

First Things First: Call

The Ministerium of the Evangelical Covenant Church maintains high standards for its ministerial credentials, recognizing that those who are called and gifted to serve in vocational ministry are trusted with sacred responsibilities. We strongly believe that call to such ministry is discerned not only individually, but corporately. Candidates for credentialing in the Covenant must demonstrate a multi-voiced call, receiving the affirmation of the local church, the regional conference, and the denomination.

In order to seek permanent credentialing in the Covenant, you must **be called to ministry, be affirmed by the church or ministry setting, and participate in the Covenant Pension Plan or Ministers' 403(b) plan** (if serving a Covenant church).

“Permanent” credentials refer to those which are bestowed by laying on of hands at the Annual Meeting of the denomination on candidates who have been carefully examined in matters of faith, theology, and call.

The permanent credentials in the Covenant are **Ordination to Word and Sacrament (OWSa), Ordination to Word and Service (OWSe), Commissioning, and Consecrated Missionary**.

Each credential is appropriate to specific callings within the structure of a church or other ministry setting. The Covenant accepts Transfer of Ordination candidates for both ordinations offered.

ORDAINED TO WORD AND SACRAMENT candidates usually feel called to a lead or solo pastor role in a church but may serve in a variety of roles, including chaplaincy and staff positions.

ORDAINED TO WORD AND SERVICE candidates are called to a staff ministry position in an area of specialization (i.e., youth, children, camping, administration, music, etc.) and contribute to the whole life of the church.

TRANSFER OF ORDINATION candidates determine which category of ordination best fits their call and circumstances.

COMMISSIONING candidates are also called to staff ministry in an area of specialization, but differ in their educational background from OWSe candidates.

CONSECRATED MISSIONARY candidates are called to long-term service as global personnel and should contact Serve Globally directly to discuss their credentialing requirements and process.

Ordered Ministry
of the Covenant



For more information...

Ordered Ministry of the Covenant

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Call: 773-583-3211

Email: ministry@covchurch.org

Web: covchurch.org/vocational-ministry

A Brief Guide to Permanent Credentials



The Evangelical Covenant Church

1. Education

The Foundation for Credentialing Success

ORDINATION TO WORD AND SACRAMENT

Hold a master of divinity degree (or equivalent) from an accredited theological seminary

ORDINATION TO WORD AND SERVICE

(1) Hold a theological master's degree (48 semester hrs)

OR Hold a secular master's degree plus 24 semester hours of theological study from an accredited seminary. Coursework must include Overview of New Testament, Overview of Old Testament, Systematic Theology, and Church History.

(2) Demonstrate 12 semester hours in an area of specialization such as children, youth, adult, discipleship, camping, administration/ leadership, music/worship, etc.

TRANSFER OF ORDINATION

Transfer candidates should first determine which ordination they would like to pursue, and follow the appropriate educational requirements.

COMMISSIONING

(1) Hold a bachelor's degree

(2) Take four 3-credit graduate courses in theology at an accredited seminary: Overview of New Testament, Overview of Old Testament, Systematic Theology, and Church History.

(3) Demonstrate 12 semester hours in an area of specialization such as children, youth, adult, discipleship, camping, administration/ leadership, music/worship, etc.



2. Covenant Orientation

For candidates who have not completed at least one year at North Park Theological Seminary or Centro Hispano de Estudios Teológicos (CHET), enrollment in Covenant Orientation is mandatory. This program is designed for completion in two years (though candidates may take up to six years) and includes:

- Covenant life experiences
- Orientation adviser relationship

Candidates must complete the Covenant Theology and Vocational Excellence courses prior to being invited into the finalization process

3. Practice Makes Perfect

COMMISSIONING

Complete five years of ministry experience. (May be counted while completing academic requirements and serving in full-time ministry.)

OWSA & OWSE

Complete two years of post-degree ministry experience.

TRANSFER

Complete two years of experience in a Covenant church or approved ministry (concurrent with completing Covenant Orientation).

4. Final Year Details

All permanent credential candidates must notify the Ordered Ministry of their desired completion date at least one year in advance.

The Ordered Ministry will send a letter of invitation to all potential candidates one year prior to finalization, inviting them to enter that year's process or postpone to a later date.

By August 15 (in the fall prior to finalization) candidates must submit the following items to the conference office:

- Application for appropriate credential
- Final comprehensive paper
- Evaluation by local church leadership
- Example of proclamation

OWSa, OWSe, and Commissioning candidates must initiate a two-year mentoring relationship with a seasoned colleague in ministry, to begin one year prior to finalization, and to continue through their first year in ministry post-finalization. This relationship serves to coach the candidate through the process, reflect with the candidate on the meaning of the process, discuss ways to develop patterns of self-care and accountability, and explore continuing educational opportunities to study together.

5. The Interview Process

All permanent credential candidates must complete:

1. A favorable interview with the Conference Committee on Ministerial Standing in the fall prior to finalization.
2. A favorable interview with the Board of the Ordered Ministry at the Midwinter Conference prior to finalization.
3. Receive approval at the conference annual meeting in the spring prior to finalization.
4. Receive the final recommendation of the Covenant Ministerium and the Covenant Annual Meeting in June.

6. Finishing Well

The Service of Ordination, Commissioning, and Consecration at the Covenant Annual Meeting in June is a meaningful end to the process of being permanently credentialed in the Covenant Church. It is here that ministry orders are officially bestowed, and participation is required.

