

TITLE: Licensing and Ordination Policy

APPROVED DATE: February 27, 2023

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 27, 2023

REVIEW DATE: February 27, 2023

**Policy:**

This policy and procedure is established in order to properly license or ordain persons for the local ministry. The following procedures will be used in order to ensure the proper vetting, training, and experience is obtained when licensing or ordaining persons for the ministry.

**Licensing**

Licensing is a function of a local church and is for a specific ministry setting and calling. The person desiring licensing will need to meet the following requirements and submittals. All licenses will be reviewed and renewed on an annual basis.

**Requirements:**

1. Must be at least 18 years of age
2. Must be a high school graduate, or equivalent diploma
3. Have at least one (1) year of ministry experience with Highland Avenue Fellowship Church (i.e. teaching a Sunday school class or Bible study, or working with a mentor in a ministry on a regular basis)
4. Must be a current member of the Highland Avenue Fellowship Church staff or recognized volunteer
5. Applicant may be subject to a psychiatric evaluation as required by the Executive Board
6. Must agree with the core values as defined in the Church's approved Bylaws

**Procedure:**

1. Submit a 1 page statement to the Pastor highlighting their acceptance of the Lord and their call to ministry

2. Submit a summary to the Pastor of the core values of Highland Avenue Fellowship church and their understanding of each
3. The Pastor will review the submittals and determine the following:
  - a. Is there a need for the ministry that the person is asking to conduct
  - b. Does the church have the resources to support the ministry
  - c. Does the person submitting the request have a sincere desire to serve the Lord and the capacity to lead the ministry
4. If, after review, the Pastor feels that there is a need for the mission or ministry, the church does have the resources, and the person has the capacity to lead the ministry, the Pastor will submit the request along with a recommendation to the Executive board for their review
5. The Executive Board will make the final determination on the ministry and the decision on licensing by formal vote with a simple majority required for approval

## **Ordination**

The ordination process begins and ends with a leader called by God to the Gospel ministry. It also involves the recognition of this call by the local church where the leader is serving. The senior pastor will be automatically ordained from the date of hire until date of separation

### **Requirements:**

1. Only associate pastors of Highland Avenue Fellowship Church are eligible to seek ordination
2. Demonstrate proficient knowledge of the Bible and the ability to apply Biblical principles to current culture
3. At least two (2) years of college or formal Bible training preferred but not required
4. At least two (2) professional references from colleagues, former professors, teachers or others who have known the applicant's educational and work background
5. Possess a deep desire for continuous personal growth; regularly creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities through continuing education (CEU's)
6. Must agree with the core values as defined in Highland Avenue Fellowship Church's approved Bylaws
7. If the applicant requesting ordination has a current or previous ordination from a recognized Christian denomination that shares Highland Avenue Fellowship Church's values, the Executive Board may waive the procedure process and approve the ordination application based on reciprocity
8. Applicant may be subject to a psychiatric evaluation as required by the Executive Board

**Procedure:**

1. Applicant will complete the required application (Attachment I) and submit it to the Executive Board for review
2. The Executive Board may request a formal interview with the applicant
3. After the review and interview process is completed the Executive Board may take one of the following steps:
  - a. Approve the ordination request, or;
  - b. Deny the application request
  - c. If the application is denied the Executive Board will provide a written response identifying the reasons for the denial and recommended actions the applicant can take to improve their opportunity for approval on future submittals

**ATTACHMENT I**

**Highland Avenue Fellowship Church Ordination Application**

Highland Avenue Fellowship Church has the authority and responsibility to ordain pastors for ministry. This application is required to provide the Executive Board with the information necessary to make the determination on whether the applicant is qualified, and has the capacity for ordination. In order for the application to be accepted for review it must be filled out completely to including references and their contact information:

Ministry or Ordination Application Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously applied for examination for local church commissioning to pastoral ministry (traditional licensure) or ordination with Highland Avenue Fellowship Church?

Yes or No (If Yes Circle One: Commissioning or Ordination)    Date \_\_\_\_\_

**CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE:**

1. How long have you been a Christian?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Give your personal testimony?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why is your belief in Jesus so strategic to everything you do (in your personal life, church, your world, our Fellowship)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Briefly explain your personal and family habit in devotional bible study and prayer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CHURCH AFFILIATION RECORD:**

Please provide the name, location and dates of the church families you have primarily been connected to: 4 CHURCH MEMBER (Y/N) PLACE DATES

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FAMILY LIFE:**

1. Single \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_
2. If Married: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you or your wife ever been divorced? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have your wife provide her personal testimony summary.

