



Manual of Licensing Procedures

2026 Edition

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Introduction to the 2025 Edition

This edition is the result of the 2022 General Conference establishing licensure as a permanent status within pastoral ministry, clarifications regarding oversight requirements for licensed individuals, and standardization of the forms Nomenclature

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A. DIGITAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- All documents will be submitted in either Word compatibility mode (.doc, .xls, .ppt, .pps) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) or adobe (.pdf)
- Tracking candidates is easier if the following naming rules for files is used:
 - Last Name, dash (-), then First Name of Candidate
 - Title of Document
 - Four-digit year
 - Dash (-) then two-digit month
 - OPTIONAL – Dash (-) then two-digit day
 - EX: Smith-Edward Ordination: Call to Ministry 2009-05-12.doc
 - Date is NOT NEEDED if document is not a report, although the date format above is still recommended.
- It is difficult to send large documents to some servers by email. It is therefore advisable to send multiple small files instead of a single large one.
- All audios will be sent in either MP3, MP4, WAV, or WMF formats or on a CD.
- All videos will be sent in either AVI, MPEG, or WMV formats or on a DVD.

B. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS FOR CANDIDATES, ELDERS AND MENTORS

Manual of Commissioning Procedures

Manual of Licensing Procedures

Manual of Ordination Procedures

Required Readings for Licensure or Ordination

Brethren Reading Program for Ordination

A Manual of Procedure of the Brethren Church

Manual of Pastoral and Congregational Procedures of the Brethren Church

Brethren Positions on Social Issues

Brethren Pastor's Handbook

Brethren Beliefs:

NOTE: *These documents contain guidelines and procedures that inform elders and congregations regarding Brethren ordination, governance, organizational structure, and discipline. It is highly recommended that these be in every elder's library.*

C. IMPORTANT DEADLINES IN THE LICENSURE PROCESS

- ✓ The Regional Leadership Team must meet and interview the person seeking a licensure **prior to their provisional licensure.**
- ✓ Any person serving as a sole or lead pastor of a Brethren church must be provisionally licensed by the region that supervises that church **within six months of hire**, if not already a Brethren licensed pastor or ordained elder.
- ✓ All parts of a licensed pastor's written licensure exam packet, including all three Brethren intensive classes **must be completed within two years of provisional licensure.**
- ✓ Upon completion of all requirements of the licensing process including the three intensives and the entire licensing examination packet, and a final approval by the Regional Leadership Team, a permanent license shall be issued.

Brethren Church Licensure Contact Form

Revised 10/10/2022

The candidate, the appropriate regional leadership team, and the presiding officer of the National Board of Oversight should maintain a copy of this form.

The Candidate is ultimately responsible for the proper submission of all forms and materials.

PLEASE SUBMIT FORMS DIGITALLY IF POSSIBLE

Region Responsible for Oversight: _____

Name of Candidate: _____

Mailing address : _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Church Where Membership Held: _____

Church Currently Serving (or Seminary Year): _____

**ALL LICENSED PASTORS
MUST HAVE A SUPERVISING ELDER**

Name of Supervising Elder: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS FOR LICENSING

Revised 10/10/2022

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL DOCUMENTS DIGITALLY IF POSSIBLE

STEP 1: PRE-LICENSURE

1. Local church calls candidate and notifies RLT through appropriate form. Solo or Lead pastors not already licensed or ordained Brethren Pastors must begin application process within six (6) months of beginning ministry context. **FORM TO BE USED: Licensure: Request for Initial (Provisional) Licensure by Local Church and RLT Examination for Initial (Provisional) Licensure and Annual Renewal of Provisional License –Date: ____/____/____**
2. Candidate completes Personal Information Section of Licensure Application **FORM TO BE USED: LICENSURE: WRITTEN EXAMINATION (PART A) – Date: ____/____/____**
3. RLT examines, issues initial license, and notifies NBO. **FORM TO BE USED: Licensure: Request for Initial Licensure by Local Church and RLT Examination for Initial Licensure and Annual Renewal of Provisional License –Date: ____/____/____**

