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STANDING BUSINESS RULES

A. PURPOSE

The National Conference shall meet annually to review the Evangelical Congregational Church's purpose, mission and vision; receive Church and Committee reports; discuss Church business; and act on ministerial certification and leadership selection so as to formulate and implement unity of purpose and mission.

B. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Order of Business shall include: Devotions, Reading of the Church *Discipline*, Minutes, Address by the Chair, Orders of the Day, Officers' Reports, Standing and Special Committee Reports, Reports from the National Ministry Team, Resolutions, Elections, Unfinished, Miscellaneous and New Business Items.

C. MEMBERSHIP

Ministers and duly elected local church lay delegates shall be considered members of the National Conference. Members shall choose their seats at the opening session and shall retain the same during the entire session. Members are expected to be in attendance at each of the daily sessions unless excused by the Bishop.

Duly elected alternate lay delegates may make motions, speak in debate and cast the lay delegate's vote only with the authorization of the lay delegate. This authorization can be given only when the lay delegate is to be permanently or temporarily absent from the National Conference business session.

The National Conference Secretary will prepare an official roll of voting members of the National Conference for each National Conference session.

D. CONFERENCE BOUNDARY

A Conference Boundary shall be fixed to accommodate seating for all delegates. Members desiring to speak and/or vote on any motion must do so within the Boundary.

The following will be granted the privilege to sit within the Conference Boundary as Advisory Members of Conference: former lay delegates; members of Evangelical Congregational Church Affiliates/Boards (Evangelical Theological Seminary, New Dawn Christian Community, Benefits Corporation, Twin Pines Camp, Rock River Bible Camp, and Camp ECCO) and Communities and the National Ministry Team; National Conference Committee members; Mission Conference Representatives; missionaries not in the itinerancy; Administrators and Faculty of the Evangelical Theological Seminary; the Chief Executive Officer of New Dawn Christian Community; full time administrators of Evangelical Congregational camps; ministerial candidates that will come before the National Conference; ministerial candidates not yet in the itinerancy; representatives of church planting churches; ministry staff persons employed by local E.C. churches; persons employed by the National Conference; National Conference Treasurer; and the Conference Solicitor.

E. ADDRESSING THE CHAIR

Any member desiring to speak on any motion must do so by rising and respectfully addressing the Chair. In case one or more persons should address the Chair simultaneously, the Chair shall decide who is entitled to the floor, which decision shall be subject to appeal to the National Conference.

F. INTERRUPTIONS

No one shall be interrupted while speaking except when the subject is misunderstood, or the introduction of anything out of order is spoken, and then only when so decided by the Chair, or by a majority of the members of the National Conference present.

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G. SPEAKING MORE THAN ONCE

No one shall be permitted to speak more than once on the same motion, until all who wish to speak shall have had opportunity, unless by special permission from the Chair.

H. MOTIONS

All motions/resolutions shall be reduced to writing before being voted upon, when requested by the Chair, the Secretary, or any two (2) members of the Conference. When a motion/resolution is under debate, no other motion shall be received excepting those: to adjourn, to lay on the table, request for the previous question, to postpone to a certain day, to refer, to amend, to postpone indefinitely, which shall have precedence in the order in which they are arranged. When a motion/resolution is made and seconded, or a report presented and is in hand with the Secretary, and stated by the Chair, it shall be deemed in the possession of the National Conference, but any such motion/resolution may be withdrawn by the mover at any time before decision by the consent of the National Conference.

I. QUORUM

A majority of the voting ministers and duly elected lay delegates shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

J. VOTING

Every member of the National Conference seated within the Boundary shall give his vote at the time the question is put, except when the Chair, at his discretion, may permit abstentions. If the Chair is unable to determine which of the "ayes" or "no's" prevails, a standing vote shall be taken, or when five (5) members of the National Conference shall demand the count, in which case the roll shall be called by the Secretary, and each member declare, without debate, his assent or dissent to the question.

K. PROTEST

If at any time, one or more members of the National Conference shall protest against any action of the National Conference, their names shall be subscribed thereto, and the protest shall be entered into the *Journal*. They may also declare the reason for their protest in the *Journal* by consent of one-third of the National Conference membership.

L. CHAIR DEBATE

The Chair shall not debate any subject while in the chair, but may be requested by the National Conference to express his opinion and/or answer questions on any subject.

M. MINORITY REPORT

A minority report of a Committee may be offered as an amendment to a majority report, and if so offered, shall be disposed of first.

N. QUESTION OF CONDUCT

No member shall be convicted of any moral offense or of any official misconduct by less than a two-thirds vote of the National Conference.

O. MINUTES/REPORTS

The National Conference Secretary shall keep the minutes of all Conference sessions. The Assistant Secretaries shall read and correct the minutes during the sessions of Conference. A final and full report of a Conference sessions minutes shall be given to the next meeting of the National Executive Committee for approval. Reports to the National Conference by Committees, Communities, Associates, and Affiliate Boards shall be distributed to the National Conference membership prior to the opening of the annual session. Representatives of these ministries shall be available to answer questions and/or receive recommendations from the National Conference.

P. BINDING ACTIONS

Actions recommended for consideration by the National Conference and approved by the members as recorded in the minutes shall be considered binding upon the local church.

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Q. ROBERT'S RULES

In all cases not provided for in these rules, the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall serve as the authority.

SPECIAL RULES

(Please note that "Conference year" and "Assignment year" refer to the 12 month period between July 1 and June 30.)

100. The Local Congregation

101 Bequests. It is recommended that when a bequest is made to a church that the church obtain a copy of the will. If the bequest is for other than a specific sum of money or item of personal property, the church should obtain a copy of the formal accounting to be filed with the court to determine that the proposed share to be distributed to the church is the proper amount. If there is any question whatsoever, the matter should immediately be submitted to the Conference attorney or to the church's attorney.

If a specific sum of money or piece of property is bequeathed, the church need only be sure that sum or that personal property to be distributed is what is specifically provided for in the will.

102 Building Project Solicitation. Congregations that desire to solicit help from other E.C. churches for building and renovation projects must secure the endorsement of the National Conference, or in the case of an emergency, the endorsement of the Bishop and Executive Director, before such solicitation is made. This privilege shall terminate with the Conference year in which it is granted, unless otherwise ordered by the National Conference. When seeking Conference endorsement, the pastor or lay delegate shall request a special privilege to address the Conference.

103 By-Laws. When revising local church by-laws, the Bishop and Executive Director should be consulted to assure that there is no conflict with the polity of the Evangelical Congregational Church as set forth in the *Discipline* or the rules of Conference.

104 Children/Youth/Staff Protection Policy. In order to protect children, youth, and paid and volunteer staff, each church shall have a sexual and physical abuse protection policy and staff screening policies and procedures.

105 Disposition of Closed Church Assets. If there is no direction from the closed church as to the distribution of funds, the following distribution will apply: Up to a maximum of 10% of proceeds after repayment of appropriations and ministry funds contributed to the National Conference to offset the building costs assumed by NC during its ownership and disposition period. National Conference finance staff will calculate expenses incurred less any revenue received during the building ownership period and only the net loss, up to 10% of the sales proceeds, will be distributed to National Conference. 10% of proceeds after repayment of appropriations and ministry funds contributed to the three camping ministries (Twin Pines, Rock River & Camp ECCO) equally. Remaining proceeds to be divided equally between the Church Health Community and the Kingdom Extension Community.

106 Districts. Within the denomination there are churches strategically located in geographic areas. These congregations are committed to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a hurting world. To fulfill the Lord's Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) effectively, efficiently and expeditiously, these congregations shall partner together as a district of Evangelical Congregational churches. The *Discipline* provides a full explanation of districting.

107 Historian. Each congregation shall select a local church historian for a four year term and submit the name to the National Conference Historian.

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108 Membership Records

108.1 Pastor's Membership. A pastor holds membership in his charge, and his name and the names of all family members residing with him who are members of the Evangelical Congregational Church shall be recorded upon the church record. In moving from one charge to another they are reported "Moved away with Certificate" and "Received by Certificate."

108.2 Membership Verification.

108.2.1 Each newly appointed pastor must verify the list of members given to him by his predecessor within six months after he has received his appointment and, if necessary, shall learn the identity of all persons reported as members by communication with his predecessor. If a discrepancy exists, the pastor shall report same to the Official Board/Ministry Council. In adjusting a discrepancy the pastor should correct the church record at once; however, he may not alter the Conference statistical record. The adjustment to the Conference record must be made at the following National Conference by reporting a loss or gain, whichever the case may be.

108.2.2 Pastors must verify the total number of members to be reported with the list of persons who are members at the time of preparing the annual statistical report for Conference and report the results of this verification to the Official Board/Ministry Council.

108.3 Membership List for the National Conference. Congregations shall annually present a current list of names and addresses of all members to the National Conference for the exclusive use of denominational agencies. This request is included in the National Conference survey distributed by the Church Center Office through the National Conference reports packet.

109 Name Changes. If a local church desires to independently change its name, its leadership should consult with the District Field Director and Executive Director.

110 Parsonage Inspection. The lay delegate, stewards, and trustees shall inspect the parsonage annually. Appliances and facilities are to be adequate and in working order.

111 Records of Local Congregations

111.1 Church Record Book. Each pastor shall keep the official *Church Record Book* in the form supplied by the Church Center Office up to date and in a safe and accurate condition. At the Annual Meeting of the Official Board / Ministry Council (see Rule 114), the pastor shall appoint a committee to examine the official *Church Record Book*. This committee shall report its findings at an Official Board/Ministry Council meeting no later than three months after the Annual Meeting.

It shall be the privilege of the District Field Director to examine the *Church Record Book* of a congregation assigned to him as often as he deems necessary.

111.2 Audits. Each church shall provide for an annual audit of all funds and treasuries of the Church, Sunday school and other organizations. We further encourage that treasurers be bonded.

111.3 Records Management. Guidelines for the management and maintenance of church records may be obtained from the Church Center Office.

111.4 Farewell Brief. Each pastor, when leaving a charge, shall give to his successor a farewell brief supplied by the Church Center Office.

111.5 Records and Dissolution of a Congregation. The Heritage Committee shall be notified of the impending dissolution of a congregation so that the records can be secured for disposition in the archives.

112 Regional Designations. The regional designations are: Delaware Region, Susquehanna Region and Great Lakes Region.

113 Statistics.

113.1 Quarterly Reports. The quarterly statistical reports shall be collected by the pastor and a summary entered into the *Official Board / Ministry Council Record Book*. Copies of the quarterly report shall be mailed to the District Field Director and E.C. Church Center within 30 days following the end of each quarter.

113.2 Annual Report. The annual statistical report shall be prepared for the period January 1 through December 31 and shall be mailed to the Church Center Office secretarial staff no later than February 10. It is to be typewritten, and figures shall be used instead of words.

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Pastors shall present their annual statistical reports to their congregations prior to going to the National Conference. They shall also see that the annual statistical report is recorded or filed in the *Official Board / Ministry Council Record Book*.

113.3 Report Forms. While the Church Center Office staff will send the statistical report forms to every pastor in the fall, they may also be downloaded from the E.C. web site or received on disk from the Church Center Office.

114 Ministry Council / Official Board. A healthy congregation will invest in their pastor and chosen lay leaders the authority to set the mission and govern the ministries of their church. Therefore every chartered congregation shall have a Ministry Council, Official Board, or other leadership team of which the pastor and lay delegate are voting members. Frequency of meetings and the elected or selected additional members of this Council/Board/Team shall be governed by the By-laws of the congregation and shall be consistent with the Evangelical Congregational Church *Discipline*, the Rules of National Conference, and the principles of the Governance Manual.

114.1 Annual Meeting. One of the congregation's Official Board/Ministry Council meetings shall be designated its Annual Meeting.

114.1.1 Purpose and Membership. The Annual Meeting of the Council/Board shall be the highest judicial or legislative meeting of the Board/Council with respect to the duties set forth in the *Discipline* (404). The membership of the Annual Meeting shall be composed of the membership of the governing Board/Council (in the case of a multiple-church charge, the membership of the combined boards/councils) plus all the itinerant and licensed ministers who are assigned as members of the congregation(s) of the charge. All members of the Annual Meeting shall be members in good standing (*Discipline* 321.6) of a congregation on the charge and entitled to one vote.

114.1.2 Minutes. The minutes of the Annual Meeting shall be kept with the congregation's Official Board/Ministry Council records.

114.1.3 Elections. The Annual Meeting shall elect the lay delegate (*Discipline*, par. 335), and if desired, an alternate lay delegate.

114.1.3.1 Delegates. The lay delegate and alternate lay delegate begin their terms of office at the time of election. During the course of National Conference, the alternate lay delegate may be seated as a voting member of Conference at any time during the absence of the elected lay delegate.

115 Pastoral Relations Committee

115.1 Purpose. According to the *Discipline* (par. 336) the purpose of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall be to aid the pastor, and any additional members of the pastoral staff, to effectively serve the needs and programs of the local congregation. It shall be a conferring and counseling committee and shall be available for consultation with the pastor concerning conditions with the local congregation that pertains to various pastoral duties.

115.2 Function. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall provide a confidential forum within which the pastor, and additional members of the pastoral staff, may seek and receive counsel, input, and insight regarding the work of the local church. In all meetings and activities of the committee, it is expected that biblical principles of conduct in relationships, in particular those principals drawn from Matthew 18, shall be the norm.

The committee shall assist the pastor in developing a written description of responsibilities for the pastor. The description of pastoral responsibilities shall incorporate the pastor's vision as well as the mission of the church. The senior pastor in consultation with his pastoral team shall develop a written description of responsibilities for each additional member of the pastoral staff, taking into account the mission and goals of the church as well as the input of the Pastoral Relations Committee. Each description of pastoral responsibilities shall be submitted to the Official Board/Ministry Council for approval.

The committee shall sensitively monitor the relationship between the pastor(s) and the local congregation and cultivate that relationship through consultation with the pastoral staff. The committee shall also communicate to the people the nature and function of the pastoral office.

The committee shall assist the pastor(s) in balancing and prioritizing family and personal needs with church needs. It shall remind him of the wisdom of using all annual vacation days, unless deferral arrangements have been made. In addition, assistance shall be given to appropriately use a week for ministry leave for the purpose of personal spiritual development, study, service, or a global ministry experience. The committee shall also expect the pastor(s) to avail themselves of one day off per week so that, through wise stewardship of time, "burnout" can be avoided, and the biblical requirement of

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“keeping the Sabbath” can be met. As a result of this wise stewardship of time, the pastor(s) will realize a greater protection of adequate family time, in addition to greater physical, emotional and spiritual health. The committee shall also work to help the congregation understand these needs.

