

GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION OF ORDINATION

Churches and agencies within the American Baptist Churches of Rochester Genesee Region may wish to call a person who has been previously ordained and have that person's ordination recognized. Recognition does not replace the original ordination, rather it allows candidates who are serving as professional clergy in the Rochester/Genesee Region to have a ministerial standing in the American Baptist Churches USA. While respecting and valuing the ordination process of other denominations, it is appropriate that the ABCRGR expects certain criteria to be met by any person who is seeking an American Baptist ordination. Thus the Ordination Review Committee and the delegates of the region have approved the following guidelines. **NOTE:** A candidate who holds a local church ordination and wishes to be ordained by the American Baptist Churches of Rochester Genesee Region is ineligible for the recognition process and must follow the "**Guidelines for Ordination in ABC Rochester Genesee Region.**"

Guidelines for Recognition of Ordination:

- The candidate must be a member in good standing of a church within the Region for at least one year before recognition can be granted.
- Must provide copy of transcript from an ATS accredited seminary with a M.Div. or equivalent. [See Addendum 1 – Affirmation of Sponsorship]
- Must provide a copy of the original ordination document
- Must document participation in a comparable examination process to the ABCRGR Permanent Council where the candidate is evaluated by credentialed (ATS equivalent) ordained clergy and laity along the following criteria:
 - Possession of gifts and attitudes that qualify the candidate for ministry
 - A basic knowledge of the Bible, understanding of the gospel, and ability to articulate and defend their theological understandings
 - An understanding of church history, practice and beliefs
 - A stance of openness before God, one's community, and the world

Must provide a letter of good ministerial standing from the ordaining body **NOTE:** The ORC is empowered to waive the requirement of a letter of good ministerial standing from the ordaining body when a candidate's:

- Ordination has been withdrawn solely due to his/her sexual orientation or gender identity

- Ordination has been withdrawn solely due to a commitment to welcome and affirm all individuals without regard to their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Ordination has been withdrawn when the ORC determines that an ordination was done in good faith, under the existing judicatory guidelines of the region (or denomination) and the ORC has not identified integrity concerns or violations of the principles consistent with the ABCRGR Code of Ethics and has a clean Criminal Background report.
- Documentation of the Ordination cannot be substantiated due to extraordinary circumstances (i.e. refugee status, catastrophic event that destroyed files, etc.)

The waiver of the requirement of a letter of good standing will also apply to candidates who have had their ABC ordinations withdrawn for the above noted reasons. (Voted in February 8, 2009)

- Candidates must sign Code of Ethics and Background Check
- Authorization at onset of the process
 - An approved seminary course in American Baptist polity and history or its equivalent.
 - Participation in either the ABCUSA Orientation to ABC life
 - (*Note that this is **not** provided on an annual basis), attending a region gathering, or an ABC Biennial Mission Summit.
 - Prepare and submit to the Executive Minister within 30 days of participation a post experience reflection paper (no more than 5 pages)
- Submission of signed the Background Check Authorization and the ABCRGR Code of Ethics at onset of the process
- A written statement of faith that describes personal experience, call to ministry, type of ministry, knowledge of ABCUSA, and reasons for entering the ministry of the ABCUSA
- One unit of Clinical Pastoral Education or equivalent is recommended
- Participation in a comprehensive career and candidacy assessment program at an ABCRGR approved Center for Ministry is required
- Candidates for recognition have a two-year period to complete the process providing that the candidate remains in active communication with mentor and Executive Minister during this time.

Format of statement of faith

- The statement of faith should be approximately 4-6 double-spaced **typed** pages
- *The lines should be numbered
- An 11 or 12-point font (Arial or Times New Roman) should be used
- The paper may be printed double-sided
- Hard copies (not e-mailed or faxed) should be sent to the members of the ORC at least three weeks before a scheduled review session

***Paper format** –To number lines in MS Word – go to Page Layout – Page Setup – Line Numbers - Continuous

The Recognition Review

The Ordination of Review Committee of the Region shall have the final responsibility for assessing the calling and readiness of the candidate for ordination

The ORC shall evaluate the candidate along the following criteria:

- Possession of gifts and attitudes that qualify the candidate for ministry
- A basic knowledge of the Bible, understanding of the gospel, and ability to articulate and defend the theological assertions in the paper
- A stance of openness before God, one's community, and the world
- An understanding of Baptist history, polity and beliefs

Addendum 1

AFFIRMATION OF SPONSORSHIP

ABCR/GR Sponsoring Church _____

Candidate's Name

Date of Local Church Membership _____

Note: The candidate must be a member in good standing of a church which is in good standing within the Region for a period of at least one year before a Permanent Council for Recognition of Ordination can be held.

Date of local church recommendation for recognition of ordination _____

As an authorized representative of the church my signature affirms that the church will comply with the noted requirements and expectations of an ABC R/GR church sponsoring a candidate for recognition of ordination.

Signature _____ Title

Date

THE ORIGINAL SIGNED AFFIRMATION MUST BE RETURNED TO

**The Reverend Alan Newton, Executive Minister
ABCRGR
1101 Clover Street
Rochester, NY 14610**