

# West Virginia South District Church of the Nazarene

## Journey Towards Ordination

### STEP BY STEP PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY AND EXPLANATION OF THE JOURNEY TOWARDS ORDINATION

#### *PREAMBLE*

Ordination is the authenticating, authorizing act of the church that recognizes and confirms God's call to ministerial leadership as stewards and proclaimers of both the gospel and the church of Jesus Christ.

It is important to realize that God calls but the church ordains. The church does not claim the right to call people to the ministry. That is the work of God the Holy Spirit.

Ordination is an authorizing act of the church. By means of ordination the church officially approves you as a minister. The ordination service itself bears witness to the church universal and to the world at large that you are truly a man or woman of God, that you have the gifts and graces for public ministry, that you have a thirst for knowledge, especially for the Word of God, and that you can clearly communicate the sound doctrine of the gospel including Christian Holiness in the Wesleyan Tradition.

Ordination is also a confirming act of the church. But before the public service of ordination, the church is at work evaluating you and your potential for ministry. The local church and the District Ministerial Credentials Board will observe you closely to determine if they will recommend you to the District Assembly for ordination.

**Ordination should not be viewed as a rite of passage**, whereby one checks off assignments but as an invitation presented to those whom the church has given the charge to certify the readiness and acceptability of each individual candidate. The District Ministerial Studies and Credentials Board have been so charged to assess each individual who is moving through the course of study and fulfilling ministerial service requirements.

Ordination is a spiritual and theological act of the church. It is more than receiving certification to minister. It is more than passing qualifying exams of your profession. It is the church's acknowledgment that God calls and gifts certain men and women for ministerial leadership in the church. Because scripture teaches that in Christ there is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Greek, male nor female, but all are one in Christ, the Church of the Nazarene ordains persons regardless of their economic status, their nationality or race, or their gender. The issue in ordination is the testimony of a call from God, completing minimum educational preparation for and experience in ministry, and the demonstration in the life of the church of the gifts and graces for ministerial leadership.

Step One:

#### Clarification of the call

- Talking and praying with spiritual mentors
- Talking and praying with pastor
- Is the call to ministry or vocation?
- Is the call to Elder (preaching) or Deacon track?

Step Two:

#### Request for Local Minister's License

- Interview with the local church board
  - \* Spiritual experience (salvation, entire sanctification)
  - \* Doctrinal understandings
  - \* Spiritual formation and disciplines (prayer, Bible reading, etc.)
  - \* Ministry experience (teaching, leadership, witnessing, etc.)
  - \* Gifts and graces (spiritual gifts)
- Submit "Request for Verification of Credential History" to General Secretary's Office
- Establish prayer partners
- Provide assignment for ministry in the church
- Enroll in classes for the Manual required course of study as soon as Local Minister's License is issued if not sooner
- Submit a signed copy of this document and a copy of the local license certificate to the district office.
- Send unofficial transcripts to Ministerial Studies Board Secretary for initial evaluation.
- Must have a Local Minister's License for at least one year and completed at least six courses. We recommend your first five courses be: 1) Telling the Old Testament Story of God; 2) Telling the New

Testament Story of God; 3) Exploring Christian Ministry; 4) Exploring Nazarene History and Polity; 5) Communicating with Spoken and Written Language. Please refer to “Plan of Examination” available on the district website and in the annual journal.

Step Three:

Request for District Minister’s License

Full and unreserved recommendation from the Lead Pastor  
Has completed the required studies (6 courses) and reported Ministerial Studies Board Secretary  
Interview with the local church board  
\* Review the list above  
\* Full and unreserved recommendation from the church board  
\* Recommendation submitted to the district secretary  
\* Church board should provide financial assistance to attend the Ministry Assessment Center  
Apply for and attend the Ministry Assessment Center  
\* Complete pre-testing and forms  
\* Attend the Ministry Assessment Center  
Complete the application for District Minister’s License  
Request an appointment for interview with the Ministry Boards in April  
Recommendation to the District Assembly comes from the Ministry Boards

Step Four:

Annual Renewal of District Minister’s License

Completion of required studies and reported to Ministry Boards  
Full and unreserved recommendation from the pastor and local church board  
Annual renewal meeting, as requested, with the Ministry Boards  
Recommendation to the District Assembly comes from the Ministry Boards

Step Five:

Request for Consideration for Ordination

Graduated from the *Manual* Course of Study for Ministers (This may be different from graduation from one of our schools or colleges as there may still be courses required for ordination that were not completed upon college graduation)  
Completed the required consecutive years of experience in ministry (Page 3)  
Request an appointment with the Ministerial Credential Board in May

