

# Ordination Process

When you have shared your sense of being called by God into Christian ministry with your pastor, he or she will guide you into both the educational process and the candidacy steps required for ministry. You should develop a close and teachable relationship with your pastor so he or she can counsel you very directly and frankly about any areas in which questions about your fitness for ministry may arise. Depending on your age, maturity, gifts for ministry, and work in the local church, your pastor will decide when the right time has come to recommend you for a local minister's license. Your pastor may spend several months or even several years observing you and questioning you about your understanding of your call. He or she may ask you to seek counsel and direction from other spiritual leaders also as part of the process of clarifying both your own sense of calling and your pastor's confidence that God has genuinely called you.

## The Local Minister's License

Once your pastor has concluded it is appropriate to recommend you to the church board, he or she will give you an "Application for Local Minister's License." The pastor will place consideration of your application on the agenda for an upcoming board meeting. You need to fill out this application and return it to your pastor. At a local church board meeting, you should be invited to present your testimony with special emphasis on your call. They may ask you further questions. If you are married, they may ask your spouse to be present and to answer questions. Most likely you will be excused from the board meeting at the time they discuss and vote on whether or not to approve your application. Should the board vote not to grant you the local minister's license, you should consult with your pastor about how you should proceed in finding and doing God's will for your life in ministry. If the church board recommends granting you the local minister's license, it is hoped your pastor will present the license to you in a public church service, and perhaps ask you to share a few words of testimony of your relationship with the Lord and your calling to ministry. It is possible the pastor will ask several members of the board and/or congregation to come forward and lay hands on you while one of them or your pastor prays for you. If you have not become actively involved in the ministry of your local church, you are expected to become involved at this point. Your pastor should also instruct you in writing a covenant of what you hope to accomplish in your ministerial development, education, and in your local church ministry. You should keep a copy of this covenant and refer to it periodically. Write about your progress in fulfilling the covenant and your feelings related to being granted a local minister's license.

Once you have been granted a local minister's license, your pastor will guide you as to how to enroll with the DMSB. First, go to the Global Ministry Center (GMC) website and download or make a copy of "Guide to Ministerial Preparation and Ordination" located at [www.nazarene.org/global-clergy-development](http://www.nazarene.org/global-clergy-development) under Ministerial Sourcebooks. Refer to this handbook for the process and information on your journey. Also located in the back of the handbook is the "Call to Ministry" form that will need to

be sent into the district office. This form is also located on the District website at [www.arizonadistrict.org/ordained-licensed-ministers](http://www.arizonadistrict.org/ordained-licensed-ministers) .

This is also the time to let the district office know if there is has been a divorce, either the candidate or the spouse of the candidate. Divorce ‘barriers’ MUST be addressed BEFORE a District License can be issued. This process can take up to 2 years, so the sooner the process of this is begun, the better.

## **Renewal of the Local Minister’s License**

Since the local church can only grant a local minister’s license for one year at a time, you will need to apply for renewal of your license before the current license expires. During this renewal interview, you should be prepared to discuss the progress and growth of your spiritual walk, your call to ministry, your ministry involvement, and the status of your educational preparation. If the church board grants renewal of the license, the pastor should mail a copy of the completed “Interview Guidelines for Renewing the Local Minister’s License” to the district superintendent.

## **The District Ministerial Studies Board (DMSB)**

When you received your first local minister’s license, your pastor should have prepared you for enrollment with the DMSB. The DMSB will provide guidance as you travel through the course of study for ministerial preparation. During your journey toward ordination, the DMSB will work with you to review your educational journey.

## **The District License**

After you have completed a minimum of one year with a local minister’s license and having taken a minimum of 6 required ordination classes (one of them being History and Polity), your pastor may consider recommending you to the DMCB for a district minister’s license (Manual 530.1). The DMCB will interview you each year before you receive a district license. List and track the steps to obtain a District Minister’s License and reflect on your interview with the local church board. If you have not shown sufficient progress in the gifts and graces of ministry or progress in the course of study, he or she may decide to recommend you for renewal of the local minister’s license, and ask you to wait another year before pursuing the district license.

If the church board does recommend you for a district license, your pastor should give you an “Application for Minister’s License” and help you find out when you need to appear before the DMSB and DMCB. If your pastor does not provide the form and information, you can obtain them from the district website. ([www.arizonadistrict.org/ordained-licensed-ministers](http://www.arizonadistrict.org/ordained-licensed-ministers)) These forms are designated for local license, district license and reporting ordained pastors. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the district personnel can be obtained through the District Office; 480.237.7000 or [brendamastin@arizonadistrict.org](mailto:brendamastin@arizonadistrict.org).

