

Credentialing Procedures Manual

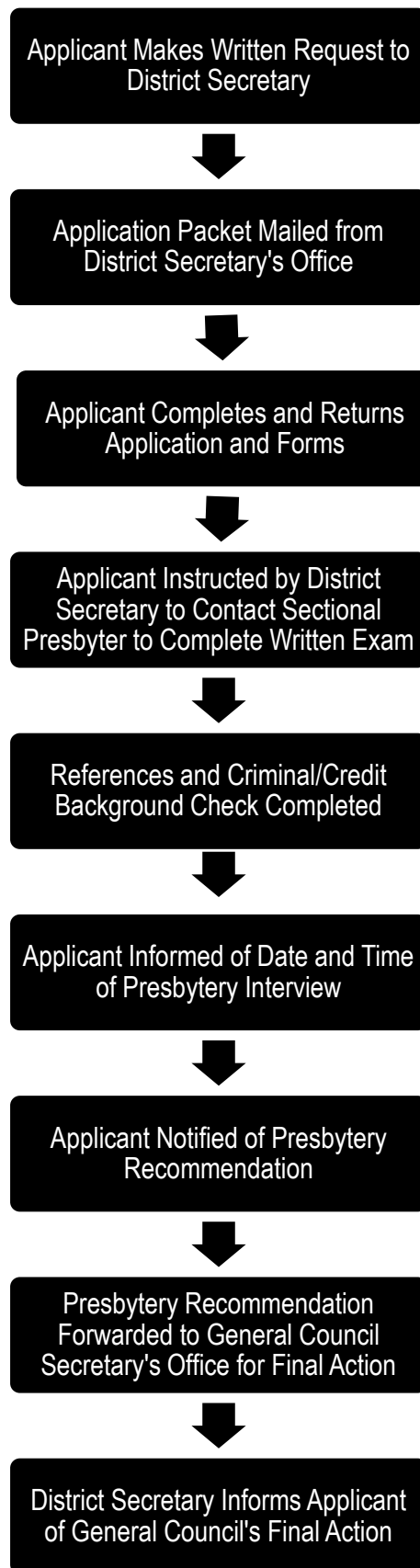
for the

**Northern New England District
Council of the
Assemblies of God**



Revised August 2016

Credential Application Process
(Process takes 3 to 6 months to complete)



A message from the District Secretary/Treasurer

Thank you for your sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and for being open to the call of God. I trust that the information provided in this booklet will be helpful as you seek God’s will for your life and ministry.

Several steps are involved in the credentiaing process. Your pastor, the Sectional Credentials Committee, your Executive Officers, and District Presbytery, are all part of the team that is working with you in the fulfillment of God’s will. This high calling is not something to be entered into lightly, but through much prayer and preparation. Our desire is for our Assemblies of God ministers to be the best equipped ministers anywhere!

The Call

We are fully committed to the biblical truth that a minister must be called of God. How is this call evidenced? I look for three things:

1. The candidate should have experienced a definite inward witness of the Spirit, awareness in some form that “this is God.”
2. The gift of God should be evidenced by fruit of the call, an evidence of the anointing, even if it is in an embryonic state.
3. A witness of mature ministers and saints that confirms the call.

Preparation

It is the responsibility of the candidate to prepare for the work of God. Study and experience are essential! Minimum educational requirements must be met either through approved studies or confirmed life preparation. Along with the course work, the candidate should be active in service in a local church and working under the guidance of his or her pastor.

Jesus said, “*The fields are white to harvest.*” There is no greater joy than being a part of the work of God. Saying “yes” may seem frightening, but God is faithful. “Where He guides, He provides.” Best of all, may heaven be a little fuller because of your obedience and faith.

Sincerely in Christ,



Ed Shearer
District Secretary/Treasurer

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Thank you for your inquiry into obtaining credentials through the Northern New England District Council of the Assemblies of God.

The Assemblies of God gives recognition to the levels of ministry as noted in this booklet. Applicants for all credentials must be residents of or hold credentials in the district where they make application and appear before its credentialing committee (General Council Bylaws, Article VII, Section 3, Paragraph a).