---

---

---

---

---

---

How supportive of your ministry is your wife? (check one)

- \_\_\_ Very supportive - encourages me to persevere when I'm discouraged
- \_\_\_ Supportive – helps when I ask. – Accepting – allows me to minister without hindering me
- \_\_\_ Reluctant – occasionally discourages me to leave the ministry

To what extent is your spouse involved in your ministry? (check one)

- \_\_\_ Almost always leads some area of ministry
- \_\_\_ Occasionally leads a ministry
- \_\_\_ Almost always participates in some ministry
- \_\_\_ Sometimes participates in a ministry
- \_\_\_ Seldom participates in ministry but keeps the home fires burning
- \_\_\_ Never participates in ministry

5. Briefly describe your strategy for maintaining a strong marriage

---

---

---

---

6. List children, if any: NAME AGE IF SAVED AT WHAT AGE

---

---

---

---

---

---

7. Are there any family relationships that are broken? If so, explain and share what steps you have taken to restore that relationship.

---

---

---

---

---

**CALL TO CHRISTIAN MINISTRY:**

1. Explain your call to Christian ministry.

---

---

---

---

2. What gifts has God given you for Christian ministry?

---

---

---

---

3. Why are you seeking Ordination?

---

---

---

---

---

**EDUCATIONAL:**

1. What educational preparation have you had? SCHOOL DEGREE MAJOR DATE

---

---

---

---

---

2. Do you plan to take additional education work?

---

---

---

**ETHICAL ISSUES:**

1. Explain your strategy for maintaining integrity in ministry:

---

---

2. How would you describe your financial strategy? Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? (Yes or No)

---

---

3. In case of difficulties in your ministry, would you be willing to consult with the Executive Board?

---

---

4. What are your ideas as to how a minister should conduct himself toward women in and out of the church?

---

---

5. What is your personal view of the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, marijuana and narcotics?

---

---

6. Do you have any arrest record or felony convictions? (Yes or No)

7. Have you provided the local church with a criminal background and child abuse clearances? (Yes or No)

8. Have you ever been involved in a homosexual lifestyle? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your personal point of view on such a lifestyle and same sex marriage?

---

---

10. Has an employer ever subjected you to investigation, disciplinary action, suspended, terminated or asked you to leave a job or volunteer position on the grounds of misconduct of any nature, unlawful sexual behavior or violation of an employer's sexual misconduct or harassment policy? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you ever been accused of any of these things in a non-employment setting? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Any comments?

---

---

12. If you answer "yes" to any of the questions in the following section, please attach a separate

sheet indicating the nature of the suit, offense, date, court and disposition or other appropriate explanation.

a. Have you ever been involved in or convicted of child abuse? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b. Have you ever entered a plea of guilty, a plea of “no-contest” or has any court ever deferred further proceedings without entering a finding of guilty and placed you on a probation or in a public service or education program for any crime other than a minor traffic offense? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ or No \_\_\_\_\_

13. Background Clearances – Provide a State Child Abuse History Certification, State Criminal Background Check Certification. If you have not lived in the state you are seeking ordination in for at least 10 years provide an FBI Criminal Background Clearance Certification By signing below I give Highland Avenue Fellowship Church permission to obtain background check information and review records of criminal history which I may have, and to obtain and review records I may have that indicate a history of abuse, neglect, threatened harm, or other maltreatment 8 against children and/or adults. I understand that this information will only be used for consideration of a potential hire for a position at this local church.

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCES:**

Provide references from three people: (1) A Pastor who knows you well and whom you respect (2) A Friend who knows you well and whom you respect (3) A Non-Believer who knows you well and whom you respect \*Reference Form Provided on next page.



**Reference Form for Pastoral Ordination (Pastor/Executive)**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Applicants Name) is applying for Pastoral Ordination with Highland Avenue Fellowship Church, Melbourne, Florida and has given your name as a reference. We appreciate your prompt response to the following questions and want to assure you that all information received will be treated confidentially. References are very important to the Church Executive Board in determining the qualifications and character of an applicant. Family members and subordinates (employee/volunteer) are not acceptable as references. To qualify as a reference, you must have known the applicant for at least one year. This reference is submitted by (Your Name)

\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you personally known the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship with the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you describe the applicant as Very Effective/ Somewhat Effective/ Not Effective in ministry? (Circle one)

Does the applicant work well with others? (Yes or No)

Explain how the applicant deals with conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have a comfortable understanding of Christianity, would you say the applicant is living a life that reflects a desire to be like Jesus Christ? (Yes or No or N/A) If you have ever observed the applicant preach a sermon, how would you evaluate his ability to preach and/or teach? (Circle N/A if not observed)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have a comfortable understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, how would you evaluate the applicant's ability to share the Gospel? (Circle N/A if you are not comfortable answering this question)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the applicant's relationship with his wife and children (If applicable).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe the applicant's social skills?

