

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMITTANCE OF CHURCHES
INTO THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MICHIGAN**

1. Any local church interested in admission to membership in the American Baptist Churches of Michigan shall communicate its interest in a formal letter addressed the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan. This letter should include the following information:
 - a. Reason(s) for seeking admission;
 - b. A statement that this interest comes as a result of formal action as a body or through appropriate boards, according to custom of the local church;
 - c. A pledge of intended participation in the life of the area or association ministry and the larger region ministry, both personally and financially, should the church unite with the American Baptist Churches of Michigan.

2. The Executive Minister, or his/her designate, upon receipt of the letter, shall forward a copy of the letter to the appropriate area or association board and arrange a meeting of area/association board representatives with the pastor and appropriate representatives of the local church seeking affiliation, for the purpose of sharing mutual information.

3. If, following this meeting, the local church wishes to proceed toward admittance into the American Baptist Churches of Michigan, the "Application for Membership" should be completed and submitted to the Executive Minister, a copy of which shall be sent to the chairperson of the area/association.

4. Upon receipt of the "Application for Membership," the Executive Minister or his/her designate, shall initiate the following:
 - a. Work with the area/association chairperson and the local church to determine an appropriate sponsoring church from the area/association who will work with the local church for a period of at least one year providing orientation and sharing of information, services and ministries. The sponsoring church will submit reports periodically to the office of the Executive Minister and to the area/association chairperson.
 - b. Arrange for informational meetings with local church representatives in order to share current ministry programs and resources offered by the area/association, the region and the denomination. Reports from these meetings should be submitted to the chair of the area/association and the region Executive Minister.
 - c. A time line will be established for completion of the informational meetings and submission of formal recommendation to the area/association board, assuming the board receives the local congregation, then the formal recommendation to the region board.
 - d. Simultaneous with the above process, the pastor of the local church shall consult with the chairperson of the region Commission on Ordination and Standing, to begin the process of having his/her ordination recognized by the American Baptist Churches of Michigan or to meet the standards for ordination.

5. The area or association board shall review the application of the congregation seeking affiliation, the reports received from the sponsoring church, and any other appropriate information, on or about the date indicated on the previously approved time line. The area/association board will then take action on the congregation seeking affiliation. If the area/association board receives the local congregation seeking affiliation, they shall recommend to the region board the admission of said congregation.

6. Upon formal approval by the region board of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan, the local church shall be received into full membership and an appropriate ceremony of recognition shall take place: (1) at a special service of the local congregation; (2) at an area/association meeting; and (3) at the Annual Gathering of the region.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MICHIGAN**

4578 S. HAGADORN ROAD
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN 48823

Date: _____

We, the pastor and members of the _____
hereby submit our application for membership in the American Baptist Churches, USA, through the American Baptist Churches of Michigan.

The programs and policies of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan have been fully explained to us and we understand the aims and objectives.

If accepted into membership, we covenant together to proportionate giving in support of the American Baptist Basic Mission Budget, and we pledge \$ _____ in support. We commit to regular and faithful giving in the future.

We further covenant to participate in denominational programs, events and meetings and to serve on ministry groups as may be requested, and on organizations affiliated with the American Baptist Churches.

We have a membership of _____
Our average Sunday worship attendance is _____
We have an annual budget of \$ _____

We are also affiliated or aligned with: _____

CHURCH INFORMATION

Name: _____
Address: _____ ZIP _____
Phone: _____
FAX: _____
Email: _____ Website: _____
Date church was established or incorporated: _____

PASTOR INFORMATION

Name: _____
Home address _____ ZIP _____
Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Email: _____
Date pastor began serving church: _____

CHURCH CLERK INFORMATION

Name: _____
Home address _____ ZIP _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Done by order of the church this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Pastor: _____
Moderator or Council Chair: _____
Church Clerk: _____

**CHECKLIST FOR ADMITTING A CHURCH INTO THE
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MICHIGAN**

NAME OF CHURCH: _____

CHURCH PASTOR: _____

DATE CHURCH BEGAN THE AFFILIATING PROCESS: _____

- _____ LETTER OF INTEREST SENT BY LOCAL CHURCH TO:
 - AREA/ASSOCIATION CHAIRPERSON
 - REGION EXECUTIVE MINISTER

- _____ MEETING OF AREA/ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES WITH PASTOR AND APPROPRIATE CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES FOR SHARING OF INFORMATION

- _____ APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP COMPLETED BY CHURCH AND SUBMITTED TO:
 - AREA/ASSOCIATION CHAIRPERSON
 - REGION EXECUTIVE MINISTER

- _____ ESTABLISH A PARTNER RELATIONSHIP WITH A SPONSORING CHURCH FOR ONE YEAR

- _____ ARRANGE FOR INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS WITH CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES

- _____ ESTABLISH A TIMELINE FOR MEMBERSHIP TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO:
 - THE CHURCH
 - THE AREA/ASSOCIATION CHAIRPERSON
 - THE REGION EXECUTIVE MINISTER

- _____ PASTOR OF CHURCH BEGINS THE PROCESS OF SEEKING RECOGNITION OF ORDINATION FROM REGION COMMISSION ON ORDINATION AND STANDING

- _____ UPON COMPLETION OF REQUIREMENTS THE AREA/ASSOCIATION CHAIRPERSON AND/OR BOARD WILL SUBMIT A RECOMMENDATION FOR MEMBERSHIP TO:
 - THE REGION EXECUTIVE MINISTER
 - THE REGION BOARD

- _____ THE REGION BOARD ACCEPTS THE CHURCH INTO MEMBERSHIP

- _____ AN APPROPRIATE RECOGNITION OF MEMBERSHIP SHALL TAKE PLACE:
 - AT A SERVICE OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION
 - AT THE AREA/ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING
 - AT THE ANNUAL GATHERING OF THE REGION

ADMITTANCE OF CHURCHES INTO THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MICHIGAN

THE ROLE OF THE SPONSORING CHURCH

When a local church seeks to affiliate with the American Baptist Churches, USA, through the American Baptist Churches of Michigan, the point of entry is through the region area/association through which the church makes application for membership. The area/association chairperson and/or board will, upon receipt of “application for membership,” determine an appropriate sponsoring church from the area/association who will work with the local church for a period of at least one year.

Suggested events and activities during the year of sponsorship, may include:

1. Developing a collegial relationship between the pastors of both churches that could include the sharing of resources as well as information and invitation to participate in programs and events sponsored by the area/association, region or denomination, especially directed toward the resourcing and equipping of pastors.
2. Engaging in 2-3 programs and/or events that would bring the two congregations together for sharing and fellowship. For example: a potluck or church picnic, a joint worship experience, a pulpit exchange or exchange of choirs or music groups, a combined youth event, a leader training event, etc.
3. Encouraging the church seeking affiliation to be aware of and participate in programs and events of the area/association and the region.
4. Reporting to the chairperson of the area/association on the progress of the church seeking affiliation.
5. Sharing with the region staff, especially the region Executive Minister, any questions and/or concerns that might arise and which could help the church seeking affiliation to become more informed and involved in region ministries.