The committee and the pastor shall annually assess the health and progress of the overall ministry of the church in achieving its mission, vision and goals. As part of that assessment, the committee and pastor shall together consider the pastor(s) role in light of the mission, vision and goals of the congregation, and his progress in fulfilling the responsibilities agreed upon in the statement of pastoral responsibilities. The conclusions of this consultation shall be kept in written form in the records of the committee for future reference. The portion of this consultation concerned with the pastor’s role shall have as its objectives both to encourage the pastor and to discern areas for potential growth, both personal and ministry related. The consultation shall also be concerned with potential means by which that growth may be achieved. In the case of any additional members of the pastoral staff, the senior pastor shall conduct that annual consultation with each staff member, keeping in mind the objectives set forth above. The senior pastor shall then share the written conclusions of each consultation with the committee. The committee may then consult with each staff member individually, keeping a written record of the conclusions of such consultations.

Pastoral transition requests shall comply with the established procedures of National Conference. (See Section 900)

115.3 Membership. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be constituted at the Annual Meeting of the Official Board/Ministry Council of each congregation following the annual congregational meeting and the reorganization of the Official Board/Ministry Council. It shall consist of not less than five (5) members, plus the assigned pastor(s). The total number of lay members shall be an odd number. Membership shall include the pastor(s) assigned by the National Conference, the lay delegate and the Official Board/Ministry Council president. Additional members may be added where necessary and appropriate, especially when the committee is involved in seeking a new pastor (see section 900). Only one member of an immediate family shall be permitted to serve on the committee. In cases where the inclusion of the lay delegate or president would result in a second person from the same family serving on the committee, the alternate lay delegate or vice president respectively shall replace that person. However, where the pastor, president of the Official Board/ Ministry Council and the lay delegate are in unanimous agreement, the second member of an immediate family may serve. The senior pastor, in consultation with the lay delegate and the Official Board/ Ministry Council president, shall present additional names to the Official Board/Ministry Council for approval.

115.4 Organization. Following the appointment of the Pastoral Relations Committee, the senior pastor shall convene the same within thirty (30) days to elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary, and to schedule the committee’s meetings for the year. No member of the pastoral staff shall serve as an officer of the Pastoral Relations Committee.

115.5 Meetings. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall hold at least four (4) meetings each year, one within each conference quarter. In case of a multiple-church charge, the committee of each church within the charge shall meet jointly at least once a year on matters relating to the charge. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, senior pastor, or the Stationing Elder.

115.6 Reporting. Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall keep all deliberations and decisions of the committee strictly confidential, except as is specifically directed by the committee. Report of pertinent matters of the committee meetings shall likewise be made to the Official Board/Ministry Council.

200 National Conference - Annual Meeting

201 Date/Location. The National Conference dates and location shall be set by the Conference Services Committee.

202 Program. The program shall be planned by the Conference Network Team. The observance of the Lord’s Supper shall take place at an appropriate time during the Conference sessions and shall be conducted by the presiding Bishop.

203 Expenses. The Conference Services Committee shall establish the budget for program, meals, and all pertinent expenses. Local churches will pay a registration fee for their pastor(s) and lay delegate to cover the cost of lodging, meals, and the program expenses. Alternate delegates may attend at the expense

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of the local church. Any additional persons attending conference shall pay a per diem amount. The Conference Finance Office shall collect all fees and pay all expenses.

Ministry Funds will pay for subsidies provided to churches requesting assistance for delegate travel expense. These subsidies may be requested through the Conference Services Committee.

204 Conference Offerings. In matters relating to finances during the sessions of National Conference, the following shall apply:

204.1 Andrew Fund. An offering for the Andrew Fund will be received. The Andrew Fund shall be used to meet the genuine financial needs of our pastoral families at the discretion of the Bishop, Executive Director and appropriate District Field Director.

204.2 Episcopal Fund. An offering for the Episcopal Fund will be received. See 704.2.2. for an explanation.

205 Conference Membership Roll.

205.1 Definition. The membership of the National Conference is defined in the *Discipline* as follows: “The ministerial membership of the National Conference shall consist of the Elders who are in the itinerancy. Voting privileges shall be granted to those holding Local Pastor, Local Elder, or Licensed Pastor credentials and are assigned by the Stationing Committee to a charge. (par. 401.1) “The lay membership of the National Conference shall consist of one lay delegate from each congregation in the Conference...” (par.401.2).

205.2 Alternate Lay Delegates. A congregation may elect an alternate delegate who would take the place of the delegate as a voting member of the Conference in the event the lay delegate is unable to attend the sessions. The alternate delegate may attend the annual meeting at the expense of the local church. If a lay delegate is absent for a session, the alternate delegate may be seated in his/her place for that session.

205.3 Advisory Members. Any person whom the National Conference chooses to appoint as an advisory member may serve in that capacity without the privilege of voting.

205.4 Establishing the Lay Delegate Roll. It shall be the responsibility of the pastor to report the name(s) of his lay delegate(s) to the Church Center Office using a form provided for that purpose. A lay delegate membership roll shall be prepared and included in the program booklet for approval by the Conference at its opening session. Changes to this roll shall be reported to the Church Center Office. The National Conference Secretary shall report these changes at the opening session.

205.5 National Executive Committee Members. National Executive Committee members will all be afforded voting rights at National Conference and National Ministry Team.

206 Conference Officers.

The officers of the National Conference shall be as provided for in para. 403 of the *Discipline*.

206.1 Chairman. The presiding Bishop shall serve as the chairman and president.

206.2 Vice Chairman. Elected by and from the Conference Network Team, the Vice Chairman’s term shall be concurrent with the term of the presiding Bishop. He shall serve as the vice chairman and vice president.

206.3 Secretary. Elected from a ballot provided by the Nominating Committee, the secretary’s term shall be concurrent with the term of the presiding Bishop.

206.3.1 National Conference Journal. The Secretary shall oversee the editing of the rules of the National Conference as directed by the Conference and coordinate the publication of the *Conference Journal*.

206.4 Treasurer. Elected from a ballot provided by the Nominating Committee, the treasurer’s term shall be concurrent with the term of the presiding Bishop.

206.5 Executive Committee. The chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer shall constitute the National Executive Committee. The Executive Director shall be an advisory member without vote. The committee shall have the power between meetings of the National Ministry Team to take actions on behalf of the National Ministry Team in emergency circumstances which require immediate action. The National Ministry Team may direct the committee to take other specific actions.

206.6 Assistant Secretaries. It shall be the prerogative of the secretary to appoint up to four assistant secretaries to carry out the administrative work at the National Conference sessions. One of the assistants shall function as the Conference Reporter.

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207 Executive Sessions.

207.1 Definition. The National Conference may adjourn an open session and enter into an Executive Session during which time only the lay and pastoral members of the Conference may be present. In this sense it is a closed session. Ministers, not members of the itinerancy, who have served appointments during the year preceding the meeting of the National Conference, shall be permitted to sit in the Executive Sessions of the Conference. The minutes are not published.

207.2 Agenda. The following items will be considered in Executive Session: examination of ministers and lay delegates as to their moral and official conduct; consideration of candidates for licentiate, local preacher's license, elder's orders, and itinerancy; transfer of credentials from other E.C. Conferences or other denominations; requests for Approved Elder credential; and other such ministerial credentialing and classification actions that the Ministerial Development Community or Bishop deems necessary for an Executive Session.

207.3 Ballots. The results of ballots taken in an Executive Session shall be announced in an open session.

208 Implementation of Approved Motions. The Conference Secretary or a named assistant shall be responsible to record and forward all approved motions of the National Conference to the appropriate person or body for implementation.

209 Conference Journal. Copies of the **Conference Journal** shall be printed and made available to the churches at cost. A copy shall be made available on the denominational web site. One copy of the Journal on CD shall be provided to each church at no cost.

210 Conference Records. A certified copy of the **Conference Journal**, proofread and corrected by the Conference Secretary, shall become the Official Record of the Conference. The Secretary shall copy the minutes of the Executive Sessions into the Official Record. A certified copy shall also be supplied to the Heritage Committee for inclusion in the archives.

211 Conference Statistician. The Bishop shall appoint a Conference Statistician. He shall prepare statistical analysis reports to be used in long range strategic planning. The staff of the finance office will have the responsibility of gathering statistics. The value of all denominational property shall be included in the statistical report of the National Conference. The statistical report shall also include the value of bequests received by denominational boards, agencies and communities.

212 Conference Parliamentarian. The Bishop shall appoint a Conference Parliamentarian. He shall be a resource to the chair responsible for making sure that the National Conference follows the correct procedures when discussing and enacting on the business of the Conference according to the Rule of Conference and Roberts Rules of Order.

213 Memorial Secretary. The Conference Secretary shall appoint a Memorial Secretary. He shall gather information during the conference year concerning the deaths of our ministers, ministers' wives or widows, and lay delegates. The Memorial Secretary shall present the necrology to the National Conference session at a time determined by the Chairman and shall give the Conference Secretary a complete copy of the report.

214 TEACH Representatives. The Evangelical Alliance of Churches International (TEACH) is the organization of E.C. Conferences worldwide.

215 Resolutions. Congregations wishing to propose a change to the denominational program or polity must present the proposal to their district. If a majority of the District Ministry Team agrees with the proposal, the district may bring a resolution to the National Conference for consideration and adoption. Resolutions which would result in changes to the *Discipline* will be processed as amendments and must be submitted to the Amendments Committee which will present the resolution to the National Ministry Team. The NMT will debate the merit of the amendment and decide by majority vote whether it should be recommended to the National Conference.

Resolutions which could result in changes to the Standing or Special Rules of Conference, or resolutions which could influence the work of the denomination without impacting the rules would be

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presented by the district directly to the National Conference and require a majority vote for approval. These resolutions must be submitted to the Church Center Office two months prior to the Conference sessions.

216 Indemnification of Officers

PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW DIRECTORS' LIABILITY ACT, January 27, 1987 as it relates to our denomination.

The Directors of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as a result of any action taken, or failure to act, unless such action or inaction constitutes both:

(a) a breach of or failure to perform his duties in compliance with the standards of fiduciary care described in the Directors' Liability Act (i.e., in good faith, in a manner he reasonably believes to be in the best interest of the corporation, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances) and

(b) self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness, subject to exceptions provided by said Act for his responsibility or liability under any criminal statute and his liability for payment of taxes.

Every director and every officer of the Corporation shall be indemnified by the Corporation against all expenses and liability, including counsel fees, reasonably incurred by or imposed upon him in connection with any proceeding to which he may be made a party, or in which he becomes involved, by reason of his being or having been a director or officer of the Corporation, or any settlement thereof, whether or not he is a director or officer at the time that such expenses are incurred, except in such cases wherein the director or officer is adjudged by a court guilty of willful misconduct or recklessness in the performance of his duties, provided however, that such indemnification shall be given in any case wherein the act or failure to act was authorized or later approved by the Board of Directors. In the event of a settlement, the indemnification herein shall apply only when the Board of Directors approves such settlement and reimbursement is deemed for the best interest of the Corporation.

In the event that a director or officer is adjudged guilty of willful misconduct or recklessness, the Board of Directors may, in specific cases, apply the foregoing indemnification.

In a proceeding brought as a derivative action on behalf of the Corporation, the above indemnification shall apply only to expenses and counsel fees unless otherwise specifically authorized by the Board of Directors.

The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition to and non-exclusive of all other rights to which such director or officer may be entitled.

The Corporation may on an individual basis, in specific cases, apply the above indemnification to an employee of the Corporation.

300. National Conference - Communities

301 Church Health Community

301.1 Purpose:

301.1.1 To communicate and encourage a health mindset and strategy for advocating healthier church ministries

301.1.2 To assess local church health-related needs and potential within their contexts (based on eight essential qualities)

301.1.3 To deliver up-to-date resources and workshops that provide creative church health solutions

301.1.4 To assist churches in adopting concepts that will ultimately produce health within their contexts

301.2 The Community will:

301.2.1 Discuss the latest church health concepts—stirring the team's thinking through reading books and exploring web-related resources together.

301.2.2 Discuss opportunities and solutions for church health concepts in our cultural setting.

301.2.3 Discuss issues derived from district cohorts concerning church health concepts.

301.2.4 Explore together church health concepts for congregations in our cultural setting.

301.2.5 Focus a segment of the National Conference gathering to church health—providing a district or national level speaker as requested.

301.3 The Scope:

301.3.1 Empowering leadership

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- 301.3.2** Gift-oriented ministry
- 301.3.3** Passionate spirituality
- 301.3.4** Functional structures
- 301.3.5** Inspiring worship
- 301.3.6** Holistic small groups
- 301.3.7** Need-oriented evangelism
- 301.3.8** Loving relationships

301.4 Membership:

301.4.1 The Church Health Associate shall be the chairperson.

301.4.2 The Bishop and the chairman shall appoint the members who are to serve on the community. The National Conference may, by its rules, populate each community by assigning various groups, committees and entities into existing communities based on their assigned work and create new communities when practical. The Bishop and the chairperson may choose to expand or reduce the size of membership within the community or its parts in order to provide for better functionality and the need for growth and flourishing within the community.

302 Global Ministries Community

302.1 Purpose:

302.1.1 To serve the local church by providing resources for fulfilling the Great Commission to the ends of the earth.

302.1.2 To assist in identifying those whom God is calling to this specialized form of ministry.

302.1.3 To help to develop a prayer support network.

302.1.4 Partner with and assist in the development of national (self-governing, self-directing, self-supporting, and self-propagating) churches.

302.1.5 To cooperate with inter-denominational mission boards, so as to develop channels, through the provision of personnel and resources, toward the effective communication of the gospel, without necessarily exporting the name of the Evangelical Congregational Church, nor its form of government.

302.2 The Scope:

302.2.1 Field Committees:

302.2.1.1 Japan

302.2.1.2 India/Nepal

302.2.1.3 Mexico

302.2.1.4 Liberia

302.2.1.5 Chaplaincy

302.2.2 Function Committees:

302.2.2.1 Executive Committee

302.2.2.2 Finance Committee

302.2.2.3 Volunteer Services

302.2.2.4 Work Teams

302.2.2.5 Mission Minded Kids

302.2.2.6 Short-term Mission Rep

302.2.2.7 Missionary Prayer Partner Coordinator

302.3 Membership:

302.3.1 The Global Ministries Associate shall be the chairperson.

302.3.2 The Bishop and the chairperson shall appoint the members who are to serve on the community. The National Conference may, by its rules, populate each community by assigning various groups, committees and entities into existing communities based on their assigned work and create new communities when practical. The Bishop and the chairperson may choose to expand or reduce the size of membership within the community or its parts in order to provide for better functionality and the need for growth and flourishing within the community.

303 Kingdom Extension Community

303.1 Purpose:

303.1.1 To communicate and encourage a kingdom mindset and strategy for extending the kingdom

303.1.2 To assess local church potential for extending the kingdom within their contexts

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303.1.3 To deliver up-to-date resources and workshops that provide creative solutions for extending the kingdom

303.1.4 To assist local churches in adopting concepts that will ultimately extend the kingdom within their contexts

303.1.5 To facilitate discussions among pastors and church leaders in district cohorts about kingdom extension within our cultural setting

303.2 The Community will:

303.2.1 Discuss the latest kingdom extension concepts—stirring the team’s thinking through reading books and exploring web-related resources together.