If the church board decides not to recommend you for a district minister’s license, you should attempt to learn from your pastor the reasons they were hesitant to recommend this step. You should not

assume the board is “against you.” Ministry in the church always requires submitting ourselves to the discernment and evaluation of others. An angry or immature response on your part when a board refuses a license actually confirms their wisdom. Even at this early stage in your journey toward ministry, learning the appropriate way to respond to conflict and disappointment is essential.

### **Mentoring Process**

Once you are in a full-time or almost full-time ministry position, you will need mentoring and accountability as you learn the practical aspects of ministry.

At your first District Interviews, you will be given information about the Mentoring Process. It is a requirement on the Arizona District to participate in the Mentoring Process and is a part of the whole process of the ordination path. Candidates will be given information on approved mentors and the Mentoring Process. In the course of the year, there is a minimum of 9 out of 12 monthly meetings that need to take place, half (6) of these must be done face to face (ie., in person, Skype or electronic device that provides for facial interaction). If the candidate does not meet the minimal requirements, the mentor will notify the Mentoring Director. The candidate will be warned and if the non-compliance continues, the District Studies Board will consider not renewing the district license and the candidate will also lose accrued ministry time. We are trying to intentionally add to the candidate’s resource team and to insure the candidate does not walk the ordination process without care and accountability on a regular basis.

You should discuss with your mentor or mentoring committee issues of spirituality, spiritual development, transition from the idealism of education to the realism of ministry practice, and the importance of your ministerial formation. You should invite the members of your mentoring committee to visit you unannounced at the church where you are serving, during both service and non-service times. Develop a covenantal foundation for feedback, accountability, and evaluation with them. They can be your best advocates in becoming the minister God has called you to be.

### **The District Ministerial Credentials Board (DMCB)**

Your meeting(s) with the DMCB may be the most critical step(s) in the public journey toward ordination. Once you have an interview time established with the DMCB, you must make every effort to be there. If you need to arrange to take off work for your interview, do so. Your interview is very important and should be approached with great seriousness. The DMCB may ask your spouse to be interviewed with you for your first district minister’s license. If the board asks to see your spouse in subsequent years for renewal, you and your spouse need to make every effort to comply with the request.

District boards will conduct and structure the interviews for district licensing in different ways. But regardless of the structure and schedule, you should be prepared for searching questions that cover such important areas as:

- Your spiritual and devotional life

- Any spiritual lapses you may have had since becoming a Christian
- Your experience of entire sanctification
- Your support of the doctrinal teachings of the Church of the Nazarene
- Your theology of ministry
- Your financial stability and whether indebtedness could limit places where you could be assigned for ministry
- Your willingness to work within the structures of the church
- Your commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission
- If you are married, the board will ask you about the health of your marriage and any areas of potential problems

The DMCB will interview you each year before you receive a district license. When the DMCB believes you are ready to be interviewed regarding ordination, they will invite you to such an interview. They will usually try to schedule the interview several weeks in advance of the district assembly so your family members can have time to plan to attend your ordination if you are approved. If you are married, it will be very important for your spouse to attend this interview. The interview will be similar to your interviews of granting or renewal of a district minister's license, except this interview should be more intense. The DMCB must be very confident you are fully qualified and ready to be ordained before they can proceed. It is hoped you will be able to perceive their love and concern for both you and the church in the interview. They carry heavy responsibility for both you and the church in the decision they will soon make. If you are truly ready for ordination, you will begin to feel a sense of being a colleague with them in the care of the church.

After the interview you will be dismissed and the DMCB will decide whether or not to recommend you to the district assembly and to the general superintendent. You will usually be notified of their decision on the same day.

## **Renewal of the District Minister's License**

Just like the local minister's license, the district minister's license is issued year by year. You must not assume the license will be renewed automatically, even if serving as a pastor (Manual 530.5). The renewal process of licensing must be repeated every year (Manual 530.3). If an application form is not automatically sent to you several weeks prior to the district assembly, it is your responsibility to request one from the district secretary.

You will need to provide an up-to-date and accurate record of your progress in your educational preparation to the DMSB in the form of a transcript (unofficial) or from the teacher of the modular class. If you have not completed the equivalent of one year's work in the college/university and/or seminary track, or one-fourth of the district-directed course of study, the DMSB may refer you back to your local

church board for consideration for renewal of your local minister's license. After receiving your first district minister's license you will be responsible to complete a minimum of two courses or modules per year to remain eligible for renewal of your district license (Manual 530.3).