REINSTATEMENT OF BRETHREN ORDINATION AND STATUS OF INDIVIDUALS LICENSED OR ORDAINED BY OTHER DENOMINATIONS OR GROUPS

1. The Brethren Church has no relational agreement for recognition of licensure or ordination from other denominations or groups. Individuals licensed or ordained by other denominations or groups will apply for licensure and ordination using the current approved procedures. Certain requirements in the process may be waived on a case-by-case basis by the Regional Leadership Team with the approval of the National Board of Oversight
2. In the case of a Brethren elder in “retired Status” who seeks to once again serve in active status, the local church may vote to have the Regional Leadership Team restore the person to active status. Once the Regional Leadership Team has met with the person, they may notify the NBO that they are being returned to active status. If the period of retirement has been longer than five years, The RLT, at their discretion, can request the person to again complete the respective Licensure or Ordination Written Exam requirements and appear before the NBO for review.
3. In the case of a Brethren pastor or elder whose licensure or ordination has lapsed for reasons of inactivity, a leave of absence or other circumstances, the local church may vote to request that the Regional Leadership Team approve that person as a licensed pastor for one year, during which a Brethren elder serves as an advisor. Again, follow the outline as presented in Step 2: Initial Licensing. After one year, the region may reinstate the previously held permanent license or ordination, or, at the region’s discretion, request NBO review before reinstatement. *The Manual of Pastoral and Congregational Procedures of the Brethren*

Church has suggested guidelines.

4. In the case of a Brethren pastor or elder whose license or ordination has been removed (defrocked), the Regional Leadership Team may, after completion of a developed plan for repentance and reconciliation and restoration, license the individual for a period of one year, with a Brethren elder serving as advisor. After one year, the region should request NBO review of the process and approval for reinstatement of the previously held permanent license or ordination, using the same forms for initial licensure or ordination, but with the word “REINSTATEMENT” printed prominently across the top of all forms submitted. *The Manual of Pastoral and Congregational Procedures of the Brethren Church has suggested guidelines.*

**LICENSURE: REQUEST FOR PROVISIONAL LICENSURE BY LOCAL
CHURCH AND EXAMINATION FOR PROVISIONAL LICENSURE BY
REGION AND ANNUAL RENEWAL OF PROVISIONAL LICENSE BY
REGION
FORM 101**

(Revised 05/04/2026)

Completed by Local Church Issuing Call and Candidate and Regional Leadership Team

Date: _____

TO: The Regional Leadership Team of the _____ Region:

_____ is a member in good standing

and full fellowship of the _____ Brethren Church

located in _____.

The church affirmed its “call” to this candidate and now requests the RLT to examine for a provisional license. This affirmation occurred at a congregational meeting on

____/____/____/ (mm/dd/yyyy). The result of the secret ballot vote was ____ affirmative and ____ negative, with ____ qualified voters present. We believe this candidate for licensing to be sound in the faith, having the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Signed:

Pastor: _____

Moderator: _____

Secretary: _____

Deacon(ess): _____

Deacon(ess): _____

Candidate:

I hereby indicate my desire to be examined for provisional licensing for the Gospel Ministry in The Brethren Church

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: _____

Regional Approval and Renewals

This candidate was examined by the Regional Leadership Team on the date below and approved for provisional licensing for one year, unless revoked for cause. We are satisfied with the candidate's faith, life, spiritual attainment, and personal fitness for the ministry.

Signed:

Date of Regional Examination: _____

RLT Chair: _____

RLT Member: _____

Mentor/Supervisor/RLT Member: _____

RENEWALS: Date: _____

RLT Chair: _____

Date: _____

RLT Chair: _____

Date: _____

RLT Chair: _____

ALL WORK COMPETED: Date: _____

RLT Chair: _____

Instructions: Local Church and Candidate complete form, then send to RLT. RLT completes the form and sends a copy to NBO. RLT should review candidate's progress annually, update this form, and send an updated copy to NBO until licensure requirements are completed and a permanent license issued.

LICENSURE: WRITTEN EXAMINATION

FORM 103

(Revised 10/10/2022)

**NOTE: A COMPLETE RESUME' WITH PICTURE IS TO BE COMPLETED
IN ADDITION TO THIS FORM**

Date this profile was completed ____ - ____ - ____

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name _____ Date of Birth ____ - ____ - ____
Last first middle initial MM DD YYYY

Address (where to send correspondence)

(Street Address)

(City) (State) (Zip Code)

Telephone number: ____ - ____ - ____ (H) ____ - ____ - ____ (W)
____ - ____ - ____ (Mobile)

Email: _____ @ _____

1. Pastoral Status Region: _____

Congregation: _____

Date of Licensing _____

Date of Ordination _____

Date of Commissioning _____

If non-Brethren, please provide contact information for verification purposes.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

2. Current church membership _____
3. Current ministry position _____
4. Family Description: Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____
 Spouse's name _____ Date Married ____ / ____ / ____
 Child(ren)'s name(s) _____
5. Have you been married more than once? _____ (If yes, please explain circumstances using additional page)
6. Current or recent community Involvements (please list with years served)
7. Current district or denominational involvements (please list with years served)

Number of years of full-time ministry as a licensed or ordained pastor _____ yrs.
 Part-time ministry will be prorated as one year of service for every two years of part-time work.