303.2.2 Discuss opportunities and solutions for kingdom extension in our cultural setting.

303.2.3 Discuss issues derived from district cohorts concerning kingdom extension.

303.2.4 Explore together kingdom extension for congregations in our cultural setting.

303.2.5 Focus a segment of the National Conference gathering to kingdom extension—providing a district or national level speaker as requested.

303.3 The Scope:

303.3.1 Apostolic Training (recruitment, assessment, & coaching)

303.3.2 Local Church/Context Facilitation

303.3.3 Publicity & Partnering

303.4 Membership:

303.4.1 The Kingdom Extension Associate shall be the chairperson.

303.4.2 The Bishop and the chairperson shall appoint the members who are to serve on the community. The National Conference may, by its rules, populate each community by assigning various groups, committees and entities into existing communities based on their assigned work and create new communities when practical. The Bishop and the chairperson may choose to expand or reduce the size of membership within the community or its parts in order to provide for better functionality and the need for growth and flourishing within the community.

304 Ministerial Development Community

304.1 Purpose:

304.1.1 To serve and support the denomination’s mission for ministerial leadership

304.1.2 To oversee and maintain an integrated process for credentialing

304.1.3 To deliver up-to-date resources and workshops that provide lifelong learning opportunities for our ministerial leadership

304.1.4 To oversee the administration of the credentialing process when needed

304.1.5 To resource local churches and pastors for proper sponsoring of candidates

304.1.6 To direct the Pastoral Assessment Center

304.1.7 To identify, recruit, train, and support Itinerants for the work of interviewing and screening candidates

304.1.8 To maintain the relationship between the denomination and the seminary programs

304.1.9 To coordinate the field training and coaching of candidates

304.1.10 To help to provide lifelong learning opportunities for active pastors

304.1.11 To provide resources for those involved with transitional ministry situations

304.2 The Scope:

304.2.1 Pastoral Assessment Center

304.2.2 Board of Examiners

304.2.3 Seminary Relations (Church Partnership/Student Aid)

304.2.4 Pastoral Coaching & Personal Health

304.2.5 Lifelong Learning

304.3 Membership:

304.3.1 The Ministerial Development Associate shall be the chairperson.

304.3.2 The Bishop and the chairperson shall appoint the members who are to serve on the community. The National Conference may, by its rules, populate each community by assigning various groups, committees and entities into existing communities based on their assigned work and create new communities when practical. The Bishop and the chairperson may choose to expand or reduce the size of membership within the community or its parts in order to provide for better functionality and the need for growth and flourishing within the community.

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305 Missional Alignment Community

305.1 Purpose:

305.1.1 To assist the Bishop to cast the vision for the denomination in keeping with God's mission for his church

305.1.2 To assess local church needs and potential for missional alignment within our current culture setting

305.1.3 To deliver up-to-date theological approaches in order to provide missional alignment for our churches

305.1.4 To assist churches in staying the course that will ultimately translate missional alignment to our current culture setting

305.1.5 To facilitate discussions among pastors and church leaders in district cohorts about missional alignment within our cultural setting

305.1.6 Discuss the latest missional alignment concepts—stirring the team's thinking through reading books and exploring web-related resources together.

305.1.7 Discuss opportunities and solutions for missional alignment in our cultural setting.

305.1.8 Discuss issues derived from district cohorts concerning missional alignment.

305.1.9 Explore together missional alignment for congregations in our cultural setting.

305.1.10 Focus a segment of the National Conference gathering to missional alignment—providing a district or national level speaker as requested.

305.2 The Scope:

305.2.1 Faith & Doctrine

305.2.2 Denominational Heritage

305.2.3 Amendments to Journal

305.2.4 Social Response and Action

305.2.5 Prayer Mobilization

305.3 Membership:

305.3.1 The Bishop shall be the chairperson.

305.3.2 The Bishop shall appoint the members who are to serve on the community. The National Conference may, by its rules, populate each community by assigning various groups, committees and entities into existing communities based on their assigned work and create new communities when practical. The Bishop may choose to expand or reduce the size of membership within the community or its parts in order to provide for better functionality and the need for growth and flourishing within the community.

400. National Conference - Committees

The standing committees of the National Conference have a continuing existence and are appointed to give a task more attention than is possible in a larger body. The special committees are assigned a specific task which does not fall within the assigned function of a standing committee. The special committee ceases to exist when the task is complete. Unless otherwise noted, all committees and their chairpersons and secretaries are appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Conference Network Team with no limitations placed on membership. The Bishop shall serve as an ex-officio member of standing committees. The standing committees are as follows:

401 Amendments - The committee receives and prepares amendment proposals which will be presented to the National Ministry Team for consideration according to the amendment process set forth in the *Discipline*.

402 Episcopacy - The committee shall counsel, confer and consult with the Bishop concerning his relationships with the Church and its leaders, and matters related to the personal and family needs of the Bishop. They may also assist the Bishop in formulating performance standards. Its members are appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Conference Network Team. There are no limitations on membership but the NMT may direct that certain persons are appointed by virtue of their position.

403 Finance - The committee receives budgetary requests and prepares a budget that provides for the overall ministry of the National Conference. The budget and annual ministry funds rate are

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recommended to the National Conference by this committee. It quarterly reviews all financial functions of all National Conference Funds and recommends policies to the National Conference. The committee recommends minimum salary levels and benefits packages for pastors, the Bishop, the Executive Director, Associates, District Field Directors, and the Stationing Elders. The membership shall include the treasurer who shall serve as chair. The Executive Director shall serve as an advisory member.

404 Nominating - The committee secures nominations for Conference officers and other elected positions as directed by the National Conference. The bishop shall serve as an ex-officio member.

405 Stationing - The committee appoints pastors to the congregations of the Evangelical Congregational Church following the procedures set forth in section 900. Chaired by the Bishop, the membership includes two Stationing Elders elected from and by each region of the denomination, and one District Field Director from each region elected by the Conference Network Team. The term is five (5) years with no term limit.

406 Assignment Privilege - The Bishop and the National Conference may assign such other duties to a committee as either deems appropriate.

500. National Conference - National Ministry Team

501 Purpose. The National Ministry Team (NMT) is empowered to act on behalf of the National Conference by attending to matters that arise between sessions of the Conference as well as carrying out tasks assigned to it by the Conference. It shall approve all necessary resolutions, including housing allowance, travel and expense reimbursement and/or Flexible Spending Accounts if applicable, for each National Conference Administrator at the fall meeting of the NMT. The NMT will make a report to and submit its actions for review by the National Conference.

502 Membership. The membership of the National Ministry Team shall consist of the Executive Committee of the National Conference, Church Health Associate, Global Ministries Associate, Kingdom Extension Associate, Ministerial Development Associate, and one active pastor and one lay delegate from each district. Each district shall elect one pastor and one lay delegate who are voting members of the National Conference to serve a maximum of two five-year terms on the NMT. Each district may elect alternate delegates to the NMT. Vacancies shall be filled by the District Leadership Team until the next District Ministry Team meeting at which time the District shall elect a successor for a full five year term. The Executive Director shall be an advisory member without vote. Additional advisory members may be added as needed.

503 Conference Network Team

503.1 Purpose. The Conference Network Team is an organizational unit within the denominational framework that is designed to provide counsel and encouragement to Evangelical Congregational leaders and to assure that our church's ministries are working together in unity to realize our denominational vision. It develops denominational initiatives, provides guidance in matters of accountability for EC credentialed personnel, and can make formal recommendations to denominational bodies.

503.2 Membership. The membership of the Conference Network Team shall consist of the Bishop, who shall serve as chair, National Conference Secretary, Church Health Associate, Global Ministries Associate, Kingdom Extension Associate, Ministerial Development Associate, and the District Field Directors. The Executive Director shall be advisory without vote.

The standing committees of the National Conference have a continuing existence and are appointed to give a task more attention than is possible in a larger body. The special committees are assigned a specific task which does not fall within the assigned function of a standing committee. The special committee ceases to exist when the task is complete. Unless otherwise noted, all committees and their chairpersons and secretaries are appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Conference Network Team with no limitations placed on membership. The Bishop shall serve as an ex-officio member of standing committees. The standing committees are as follows:

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503.3 Loan/Investment Fund - The committee shall operate the Loan/Investment Fund under the supervision of the National Ministry Team. There shall be at least five members. The Bishop shall serve as an ex-officio member. The Executive Director Controller and Finance Committee chair shall serve as ex-officio members.

504 Conference Support Team

504.1 Purpose. The Conference Support Team will support the mission and serve the church by supervising our operations – stewarding assets and providing the necessary services to accomplish the mission across the network.

504.2 Membership. The membership of the Conference Support Team shall be consist of the Executive Director, who shall serve as chair, the National Conference Treasurer, Church Center Office Manager, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop. Additional members shall be appointed to serve on the Team. The Bishop shall be an ex-officio member with vote.

The number and scope of the committees of the Conference Support Team shall be determined by the Bishop and Executive Director in consultation with the National Ministry Team. Unless otherwise noted, all chairpersons and secretaries are appointed by the Executive Director in consultation with the Bishop with no limitations placed on membership. The Executive Director and Bishop shall serve as a ex-officio members of all committees.

504.3 Audit - The committee receives and reviews the audit of the National Conference financial records as well as the audit reports of all affiliated agencies and institutions. The Treasurer shall be a members with vote. The Executive Director shall be an advisory member.

504.4 Church Center Operations Committee

504.5 Conference Services – The committee develops and implements the plan for the annual meeting of the National Conference. This includes the selection of dates and location. The committee will establish a budget and set the conference registration fees sufficient to fund the budget. The Executive Director shall be an advisory member.

504.6 Tellers - The committee counts Conference ballots, distributes the printed reports at the sessions of National Conference and provides ushers for the various services at the sessions.

504.7 Finance. (See Rule 407)

504.8 Property. The committee is responsible for the management, maintenance, repair and protection of all denominational property.

504.9 Publishing. The committee shall edit and publish the *Discipline* of the Church, the National Conference *Journal*, as directed by the NMT. It shall oversee other denominational publications as well as the denominational web-site.

505 Appointment Privilege - The National Ministry Team may appoint such other committees as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the church.

600. National Conference – Elections and Evaluations

601 Election of a Bishop

601.1. Composition of the Election Body

The National Conference shall elect the Bishop.

601.2. The Meeting of the Election Body

The election body shall meet to elect a bishop every five years. The Bishop will chair the sessions of the election body. In the absence of the Bishop, the conference shall elect a Presiding Officer from among the Itinerant Elders (*Discipline*, Para. 403.1)

601.3. The Process of Election

The balloting will be preceded by an extensive period of prayer to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The election will be conducted by secret ballot and the ballots will be counted in open session. Balloting will continue until one person secures a majority of the votes cast.

Prior to the meeting of the election body, the National Ministry Team will appoint a Special Nominating Committee to secure the names of qualified candidates and prepare a ballot of the nominees. This committee will interview candidates and decide on the persons to be placed on the ballot. The ballot will be distributed to the electors at least one month prior to the election. The slate of nominees will contain a sufficient number of candidates (preferably more than two) to insure a range of styles, visions, etc. Included with the name of each candidate will be a biographical sketch, a description of the

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candidate's leadership style, comments from each candidate on his view of the current state of the Evangelical Congregational Church, and his vision of her future.

Individual electors may submit the names of additional qualified persons for inclusion on the ballot provided the elector secures the permission of the candidate, the necessary documentation (see above), and the support of at least seven other electors. These additional nominations must be submitted in writing to the Church Center Office at least two weeks prior to the election.

601.4. Other items related to the transition

Other items that relate to the transition, such as the date the bishop-elect shall assume office, provision for interim Episcopal leadership if needed, and items related to the retiring Bishop, will be cared for by the National Ministry Team at a meeting to be held as soon as possible after the election.

602 Election of Stationing Elders

602.1. Meeting of the Election Body

The pastors and lay delegates of the respective regions of the Evangelical Congregational Church will elect their Stationing Elders at a designated meeting during the sessions of the National Conference of the entire Church.

602.2. The Process of Election

When Stationing Elders need to be elected the elders from the respective regions shall be notified and invited to apply. The resumes of the men who apply shall be distributed to the Conference delegates and a secret ballot shall be taken with all pastoral and lay delegates from the respective regions voting.

602.2.1 – Due to the geographical size of the Great Lakes Region, there shall be one Stationing Elder elected from among the Elders of the Illinois District. The second Stationing Elder shall be elected from among the Elders of the Buckeye and Allegheny Districts.

603 Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs among the employed leaders of the Evangelical Congregational Church because of death, resignation, retirement or suspension, the vacancy will be filled by the Executive Committee of the elections body which will appoint a person or persons to assume the responsibilities of the office until the next meeting of the electing/affirming body at which time a successor will be elected/affirmed. If the position has a term limit, the person elected/affirmed would begin his first five-year term.

The appointment of a person to fill a vacancy in the office of Bishop will take place according to the provisions of paragraph 406.1.1.2 of the *Discipline*.

604 Evaluations

The performance of each of the persons holding these positions will be evaluated every three years. The National Ministry Team will be responsible for the evaluation of the Bishop. The Bishop shall not be involved in the appointment of his own evaluation team. In each case there shall be input in the final appraisal by members of the constituencies being served by the position holder. It is assumed that each leader will also make a self-evaluation. The results of evaluations should be presented to the subsequent session of the National Conference by the National Ministry Team for all positions.

700. National Conference - Finances

701 Ministry Funds. Each congregation will pay a percentage, set by the National Conference, of their adjusted monthly income, for its budgetary needs. Requests will be received by the Finance Committee from Communities, Committees and other endorsed ministries of the National Conference. The Ministry Funds system will not be used to pay the costs of pastoral health insurance coverage. Churches will be billed separately for the payment of premiums. Medical premiums for pastors cannot be deducted as an item in the calculation of adjusted income. All churches are expected to contribute to the budget for all ministries, with the exception of our camping ministries, which will be supported by the churches in their given marketing area. Unpaid ministry funds shall constitute a noninterest-bearing obligation chargeable against the property of a congregation; such debt to become payable and collectible according to law from any congregation that shall separate from or dissolve its affiliation with the Evangelical Congregational Church.

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701.1. Maximum Ministry Fund Payment

701.1.1. Churches with annual ministry fund eligible income, as defined by Rule of Conference 701.3, up to \$1,000,000; the total annual payments for Ministry Funds to the National Conference will be the lower of \$60,000 or the ministry fund percentage as defined in the National Conference approved budget. The annual payments to Twin Pines will be the lower of \$4,500 or the Twin Pines percentage as defined in the National Conference approved budget. The total maximum annual payment to the National Conference will be \$64,500, including the Twin Pines Camp.

701.1.2 Annual ministry fund eligible income, as defined by Rule 701.3, between \$1,000,001 and \$1,500,000 total annual payments for Ministry Funds to the National Conference will be the lower of \$65,000 or the ministry fund percentage as defined in the National Conference approved budget. The total annual payments to Twin Pines will be the lower of \$5,000 or the Twin Pines percentage as defined in the National Conference approved budget. The total maximum annual payment to the National Conference will be \$70,000, including the Twin Pines allocation.