To renew your district license you should follow the procedure outlined by your district. A few districts do not meet every candidate for renewal each year, but you should make every effort to be available for an interview every year. If you are away attending school, you should make every effort to return for your annual interview with the DMCB. If returning is extremely difficult, they may try to help you by scheduling a special meeting during one of your academic breaks. In some cases, candidates in Nazarene schools have received permission from their district to be interviewed by a committee of religion faculty and/or pastors where they are attending school.

### **Time Limitation**

A period of 10 years is allowed for the completion of the course of study, from the time you are granted your first district license (by whatever path you choose to pursue).

### **Clarifying Issues and Personal Guidance**

If there is a potential impediment to your being ordained, such as a divorce or legal conviction, the issue must be addressed at your first DMCB interview. Your pastor should alert the district superintendent or the district secretary to any such issues to be addressed with you. However, if he or she fails to do so, you should contact the district superintendent prior to the interview to determine what information you need to provide to clarify the issue for the DMCB, and in some cases for the Board of General Superintendents.

### **Ministry Credit Time**

Ministry Credit time is the refinement of your ministry skills through practical application. The candidate is required to accrue 3 consecutive years in full-time ministry by indication in the District Journal or 4 plus years for part-time.

Definition of Full-time and Part-time:

Full-time -

1. Ordained Deacon, Ordained Elder, or District Licensed Minister.
2. Various levels of pastoral service with a church
3. **AND** works 30 or more hours a week
4. **AND** earns at least **51%** of his or her income from the church.

Part-time -

1. Ordained Deacon, Ordained Elder, or District Licensed Minister.
2. Various levels of pastoral service with a church
3. **AND** works less than 30 hours a week

4. **AND** earns less than 51% of his or her income from the church.

### **Church of the Nazarene Journal Role Codes**

The following Role Codes will be the ones most likely used for candidates:

**\*\*PAS—Pastor**

**\*\*PSV-FT—Pastoral Service, Full-Time**

**\*\*PSV-PT—Pastoral Service, Part-Time**

**\*\*STU—Student (If this designation is used, no Ministry Credit Time will be credited)**

The candidate **MUST** be listed as Director over a ministry in the District Journal. The District Journal is an official document and will be considered the record of the Ministry Credit Time. Teaching classes, serving as an assistant or other non-leading role will **not** qualify for Ministry Credit hours. In order to become ordained, the candidate **MUST** have completed the required Ministry Credit Time **PRIOR** to ordination.

### **Ministerial Candidate Workshop Weekend (MCW)**

Ministerial Candidate Workshop is a weekend uniquely designed to provide licensed ministers a deeper understanding of their calling. The goal of the workshop is to help candidates identify personal strengths and gifting, receive focused guidance and direction, develop deeper self-awareness, review the Nazarene ordination process, and cultivate supportive relationships with district leaders. This is offered one weekend per year, for those entering their first or second year of district licensing. **This workshop weekend is a requirement for ordination on the Arizona District.**

### **Affirming, Yet Challenging**

It is hoped that this interview process will be supportive and affirming to you, while still being challenging and evaluative. District boards are charged with the responsibility of making sure the church's ministers are called, well prepared, and spiritually ready to minister to the people of God and to those who do not yet know Christ. Since this task has such serious, eternal implications, don't be surprised if it sometimes seems too intense, too long, too cautious, or too personal. If you have questions about the interview process, before or after the interview, you should talk with your pastor and/or district superintendent. He or she may help you develop a helpful perspective on the process.

Should the board decide not to recommend you for a district minister's license or ordination at this time, you should inquire of your pastor, mentor, and/or district superintendent about the reasons for the board's decision.

Once again this can be an opportunity for growth. An inappropriate response only confirms the wisdom of the DMCB's refusal to recommend you. The disappointment of waiting another year to be ordained

and/or having a district license renewed is far less than the crisis of having to give up your ordination credential for whatever reason. The careful and deliberative process is important in protecting the purity and efficiency of the ministry you are joining. For this reason the church must follow the teaching of 1 Timothy 5:22, "Do not ordain anyone hastily" (NRSV).

### **The District Assembly**

If the DMCB recommends you for a district minister's license, the recommendation will go to the district assembly for a vote. If the district assembly votes to recommend you, the final decision for your district minister's license will be made by the general superintendent presiding over that assembly. If you are approved at each step, you will receive a district minister's license. Your pastor may ask for the opportunity of recognizing you at a public service of your local church so they can rejoice with you at this step in your journey toward ministry.

Upon receiving a positive recommendation for ordination from the DMCB, the district assembly and general superintendent will usually join in affirming you to be ordained. The time of the ordination service will be announced well in advance of the district assembly.