Step Six:

Ordination

Conditioned upon recommendation of the Ministerial Credentials Board, affirmative vote of the District Assembly and the approval of the General Superintendent in jurisdiction.  
**Ordination can take up to 10 years given education/service requirements.**

***THEOLOGY OF ORDINATION***

Theology of Ordination. While affirming the scriptural tenet of the universal priesthood and ministry of all believers, ordination reflects the biblical belief that God calls out and gifts certain men and women for ministerial leadership in His Church. Ordination is the authenticating, authorizing act of the Church, which recognizes and confirms God’s call to ministerial leadership as stewards and proclaimers of both the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ. Consequently, ordination bears witness to the Church universal and the world at large that this candidate evidences an exemplary life of holiness, possesses gifts and graces for public ministry, has a thirst for knowledge, especially for the Word of God, and has the capacity to communicate clearly sound doctrine. *Manual* 401, 2005-2009  
(Acts 13:1-3; 20:28; Romans 1:1-2; 1 Timothy 4:11-16; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6-7; 5:22)

***CRITERIA FOR ORDINATION***

After a candidate has met the minimum service and educational pre-requisites, the Ministerial Credentials Board will evaluate the following areas:

1. Evidence of spiritual maturity and growth, which is evidenced by high moral ethical behavior.
2. Evidence of doctrinal and biblical integrity, comprehension, and articulation.
3. Evidence of churchmanship, knowledge of church history and polity.
4. Evidence of the gifts and graces necessary for ministry, as seen in his or her ministry assignment(s).

5. Evidence of personal maturity (and common sense) befitting an ordained minister in the Church of the Nazarene.
6. Evidence of a life-style that prioritizes family relationships and in cases of unhealthy relationships peruses reconciliation.
7. Evidence of Personal Evangelism and Making Disciples

**EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT FOR ORDINATION**

*Manual, 534.3 for Elder, 2017-2021 (see 533.3 for Deacon)*

One who professes a call of God to this ministry. The candidate currently holds a district license and has at one time held a license for not fewer than three consecutive years. In addition, the candidate has been recommended for renewal of district license by the church board of the local church in which he or she holds membership or by the District Advisory Board.

Further the candidate: 1. has fulfilled all the requirements of the church for the same, 2. has successfully completed a validated course of study prescribed for licensed ministers and candidates for ordination as elder, and 3. has been carefully considered and favorably reported by the District Ministerial Credentials Board or District Board of Ministry of the district assembly.

The candidate may be elected to the order of elder by two-thirds vote of the district assembly. To be eligible for election, the candidate must have been an assigned minister for not fewer than three consecutive years, and the candidate must currently be serving in an assigned ministry. In the case of part-time assignment, it should be understood that there should be an extension of the consecutive years of in-service time, depending on their level of involvement in local church ministry, and that their testimony and service demonstrate that their call to ministry is primary to all other pursuits. Further, any disqualification that may have been imposed by a district assembly must be removed in writing by the district superintendent and the District Advisory Board of the district where the disqualification was imposed before the minister is eligible for election to elder's orders. In addition, the candidate's marriage relationship must be such as not to render him or her ineligible for ordination. (205.6, 320, 529)

**RECOMMENDATION FOR APPLICATION FOR ORDINATION**

All candidates must have a current District Minister's License which has been held for at least three consecutive years prior to ordination, complete the required course of study for ministry and fulfill the required time of service within the Church of the Nazarene that provides important experience and reflects gifts and graces necessary as an ordained minister of the gospel. At the time of ordination the candidate must be serving in a current ministry assignment in the Church of the Nazarene.

We recommend the following requirements for time of service for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene on the West Virginia South District.

1. Three consecutive years as a lead or associate pastor.
2. Six consecutive years of service as a part time (15-29 hours per week) for an associate or assistant pastor.

An individual must hold a **district license and serve in an assigned ministry position to meet this requirement**. It will be the responsibility of the candidate to provide a detailed listing of their ministry assignments, including position, basic responsibilities and hours per week. This form must be signed off by the lead pastor or supervisor for that assignment and sent annually to the district secretary with the annual applications for district minister's license or ordination.

It is further understood that there may be a combination of service times with candidates having different levels of ministry involvement (full or part time). In such cases it will be the purview of the Ministerial Credentials Board as to what combination(s) will meet said requirements.

Locally Licensed Minister's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Senior Pastor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Church: \_\_\_\_\_