701.1.3 Annual ministry fund eligible income, as defined by Rule 701.3, above \$1,500,001 total annual payments for Ministry Funds to the National Conference will be the lower of \$70,000 or the ministry fund percentage as defined in the National Conference approved budget. The total annual payments to Twin Pines will be the lower of \$5,500 or the Twin Pines percentage as defined in the National Conference approved budget. The total maximum annual payment to the National Conference will be \$75,500, including the Twin Pines Camp allocation.

701.1.4 Churches are encouraged to generously support Evangelical Theological Seminary, Camp ECCO, Rock River Bible Camp, StoneRidge Retirement Living, and Twin Pines Camp through voluntary giving as their budgets allow.

701.2. Monies to be excluded.

701.2.1 New construction, remodeling, sizable maintenance costs and property acquisition are valid building expenses that can pose financial challenges "over and above" regular giving. Therefore, the National Conference permits that a church may exempt building expenses in the following manner: 1) after being approved by the congregation, a brief description of the project, including a time line, must be on file with the Executive Director at the E. C. Church Center. 2) If the project is more than 20% of the previous year's income, and is less than \$150,000, the exclusion is for three (3) years. 3) If the project is more than 20% of the previous year's income and is more than \$150,000 but less than 750,000, the exclusion is for 5 years. 4) If the project is more than 20% of the previous year's income and more than \$750,000 but less than \$1M the exclusion is for 10 years. 5) If the project is more than 20% of the previous year's income and more than \$1M but less than \$1.5M the exclusion is for 20 years. 6) If the project is more than 20% of the previous year's income and more than \$1.5M the exclusion is for 25 years.

701.2.2 Churches are allowed to exclude monies set aside for church planting projects from Ministry Funds payments (significant fresh expressions, or traditional works, daughter congregations and/or satellite locations). The church requesting the ministry Funds Exemption must have a written and detailed plan for the proposed church planting projects including a formal ministry proposal including: board or council minutes and congregational meeting minutes approving the church planting project, target audience, potential location, possible style of worship, including a timeline, etc. A copy of this proposal is to be provided to the Kingdom Extension Community (KEC) and kept on file at E.C. Church Center. The church, working with the Kingdom Extension Associate, must seek and obtain the approval for the planting endeavor from the Kingdom Extension Community. For approved church planting projects, there will be a direct reduction in ministry funds paid by the sponsoring congregation of 50% of the total sponsoring church's annual expenses for the church planting project for the first two years of the project. Followed by ministry fund reductions of 30% in the third year, a 20% reduction in the fourth year and a 10% reduction in the fifth year. No ministry fund reductions in the sixth year and beyond.

For example, a church that funds a church planting project for \$20,000 the first year of the project receives a \$10,000 deduction in ministry funds paid for that year. The same church has \$15,000 expenses for the church planting project in the second year and will have a \$7,500 reduction in ministry funds paid for that year. In the third through fifth years of the project the church funds \$8,000 of the church planting expenses and receives a ministry fund reduction of \$2,400 in the third year, \$1,600 in the fourth year in \$800 in the fifth year.

701.2.3 Money collected for the following required offerings are exempt: Church Planting, Global Giving, Mother's Day, Student Aid, Kingdom Extension and Christmas Missionary. In addition, money

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paid (not donated) for a specific purpose, where the church is simply acting as an agent to collect and disburse the funds may also be exempt.

701.3 Method of payment Chartered Churches

701.3.1. Each organizational treasurer of the congregation shall report their income/profit to the church treasurer before the 10th of the following month. (For example, January's figures should be received by February 10, February's figures should be received by March 10, etc.) Checks are due at the Church Center office by the 15th of the month. Final payment must be made by January 15 from the previous year.

701.3.2 The church treasurer shall add all the incomes/profit and multiply the sum by the percentage established by the National Conference for that year. Since there are ministries relying upon the ministry funds for salaries, medical coverage in reimbursements as well as retirees needing their pension checks and medical coverage, please do not delay the monthly payment. If one of the treasurers fails to meet the deadline, be sure to include those figures the following month.

701.3.3. Make your check payable to: "E. C. Church-Ministry Funds".

701.3.4 Be sure to include the location (city, town, borough) of your church. We have over 20 "Grace" churches.

701.4 Method of payment for Church Plants

701.4.1 Church plants will be asked to make a ministry fund contribution to the National Conference. Beginning with the first full calendar year after the church plant starts, the church plant will pay 20% of the established ministry funds percentage. Each successive calendar year, the congregation will increase the amount by an additional 20% until the fifth full-year when the church will be providing the full amount of ministry funds. Money received from the Kingdom Extension Community or sponsoring congregation(s) should not be included as income for the church plant's ministry fund calculation.

702 Computation of Benefits Corporation medical insurance for retirees/widows. The Benefits Corporation will advise the Budget Committee of the needs of the Corporation for medical insurance for the retirees and widows.

703 Payment of medical premiums to the Benefits Corporation for active ministers. Medical premiums will be paid by the church being served by the active minister(s). The rate will be established by the Benefits Corporation. This figure will not be part of the ministry funds. Each congregation is to bear its full share of the medical costs. This check is to be made payable to the "Benefits Corporation" and sent to: Benefits Corporation, 100 W. Park Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067-1235.

704 Denominational Offerings.

704.1. Required Offerings. The schedule for receiving and paying of the offerings approved by the National Conference shall be:

704.1.1. The **Church Planting** offering received the second Sunday in February for the support of U.S. church planting ministries.

704.1.2. The **Self-Denial** offering received the second Sunday in March for the support of the daily work of the Global Ministries Community.

704.1.3. The **Mother's Day** offering received the second Sunday in May for the support of the Benevolent Fund of the New Dawn Christian Community. Please send this offering to 440 East Lincoln Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067.

704.1.4. The **Student Aid** offering received the second Sunday in June for the support of E. C. ministerial students.

704.1.5. The **Kingdom Extension** offering received the first Sunday in October for the support of U.S. church planting ministries.

704.1.6. The **Christmas Missionary** offering received the Sunday preceding Christmas for the support of the daily work of the Global Ministries Community.

704.1.7. Identify on the check the purpose of the check and also include the full name of the church for proper credit and receipt. Denominational offerings are to be sent within six weeks after the date received. All but the Mother's Day and Twin Pines offerings should be sent to the Church Center Office, 100 W. Park Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067-1235

704.1.8. Churches on unified budgets shall include these offerings in their budgets.

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704.2. Requested Offerings. These are not required but congregations are asked to give consideration to additional opportunities to support E.C. ministries.

704.2.1. Church Planting Partners give \$100.00 per partner to support U.S. church planting ministries. You may designate the church plant that is to receive your support. Note "CP Partner" on your check and send it to Church Center Office.

704.2.2. The **Episcopal Fund** supports the ministry of the Office of Bishop. Honorariums received by the Bishop are deposited in this fund and the proceeds help fund the denominational budget.

704.2.3. ETS's **Educational Excellence Churches** are those congregations that have made a financial commitment to our seminary over and above the ministry funds contribution. These gifts should be sent to Evangelical Theological Seminary, 121 S. College St., Myerstown, PA 17067.

704.2.4. The **Manna Fund** supports E.C. ministerial retirees and widows whose pension is not sufficient to meet daily living expenses. It is administered by the Benefits Corporation. Contributions may be sent to the Benefits Corporation, 100 W. Park Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067-1235.

704.2.5. The **Twin Pines** offering is received the last Sunday in August for the support of Twin Pines. This offering is received by churches in the Twin Pines ministry area. Please send this offering to the camp at 3000 Twin Pines Road, Stroudsburg, PA 18360.

704.3. Global Ministries Special Offerings. These offerings support the missionaries and mission projects of the Global Ministries Community.

704.3.1. Stewardship Offering assists in funding field needs that are underfunded.

704.3.2. Thankoffering assists in funding the international conferences and ministries of the EC Church. It may also be used to help defray the cost of staffing.

704.4. E.C. Partnerships

704.4.1. National Association of Evangelicals applications for supporting membership and the appropriate amount of dues for the size of the congregation are to be sent to NAE, P.O. Box 23269, Washington D.C., 20026.

704.4.2. World Relief offerings for the care of suffering people around the world may be sent to World Relief, 7 E. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21202. Please note the E.C. account number "52095" on your checks.

705 Special Financial Needs. All churches requiring financial assistance shall appeal to their District Field Director, who will relay the appeal to the churches in the district of the requesting church. If the churches of the district are unable to help, the District Field Director will make the need known to the Executive Director and Bishop who then may announce the need to churches in neighboring districts. These funds shall not be considered repayable. It is understood that the churches who receive financial assistance are to make every effort to become healthy and thus able to assume their full financial responsibility. Other churches in the district of the assisted church are to work with the church and keep her accountable for moving toward health.

706 Appropriations.

706.1. An Appropriation is money provided to a local congregation from the National Conference treasury to be used specifically to cover the short-fall in the pastor's salary. Appropriations are temporary and not intended to be a permanent solution to a local church's financial situation. Appropriations made by the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church, or any of the agencies of such conferences, shall constitute a noninterest-bearing obligation chargeable against the property of a congregation; such debt to become payable and collectible according to law from any congregation that shall separate from or dissolve its affiliation with the Evangelical Congregational Church. (See *Discipline* 324.3.7)

706.2. If a local congregation is struggling to pay their pastor they shall appeal to their District Field Director. The Conference Network Team shall have the authority to grant Appropriations in consultation with the Finance Committee. The Executive Director shall have the privilege of requiring monthly ministry reports prior to and during the time of payment of Appropriations made to the church.

707 Miscellaneous

707.1. Workmen's Compensation Insurance. Ministers and other church employees, such as janitors, organists, secretaries, etc., whose salaries are reported to the Conference on the statistical form, may claim compensation when injured while discharging their respective duties. The cost of the insurance is covered proportionately by each local congregation. Each church will be billed separately by

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the Benefits Corporation. Churches opting not to participate in the denominational plan must provide proof of coverage. Our insurance provides compensation for:

707.1.1. Wages or salaries lost because of the occupational injury.

707.1.2. Medical and hospital expenses incurred by said injury.

707.1.3. Dismemberment or death resulting from said injury.

707.1.4. Injuries should be reported within 48 hours of the accident to the Executive Director who will send forms for a formal request.

707.2. Disability Income Plan. Provision has been made by the Benefits Corporation for a Disability Income Plan. Enrollment in this plan requires an annual premium payment for each minister (full or part time) assigned by the National Conference and for other individuals as approved and stated by the EC Benefits Corporation. When a disability occurs, the Executive Director should be notified. He will send the appropriate forms. Disability income will begin with the 61st day of disability according to the provisions of the plan set forth in the Benefits Corporation by-laws.

708 Audit. The financial records shall be audited annually. The audit shall be reviewed by the Treasurer and his staff as well as the Audit Committee which shall report on the audit to the National Ministry Team.

800. Ministerial Credentialing and Classifications

801 Ministerial Credentialing

801.1. Ministerial Development Community

801.1.1. There shall be a Ministerial Development Community system that is composed of the Bishop, the Ministerial Development Associate and appointed members to carry out the credentialing tasks among individuals holding any of the following classifications or statuses in the districts of the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

801.1.1.1. The Ministerial Development Community will deliver an integrated process for credentialing that includes 1) helping sponsoring pastors and churches identify and prepare candidates for assessment, 2) conducting a Pastoral Assessment Center, 3) examination of applicants through a Board of Examiners, 4) coaching, supporting, and training opportunities, 5) facilitating a process for lifelong learning and 6) providing pastoral care, health and restoration.

801.1.1.2. The Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate will appoint members to fill the component areas of the Pastoral Assessment Center, Board of Examiners, Coaching, and the Pastoral Care and Restoration Teams with members from among all regions of the National Conference.

801.1.1.2.1. The Pastoral Assessment Center: The Bishop, Ministerial Development Associate, and Director of the Pastoral Assessment Center will appoint members to participate as assessors and presenters for the Pastoral Assessment Center.

801.1.1.2.2. The Board of Examiners: The Bishop, Ministerial Development Associate, and Chairman of the Board of Examiners (Itinerancy and Non-Itinerancy) teams will appoint members to interview and examine pastoral applicants for ministry in the Evangelical Congregational Church.

801.1.1.2.3. Coaching: The Bishop, Ministerial Development Associate, and Coaching Associate will appoint members to receive training for effective coaching of all non-elder pastoral credentialed individuals.

801.1.1.2.4. Pastoral Care Team: The Bishop, Ministerial Development Associate, and Chairman of the Pastoral Care Team will appoint members to assist in the overall aspects of pastoral care and health.

801.1.1.2.5. Pastoral Restoration Team: The Bishop, Ministerial Development Associate, and Chairman of the Pastoral Care Team will appoint members to oversee the restoration process for pastors and their families during pastoral accountability, disciplinary care, and suspension (see Section 808).

801.1.1.3. The component areas of the Ministerial Development Community shall meet in frequency and at various times that will most effectively accomplish the overall objectives of the community.

801.1.2. The Ministerial Development Community National Conference Relations Committee shall meet together at least annually to evaluate current practices, review consistency, and formulate procedures.

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801.1.3. The Ministerial Development Community shall meet together at least annually to evaluate current practices, review consistency, and formulate procedures.

801.2. Ministerial Classifications and Statuses

801.2.1. Ministerial classifications are determined by the level of an applicant's call and qualification to serve within the Evangelical Congregational Church.

801.2.1.1. National Classifications

801.2.1.1.1. The national classification consists of licensed candidates and pastors, as well as ordained elders.

801.2.1.1.2. Those seeking eventual ordination shall begin candidacy through the national classification as a Licensed Candidate.

801.2.1.2. Local Classifications

801.2.1.2.1. The local classification consists of local candidates, pastors, and elders.

801.2.1.2.2. Those seeking eventual qualification as an elder (without ordination) shall begin candidacy through the local classification as a Local Candidate.

801.2.1.3. Specialized Classifications

801.2.1.3.1. The specialized classification consists of Certified Lay Preachers, as well as licensed and ordained Deacon/esses.

801.2.1.3.2. Those seeking to serve the church in a specialized, non-pastoral role shall begin candidacy through the specialized classification as a Certified Lay Preacher or a Licensed Deacon/ess.

801.2.1.4. Provisional Classifications

801.2.1.4.1. The provisional classification consists of approved candidates, pastors, and elders.

801.2.1.4.2. Those seeking to serve the church in a provisional role can enter the provisional classification as an Approved Candidate, Approved Pastor, or Approved Elder based on their current qualifications in experience and education.

801.2.2. Ministerial statuses designate one's level of advancement within a given classification based on the qualifications of experience, education, and assignment.

