

**THE ORDINATION COUNCIL
SUGGESTED PROCEDURE
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MICHIGAN**

1. CONVENING OF THE ORDAINING COUNCIL

The region Executive Minister or his/her appointed representative shall convene the council. If a region staff representative is not present, the pastor of the ordaining church or his/her designee shall convene the council.

2. INVOCATION

3. ELECTION OF A MODERATOR AND SECRETARY

The Moderator and Secretary shall be elected from among the delegates.

4. ROLL CALL OF AREA/ASSOCIATION CHURCHES AND CLERGY

Delegates shall include the pastor and two laypersons from each member church in the area/association.

a. RECOGNITION OF ABCMI NON-AREA/ASSOCIATION CHURCHES AND CLERGY

Representatives from other region churches may be seated with or without vote at the discretion of the Council.

b. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS AND GUESTS

Guests may be seated and may participate with voice but without vote, at the discretion of the council.

5. ESTABLISHING THE COUNCIL – DETERMINING IF A QUORUM IS PRESENT

- a. A quorum shall consist of representatives from at least six (6) Area/Association churches. If representatives from at least six are not present, representatives from other region churches (outside the area/association) may be seated and included in the quorum count if the established council agrees.
- b. If a “good faith effort” has been made to gain a quorum of six churches (by following the document “Establishing an Ordination Council”), and a quorum cannot be established, the council may proceed, noting however, that a quorum was not present.

6. STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE AND TASK OF THE ORDAINING COUNCIL

7. READING OF STATEMENTS

Read by the ordaining church clerk, the ordaining church pastor, or the council secretary.

- a. Documentation of the candidate’s preordination license if such was granted.
- b. Letter from the ordaining church requesting the ordination council.
- c. Recommendation from the Commission on Ordination and Standing

8. PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF THE CANDIDATE

- a. Introduction of candidate including relevant personal and professional background.
- b. Presentation of the ordination paper by the candidate.
It is suggested that the candidate not read the entire paper at once, rather that discussion should proceed through each section of the paper.
- c. Examination of the candidate.
The moderator shall have the responsibility to ensure that the council confines itself to the facts concerning the candidate's experience, attitudes and viewpoints. The moderator shall have the right to declare out of order any

questions or comments which are not relevant to this task.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. Dismissal of candidate and non-delegates.
- b. Discussion of candidate's eligibility for ordination.
- c. The Council may recommend that the local church:
 1. Proceed to ordain the candidate
 2. Postpone action pending clarification of some stipulated contingency
 3. Not ordain the candidate
- d. A vote shall be taken, with each delegate casting his/her vote and briefly stating the reason, if he/she chooses. A **two-thirds vote** of those present is suggested for approving a recommendation for ordination to the candidate's church.

10. RECALLING THE CANDIDATE AND NON-DELEGATES INFORMING THE CANDIDATE OF THE DECISION

11. READING AND APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL **The Secretary shall file records of the Ordaining Council's action with:**

- a. The ordaining church**
- b. The candidate**
- c. The Area/Association**
- d. The Commission on Ordination and Standing**
- e. The Executive Minister of the ABCMI**

12. DISSOLVING THE COUNCIL AND CLOSING PRAYER

PURPOSE AND TASK OF THE ORDINATION COUNCIL

Ordination is the act of the Church of Jesus Christ by which it delegates to a qualified person who has responded to the call of God, a wide range of ministerial functions and responsibilities. Among American Baptist Churches, the service of ordination is conducted by a local church following consultation with congregations of like faith and order.

The most important prerequisite for ordination, the call by God, does not yield itself to particular standards which a denomination or congregation might establish. Such standards and prerequisites, especially those having to do with educational preparation and the proposed type of service as an ordained minister, are nevertheless important. In these areas it is quite appropriate that the local and wider church to establish and maintain standards for ordination.

The task of the ordination council is to determine the candidate's fitness for ordination. The council moderator shall have the responsibility to ensure that the council confines itself to ascertaining the facts concerning the candidate's experience, ability, attitudes and beliefs. The moderator shall have the right to declare out of order any questions or comments which are not relevant to this task.

The purpose of the ordaining council is to ascertain the views of the candidate, not to change them.