REFERENCES: List the names and addresses of four people who are familiar with your pastoral ministry.

Name	Phone (day-time)	(evening)
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____

B. GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT PASTORAL MINISTRY

1. What in your ministry has brought you the greatest level of satisfaction?
2. What in your ministry has brought you the most frustration or disappointment?
3. What do you hope to accomplish in your current context of ministry?

4. Preferred Type of Pastoral Ministry – check all that apply:
Full-time _____ Part-time _____ Bi-vocational _____ Yoked (Two-point charge) _____

Comments:

C. CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE and CALL

1. How long have you been a Christian? _____ years
 - a. Under what circumstances did you become a Christian?
 - b. When were you baptized? _____ - _____ - _____ (date)
in what church? _____
by what method? _____
 - c. How long have you been a member of The Brethren Church? _____ years
 - d. If you are married, is your spouse a member of The Brethren Church? Yes ___ or No ___
2. What experiences have you had in Christian work (non-pastoral in nature – Mission's trips, retreats, conferences, church positions prior to pastoral ministry, etc.)?
3. Why do you believe you have been called by the Lord to Christian ministry?
4. When and under what circumstances did you decide to offer your life for Christian ministry?
5. If you are married, is your spouse in accord with your call into ministry? _____ Yes or No
6. What is your present habit in devotional life, Bible study, Bible memorization, prayer, and reading (please share your practices in each area)?
7. What experiences have you had in personal efforts to lead others to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?
8. What are your beliefs and practices about stewardship?
9. Do you give 10% of your income to the work of the Lord through the local church? What other ministries do you financially support?

D. DOCTRINE

What are your personal beliefs and struggles in relation to the following Statements? Indicate whether you agree completely, C, mostly M, or partially, P. Please explain your answer to any statements marked M or P on a separate sheet, including your reflections, appropriate scripture, and acknowledgement/agreement with stated Brethren positions where appropriate. You are also welcomed to comment on sections you mark C if you desire to comment or clarify your position

- _____ 1. Our motto: The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.
- _____ 2. *The Authority and Integrity of the Holy Scriptures. The ministry of the Brethren Church, desires to bear testimony to the belief that God's supreme revelation has been made through Jesus Christ, a complete and authentic record of which revelation is the New Testament; and, to the belief that the Holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, are the infallible record of the perfect, final and authoritative revelations of God's will, altogether sufficient in themselves as a rule of faith and practice.*
- _____ 3. *The pre-existence, deity, and incarnation by virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; The fall of Man, his consequent spiritual death and utter sinfulness, and the necessity of his new birth; The vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ through the shedding of His own blood; The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the body in which He suffered and died and His subsequent glorification at the right hand of God;*
- _____ 4. *The justification by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of which obedience to the will of God and works of righteousness are the evidence and result; the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, and the life everlasting of the just;*

_____ 5. *The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit who indwells the Christian and is his Comforter and Guide; The personal and visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords; the glorious goal for which we are taught to watch, wait, and pray.*

_____ 6. *The Christian should 'be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind (non-conformity),' should not engage in carnal strife (non-resistance) and should 'swear not at all (non-swearing).*

_____ 7. *The Christian should observe, as his duty and privilege, the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, among which are: baptism of believers by Triune (Trine, ed.) Immersion, confirmation(laying on of hands); the Lord's Supper (love feast); the Communion of the Bread and Cup; the washing of the feet; and the anointing of the sick with oil.*

E. The Mission of The Brethren Church:

The mission of The Brethren Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who, united in Christ, embrace and reflect God's love and live in the transforming presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

As a pastor, how do you understand this statement, and what are your responsibilities as a pastor to fulfill this mission?

F. Vision for The National Brethren Church: Est. 7/2023

The Brethren Church is led by the Word and Spirit as a family of churches creating innovative relational spaces for every tribe, language, people, and nation to encounter God's redemptive Kingdom.

What role as a pastor to you believe you play in fulfilling this vision?

G. The Brethren Church's Six Core Values:

How do you as a pastor see yourself living out each of these core values?

Contextual Brethren Life

Summary:

We are guided by traditions and values that shape our identity as The Brethren Church, but we seek to apply these traditions and values in ways that fit our context.