801.2.2.1. Candidates, Pastors, and Elders

801.2.2.1.1. Generally, candidates are those who are available for ministry; they have sensed a calling from God toward pastoral ministry, but they have not yet had opportunity to serve as a pastor.

801.2.2.1.2. Generally, pastors are those who are active in ministry; they are currently serving a local congregation, but have not yet fulfilled the experiential and educational requirements within their classification.

801.2.2.1.3. Generally, elders are those who are accomplished in ministry; they have served or are currently serving a local congregation, and have fulfilled the experiential or educational requirements within their classification.

801.2.2.2. Lay Preachers and Deacon/esses

801.2.2.2.1. Lay preachers are those who are called and gifted to preach the Word of God, but do not serve in a pastoral role.

801.2.2.2.2. Deacon/esses are those who are called and qualified to provide specialized ministries such as (but not limited to) discipleship, evangelism, Christian education, youth ministry, prison ministry, visitation ministry, counseling, nursing home, or any kind of chaplaincy.

801.3. Ministerial Applications

801.3.1. All individuals seeking to make applications for a credential shall contact the Ministerial Development Associate.

801.3.2. Consultation with the Ministerial Development Associate is necessary to determine the appropriate classification and status for application.

801.4. Authorizations

801.4.1. The Ministerial Development Community shall report and be authorized to recommend for approval at National Conference, or grant immediately in the case of an Approved Candidate see (801.6.1.1) 1) candidates, pastors, and elders within provisional, local, and national classifications, 2) lay preachers and deacon/esses within specialized classifications, and 3) elders and deacon/esses for ordination, and 4) elders for itinerancy.

801.4.1.1. Approved candidates can immediately apply for and receive denominational student aid.

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801.4.2. The Ministerial Development Community shall report and be authorized to recommend for approval at National Conference retirement for local pastors and elders, and superannuated or supernumerary status for ordained elders under the region's jurisdiction.

801.4.3. The Ministerial Development Community shall be authorized to transfer between candidate and pastor statuses within a given classification without reporting to the National Conference. The Ministerial Development Community shall report and be authorized to recommend transfer for all others.

801.4.4. The Ministerial Development Community is authorized to grant provisional classifications upon pastors and elders between the sessions of National Conference for the purpose of providing availability for stationing needs.

801.4.5. The Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate are authorized to recommend spiritual care for candidates, pastors, elders, lay preachers, or deacon/esses needing guidance or support.

801.4.6. The Ministerial Development Associate in consultation with the Bishop is authorized to recommend for discipline any candidate, pastor, elder, lay preacher, or deacon/ess in order to provide spiritual restoration (see 808).

801.4.7. The Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate in consultation with the Board of Examiners are authorized to recommend to the National Conference the removal from the rolls of any candidate, lay preacher, or licensed deacon/ess who does not complete and submit the form for annual renewal of credentials in a given year.

801.4.8. The Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate in consultation with the Board of Examiners are authorized to recommend to the National Conference the removal from the rolls any pastor or elder who has withdrawn irregularly from assignment before the conclusion of the conference year, unless an agreement has been negotiated with the Stationing Committee concerning an early release. All such removals would be reported to the National Conference.

801.4.9. The Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate in consultation with the Board of Examiners are authorized to take disciplinary action when any credentialed person fails to notify them of changes in ministry employment outside of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

801.4.10. The Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate, acting jointly or individually, are authorized to immediately suspend the credentials of any individual when in their judgment credible evidence exists that the individual has violated Biblical standards of conduct to the extent that the individual in question cannot continue in pastoral ministry (see 808.3).

801.4.11. The Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate in consultation with the Board of Examiners may authorize the Ministerial Development Community to bring a recommendation to the National Conference to revoke an individual's credentials and remove them from our ministerial roles. (See 808.4)

802 Ministerial Credentialing and the National Conference

802.1. Credentials

802.1.1. The Ministerial Development Community secretary shall present a report to National Conference to consider all necessary items relating to credentialing at least two (2) weeks before the sessions of Conference.

802.1.2. The Ministerial Development Community secretary shall automatically transfer individuals between candidate and pastor statuses within the same classification, when a candidate is assigned or a pastor is no longer assigned. The individual will automatically assume the responsibilities, expectations, and privileges of his new status.

802.2. Executive Session

802.2.1. Applicants for Approved Elder and all statuses within the local and national classifications shall be considered in executive session at National Conference.

802.2.2. A simple majority vote of the members of the National Conference delegates present and voting is required, except for the Itinerant Ordained Elder status (see 802.2.3).

802.2.3. Applicants for Ordained Elder and admission into the Itinerancy shall be by ballot with only Itinerant Ordained Elders voting. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by ballot of the members of the Itinerancy present is required. The result of each ballot shall be announced in the open session of National Conference.

802.2.4. An applicant for transfer of credentials as an Ordained Elder shall be by ballot with only Itinerant Ordained Elders voting. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by ballot of the members of the

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Itinerancy present is required. The result of each ballot shall be announced in the open session of National Conference.

803 Ministerial Elder's Ordination and Itinerancy

803.1. Ministerial Qualifications that Lead to Elder's Ordination: The process that leads to becoming an Itinerant Ordained Elder requires that one is duly called, prepared, examined, ordained, and authorized through the Evangelical Congregational Church to represent the ministry of the gospel to the world.

803.1.1. The call to pastoral ministry is first sensed in an individual's heart and then shared with his pastor or elder. The pastor or elder makes the appropriate recommendation to the Ministerial Development Associate who connects the applicant with the Pastoral Assessment Center (see 804.2.1).

803.1.2. Following confirmation of an individual's call to ministry by the Pastoral Assessment Center, the applicant begins the process of preparation for ministry. Successful preparation and proficiency are demonstrated in passionate spirituality, the preaching of God's Word, evangelism, pastoral care, healthy interpersonal relationships, personal integrity, agreement with Evangelical Congregational theology, empowering leadership, and administration as reflected in our denomination's core values and the healthy characteristics presented within the overall credentialing process.

803.1.3. A Master of Divinity degree from Evangelical Theological Seminary or a similarly approved institution is strongly encouraged as this helps provide men with the training to evidence these necessary abilities and proven skills. If, in the considered judgment of the Ministerial Development Community and the National Conference, an applicant for ministry possesses a degree of maturity and experience, and has training equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree, he may be considered for ordination provided that he received additional training for Evangelical Congregational history, doctrine, and polity as determined by the Ministerial Development Community.

803.2. Itinerancy

803.2.1. The Itinerancy defines the ordained ministerial membership of the National Conference. An Itinerant Ordained Elder makes a commitment to the Evangelical Congregational Church to serve as assigned until released for good and sufficient reason by the National Conference.

803.2.2. Only ordained elders from within the national classification shall be included in the Itinerancy (see 805.3.1.3).

803.3. Ordination and the Deacon/ess Track for Ministry

803.3.1. A deacon/ess may be ordained when he or she meets the requirements for ordination in the deacon/ess track of ministry (see 805.4.3).

803.3.2. Ordained deacon/esses are not eligible for the Itinerancy.

804 The Standard Process for All Ministerial Credentials

804.1. General Requirements for Applicants

804.1.1. An applicant for any credential shall possess a high school diploma or its equivalent.

804.1.2. An applicant for any credential (except for Approved Pastor or Approved Elder) shall be a member of a local Evangelical Congregational Church for a minimum of one (1) year, where he has given evidence of his call by participation in the life and activity of the local congregation.

804.1.3. An applicant for Approved Pastor status shall be a member of another evangelical church for a minimum of one (1) year, where he has given evidence of his call by participation in the life and activity of the local congregation.

804.1.4. An applicant for Approved Elder status or for transfer of credentials shall be a ministerial member in good standing of his denomination.

804.1.5. The Ministerial Development Community shall consider only male applicants for the provisional, local, and national classifications, and as lay preachers.

804.1.6. Female applicants shall only be considered within the specialized classification as deaconesses.

804.2. General Procedures for Application

804.2.1. Pastoral Assessment

804.2.1.1. An applicant for any candidate status, or a local or licensed pastor status shall be required to participate in the Pastoral Assessment Center before being interviewed by the Board of Examiners. Approved Pastors must successfully complete the Pastoral Assessment Center during its next available offering.

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804.2.1.1.1. An applicant shall acquire the Pastoral Assessment Center forms through the Ministerial Development Associate, complete, and return all forms to Church Center according to the dates on the application for the start of the Pastoral Assessment Center.

804.2.1.1.2. An applicant for pastoral assessment shall secure a letter of reference from his pastor or elder regarding his calling, character, and competency.

804.2.1.2. Applicants within the specialized classification are not required to participate in the Pastoral Assessment Center.

804.2.1.3. Applicants for Approved Elder status, or who are transferring credentials to the Evangelical Congregational Church are not required to participate in the Pastoral Assessment Center.

804.2.2. Board of Examiners Interviews

804.2.2.1. All first-time applicants shall appear before the Board of Examiners to be interviewed.

804.2.2.1.1. Upon completion of the Pastoral Assessment Center, applicants wishing to apply as Approved Candidates shall contact the Ministerial Development Associate by March 1 in order to be considered for an interview.

804.2.2.1.2. Upon completion of the Pastoral Assessment Center, applicants wishing to apply as local or licensed candidates shall acquire the addendum to the Pastoral Assessment Center application from the Ministerial Development Associate, complete, and return the form to Church Center March 1 in order to be considered for an interview.

804.2.2.1.3. All other applicants shall acquire the appropriate application from the Ministerial Development Associate, complete, and return the form to the Church Center by March 1 in order to be considered for an interview.

804.2.2.2. When an applicant transfers from a candidate status to pastor status within the same classification, an interview with the Board of Examiners may be required. In this case, he shall secure a letter of reference from his pastor, elder, or coach regarding his calling, character, and competency.

804.2.2.3. An applicant for Itinerant Ordained Elder shall secure a letter of reference from his Pastoral Relations Committee or his employing board or agency regarding his character and competency.

804.2.2.4. Any applicant transferring from outside the denomination shall provide at least three (3) references regarding his calling, character, and competency.

804.2.2.5. An applicant for lay preacher, or a licensed or ordained deacon/ess status shall secure a letter of reference from his or her pastor, elder, or employing board or agency regarding his or her calling, character, and competency.

804.2.2.6. Only those forms received by March 1 shall be processed, unless a special exception has been granted by the Ministerial Development Associate.

804.2.3. An applicant shall then meet with the Board of Examiners. If approved, the Ministerial Development Community shall recommend the applicant for the proper status to the National Conference. In the case for an Approved Candidate, he can be granted status immediately.

804.2.4. After Board of Examiners approval, the following items need to be submitted to the Ministerial Development Associate.

804.2.4.1. All first-time applicants must sign an employment disclaimer permitting the Evangelical Congregational Church to conduct a criminal background clearance and child abuse history, and if needed, a credit check.

804.2.4.2. First-time applicants for any candidate, pastor, or lay preacher status shall preach a sermon and receive the recommendation of the majority of the members and friends of the local congregation in attendance prior to May 15.

804.2.4.3. Applicants for licensed deacon/ess status shall present a formal testimony in a worship service outlining his or her calling from God and receive the recommendation of the majority of the members and friends of the local congregation in attendance prior to May 15.

804.2.5. All first-time applicants shall appear before the National Conference to answer the *Questions to Applicants (Discipline, Section 512)* and receive approval from that body.

804.2.5.1. An Approved Candidate applicant may be permitted to answer the *Questions to Applicants* at the conclusion of his interview with the Board of Examiners and receive exemption from appearing at National Conference due to distance. However, upon first availability in the future shall appear before the National Conference to answer these questions.

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804.2.6. All candidates and pastors shall be assigned a coach to mentor them throughout the process until they obtain elder status.

804.2.7. The Student Aid Committee shall cooperate with any licensed candidate or pastor and his local church to help provide support for funding courses which are taken for credit.

804.3. Advancement

804.3.1. All local and licensed candidates and pastors, lay preachers, and deacon/esses shall immediately pursue the educational requirements within their respective classifications (see section 805).

804.3.2. All licensed pastors and Itinerant Ordained Elders shall be required to take the courses pertaining to Evangelical Congregational history, doctrine, and polity. Approved elders shall be required to take these courses after their first year in service.

805 Ministerial Credentials

805.1. All Candidates – Approved, Local, and Licensed

805.1.1. Definition and Differentiation of Candidates

805.1.1.1. Approved Candidate

805.1.1.1.1. The Approved Candidate status provides guidance in training, clarification of one's call to ministry, and utilization in a limited capacity by his pastor or elder.

805.1.1.1.2. The Approved Candidate is a provisional status in the provisional classification, which allows one to pursue his calling; however, eventually he must determine a course through the local or national classification.

805.1.1.2. Local Candidate

805.1.1.2.1. Additionally to 805.1.1.1.1, the Local Candidate status provides availability to be used at the direction of the Stationing Committee.

805.1.1.2.2. The Local Candidate is a status within the local classification, which allows one to become a Local Pastor and eventually a Local Elder. The local classification does not provide ordination.

805.1.1.2.3. The Local Candidate shall pursue the completion of the local pastor track within the Institute for Church Leadership course of study and the requirement in 804.3.2.

805.1.1.3. Licensed Candidate

805.1.1.3.1. Additionally to 805.1.1.1.1, the Licensed Candidate status provides availability to be used at the direction of the Stationing Committee.

805.1.1.3.2. The Licensed Candidate is a status within the national classification, which allows one to become a Licensed Pastor and eventually an Itinerant Ordained Elder.

805.1.1.3.3. Additionally to the requirements in 804.1.1, the Licensed Candidate must have completed at least three (3) years of college and is involved or is planning to be involved with seminary training. Therefore, the Licensed Candidate is committing to pursue a seminary degree and eventual ordination in the Evangelical Congregational Church.

805.1.2. All candidate applicants shall meet the requirements listed in section 804.1 and follow the procedure listed in section 804.2.

805.1.3. Privileges

805.1.3.1. All candidates have permission to preach in any of our churches upon invitation.

805.1.3.2. All candidates have permission to assist their pastor or elder as directed by him.

805.1.4. Restrictions

805.1.4.1. All candidate statuses are subject to annual renewal.

805.1.4.1.1. If a local or licensed candidate remains dormant in making progress toward his educational advancement for (4) years, the Ministerial Development Community may take action with his status.

805.1.4.2. All candidates are under the authority of their pastor or elder.

805.1.4.3. Candidates are not permitted to officiate at weddings.

805.1.4.4. Candidates are not permitted to use of the written title of *Reverend*.

805.1.4.5. Candidates do not possess any voting privileges at National Conference (see 205.1).

805.2. All Pastors – Approved, Local, and Licensed

805.2.1. Definition and Differentiation of Pastors

805.2.1.1. Approved Pastor

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805.2.1.1.1. The Approved Pastor status identifies those applying from outside the Evangelical Congregational Church who are willing to be stationed, but have no ministerial credential with another denomination, and who have not yet completed the educational requirements for becoming an elder within any classification.

805.2.1.1.2. Additionally to 804.1.1, the Approved Pastor must be active in the pursuit of training for ministry through college, seminary or an approved course of study.