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

(Excerpted from General Council Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2)

- a. Salvation.** Testimony to having experienced the new birth (John 3:5).
- b. Baptism in the Holy Spirit.** Testimony to having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues according to Acts 2:4. The Spirit-filled life will enable a minister to fulfill the fourfold mission of the church (Constitution, Article V, paragraph 10).
- c. Evidence of call.** Clear evidence of a divine call to the ministry, evidenced by a personal conviction, confirmed by the work of the Spirit and the testimony of fellow ministers.
- d. Christian character.** A blameless Christian life and a good report of those who are without (Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:7).
- e. Doctrinal position.** A thorough understanding of and agreement with our doctrinal position as contained in the Statement of Fundamental Truths.
- f. Assemblies of God.** A satisfactory working knowledge of the principles, practices, and purposes of the Fellowship through a study of the General Council and District Council Constitutions and Bylaws.
- g. Voluntary cooperation and commitment to the Fellowship.** An active loyalty to our constitutional agreements, a cooperative spirit, and a readiness to seek and receive the counsel of older mature Christians and those in positions of authority.

By voluntary it is meant that, upon learning the principles, doctrines, and practices of the Assemblies of God, and by seeing the benefits to be derived from being associated with such an organization, persons of their own free choice decide to become members, thus subscribing to all that for which the organization stands.

For the minister, by cooperation, it is meant, to the best of one's ability, complying with all decisions setting forth and defining duties and responsibilities incumbent upon members of the organization. It includes active participation and respect for the will of the majority expressed through constitutional processes.

Hence, for the minister, voluntary cooperation means that when the minister decides to become a cooperating member of the Assemblies of God, this cooperation and participation thereby becomes obligatory and not optional.

h. Basic education requirements. Any level of formal academic achievement (diploma or degree) shall not be a requirement for credentials; however, credential applicants shall meet the following criteria:

- (1) All applicants are required to be interviewed by the District Credentials Committee, and in preparation for the interview, pass a standard exam approved by the General Presbytery whereby they demonstrate knowledge of the Bible, Assemblies of God doctrines, and ministerial practices; and either
- (2) Successfully complete equivalent training to that indicated in paragraph (3) below, preferably, in an endorsed Assemblies of God post-secondary school; or in a seminary, college, Bible college, or school approved by the District Credentials Committee consistent with criteria established by the General Council Credentials Committee; or
- (3) Successfully complete courses, prescribed by the General Presbytery, offered in correspondence through Global University of the Assemblies of God, or pass the final examinations in the prescribed courses; or
- (4) Be recommended by the District Credentials Committee as qualifying for credentials through self-study and ministerial experience. Such candidates shall have proven and fruitful ministry of substantial duration. Requests from a district for such a candidate shall be presented to the General Council Credentials Committee and may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

i. Mandatory screening. All applicants for ministerial credentials shall be screened through a designated screening agency established by the Executive Presbytery. Said screening shall be done by the district council prior to the submission of the application to the office of the general secretary.

j. Marriage status. We disapprove of any married persons holding ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God or district council granting credentials to such, if either marriage partner has a former spouse living, unless the divorce occurred prior to his or her conversion except as hereinafter provided.

k. Annulments, marriage dissolutions, and divorces. The Executive Presbytery shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant qualifies for an ecclesiastical annulment. In such cases there must be clear and satisfactory evidence of deception, fraud, or other conditions which have a profound impact preventing the creation of a valid marriage union, unknown at the time of marriage by the applicant. The Executive Presbytery shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant qualifies regarding a former marriage when the termination of that marriage is consistent with the scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the granting of holding of ministerial credentials; or if a former marriage ended prior to conversion. In those cases involving preconversion divorce they shall be decided on an individual basis just as those that deal with ecclesiastical annulments. Appeals from the decisions of the Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Presbytery.

l. Eligibility of women. The Scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word (Joel 2:29; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5). Women who meet the qualifications for ministerial credentials are eligible for whatever grade of credentials their qualifications warrant and have the right to administer the ordinances of the church and are eligible to serve in all levels of church ministry, and/or district and General Council leadership.