Incarnational Ministry

Summary:

Just as God's reign was ushered into the world by God becoming one of us (John 1:14-18), so we also practice ministry by immersing ourselves in the contexts to which God has called us. Such incarnational ministry is articulated in Paul's statement, "I have become all things to all, in order that by all means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22b).

Responsible Stewardship

Summary:

We recognize our responsibility to act as stewards of all that God has given us as The Brethren Church. The ultimate goal of our stewardship is to bear witness to God's Kingdom throughout creation. This commitment to stewardship extends to all areas of our shared life together.

Intentional Kingdom Witness

Summary:

We recognize that we are called to bear witness to the Kingdom of God to our neighbors and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:7). We understand that we should be actively pursuing opportunities to advance the Kingdom in all the places we find ourselves: locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. As Brethren led by the Spirit, we join together to extend the Brethren witness through the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches.

Servant Leadership**Summary:**

We understand leadership to be the ability of a person or group to influence others toward achieving shared goals. Following Jesus' example, leaders in The Brethren Church consider themselves servants of both God and the people around them. We identify and promote the development of leaders at all levels of the church, both lay and ministerial.

Biblical and Spiritual Formation**Summary:**

We are committed to being transformed into the likeness of Jesus through submission and obedience to Scripture and through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

H. UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR

Understanding the Role of the pastor in the Brethren Church is vital for the future of the church, both locally and nationally. What do you believe is the role of the pastor within the national church?

I. FINANCIAL HEALTH

1. Do you have financial obligations and debts which may hinder your ministry? Yes or No
2. Do you make regular contributions to a retirement account? Yes or No
3. Do you have adequate life insurance to help cover your family's financial needs in the case of your death? Yes/No/Not sure
4. Do you have adequate medical insurance through your or your spouse's current employer? Yes or No

J. PASTORAL AND CONGREGATIONAL ETHICS STATEMENTS

1. I have read the current pastoral ethics statement and affirm its content.
SEE REQUIRED READINGS _____ (initial if true)
2. I have read the current congregational ethics statements (1987 version) and affirm its content.
SEE REQUIRED READINGS _____ (initial if true)
3. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, other than traffic offenses? Yes or No
If yes, please explain:
4. **A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS DOCUMENT**
5. Has a formal complaint of ethical misconduct ever been filed against you? Yes or No
If yes, please explain how the case was resolved:

K. POSITIONS ON SOCIAL, SELF-CARE and ORDINATION ISSUES

What are your personal beliefs and struggles in relation to the following Statements? Indicate whether you agree completely, C, mostly M, or partially, P. Please explain your answer to any statements marked M or P on a separate sheet, including your reflections, appropriate scripture, and acknowledgement/agreement with stated Brethren positions where appropriate. You are also welcome to comment on sections you mark C if you desire to comment or clarify your position

***SEE REQUIRED READING FOR BRETHREN POSITIONS ON SOCIAL ISSUES,
ORDINATION OF PERSONS OF DIVORCE AND ORDINATION OF WOMEN.***

_____ Addictions (Drugs, Alcohol, Gambling, and Pornography)

_____ Consumption and Wealth

_____ Issues of Life and Death

_____ Immigration

_____ Poverty and Racial Inequality

_____ Sexuality

_____ Stewardship of Creation

_____ Peace and War

_____ Ordination of Persons of Divorce

_____ Ordination of Women

L. REQUIRED READINGS AND COURSEWORK

The Board of Oversight requires competency of all applicants for licensure. Therefore, a study list has been prepared to outline requirements for this process.

1. I have read and reviewed with my supervising elder all the items in the ***Required Readings for Licensure and Ordination Document***.

Candidate Initials: _____ Date: ____/____/____
Supervising Elder Initials: _____ Dare: ____/____/____

2. I have completed the intensive course in Brethren History: (Attach Certificate)

Candidate Initials: _____ Date: ____/____/____
Supervising Elder Initials: _____ Dare: ____/____/____

3. I have completed the intensive course in Brethren Doctrine: (Attach Certificate)

Candidate Initials: _____ Date: ____/____/____
Supervising Elder Initials: _____ Dare: ____/____/____

4. I have completed the intensive course in Brethren Polity: (Attach Certificate)

Candidate Initials: _____ Date: ____/____/____
Supervising Elder Initials: _____ Dare: ____/____/____

5. READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

I certify that I have read through the entire Bible, either chronologically or systematically