805.2.1.1.3. The Approved Pastor is a provisional status within the provisional classification, which allows one to provide pastoral support to a congregation; however, he must be willing to determine a course through the local or national classification after one (1) year. The Ministerial Development Associate shall provide direction in this matter, determining if, how, and when he should make application within another classification.

805.2.1.1.4. An Approved Pastor may be requested to participate in the Pastoral Assessment Center (see 804.2.1.3).

805.2.1.1.5. Because the Approved Pastor status provides a one (1) year trial period, he is permitted to perform all pastoral duties, except for officiating at weddings. The District Field Director shall meet with the congregation immediately following his assignment to explain the responsibilities and restrictions within this status of ministry.

805.2.1.2. Local Pastor

805.2.1.2.1. The Local Pastor status identifies those who are stationed, but have limited or no ministerial experience, and who have not yet completed the educational requirements for becoming Local Elders within the local classification.

805.2.1.2.2. The Local Pastor is a status within the local classification, which allows one to provide pastoral support to a congregation while accomplishing the requirements for becoming a Local Elder. The local classification does not provide ordination.

805.2.1.2.3. The Local Pastor shall pursue the completion of the local pastor track of the Institute for Church Leadership course of study and the requirement in 804.3.2.

805.2.1.3. Licensed Pastor

805.2.1.3.1. The Licensed Pastor status identifies those who are stationed, but have limited or no ministerial experience, and who have not yet completed the educational requirements for becoming Itinerant Ordained Elders within the national classification.

805.2.1.3.2. Additionally to 804.1.1, the Licensed Pastor must have completed at least three (3) years of college and is involved or is planning to be involved with seminary training. Therefore, the Licensed Pastor is committing to pursue a seminary degree and eventual ordination in the Evangelical Congregational Church.

805.2.1.3.3. The Licensed Pastor is a status within the national classification, which allows one to provide pastoral support to a congregation while accomplishing the requirements for becoming an Itinerant Ordained Elder.

805.2.1.3.4. A Licensed Pastor shall receive a salary based on the minimum compensation set by the Pastoral Compensation Committee recommendation and mandated by National Conference approval for a Licensed Pastor.

805.2.1.3.4.1. A Licensed Pastor in his first two (2) years shall be compensated accordingly; however after completion of his second full year, he shall be compensated as a Licensed Pastor II.

805.2.2. All pastor applicants shall meet the requirements listed in section 804.1 and follow the procedure listed in section 804.2.

805.2.3. Privileges

805.2.3.1. Annual renewal of local and licensed pastor status is automatic so long as the assignment continues. Approved pastors must select between the local or national classification by the next National Conference (see 805.2.1.1.3).

805.2.3.2. Local and licensed pastors are permitted to officiate at weddings. Approved pastors are not granted this privilege (see 805.2.1.1.5).

805.2.3.3. Local and licensed pastors who are stationed as assistants or associates may perform full pastoral functions under the direction of their senior pastor.

805.2.3.4. All pastors are permitted to use the written title of *Reverend* so long as the assignment continues.

805.2.3.5. Local and licensed pastors are permitted voting privileges at National Conference whenever they are assigned (see 205.1).

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805.2.4. Restrictions

805.2.4.1. Approved pastors are not permitted to officiate at weddings.

805.2.4.2. Approved Pastors are not permitted any voting privileges at National Conference (see 305.1).

805.2.4.3. When a local or licensed pastor is no longer under assignment, his status shall revert back to the appropriate candidate status with the same privileges and restrictions of a candidate.

805.3. All Elders – Approved, Local, and Ordained

805.3.1. Definition and Differentiation of Elders

805.3.1.1. Approved Elder

805.3.1.1.1. The Approved Elder status identifies those applying from outside the Evangelical Congregational Church, who are available for assignment, have a ministerial credential with another denomination, yet will retain their credential with their former denomination.

805.3.1.1.2. In cases of emergency, the Stationing Committee, in consultation with the Ministerial Development Associate and the appropriate District Field Director, shall have the authority to employ an Approved Elder between the sessions of National Conference and report this to the Ministerial Development Community.

805.3.1.1.3. The Approved Elder is a provisional status within the provisional classification, which allows one to provide pastoral support to a congregation by serving under the authority of the Ministerial Development Associate.

805.3.1.1.4. When an Approved Elder wishes to transfer his credentials, he shall follow the procedure listed in section 805.5.

805.3.1.2. Local Elder

805.3.1.2.1. The Local Elder status identifies those in the local classification who have completed the Leadership Contact course of study or its equivalent, the requirement in 804.3.2, and three (3) years of assigned Evangelical Congregational pastoral experience.

805.3.1.2.2. The Local Elder status is a permanent status within the local classification, which allows one to provide full pastoral support to a congregation to which he is assigned. This classification does not provide ordination.

805.3.1.2.3. When a Local Elder is not assigned to a congregation, he shall be under the authority of the pastor or elder where he holds his membership. He shall be permitted to perform marriages in that congregation under the authority of the assigned pastor or elder.

805.3.1.2.4. When a Local Elder is not assigned to a congregation, he shall not be a voting member of the National Conference.

805.3.1.3. Itinerant Ordained Elder

805.3.1.3.1. The Itinerant Ordained Elder status identifies those in the national classification who have completed the educational and experiential requirements for ordination, and who are willing to make a commitment to the Evangelical Congregational Church to serve as assigned until released for good and sufficient reason by the National Conference.

805.3.1.3.1.1. The requirements for ordination are the completion of a Master of Divinity degree from an approved seminary (or its equivalent; see 805.3.1.3.1.2), the educational requirements in 804.3.2, and three (3) years of assigned experience in Evangelical Congregational pastoral service or employment of a board or agency.

805.3.1.3.1.2. In the case where an equivalency to a Master of Divinity degree is granted for the educational requirement, five (5) years of assigned experience in Evangelical Congregational pastoral service or employment of a board or agency is required.

805.3.1.3.2. The Itinerant Ordained Elder status is a permanent status within the national classification, which allows one the permanent authority for full pastoral functions and title (see 805.3.5).

805.3.1.3.3. Ordination carries with it the obligation to stand accountable and responsible before God and the Church within the apostolic tradition and the doctrinal positions of the Evangelical Congregational Church, which the ordinand is charged to protect and defend.

805.3.2. Procedure for Application (All Elder Classifications)

805.3.2.1. The applicant shall acquire the appropriate application from the Ministerial Development Associate, complete, and return the form to Church Center by March 1 in order to be considered for an interview with the Board of Examiners.

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805.3.2.2. Licensed Pastors who have completed the educational and experiential requirements (see section 805.3.1.3.1) shall concurrently apply for admission to the Itinerancy when applying for ordained elder status (see section 805.3.3).

805.3.3. Procedure for Application (Itinerant Ordained Elders only)

805.3.3.1. An applicant for ordination shall secure a letter of reference from his Pastoral Relations Committee or his employing board or agency regarding his character and competency and forward it to the Ministerial Development Associate.

805.3.3.2. An applicant shall meet with the Board of Examiners to review his application and receive its recommendation to the National Conference. The applicant is expected to provide evidence of his necessary abilities and proven skills, articulate and defend the doctrinal positions of the Evangelical Congregational Church, and inform and satisfy the Board of Examiners regarding his ministry objectives and ministry work performance.

805.3.3.3. The examination of an applicant for ordination goes beyond merely completing an educational degree. The necessary abilities in all of the areas enumerated in section 803 and in the application for ordination must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Board of Examiners.

805.3.3.4. Applicants who already possess Elder's orders from the EC Church, but did not seek admission to the Itinerancy in the past may apply for admission to the Itinerancy by obtaining the supplemental application for Itinerancy from the Ministerial Development Associate.

805.3.3.5. Applicants who possess credentials from another denomination must serve two (2) years in an assigned capacity in the Evangelical Congregational Church before becoming eligible for admission to the Itinerancy.

805.3.4. Steps toward Ordination and Itinerancy (Itinerant Ordained Elders only)

805.3.4.1. Upon approval by the Board of Examiners, an applicant shall then receive the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Itinerancy present and voting by ballot at National Conference.

805.3.4.2. Upon approval by the members of the Itinerancy, ordinands shall be ordained by the Bishop on behalf of the whole church in an Evangelical Congregational location of the ordinand's choice, such as a church, seminary chapel, or on the mission field. Full consultation with the Bishop must be made prior to scheduling the ordination service.

805.3.4.3. Each ordinand shall receive a Bible, properly inscribed, at the time of ordination.

805.3.5. Privileges (Itinerant Ordained Elders only)

805.3.5.1. Only until after the ordination vows have been assumed at an ordination service may the Itinerant Ordained Elder begin to assume the following privileges.

805.3.5.1.1. Itinerant Ordained Elders possess full voting privileges for National Conference.

805.3.5.1.2. Itinerant Ordained Elders shall be given priority consideration for an open assignment above the other statuses for ministry.

805.3.5.1.3. Itinerant Ordained Elders possess permanent authority for all pastoral functions and title.

805.3.5.2. Itinerant Ordained Elders are eligible for election to the offices of Bishop, and may be appointed as an Associate and as members of the Board of Examiners.

805.4. All Specialized Personnel – Certified Lay Preachers and Deacon/esses

805.4.1. Certified Lay Preacher

805.4.1.1. Definition of Certified Lay Preachers

805.4.1.1.1. The Certified Lay Preacher status identifies those who are called and gifted to preach the Word of God, but not permitted to serve in a pastoral role.

805.4.1.1.2. The Certified Lay Preacher is a provisional status within the specialized classification, which allows one to be used for pulpit supply.

805.4.1.1.3. The Certified Lay Preacher shall pursue the completion of the certified lay preacher track within the Institute for Church Leadership course of study.

805.4.1.2. Procedure for Application

805.4.1.2.1. All Certified Lay Preacher applicants shall meet the requirements listed in section 804.1 and follow the procedure listed in sections 804.2.2., 804.2.3, 804.2.4, and 804.2.5.

805.4.1.2.2. All Certified Lay Preacher applicants shall secure a letter of reference from his pastor or elder regarding his calling, character, and competency.

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805.4.1.3. Privileges

805.4.1.3.1. The Certified Lay Preacher has permission to preach in any of our churches upon invitation of the local pastor.

805.4.1.4. Restrictions

805.4.1.4.1. The Certified Lay Preacher status is subject to annual renewal.

805.4.1.4.2. Certified Lay Preachers are not permitted to officiate at weddings.

805.4.1.4.3. Certified Lay Preachers are not permitted to use of the written title of *Reverend* or *Pastor*.

805.4.1.4.4. Certified Lay Preachers do not possess any voting privileges at National Conference (see 205.1).

805.4.2. Licensed Deacon/ess

805.4.2.1. Definition of Licensed Deacon/esses

805.4.2.1.1. The Licensed Deacon/ess status identifies those men and women who are qualified to provide specialized ministries such as (but not limited to) discipleship, evangelism, Christian education, youth ministry, prison ministry, visitation ministry, counseling, nursing home, or any kind of chaplaincy.

805.4.2.1.2. The Licensed Deacon/ess is a provisional status within the specialized classification, which allows one to be recognized in his or her field of specialization and serve in a particular ministry context with some of the privileges given to pastors and elders.

805.4.2.2. Procedure for Application

805.4.2.2.1. All Licensed Deacon/ess applicants shall meet the requirements listed in section 804.1 and follow the procedure listed in sections 804.2.2., 804.2.3, 804.2.4, and 804.2.5.

805.4.2.2.2. All Licensed Deacon/ess applicants shall secure a letter of reference from their pastor or elder regarding their calling, character, and competency.

805.4.2.3. Privileges

805.4.2.3.1. Licensed Deacon/esses are permitted to officiate at weddings only on those occasions that their particular position requires them to do so and as approved by the Ministerial Development Associate.

805.4.2.4. Restrictions

805.4.2.4.1. The Licensed Deacon/ess status is subject to annual renewal.

805.4.2.4.2. Upon approval by the National Conference, the Licensed Deacon/ess shall specify the church or organization where the license will be used to the Ministerial Development Associate, and thereafter must seek approval when changes are necessary. The Licensed Deacon/ess shall inform the Ministerial Development Associate when changes occur in location, responsibilities or duties.

805.4.2.4.3. Licensed Deacon/esses are not permitted to use of the written title of *Reverend*.

805.4.2.4.4. Licensed Deacon/esses do not possess any voting privileges at National Conference (see 305.1).

805.4.3. Ordained Deacon/ess

805.4.3.1. Definition of Ordained Deacon/esses

805.4.3.1.1. The Ordained Deacon/ess status identifies those men and women who have successfully served in specialized ministries such as (but not limited to) discipleship, evangelism, Christian education, youth ministry, prison ministry, visitation ministry, counseling, nursing home, or any kind of chaplaincy for at least three (3) years after becoming a Licensed Deacon/ess. A full year of service in a part-time assignment shall be counted as one-half (1/2) year of service (see 906.2).

805.4.3.1.2. The Ordained Deacon/ess is a permanent status within the specialized classification, which allows one to be recognized and ordained in his or her field of specialization and serve in a particular ministry context with some of the privileges given to pastors and elders.

805.4.3.2. Procedure for Application

805.4.3.2.1. An applicant for ordination shall acquire the appropriate application from the Ministerial Development Associate, complete, and return the form to Church Center by March 1 in order to be considered for an interview with the Board of Examiners.

805.4.3.2.2. Applicants for ordination shall secure a letter of reference from their pastor or elder, or employing board or agency regarding their character and competency.

805.4.3.2.3. Applicants for ordination shall meet with the Board of Examiners to review their application and receive its recommendation to the National Conference. Applicants are expected to provide evidence of their necessary abilities and proven skills, articulate and defend the doctrinal

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positions of the Evangelical Congregational Church, and inform and satisfy the Board of Examiners regarding their ministry objectives and ministry work performance.

805.4.3.2.4. The examination of an applicant for ordination goes beyond merely completing the experiential requirement. The necessary abilities in all of the areas in the application for ordination must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Board of Examiners.

805.4.3.3. Steps toward Ordination

805.4.3.3.1. Upon approval by the Board of Examiners, an applicant shall then receive the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the ministerial and lay members present and voting by ballot at National Conference.

805.4.3.3.2. Upon approval at National Conference, ordinands shall be ordained by the Bishop on behalf of the whole church in an Evangelical Congregational location of the ordinand's choice, such as a church, seminary chapel, or on the mission field. Full consultation with the Bishop must be made prior to scheduling the ordination service.

805.4.3.4. Privileges

805.4.3.4.1. Ordained Deacon/esses are permitted to officiate at weddings only on those occasions that their particular position requires them to do so and as approved by the Ministerial Development Associate.

805.4.3.4.2. The Ordained Deacon/ess status does not require annual renewal.

805.4.3.5. Restrictions

805.4.3.5.1. The Ordained Deacon/ess shall inform the Ministerial Development Associate when changes occur in location, responsibilities or duties.