How would you describe the applicant's work ethic?

---

How would you describe the applicant's leadership skills (Wisdom, Discernment, Responsibility, Vision)?

---

Are there any areas of behavior that you are aware of that could hinder the applicant's ability to lead in Christian ministry? (For example: Improper sexual behavior, drunkenness, unethical behavior)

---

If you were looking to hire a pastor or needed personal pastoral care, would you hire this candidate or desire the applicant to help during your time of need? (Yes or No) Please explain:

---

---

---

**Reference Form for Pastoral Ordination (Friend)**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Applicants Name) is applying for Pastoral Ordination with Highland Avenue Fellowship Church, Melbourne, Florida and has given your name as a reference. We appreciate your prompt response to the following questions and want to assure you that all information received will be treated confidentially. References are very important to the Church Executive Board in determining the qualifications and character of an applicant. Family members and subordinates (employee/volunteer) are not acceptable as references. To qualify as a reference, you must have known the applicant for at least one year. This reference is submitted by (Your Name)

\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you personally known the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship with the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you describe the applicant as Very Effective/ Somewhat Effective/ Not Effective in ministry? (Circle one)

Does the applicant work well with others? (Yes or No)

Explain how the applicant deals with conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have a comfortable understanding of Christianity, would you say the applicant is living a life that reflects a desire to be like Jesus Christ? (Yes or No or N/A)

If you have ever observed the applicant preach a sermon, how would you evaluate the his ability to preach and/or teach? (Circle N/A if not observed)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have a comfortable understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, how would you evaluate the applicant's ability to share the Gospel? (Circle N/A if you are not comfortable answering this question)

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the applicant's relationship with his wife and children (If applicable).

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe the applicant's social skills?

How would you describe the applicant's work ethic?

---

How would you describe the applicant's leadership skills (Wisdom, Discernment, Responsibility, Vision)?

---

Are there any areas of behavior that you are aware of that could hinder the applicant's ability to lead in Christian ministry? (For example: Improper sexual behavior, drunkenness, unethical behavior)

---

If you were looking to hire a pastor or needed personal pastoral care, would you hire this candidate or desire the applicant to help during your time of need? (Yes or No) Please explain:

---

---

---

**Reference Form for Pastoral Ordination (Friend)**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Applicants Name) is applying for Pastoral Ordination with Highland Avenue Fellowship Church, Melbourne, Florida and has given your name as a reference. We appreciate your prompt response to the following questions and want to assure you that all information received will be treated confidentially. References are very important to the Church Executive Board in determining the qualifications and character of an applicant. Family members and subordinates (employee/volunteer) are not acceptable as references. To qualify as a reference, you must have known the applicant for at least one year. This reference is submitted by (Your Name)

\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you personally known the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship with the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you describe the applicant as Very Effective/ Somewhat Effective/ Not Effective in ministry? (Circle one)

Does the applicant work well with others? (Yes or No)

Explain how the applicant deals with conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have a comfortable understanding of Christianity, would you say the applicant is living a life that reflects a desire to be like Jesus Christ? (Yes or No or N/A) If you have ever observed the applicant preach a sermon, how would you evaluate his ability to preach and/or teach? (Circle N/A if not observed)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have a comfortable understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, how would you evaluate the applicant's ability to share the Gospel? (Circle N/A if you are not comfortable answering this question)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the applicant's relationship with his wife and children (If applicable).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe the applicant's social skills?

How would you describe the applicant's work ethic?

---

How would you describe the applicant's leadership skills (Wisdom, Discernment, Responsibility, Vision)?

---

Are there any areas of behavior that you are aware of that could hinder the applicant's ability to lead in Christian ministry? (For example: Improper sexual behavior, drunkenness, unethical behavior)

---

If you were looking to hire a pastor or needed personal pastoral care, would you hire this candidate or desire the applicant to help during your time of need? (Yes or No) Please explain:

---

---

---

## **Changes to 2023-10**

3/26/23:

Changed Elder Board to Executive Board throughout document