

Best Practices for the Ordination Process For Pastors and Ordination Candidates

**Los Angeles District Church of the Nazarene
Board of Ministry**

Because the District Superintendent and the Board of Ministry take ordination seriously, the following policies and recommended practices have been consolidated to assist every ordination candidate and sponsoring pastor to effectively work through the process.

Years of Ministry Service and Licensing

For ordination, candidates must presently be in an assigned ministry.

For ordination, candidates must have held a district license for not less than three consecutive years.

For ordination, candidates must have served a minimum of three years consecutive service in an assigned ministry.

The three years of district licensing must be simultaneous to (in other words, at the same time as) the three years of assigned ministry.

If part time, the number of years is to be extended, adjusted to the level of involvement commensurate to three years full time.

Logging ministerial hours: Pastor and candidate should mutually keep a log of the candidate's ministry activity and hours. Pastors, please check the candidate's log book and inform the Board of Ministry.

Deadlines and Timelines

A local church license must be held for at least one year (from the time of district assembly).

Applications for Ordination and for district license and for district license renewals must be submitted to the LA District Office by **November 30** in order to be interviewed the following the following January, February, or March.

First-time district license interviews, renewal interviews, and preliminary ordination recognition interviews are conducted every January before District Assembly.

Ordination interviews and ordination recognition interviews are conducted every February before District Assembly.

Divorce Barrier

If an ordination candidate has been previously divorced, he or she must submit a personal testimony, including sanctification experience. (For the removal of the divorce barrier, one must be entirely sanctified.) Then he or she must appear before the LA District Board of Ministry, which makes recommendations to the Board of General Superintendents, which approves or disapproves removal of the divorce barrier.

One cannot receive a district license until the divorce barrier is first removed.

General Superintendents meet twice per year, and because of timing, candidates will typically wait until the following year to receive a district license. It is recommended to address this issue as early as possible in the process.

Course Requirements

Go to www.LADTC.org, click “Board of Ministry” for all courses required for ordination to elder or deacon. These are collectively known as the Course of Study.

All classes taught by LA District Training Center, Grace Bible College, or Emmanuel Bible College are those required for ordination.

A minimum of six ordination-approved courses (course of Study) must be completed before receiving a first-time district license.

One of the six courses must be History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene. Our district has instituted this policy because a pastor who is given authority over a local congregation needs to understand the ethos and polity of the organization.

To *renew* a district license, an ordination candidate must successfully complete a minimum of two Course of Studies courses in the previous assembly year. This may be waived if the candidate fails to do this for one year and has good reason. A second time will require very special circumstances, or the candidate will likely lose the district license.

An ordination candidate must complete all ordination requirements *within ten years* from the granting of the first district license.

Transcripts from Previous Education

If you have taken Bible or ministry courses at the college level prior to your district license application, please contact the Board of Ministry Secretary of Credentials & Studies and have all such school transcripts sent from the school directly to the Board of Ministry Secretary.

See the contact name and information immediately under “General Information” on the LADTC Board of Ministry page.

Ministry Candidates’ Weekend

The Ministry Candidates Weekend (MCW) is an intensive one-time event for personal assessment that every ordination candidate and spouse must attend.

Candidates must hold a district license for at least one year before attending the MCW.

Candidates must attend the MCW prior to ordination.

For candidates who do not speak English, every effort will be made to enable them to fulfill this.

Contact the District Office for information and applications.

Background Checks

The District will conduct background checks for all

- New candidates
- Transfer candidates
- Renewal candidates who have not yet been checked
- Recognition of credential candidates

-Ordination candidates who have not yet been checked
Contact the District Office for all required forms and for information to take the online class.

Legal / Immigration Status

Undocumented candidates may be ordained.

Legally, they may not be paid a salary or receive direct financial compensation for their work. The Board of General Superintendents, along with legal counsel, at headquarters has established that

No district or local church should knowingly hire, employ, or compensate any persons who are not authorized to work in the United States. Any refusal to comply with this ruling could result in either civil or criminal offenses, with stiff penalties assessed to local churches and/or districts.

This implicitly includes parsonage, housing allowance, and utilities.

This situation is, and will continue to be, a thorny issue that is difficult for many of us. Because an ordination candidate's local church and the LA District hold legal responsibility, the District Superintendent will follow up as to a candidate's legal status.

District Assembly Ordination Service

All those who hold a district license, whether new or renewed, please attend ordination ceremony at annual District Assembly. You will be publicly recognized.

District license holders who retire will also be recognized at that time. There is no automatic renewal or retired status for district license.

Mentoring

All district licensed ordination candidates must have a mentor for their pastoral/ministry development. The mentor should be an ordained elder and could be your senior pastor, a staff pastor, or a retired pastor or missionary. Ideally he or she should be Nazarene but in special circumstances could be from another holiness denomination. Please confirm your mentor with the district office and provide your mentor's email and telephone contact information.

For candidates who themselves are senior pastors, or who have exceptional cases, the Board of Ministry will work with you to assist you.

The mentor needs to meet with you, encourage and guide you, and be able to offer honest assessments to the District Superintendent or the Board of Ministry of your pastoral calling, character, and progress—along with any areas of concern and how to address them.

It is also requested that your mentor meet with, or at least be in communication with, your spouse as well because a spouse is a vital part of one's pastoral ministry.

Note also: Each Board of Ministry member is assigned as an “**Advisor**” to ordination candidates in order to oversee three simple things:

- 1) You're taking at least two classes per year.
- 2) You turn in your licensing paperwork each November.
- 3) The board member contacts and ascertains that things are in order with your mentor.

General Superintendent's Final Approval

Note that the Board of Ministry *recommends* a candidate's ordination to the next district assembly. Each candidate's ordination is finalized only after the presiding General Superintendent's final approval.

Note to Pastors

Lifelong Learning:

All pastors are expected to do lifelong learning (continuing education) of twenty credit hours per year. This can be done through conferences, classes, or reading.

Contact the District Office, or see the LADTC.org Board of Ministry page for "Lifelong Learning Description & FAQs" and for "Recognition of Lifelong Learning Hours."

Pastors who do not fulfill lifelong learning hours will not be directly penalized, but their nonparticipation will be noted on their pastoral record and made available to any church or district to which they may transfer.

Absence from assigned ministry:

If you are not in an assigned ministry (part time or full time, paid or volunteer) for four consecutive years, you will be asked to return your ordination credentials.

God bless you!

All those who are district licensed or ordained, you are important. The church rises or falls by your leadership. God bless and empower you.