m. Ministers from other organizations. If a minister from another reputable body desires to affiliate with the Assemblies of God, the credentials committee of both the General Council and the District Council are under no obligation to accept the applicant's previous ministerial status, but will judge each candidate on his or her merits as to level of credentials to be granted. Such applicants will be required to:

- (1) Conform to Assemblies of God criteria for recognition.
- (2) Complete an application for ministerial recognition.
- (3) Submit a letter of recommendation from a neighboring Assemblies of God minister or the sectional presbyter for the applicant's area.
- (4) Submit a recommendation from the body with which the minister was formerly affiliated. If such is not available, letters of recommendation should be sought from three reputable ordained ministers who are familiar with the applicant's ministry, two of whom should be with the applicant's former credentialing body.
- (5) Take the credential examination.
- (6) Complete such courses as may be prescribed by the General Presbytery for ministers transferring from other credentialing bodies.
- (7) Meet with the district credentials committee for an oral interview.
- (8) Be recommended by the district credentials committee for action by the General Council Credentials Committee.
- (9) All previously ordained ministers so approved shall receive recognition as ordained Assemblies of God ministers with the laying on of hands by the district presbytery. All other applicants so approved shall receive the appropriate level of credential recognition.
- (10) Ministers who receive Assemblies of God recognition shall relinquish their ministerial credentials with any other organization, unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee upon recommendation of the district council credentials committee for a minister serving as a missionary in this country who holds a credential with a member body of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, or in special and/or unique cases as determined by the General Council Credentials Committee.

SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS

(General Council Bylaws Section 3. Specific Qualifications)

c. CERTIFIED MINISTER.

(1) *General Requirements.* They shall show promise of usefulness in the gospel work. They shall devote a part of their time to Christian ministry and, at the discretion of the District Credentials Committee, remain under the supervision of a pastor or a designated supervisor. They shall preach at least 12 times a year or be actively engaged in some other aspect of ministry except in case of ill health or advanced age.

(2) *Pastoral requirements.* In the event a certified minister is serving in a position as the pastor, he or she shall be expected to advance to license to preach within 2 years of acceptance of the pastorate. This shall not apply to any minister who has reached the age of 65 or older, or whose certificate has been issued on a provisional basis. Any exceptions shall be at the discretion of the District Credentials Committee.

(3) *Exception for provisional issuance.* A Certificate of Ministry may be issued on a provisional basis to a person who has not met all the credentialing requirements but who is deemed by the District Credentials Committee to be essential to the continuity of a church or a ministry. The reason for such a provisional issuance must be ministry driven, and the justification for its use is terminated when the minister ceases to be involved in the ministry for which it was initially granted unless the minister accepts another qualifying assignment. Other limitations are:

(a) The ministry certificate on a provisional basis will be issued for 1 year and shall not be renewed more than two times.

(b) A person who has been granted the Certificate of Ministry on a provisional basis must meet the qualifications for a ministry certificate within a 3-year period.

d. LICENSED MINISTER. Qualifications for license shall include clear evidence of a divine call, character and preparation suitable for that calling, practical ministry experience, and an evident purpose to devote one's life in service to the proclamation of the gospel.

e. ORDAINED MINISTER. Qualifications for ordination are outlined in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9). In addition:

(1) Applicants must be 23 years of age or older.

(2) They must have met all the requirements in making application and in completing the prescribed application form.

(3) No person may be ordained to the ministry until he or she has held a license to preach and has been engaged in active work as a pastor, evangelist, or some other recognized and proven full-time preaching ministry for at least 2 full consecutive years immediately prior thereto.

(4) *Residency requirements of applicants.* Applicants must be residents of or hold credentials in the district where they make application and appear before its credentials committee. District councils are required to refrain from approving any applicant for ordination who may have been licensed in another district, until such licensed minister shall have been a member of the

district in which he or she is seeking ordination at least 1 year. Applicants who have not been a member of the district where they apply for ordination for 2 full consecutive years must meet the requirements and secure the endorsement of the officers of the district in which they were previously licensed, as well as the district of their residence.