Initial _____

6. READING SINCE PROVISIONAL LICENSURE

Please list the books you have read in the areas indicated since your initial licensure. Include, title, author, and year read for each item. **NOTE TO NON-DEGREE APPLICANTS ALSO COMPLETING THE READING PROGRAM: If you are a non-degree applicant, these are works which you have read but were not required to write any report or paper for your region. Works which the region require or receive a paper or reflective response should be included in your Reading Program materials.**

- PREACHING AND WORSHIP
- COUNSELING
- CHURCH GROWTH AND MANAGEMENT
- BIBLICAL STUDIES

- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & YOUTH
- CHRISTIAN CLASSICS
- ONTEMPORARY

LICENSURE: GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL ORAL EXAMINATION FOR LICENSURE

(revised 10/10/2022)

The Oral Examination is designed for a group interview before the Regional Leadership Team. Any information that is requested by the Written Exam for Licensure, Personal Information and Pastoral Profile is considered appropriate areas of discussion. It is understood that not every area may be considered, but that the RLT has the freedom to select questions and to ask additional questions. Additionally, the candidate may be asked questions in the following areas not covered in the Written Exam or Ordination: Personal Information and Pastoral Profile, so the candidate may wish to review these areas prior to any Oral Examination.

Those who are conducting the Oral Exam are encouraged to have available some time prior to the interview the candidate's Written Exam for Licensure, Personal Information and Pastoral Profile. The completion of the Written Exam for licensure is required within two years of initial Licensure and can be an important source for questions during the Oral Exam.

This Oral Examination is to occur every year after the initial licensure, with the Region re-certifying Licensure each year after a proper examination of the candidate until all requirement completed and a permanent license issued.

Additional Possible Areas of Discussion:

- 1) Childhood impacts on personal development
- 2) Spiritual condition of parents and their relationship to the church
- 3) Share your personal spiritual journey
- 4) Demonstrate the steps used to lead someone to Christ, including scriptures normally used.
- 5) Describe the most influential person in your life.
- 6) Describe your current spiritual disciplines.
- 7) Describe your current relationship with your local church.
- 8) State your personal and professional life goals.
- 9) Name the five (5) main objectives you have for your life.
- 10) State why you feel called to ministry in The Brethren Church instead of some other group.

11) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Bibliology (Revelation, Inspiration, Canon, Authority, Infallibility and Inerrancy, The relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament, Principles of Biblical Interpretation).

12) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Theology (Trinity, Attributes).

13) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Anthropology (Human Nature, Sin, relationship to God).

14) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Christology (Virgin Birth, Trinitarian Views, Humanity and Deity of Jesus Christ, Lordship).

15) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Pneumatology (Work of the Holy Spirit, Spiritual Gifts).

16) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Soteriology (Justification, Adoption, Regeneration, Eternal Security, Calling, Election, Predestination, and Foreknowledge).

17) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Ecclesiology (Nature of Church, Relationship of Church to Israel, Church Polity, Ordinances, Practices, Elders, Deacons,

18) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Brethren Distinctives (Communion, Feet-Washing, Baptism, Anointing, Confirmation, Nonconformity, Nonviolence, and Nonswearing).

19) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Eschatology (Rapture, Tribulation, Millennial Reign, and Prophecy).

20) Please state your views in the areas of the field of Demonology (Possession, Exorcism, Spiritual Warfare, Personhood, and Existence).

21) Share your views on issues of current social concern (Women's Rights, Abortion, War, other areas covered in the Written Application or Ordination: Resume' and Pastoral Profile).

22) Share your views on issues of current religious concern (Women in Ministry, Charismatic Movement, Church Growth Movement, Cults and the Occult, Church and State Issues).

23) Share your personal insights from any of the areas listed in the Written Exam dealing with your personal Philosophy of Ministry.

LICENSURE: REVIEW SURVEY

This review will happen the first year a Brethren Pastor/Elder serves in a local congregation and then every three years thereafter.

Write a paragraph for each of the questions below. You may be contacted by a member of the Regional Leadership Team to discuss your responses.

Name: _____
Current Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____
Email Address: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Business/Office Phone: _____

1. What have you been reading? What individuals are you following on other sources (podcasts, blogs, social media)?
2. What special events and conferences have you attended (including Brethren events)?
3. What are you reading devotionally? How are you growing spiritually?
4. What are you doing for self-care? (mental, emotional, physical, marriage, family)
5. Describe your current ministry context, including your primary responsibilities and activities within the context.
6. Describe your interactions and relationships with those you serve in your current ministry context.
7. What other Brethren pastors, leaders or congregations have you been in relationship with?
8. We want to help you in your ministerial and spiritual growth. What areas can we walk alongside you in? How can we resource you better?