### **A Highlight of Your Life**

Your ordination service should be one of the great highlights of your life and ministry. You will want to note in your journal your feelings and the significant scriptures and comments made in the ordination sermon, and by those family and church friends who love you and helped you come to this most important moment in your ministry. Be generous in your expression of gratitude to them as the instruments of God in helping you fulfill His calling on your life!

### **Recognition of Minister's Orders**

Ordained ministers from other evangelical denominations who wish to join the Church of the Nazarene may do so if they meet all requirements for ordination as outlined in Manual paragraphs 225, 527, 531, 532, and 533. There will also be an examination by the DMCB as to their conduct, personal experience, and doctrine. The candidate must demonstrate competency on (1) the Nazarene Manual; (2) the history of the Church of the Nazarene; and (3) the doctrine of holiness. The DMSB will recommend ways to meet these three requirements satisfactorily.

### **After Ordination, Then What?**

The candidacy process is so intense and takes so long it often seems it will never end. There can be a sense of let-down after ordination. There can also be a temptation to assume the hard parts are all over. Since ordination is a lifetime action of the church, there will be no more interviews every year with the DMCB. You will no longer fill out an annual application for renewal of district license, but you are expected to report annually to the district assembly where your membership is held (Manual 536.9).

However, this does not mean you can now coast through ministry without evaluation and accountability. If you were considered worthy to be ordained, the church now expects you to

demonstrate leadership in the church. You should have built the patterns of accountability and self-evaluation into the very fabric of your ministerial being. You will want to continue in an accountability or spiritual formation group. You will want to continue to read and study the faith you proclaim. If you fulfill your ministry faithfully, perhaps you will be asked to serve as a mentor of a candidate or on the DMSB or DMCB. You will have ample opportunity to share what you have learned in your candidacy journey with others who come behind you. May they find you faithful.

#### REQUIRED CLASSES FOR ORDINATION

| <b>NBC DEGREE CURRICULUM</b>                   |  |                | <b>MODULE TITLE TRACK</b>                        |
|--|--|----------------|--|
| English Composition I                          |  | <b>MPP1021</b> | Communicating with Spoken and Written Language   |
| Introduction to Psychology                     |  | <b>MPP1191</b> | Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally            |
| Introduction to the Old Testament              |  | <b>MPP1001</b> | Telling the Old Testament Story of God           |
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| Spiritual Formation                            |  | <b>MPP1061</b> | Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation |
| Intro to Christian Educational Ministries      |  | <b>MPP1181</b> | Providing Christian Education for All Ages       |
| Western World/Ancient & Medieval Times         |  | <b>MPP1071</b> | Examining Our Christian Heritage I               |
| Western World/Emerging Modern Society          |  | <b>MPP1081</b> | Examining Our Christian Heritage II              |
| Biblical Interpretation                        |  | <b>MPP1041</b> | Interpreting Scripture                           |
| Developing a Missional Church                  |  | <b>MPP1171</b> | Leading the People of God                        |
| Church Administration and Finance              |  | <b>MPP1161</b> | Administering the Local Church                   |
| History & Polity of the Church of the Nazarene |  | <b>MPP1091</b> | Exploring Nazarene History and Polity            |
| The Practice of Christian Ministry             |  | <b>MPP1031</b> | Exploring Christian Ministry                     |
| Global Evangelism                              |  | <b>MPP1201</b> | Communicating the Gospel in a Pluralistic World  |
| Pauline Epistles/Acts                          |  | <b>MPP1121</b> | Exploring John Wesley's Theology                 |
| Senior Ministry Integration                    |  | <b>MPP1232</b> | Supervised Ministry Experience                   |

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| Doctrine of Holiness                |  | <b>MPP1131</b> | Becoming a Holy People              |
| Systematic Theology I               |  | <b>MPP1101</b> | Investigating Christian Theology I  |
| Systematic Theology II              |  | <b>MPP1111</b> | Investigating Christian Theology II |
| Pastoral Care and Counseling        |  | <b>MPP1151</b> | Shepherding God's People            |
| Christian Preaching I               |  | <b>MPP1211</b> | Declaring the Gospel of God         |
| Christian Preaching II              |  | <b>MPP1141</b> | Preaching the Story of God          |
| Philosophy and Christian Ethics     |  | <b>MPP1221</b> | Living Ethical Lives                |
| Pentateuch or O.T. Historical Books |  | <b>MPP1051</b> | Tracing the Story of God 1          |
| New Testament Gospels               |  | <b>MPP1061</b> | Tracing the Story of God 2          |
| Foundations for Women's Ordination  |  |                |                                     |