(5) *Exceptions to requirements.* The General Council Credentials Committee, upon request by a district credentials committee and where exceptional circumstances exist, may waive the requirements for an applicant holding a license to preach for 2 full consecutive years or being a member of the district in which he or she is seeking ordination for at least 1 year.

(6) In order to maintain status, ordained ministers shall be engaged in viable ministry and proclamation of the gospel except for cases of disability, retirement, or other valid circumstances as determined by the general secretary.

INITIAL CREDENTIAL PROCEDURE

(Effective January 1, 2004)

1. An individual makes **written request** to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office to be considered for credentials.
2. The District Secretary/Treasurer's office sends the application and accompanying forms to the individual.
3. The individual returns the completed application and forms with \$100.00 (non-refundable application fee) to the District Secretary/Treasurer.
 - A. TRANSCRIPTS: Applicants are required to have official transcripts forwarded from the schools where they have received their Bible training to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office. Applicants who have not completed a course on "A/G History, Missions & Governance" or its equivalent must do so prior to the interview.
 - B. REFERENCES: References from several individuals will be requested. Provide complete addresses. It is preferred that the ministers used for references be credentialed Assemblies of God ministers. **Do not use a sectional presbyter or district official since they serve on the District Credentials Committee.**
4. Applicant is requested to read *The Contemporary Pastor* by Charles Crabtree, and submit a written synopsis of the book to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office.
5. The District Secretary/Treasurer's office notifies the applicant to proceed in contacting the sectional presbyter to arrange to take the written examination. The examination is taken in the presence of the sectional presbyter. Applicants may bring the General Council and District Council Constitution and Bylaws and their Bible (text only). Section I. Doctrine and Theology can be taken with the use of the Bible (text) only. The Bible (text), the General Council Constitution and Bylaws and the district council constitution and bylaws may be used when taking the remainder of the test. Once Section I is completed and Section II started, you are not to go back to or refer back to Section I. The exam must be completed prior to the interview with the District Credentials Committee (comprised of District Executive Officers and Sectional Presbyters.)
6. The District Secretary/Treasurer's office will schedule the applicant (and spouse) for an interview with the District Credentials Committee.
7. Candidates will receive credentials at the final discretion of the General Council Credentials Committee based upon the recommendation of the District Credentials Committee. The recommendations based upon the completing of basic educational requirements, satisfactory application requirements, a passing grade on the examination, and satisfactory personal interviews.
8. Applicants who do not complete the credentialing process within 1 year forfeit their application fees and must re-complete the entire application process and re-pay all application fees.

CREDENTIAL UPGRADE PROCEDURE

(Revised and Presbytery approved 11/16/1999)

Individuals desiring to upgrade to the next level of credentials, who have met the appropriate requirements are to make **written request** to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office for consideration.

1. Upgrade to License:

- A. Applicant returns completed application and reference forms to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office along with \$100.00 fee (non-refundable).
 - (1) REFERENCES: References from several individuals will be requested. Provide complete addresses. It is preferred that the ministers used for references be credentialed Assemblies of God ministers. **Do not use a sectional presbyter or district official since they serve on the District Credentials Committee.**

- B. After the application has been processed, the applicant will be notified by the District Secretary/Treasurer's office to contact his or her sectional presbyter to arrange for taking the exam. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the sectional presbyter to make the arrangements for taking the exam.** The examination is taken in the presence of the sectional presbyter unless he designates the assistant presbyter to serve as proctor. Applicants may bring the General Council and District Council Constitutions and Bylaws and their Bible (text only). Section I. Doctrine and Theology can be taken with the use of the Bible (text) only. The Bible (text), the General Council Constitution and Bylaws and the district council constitution and bylaws may be used when taking the remainder of the test. Once Section I is completed and Section II started, you are not to go back to or refer back to Section I. The exam must be completed prior to the interview with the District Credentials Committee (comprised of District Executive Officers and Sectional Presbyters.)