805.4.3.5.2. Ordained Deacon/esses are not permitted to use of the written title of *Reverend*.

805.4.3.5.3. Ordained Deacon/esses do not possess any voting privileges at National Conference (see 205.1).

805.4.3.5.4. Since the Ordained Deacon/ess credential is issued for a specific ministry, approval from the Ministerial Development Associate is necessary in order to transfer the credential to another field (*Eg. from counseling to youth ministry or chaplaincy to discipleship*).

805.5. Transfer of Credentials from Other Denominations

805.5.1. Requirements

805.5.1.1. An applicant for transfer of credentials must be a ministerial member in good standing with his denomination.

805.5.1.2. An applicant shall provide at least three (3) references regarding his calling, character, and competency.

805.5.1.3. The applicant shall possess a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent in order to be considered for credentials as an Ordained Elder. If he does not have a Master of Divinity or its equivalent, he shall be required to apply for and follow the procedure for an Approved, Local, or Licensed Pastor (see section 805.2).

805.5.1.4. Consideration for credentials as an Ordained Elder requires prior full time service as an accredited pastor in another denomination for at least four (4) years. If he does not have four (4) years' experience, he shall be required to apply for and follow the procedure for a Licensed Pastor (see sections 805.2.1-4).

805.5.2. Procedure for Application

805.5.2.1. The applicant shall acquire the appropriate application from the Ministerial Development Associate, complete, and return the form to the EC Church Center by March 1 in order to be considered for an interview with the Board of Examiners.

805.5.2.2. The applicant shall produce evidence of possessing valid credentials with his current denomination.

805.5.2.3. An applicant shall meet with the Board of Examiners to review his application and receive its recommendation to the National Conference. The applicant is expected to provide evidence of his necessary abilities and proven skills, articulate and defend the doctrinal positions of the Evangelical Congregational Church, and inform and satisfy the Board of Examiners regarding his ministry objectives and ministry work performance.

805.5.2.4. After approval from the Board of Examiners, an applicant shall appear before the National Conference to answer the Questions to Applicants (*Discipline*, Section 512) and receive approval from that body (see 802.2.4).

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805.5.3. Privileges

805.5.3.1. If he has educational requirements that satisfy a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, he would be received as an Ordained Elder, however will have to wait two (2) years to be considered for the Itinerancy.

805.5.3.2. He would become available for assignment within the EC Church.

805.5.3.3. He would be permitted to officiate at weddings.

805.5.3.4. He would possess voting privileges at National Conference, but not the privileges of an Itinerant.

805.5.4. Restrictions and Additional Requirements

805.5.4.1. Admission into the Itinerancy requires at least two (2) years assigned experience in the EC Church.

805.5.4.2. He would not be permitted to vote in executive session at National Conference.

805.5.4.3. He shall be required to take the next available courses pertaining to Evangelical Congregational history, doctrine, and polity. The candidate, the local church he serves, and the denomination Student Aid Committee will cooperate in funding such courses.

805.6 Transferring of Credentials to another Judicatory

805.6.1. An individual with E.C. credentials who desires to transfer those credentials to another judicatory must request it in writing to the Ministerial Development Associate.

805.6.2. The Ministerial Development Community in consultation with the Bishop is authorized to grant such a transfer between the sessions of National Conference.

805.6.2.1. Upon approval of the Ministerial Development Community, the secretary shall notify the E.C. Church Center who shall then issue the letter of transfer of credentials.

805.6.3. This action shall be included in the Ministerial Development Community report to the National Conference.

806 Secondary Active Designations

806.1. Designations. A credentialed minister serving on the mission field, in military chaplaincy, or in Christian ministries not related to the Evangelical Congregational Church shall be classified within his standing credential with the added designation *Active in Related Field* along with the specific field of service (Eg. *Active in Related Field – Missionary*).

806.1.1. Missionaries. A credentialed minister of the National Conference who desires to serve in a full-time capacity as an EC missionary shall make the request known to the Ministerial Development Associate and the Global Ministries Associate. He must successfully complete the interview process of the Global Ministries Community and receive the approval of the Stationing Committee for appointment to the field.

806.1.2. Military Chaplains. An Ordained Elder of the National Conference who desires to serve in a full-time capacity as a chaplain in the U.S. Armed Forces shall make the request known to the Ministerial Development Associate, the Bishop, and the National Conference endorser for military chaplaincy. He must successfully complete the interview process of the denomination's Chaplaincy Committee, the chaplain candidacy program of his branch of the armed forces, and receive the approval of the Stationing Committee for appointment to the chaplaincy.

806.1.3. Other Ministries. A credentialed minister who desires to be employed by a Christian ministry or local church that is not related to the Evangelical Congregational Church shall present a letter of request to the Ministerial Development Associate who shall consult with the Bishop for approval.

807 Inactive Classifications

807.1. Retirement and Superannuation

807.1.1. Classifications

807.1.1.1. Itinerant Ordained Elders who retire from active ministry are classified as *Superannuated*.

807.1.1.2. All other retiring pastors, elders, and deacon/esses shall be classified as *Retired*.

807.1.2. Procedure

807.1.2.1. When a pastor, elder, or deacon/ess decides to retire, he or she shall make his intention known by written notification to the Ministerial Development Associate and Bishop by January 1 of the year he plans to retire.

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807.1.2.2. The Ministerial Development Associate shall present the written notice to the Ministerial Development Community and a recommendation for retirement shall be made to the National Conference.

807.1.2.3. The pastor or elder shall also notify the Benefits Corporation through the Executive Director.

807.1.3. Provisions

807.1.3.1. The National Conference shall give a monetary gift (a minimum of \$25 per year of service) to each retiring pastor or elder as directed by the finance committee.

807.1.3.2. The National Conference shall also provide for the moving expense of retiring pastors and elders and for widows whose husbands were in active ministry at the time of their death provided that the distance is within the boundaries of the National Conference (see rule 910.2.3 for schedule).

807.2. Inactive and Supernumerary

807.2.1. Classifications

807.2.1.1. Any Itinerant Ordained Elder of the National Conference who withdraws from pastoral ministry due to bodily infirmities or who accepts a full-time position in any other sphere of service, other than those listed under the designation *Active in Related Field* (see section 806), and is, in honor, so bound by the other commitment that he cannot meet the requirements of an active elder, shall be placed in *Supernumerary* relationship.

807.2.1.2. Any other pastor, elder, or deacon/ess of the National Conference who withdraws from pastoral ministry due to bodily infirmities or who accepts a full-time position in any other sphere of service, other than those listed under the designation *Active in Related Field* (see section 806), and is, in honor, so bound by the other commitment that he cannot meet the requirements of an active pastor, elder, or deacon/ess, shall be placed in an *Inactive* relationship (*Eg. Elder – Inactive*).

807.2.2. Supervision

807.2.2.1. The Ministerial Development Community will maintain a supervisory relationship with supernumerary and inactive pastors, elders, and deacon/esses through an annual contact by the Ministerial Development Community.

808 Credentials and the Process for Violations of Biblical Standards

808.1. When a credentialed individual is alleged to have committed a sin expressly forbidden in God's Word or to have acted in a manner that is detrimental to the people entrusted to his/her care, the Evangelical Congregational Church, or the ministry of the Kingdom, the Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate shall meet with the credentialed individual, and any other parties involved in order to discern the reality and seriousness of the situation.

808.1.1. The Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate, acting jointly, or individually in the other's absence, have the authority to act immediately to suspend the credentials of any individual when in their judgment credible evidence exists that the individual has violated biblical standards of conduct to the extent that the individual in question cannot continue in ministry effective immediately. (See 808.2)

808.1.2. Alternately, the Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate, may determine that the individual can continue in ministry under the direction of a restoration team that will be assigned to walk through a process of healing with the individual that may also include the spouse and family, if necessary. This process will be defined as Under Accountability or Under Discipline based on the seriousness of the violation. (See 808.4)

808.2. Violations Resulting in the Immediate Suspension of Credentials

808.2.1. There are times when an individual holding credentials is removed from his/her ministry position, because the individual has violated biblical standards of conduct to the extent that the individual in question cannot immediately continue in ministry.

808.2.1.1. The Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate along with the appropriate Board of Examiners shall then meet as soon as is practical to consider further action, and the appropriate District Field Director will be notified.

808.2.1.2. As a result of suspension, the credentialed individual will be immediately removed from his/her ministry position(s), and after review of the Board of Examiners, may be placed under disciplinary care (See 808.4.2), and may additionally, be required to surrender his/her credentials (See 808.3)

808.2.1.3. Neither this designation, nor its results, will appear in the Conference Journal.

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808.3. Violations Resulting in Surrendering of Credentials

808.3.1. There are times when an individual holding credentials is removed from a ministry position because the individual has violated biblical standards of conduct to the extent that the individual in question cannot continue in ministry for a prolonged duration.

808.3.1.1. At this point, the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate along with the appropriate Board of Examiners have the authority to ask individuals to surrender their credentials. The appropriate District Field Director will be notified.

808.3.1.2. As a result of surrendering credentials, the individual will be immediately removed from his/her ministry position(s), and required to surrender his/her clergy certificate and identification card. The term for one's return to ministry will be determined by a process under the direction of a restoration team that will be assigned to walk through a process of healing with the individual that may also include the spouse and family, if necessary. (See 808.4.2)

808.3.1.3. When an individual refuses to submit to the process for restoration, the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate will follow procedures to revoke his/her credentials (See 808.5)

808.3.1.4. Neither this designation, nor its results, will appear in the Conference Journal.

808.4. Violations Not Resulting in Surrender of Credentials

808.4.1. Under Accountability

808.4.1.1. There are times when an individual holding credentials is not removed from his/her ministry position, but is dealing with issues where the guidance of the Pastoral Restoration Team may be of great help.

808.4.1.2. In those cases, the Ministerial Development Associate and Bishop may at their discretion place individuals Under Accountability and assign a Pastoral Restoration Team to provide accountability, guidance, and support to them. The appropriate District Field Director will be notified, and no action is taken in regard to the credential.

808.4.1.2.1. The members of the Pastoral Relations Team are accountable to the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate at all times and can never act independently of their oversight.

808.4.1.2.2. The work of the Pastoral Restoration Team will be governed by the Ministerial Development Community policy.

808.4.1.3. There is no change in credential or in status of an individual who is Under Accountability.

808.4.1.4. Neither this designation, nor its results, will appear in the Conference Journal.

808.4.2. Under Disciplinary Care

808.4.2.1. There are times when an individual holding credentials is removed from his/her ministry position because of sinful conduct and is placed under the disciplinary care of the Pastoral Restoration Team (801.1.1.2.5).

808.4.2.2. The Pastoral Restoration Team will work toward spiritual restoration of the individual (including the family, if necessary), in consultation with the Bishop, the Ministerial Development Associate. The appropriate District Field Director will be notified.

808.4.2.2.1. If needed, the Ministerial Development Associate and/or Bishop may additionally ask the individual to surrender his/her credentials and authorize the Board of Examiners to hold them until such time as restorative requirements are met. (See 808.3)

808.4.2.3. The members of the Pastoral Restoration Team are accountable to the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate at all times and can never act independently of their oversight.

808.4.2.4. The work of the Pastoral Restoration Team will be governed by the Ministerial Development Community policy.

808.4.2.5. Neither this designation, nor its results, will appear in the Conference Journal.

808.5. Violations Resulting in Revoking of Credentials

808.5.1. In situations where the fact of misconduct is beyond question and the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate determines that an individual under accountability, disciplinary care, or suspension cannot be restored to office or fails to complete the requirements established for restoration, the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate may authorize the appropriate Board of Examiners to bring a recommendation to the National Conference to revoke the individual's credentials and remove them from our ministerial rolls.

808.5.1.1. Voting by ballot, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Itinerancy is required to approve the action.

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808.5.1.2. The individual whose credentials are being revoked may appeal the decision utilizing the appeal procedure outlined in the Discipline, paragraph 614.

809 Ministerial Personnel Not Serving Pastoral Appointments

809.1. All ministerial personnel not serving appointments shall give active support to the local EC congregation in which their membership is held and loyal cooperation to the pastor or elder of that congregation unless granted an exception by the Ministerial Development Associate.

809.2. A supernumerary who has removed his residence to another locality that is at such a distance from the area served by a local EC church to prevent his attendance at a local EC church's services and functions shall annually complete a report concerning his whereabouts and status. The Ministerial Development Associate will convey this information to the local pastor and the Ministerial Development Community. If a supernumerary fails to make such contact and report, the local pastor shall contact the Ministerial Development Associate, who will follow up with the Supernumerary.

809.3. The Ministerial Development Associate shall present a report regarding these persons, their relationship to the local church, and their adherence to the moral and spiritual principles of the denomination to the Ministerial Development Community.

810 Irregular Pastoral Appointments

810.1. Stationed Interims

810.1.1. An interim pastor or elder shall be so designated by the Stationing Committee when he is entrusted with the oversight of a church to which no regular pastoral appointment has been made.

810.1.2. An interim pastor or elder shall have the all the privileges of an assigned pastor or elder (See Section 908).

810.2. Pulpit Supply

810.2.1. When an interim or permanent pastor or elder is not immediately available, lay members may be used to supply the pulpit and meet basic pastoral care needs.

810.3. Church Planting

810.3.1. A church planter shall be designated by the Kingdom Extension Community in consultation with the Stationing Committee and shall give pastoral oversight to the plant or restart.

810.4. Authorized Work

810.4.1. Lay members may also be deployed and entrusted with the work of initiating and/or servicing new preaching places.

810.4.2. Lay members may be deployed when a new preaching place has been identified, or when a church has been planted or restarted and a permanent church planter has not yet been appointed by the Kingdom Extension Community.

900. Stationing of Ministers

901 Defining Stationing. Pastors are assigned by a Stationing Committee through a cooperative process (Stationing Committee, pastor and local church) rather than called to pulpit ministries by a local congregation. Pastors agree to willingly go where they are assigned and churches agree to accept the pastor assigned. The final decision regarding a pastoral assignment rests solely with the Stationing Committee.

The National Conference demonstrates active concern for the well being of both pastor and people through a support structure involving the District, Stationing Committee, and the Pastoral Relations Committee.

The National Conference exercises control over the stationability of a pastor. This control is exercised through the Stationing Committee, the Ministerial Development Community, the Conference Network Team, and through adherence to the *Discipline* of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

In each case where a move is necessitated, the Stationing Committee shall give careful consideration to seniority, past performances, and the gifts and graces of the men involved (not necessarily in that order) as well as the needs of the local churches to be stationed.

902 The Stationing Committee and Stationing Elders. This committee is chaired by the Bishop and includes two Stationing Elders elected from each and by each region of the denomination and one District Field Director from each region elected by the Conference Network Team. The Stationing Elder

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must be an active or retired Elder. The term of office for a Stationing Elder is five years with no term limit. The responsibilities of a Stationing Elder are:

1. To assist in the stationing process by preparing pastors and pastoral relations committees for interviews
2. To confirm pastoral salary packages at a duly called Official Board/Ministry Council meeting.

