

Ministerium FAQ

WHAT IS THE COVENANT MINISTERIUM?

The Covenant Ministerium is the collegium or community of all Covenant clergy and consecrated missionaries.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M A MEMBER?

If you hold any kind of Covenant ministerial credential (including student licenses and bi-vocational licenses) or are a consecrated Covenant missionary you are automatically a member of the Covenant Ministerium.

WHAT ARE MY MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS?

The constitution of the Covenant Ministerium states that you are required to maintain good standing in a regional ministerial association. These are associations organized on the conference level. Among other things they are responsible for retreats, clusters/districts, and continuing education opportunities.

Maintaining good standing also involves paying annual dues. The treasurers of the conference associations collect the dues. The amount is set by the conference ministerial association so they are different in each conference. However, \$75 of that amount is forwarded by the conference association treasurer to the treasurer of the Covenant Ministerium.

ARE THESE DUES MANDATORY OR "SUGGESTED"?

The dues are mandatory. Failure to pay dues can eventually result in the loss or suspension of ministerial credentials.

DOES EVERYONE HAVE TO PAY DUES?

No. Those who are on "inactive" status, or licensed as a theological student, or who have retired are exempt from paying dues.

IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY TO GET AN EXEMPTION?

Yes. If you are experiencing financial difficulty you can write to the president of the Covenant Ministerium. S/he has been authorized by the executive committee to grant exemptions. These exemptions apply for all your dues (the portion that goes to the conference association and the portion that goes to the Covenant Ministerium).

WHAT ABOUT MISSIONARIES & MILITARY CHAPLAINS?

Consecrated missionaries and chaplains are full members of the Ministerium and like their colleagues pay dues in order to maintain standing. However, the Rules for the Ordered Ministry state that "Military chaplains and consecrated missionaries shall maintain their standing through the office of the executive minister of the ordered ministry..." (Art. XI. Sec. 11.2.c) We are currently interpreting this to mean that missionaries and chaplains will pay only the \$75 portion of the dues that goes toward the Ministerium and they pay that directly to "The Covenant Ministerium" c/o the Department of the Ordered Ministry, 8303 W. Higgins, Chicago, IL 60631 USA.

WHEN ARE DUES DUE?

Different conference associations have different ways of collecting dues. Generally speaking, however, dues are expected to be paid by May 1st of each year. For example, dues for the May 1, 2012 - April 30, 2013 fiscal year are due on May 1, 2012.

WHAT IF I MOVE TO A DIFFERENT CONFERENCE, WHICH ONE DO I PAY?

Pay dues to the conference ministerial association to which you belong on April 1. For example, if you are serving a church in Illinois on April 1, 2012 but move to a church in California on April 15, 2013, you would still pay your dues for the 2012-2013 year to the Central Conference Ministerial Association (even though you were not technically residing there on the first day of the fiscal year). But in the following year you would pay to the Pacific Southwest Conference association.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE DUES MONEY?

Each year the annual meeting of the Covenant Ministerium is held just prior to the annual meeting of the ECC. One thing that happens at that meeting is the adoption of a budget. If you missed the annual meeting, you can still see the budget, along with the minutes of the meeting, in the Covenant Yearbook for this year.

DO I HAVE TO GO TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERIUM OR SEND A LETTER IF I DON'T GO?

No one is keeping attendance. But it is one of several ways that we carry out our common business, worship together, and participate in continuing education that relates not just to the needs of the individual but the group as a whole. A greeting from those who must be absent may be sent to the secretary or president of the Ministerium as an optional courtesy.

DOES THE MINISTERIUM HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PENSION AND HEALTH INSURANCE?

No, not directly. The Covenant pension plan and the Covenant insurance program are both overseen by the Covenant Benefit Board. See <http://www.covchurch.org/benefits/pension/> for more info.

WHAT IS THE CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT?

Several years ago the Ministerium created a continuing education requirement for its members in an attempt to encourage ongoing professional development. Ministers and missionaries are expected to have four vocational growth experiences per year and to report those experiences on an annual form that goes to the Department of the Ordered Ministry. This requirement was recently reviewed and a new reporting tool was implemented in 2012.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MINISTERIUM, THE BOARD OF THE ORDERED MINISTRY, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ORDERED MINISTRY?

See the chart below for clarification.

	The Covenant Ministerium	The Board of the Ordered Ministry	The Department of the Ordered Ministry
Who	All persons holding ministerial credentials issued by the ECC – (active, inactive, and retired).	20 clergy members, two lay members.	Currently six full-time staff members, including the executive minister of the ordered ministry, and the director of staff ministry.
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers and acts on credentials for Covenant ministers and missionaries, as recommended by the Board of the Ordered Ministry. • “Seeks to raise the spiritual, ethical, and professional standards” of ministers and missionaries. • Strengthens the “bonds of fellowship” – connectivity – amongst our members. • Assists members in times of need. • Assists in the recruitment and selection of candidates for vocational ministry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews and recommends candidates for ministerial credentials. • Investigates and considers matters related to ministerial discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides staff support for the Board of the Ordered Ministry. • Provides staff support for the Covenant Ministerium and its objectives. • Functions as a liaison to the Covenant administrative structure.
Leadership	<p>Officers are elected by the annual meeting of the Covenant Ministerium. The rest of the executive committee is made up of the presidents of the conference ministerial associations. Ex-officio members of the executive committee include the executive minister of the ordered ministry, the dean/president of North Park Seminary, and the chair of the Board of the Ordered Ministry, a clergy representative from each of the approved ethnic associations, the president of the ECC.</p> <p>The current president of the Covenant Ministerium is Timothy B. Johnson.</p>	<p>Members are elected by the annual meeting of the ECC. Ex-officio members are the executive minister of the ordered ministry, the president of North Park Seminary, the president of the Covenant Ministerium, the president of the ECC, the president of CHET, a liaison appointed from the executive board of the ECC.</p> <p>The current chair of the Board of the Ordered Ministry is Tom Ek.</p>	<p>The department is headed by the executive minister of the ordered ministry, who is called by the annual meeting of the ECC. A candidate for the executive minister of the ordered ministry is nominated by the Board of the Ordered Ministry, with the concurrence of the executive committee and annual meeting of the Ministerium.</p> <p>The current executive minister of the ordered ministry is Mark Novak.</p>
Conference-level parallel	Conference Ministerial Association	Conference Committee on Ministerial standing (COMS) which does preliminary credentialing interviews and some care and discipline.	Conference superintendent works with the executive minister of the ordered ministry to handle problems.