- C. An interview with the District Credentials Committee may or may not be required at the discretion of the District Executive Officers. This is usually determined by the applicant having had received credentials previously in this district. The exam must be completed prior to the interview with the District Credentials Committee (comprised of District Executive Officers and Sectional Presbyters.)

- D. Candidates will receive credentials at the final discretion of the General Credentials Committee based upon the recommendation of the District Credentials Committee. The recommendation is based upon the completing of basic educational requirements, satisfactory application requirements, a passing grade on the examination, and satisfactory personal interviews.

- E. Applicants who do not complete the credentialing process within 1 year forfeit their application fees and must re-complete the entire application process and re-pay all application fees.

1. **Upgrade to Ordination:**

- A. Individual makes **written request** to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office to be considered for credentials.
- B. After the District Credentials Committee reviews and approves the candidate's request for consideration, an official application will be mailed to the candidate.
- C. Applicant returns completed application and reference forms to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office along with \$100.00 fee (non-refundable).
 - (1) REFERENCES: References from several individuals will be requested. Provide complete addresses. It is preferred that the ministers used for references be credentialed Assemblies of God ministers. **Do not use a sectional presbyter or district official since they serve on the District Credentials Committee.**
- D. After the application has been processed, the applicant will be notified by the District Secretary/Treasurer's office to contact his or her sectional presbyter to arrange for taking the exam. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the sectional presbyter to make the arrangements for taking the exam.** The examination is taken in the presence of the sectional presbyter unless he designates the assistant presbyter to serve as proctor. Applicants may bring the General Council and District Council Constitutions and Bylaws and their Bible (text only). Section I. Doctrine and Theology can be taken with the use of the Bible (text) only. The Bible (text), the General Council Constitution and Bylaws and the district council constitution and bylaws may be used when taking the remainder of the test. Once Section I is completed and Section II started, you are not to go back to or refer back to Section I. The exam must be completed prior to the interview with the District Credentials Committee (comprised of District Executive Officers and Sectional Presbyters.)
- E. All ordination candidates (and their spouse) are interviewed by the District Credentials Committee in January.
- F. Candidates will receive credentials at the final discretion of the General Credentials Committee based upon the recommendation of the District Credentials Committee. The recommendations based upon the completing of basic educational requirements, satisfactory completion of application requirements, a passing grade on the examination, and satisfactory personal interviews.
- G. Candidates who are recognized by the General Council Credentials Committee are officially ordained during District Council with the laying on of hands by the District Presbytery.
- H. The ordination application process must be completed prior to the January meeting of the District Presbytery.

MINISTER FROM ANOTHER ORGANIZATION PROCEDURE

Ministers from other organizations are required to:

Conform to Assemblies of God criteria for recognition.

Complete such educational courses as may be prescribed by the General Presbytery for ministers transferring from other credentialing bodies. This can be accomplished through correspondence with Global University.

Individual makes a **written** request to be considered for credential.

The District Secretary/Treasurer's office sends the application and accompanying forms to the individual.

The individual returns the completed application and forms with \$100.00 (non-refundable application fee) to the District Secretary/Treasurer.

- A. A letter of recommendation from a neighboring Assemblies of God minister or the sectional presbyter for the applicant's area.
- B. A letter of recommendation from the body with which the ministers is presently or formerly affiliated.
- C. **TRANSCRIPTS:** Applicants are required to have official transcripts forwarded from the schools where they have received their Bible training to the District Secretary/Treasurer's office. Applicants who have not completed a course on "AG History, Missions & Governance" or its equivalent must do so prior to the interview.
- D. **REFERENCES:** References from several individuals will be requested. Provide complete addresses. It is preferred that the ministers use for references be ordained Assemblies of God ministers. Do not use Sectional Presbyters or District Officials since they serve on the District Credential Committee.

The District Secretary/Treasurer's office notifies the applicant to proceed in contacting the sectional presbyter to arrange to take the written examination. The examination is taken in the presence of the sectional presbyter. Applicants may bring the General Council and District Council Constitutions and Bylaws and their Bible (text) only. Section I. Doctrine and Theology can be taken with the use of the Bible (text) only. The Bible (text), the General Council Constitution and Bylaws and the District Council Constitution and Bylaws may be used when taking the remainder of the exam. Once Section I is completed and Section II started, you are not to go back to or refer back to Section I. The exam must be completed prior to the interview with the District Credentials Committee (comprised of District Executive Officers and Sectional Presbyter.)

The District Secretary/Treasurer's office will schedule the applicant (and spouse) for an interview with the District Credentials Committee.

Candidates will receive credentials at the final discretion of the General Council Credentials Committee based upon the recommendation of the District Council Credentials Committee. The recommendation is based upon the completing of basic educational requirements, satisfactory application requirements, a passing grade on the examination and satisfactory personal interview.

It should be noted that ministers who receive Assemblies of God recognition shall relinquish their ministerial credentials with any other organization.

Applicants who do not complete the credentialing process within one year forfeit their application fees and must re-complete the entire application process and re-pay all application fees.

REINSTATEMENT FOR OTHER THAN DISMISSED MINISTER PROCEDURE

When a minister who is a member of our Fellowship is removed from our rolls for any cause, except failure to renew and dismissal, and shall apply for reinstatement, he or she shall not be eligible for reinstatement until at least 6 months have elapsed after his or her name has been stricken from our list of ministers. (General Council Bylaws, Article VII, Section 10, Subsection e.).

1. Individual makes a **written request** through the District Secretary/Treasurer's office for reinstatement consideration.
2. The District Secretary/Treasurer's office will seek a letter of clearance from the district that processed the termination (if necessary). Upon clearance, the District Secretary/Treasurer's office will forward the Reinstatement Application to the applicant.
3. The individual returns the completed application and forms with \$100.00 (non-refundable application fee) to the District Secretary/Treasurer.
4. An examination is required if the applicant for reinstatement has been without credentials for two or more years. No re-examination is necessary for individuals who have been without credentials for less than 2 years.
5. The District Secretary/Treasurer's office will schedule the applicant (and spouse) for an interview with the District Credentials Committee.
6. Applicants will receive credentials at the final discretion of the General Council Credentials Committee based upon the recommendation of the District Credentials Committee. The recommendation is based upon the completing of basic educational requirements, satisfactory completion of application requirements, a passing grade on the examination, and satisfactory personal interviews.
7. Applicants who do not complete the credentialing process within 1 year forfeit their application fees and must re-complete the entire application process and re-pay all application fees.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

New Course Requirements for Ministerial Credentials

CERTIFIED	LICENSED	ORDAINED
CER112 Synoptic Gospels	LIC211 Introduction to Theology	ORD311 Prayer and Worship
CER114 Introduction to Pentecostal Doctrine	LIC212 New Testament Survey	ORD313 Corinthians
CER115 Acts	LIC214 Old Testament Survey	ORD318 Pentateuch
CER117 Prison Epistles	LIC215 Romans	ORD322 Poetic Books
CER121 Introduction to Hermeneutics	LIC223 Introduction to Homiletics	ORD325 Preaching in Context
CER123 Evangelism	LIC245 Eschatology	ORD327 Church Administration, Finance and Law
CER142 AG History, Missions, and Governance	LIC251 Leadership Skills	ORD381 Pastoral Ministry
CER181 Relationships and Ethics in Ministry	LIC261 Theology of Missions	ORD391 Ministry Internship Program (required for credentials)
CER191 Ministry Internship Program (required for credentials)	LIC281 Conflict Resolution	
	LIC291 Ministry Internship Program (required for credentials)	

Some courses are subject to change. The District follows the course requirements as provided by Berean School of the Bible or the educational equivalency thereof. Courses can be completed through the District School of Ministry or can be ordered through the Global University website at: http://www.globaluniversity.edu/student_info/level3/bsb/bsb.cfm.

CREDENTIAL FEE STRUCTURE

Certified Minister	\$100.00	formal application
Upgrade to License to Preach	\$100.00	formal application
License to Preach	\$100.00	formal application
Ordained Minister	\$100.00	formal application
Reinstatement	\$100.00	formal application