903 Initiating a Pastoral Change

903.1. The Pastor. A pastor may request a new assignment in writing to the Bishop.

903.2. The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). The PRC may make the request for a pastoral change when there are valid reasons for such a request. A careful yet confidential assessment of the attitudes and concerns of the congregation and its other leaders should be considered. The counsel of the District Field Director should be sought. A request for a new pastor must be made in writing to the Bishop.

903.3. The Stationing Committee. The Stationing Committee may ask a pastor to consider a change when his gifts and graces are needed elsewhere. They may also initiate a change when the present assignment is not resulting in healthy ministry.

903.4 Early Withdrawal. Negotiations for an early, regular withdrawal shall be conducted with the stationing committee members from that region through the Bishop.

903.5 Irregular Withdrawal. When a pastor withdraws irregularly (that is, before the end of the assignment year) from our denomination, the Ministerial Development Community shall be authorized but is not required to request the return of his credentials. This request shall be made by the Ministerial Development Community Secretary unless the pastor has negotiated an early release with the Stationing Committee.

903.6 Exit Interview. The Ministerial Development Associate and/or the bishop shall conduct an exit interview with pastors who withdraw from ministry.

904 Stationing Procedures.

904.1. Deadlines. January 1 is the deadline for both churches and pastors to submit written requests for a change along with a completed Pastor Information Profile (PIP) to the Bishop. Lay delegates and pastors shall be notified of pending changes at least one month prior to the opening date of the National Conference, if possible.

904.2. Profile Forms. Church Information Profiles (CHIPs) and Pastor Information Profiles (PIPs) will be provided by the Stationing Committee as needed.

904.2.1. CHIP. The local church's PRC and Official Board/Ministry Council will complete a CHIP to assist the church and the Stationing Committee in identifying the pastor of God's choosing. The CHIP serves as a written introduction to the church for potential candidates.

904.2.2. PIP. The PIP is a helpful tool for the Stationing Committee as they seek to match pastors and churches. It is useful to a church that is preparing to interview the pastor.

904.3 Interviews.

904.3.1. PRC Expansion. The Official Board/Ministry Council may expand the membership of the PRC for the purpose of interviewing candidates. The lay delegate shall be the liaison with the Stationing Committee unless the official board/ministry council appoints the PRC chairperson to serve as the liaison.

904.3.2. Interview Process. The Stationing Committee will provide to one pastor the copy of the CHIP of one church for prayerful consideration. Upon that pastor's agreement to interview at that church, the Stationing Committee will provide to that church's PRC a copy of his PIP for their prayerful consideration. When agreement has been reached to proceed, the interview process will be carried through until completion. In the event that the initial interview does not result in an appointment, efforts will be made to provide additional interview opportunities.

The PRC may attend the prospective pastor's worship/Bible study to assist in evaluations only with the approval of Stationing Elder. The pastor may not initiate personal contacts with the prospective church, nor the church with the prospective pastor without the approval of the Stationing Elder.

The number of interviews allowed is limited only by the number of available and qualified pastors and the number of available and suitable churches. However, only one pastor will interview with one church until a mutual decision is reached."

904.3.3. Special Requests. A church desiring to contact a specific pastor will do so only through the Stationing Committee. The Stationing Committee will contact the pastor and secure his

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desires. A pastor desiring consideration for a specific church may inform the Stationing Committee but should not contact the church.

904.3.4. Interview Decision. When a decision is made by the PRC or the pastor, the decision must be conveyed to the Stationing Elder as soon as possible. If the decision reached is that the pastor and the church are not a suitable match, the process is closed between them and will not be reopened.

904.4. Final Decision and Announcement. In all matters regarding a decision of assignment of a pastor to a local church, the Stationing Committee will have the final authority. Official announcement of stationing assignments will be made by the Bishop on behalf of the Stationing Committee following their announcement in the churches affected by the assignments.

905 Transitional or Interim Ministry Assignments.

905.1 Definition. Transitional or interim pastors are assigned to a congregation when the congregation faces a significant transition in ministry and focus resulting from but not limited to one of the following circumstances: (1) the end of a long-term pastorate; (2) the confession of pastoral misconduct; (3) occurrence of significant congregational conflict; (4) desire to make changes in greater ways and at a faster pace than they normally would (5) the need to radically refocus ministry as in the transitions faced by aging urban congregations in ethnically diverse neighborhoods.” A transitional or interim pastoral appointment shall be recommended to a congregation by the Bishop in consultation with the Stationing Committee. In all matters relating to transitional or interim appointments, the Stationing Committee shall have the final authority.

905.2 Assignment Guidelines.

905.2.1 The transitional pastor shall meet the “Standards for the Practice of Transitional Ministry in the Evangelical Congregational Church,” which may be secured from the Stationing Committee.

905.2.2. The transitional pastor may be full-time or part-time and may serve individually or as a part of a pastoral team.

905.2.3. The transitional pastor shall serve under the “Evangelical Congregational Church Transitional Ministry Covenant and Compensation Covenant,” which is provided by the Stationing Committee.

905.2.4. A document entitled “Roles during the Interim” shall be completed by the Stationing Elder in consultation with a local church’s Pastoral Relations Committee.

905.2.5. The Bishop shall suggest all transitional ministry assignments.

905.2.6. The Stationing Elder shall negotiate the “Evangelical Congregational Transitional Ministry Covenant” and the “Compensation Covenant” with the transitional pastor, other team members, and the congregation. The Stationing Committee shall oversee the work.

906 Stationing Classifications

906.1 Full-time Pastors. A full time pastor is a pastor who has been assigned to a church or charge, receives the full time cash salary adopted by National Conference plus the base compensation benefits defined in the NC rule 1002, and has no other employment unless agreed to by the District Field Director and Ministerial Development Associate in consultation with the church or charge.

906.2. Part-Time Pastors (PT). A part time pastor is a pastor who has been assigned to a church or charge and receives less than the minimum annual salary package as established by the National Conference and has permission to seek outside employment. To assure adequate compensation for the level of part time work expected by a congregation and to assist the Benefits Corporation in assigning certain benefits, part time pastors shall be classified in one of three categories: Quarter time- 10-15 hours per week; Half time- 20-25 hours per week; Three-quarters time- 30-35 hours a week

906.3. Associate Pastors (A). An associate pastor is employed full-time on a pastoral staff.

906.4. Assistant Pastors (At). An assistant pastor is employed part-time on a pastoral staff.

906.5. Interim Pastors (I). Pastors serving transitional ministry assignments are called interims.

907 First Appointments. Within two years after being stationed, a pastor in his first appointment shall attend the scheduled orientation session, sponsored by the Ministerial Development Community, expenses for same to be paid by the National Conference.

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908 Privileges of Assignment. The lead pastor or elder of an assignment will be responsible to oversee the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the spiritual health and pastoral care of the local body.

909 Solemnizing Marriages. Consistent with our understanding of human sexuality and marriage as articulated in Section 143.1.2 of the *Discipline*, it is hereby resolved that persons holding ministerial credentials in the Evangelical Congregational Church are prohibited from performing any rite or ceremony, as well as from signing any documents pursuant to the sanctioning or solemnizing of same-sex unions or same-sex marriages.

910 Moving of Ministers

910.1. The National Conference will only pay for moves that are required by Stationing.

910.2 Pastors who are moving are expected to get two or more estimates from moving companies of their choice, prior to the start of National Conference. One of the estimates will be initiated by the Moving Coordinator working with a moving company provided by conference.

910.2.1 Moving estimates should be given to the Moving Coordinator.

910.2.2 Basic insurance coverage is provided by moving companies for intra-state and inter-state moves. The amount of basic coverage varies depending on weight. If a pastor feels that additional insurance is necessary for the move, the additional cost will be the pastor's responsibility. Also, pastors are responsible to do their own packing. If pastoral families find it necessary to obtain boxes from the moving company, this expense would be paid by National Conference. Some moving companies provide boxes free of charge or will rent boxes at a lesser charge.

910.2.3 Churches shall be granted a moving subsidy as established by National Conference. The subsidy will be given based on the distance of the move. The following shall be used as the schedule for moving expense given based on the distance of the move. The following shall be used as the schedule for moving expense reimbursement: for intra-state (within the state) moves from 0-40 miles, the allowance will be up to \$2500.00; for intra-state moves from 41-200 miles the allowance will be up to \$3000.00; for intra-state moves from 201-350 miles, the allowance will be up to \$4500.00; and for inter-state (between states) moves, the allowance will be up to \$7500.00. If the amount exceeds the National Conference subsidy, the receiving church will be responsible for the remaining balance. The Finance Committee shall review these amounts annually.

910.2.4 All moves will be reviewed for possible income tax liability by the regulations included in IRS publication 521 Moving Expenses. In moves that are determined to be taxable, form 1099-MISC will be generated by the E. C. National Conference with the relocated pastor as the recipient on the form 1099-M with total cost of the move included in box 7 (non-employee compensation). This amount becomes taxable income to the relocated pastor. The National Conference will also reimburse the affected pastor up to 25% of the cost of the move to offset Federal, State and Local income taxes, if applicable. The tax payment will also be reported in Box 7 of form 1099-MISC as taxable income.

910.3 Moves should commence as soon as possible after the National Conference and need to be coordinated with the pastor currently occupying the parsonage, and the Moving Coordinator. Pastors and churches should do everything possible to expedite the moving schedule. Requests for a move prior to National Conference are to be made through the Moving Coordinator in consultation with the Bishop.

910.4 Pastors receiving a new assignment shall move within 12 months of the effective date of that assignment. Any move beyond the 12 month period at that assignment shall be at the pastor's own expense.

910.5 Retiring pastors should move prior to the National Conference or immediately thereafter.

910.6 Problems coordinating moves should be reported to the Moving Coordinator.

910.7 A form requesting information and an assessment of the move will be sent to the pastor. The completed form is to be forwarded to the Moving Coordinator.

910.8 The Bishop shall appoint a Moving Coordinator to oversee the moving schedule and other moving related responsibilities. The Moving Coordinator's term of office shall be one year, with no term limit.

1000. Pastoral Compensation

1001 Salary Year. The salary year shall conform to the calendar year, January 1 through December 31. Changes in salary necessitated by a change in pastor shall be approved at a special meeting of the Official

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Board/Ministry Council. At the time of Pastoral change or termination of ministry, the salary is to continue until June 30. Salary for newly assigned Pastors shall begin on July 1.

1002 Base Compensation Definition. Items which each charge is to provide as base compensation are: in addition to cash salary: one-half the actual Social Security payment; medical premiums for the pastor and family; first \$500 of deductible health care expenses (see 1002.7); disability coverage; travel reimbursement for pastoral care at the standard IRS mileage rate; continuing education allowance; vacation according to schedule of years served; and suitable housing (see 1002.a) or housing allowance. Cash salary is defined as the base compensation amount before being adjusted for the housing allowance, social security, pension contribution or any other additional benefit or deduction to salary. After the pastor's salary has been approved for the next fiscal year, all churches are required to complete the Statement of Pastor's Salary Form and provide copies of this form to the Pastor, Official Board/Ministry Council Record Book, Local Church Treasurer, Executive Director, and Benefits-Compensation Administrator. The Executive Director will annually review the Statement of Pastor's Salary Form, Worksheet for Pastor's Salary, the Salary and Medical Reimbursement Agreement Forms and make them available to the churches.

1002.1. Medical Salary Deductions. After the pastor and Pastoral Relations Committee/Official Board/Ministry Council have a joint discussion regarding salary, churches may choose to deduct a portion of the pastor's salary as payment for the medical premium according to the following schedule:

<u>Salary Range</u>	<u>Contribution</u>
\$0 - \$35,000	5.0%
\$35,001 - \$50,000	7.5%
\$50,001 - Unlimited	10.0%

1002.2. Parsonage Requirements. For churches providing a parsonage, the following items are included in the pastors' compensation/benefit package: utilities including electric, gas/oil, water/sewer, and base telephone; a cooking range and refrigerator; living room carpeting and drapes; smoke detectors and a fire escape ladder. A committee made up of a Steward or a member of the Finance Committee or a member of the group responsible for setting the pastor's compensation package and a Trustee and the Lay Delegate shall annually conduct a walk-thru of the parsonage at the time that the pastor's salary is set. This group shall complete the Annual Church-Owned Parsonage Review Form and provide signed copies to the Pastor, District Field Director, and Executive Director and place a copy in the official minutes of the church. The walk-thru committee shall provide a synopsis of the parsonage review form, including the list of immediate needs and priorities, to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting. This form will be reviewed by the National Conference Finance Committee and made available for distribution with the Pastors' Salary Forms as listed in NC Rule 1002.

1002.3. Minimum Cash Salaries. For the calendar year, the minimum cash salary of full time pastors shall be those recommended by the Compensation Committee and approved by the Conference. Probationers shall receive a minimum cash salary of \$1,000 less than Licentiates. The lay delegate shall call together the stewards or appropriate financial officers of the charge immediately following the National Conference to acquaint them with any pertinent actions or recommendations of the Conference concerning salary matters.

1002.4. Multiple Staff Salaries. Charges with the second full time pastoral assignment should meet at least the minimum recommended salary range. In the case of an Elder, the initial salary shall be negotiated between the local church, the Stationing Elder, as requested, and the man to be assigned, based on his abilities and years of service.

1002.5 Student Pastor Salaries. A pastor enrolled in the four year program at the Evangelical Theological Seminary or its equivalent and living on the field is a student pastor and shall receive a minimum remuneration according to the scale fixed above based on his classification.

1002.6. Part-time Pastor Salaries. Part-time pastors, defined as those pastors serving on a limited basis because they are also employed in secular work, because they are superannuated or because they are students serving on a more limited basis than a regular student pastor, shall be paid a salary negotiated by the Stationing Elder, the local church and the man to be assigned.

1002.7. Mid-Year Change From Full-Time To Part-Time or Part-Time To Full-Time Pastoral Assignment. Any church or assigned pastor contemplating a change of status from full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time during the course of the conference year must contact the District Field Director and Executive Director prior to any change in the pastor's status. The Executive Director

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and the Bishop, in consultation with the District Field Director, will review the request. If the change in assigned status is approved, the Executive Director, where appropriate, will negotiate a new compensation agreement. Due to legal issues of compliance the E.C. Benefits and Compensation Administrator must be informed of the pending change in status 30 days in advance of its effective date.

1002.8. Leaders Serving in Shared Ministry. When denominational leaders serve in a shared ministry position the denominationally funded portion of the total compensation shall not increase by more than ten percent (10%) in any year without approval by the Finance Committee and National Ministry Team.

1002.9. Housing Allowance. Pastors and congregations who want to consider a housing allowance should in all cases advise the Executive Director and seek his consultation regarding the pertinent details.

1002.10 Social Security Benefit. Each church will reimburse to the pastor the employer's portion of the Social Security and Medicare Payroll tax per the annual rate as reported in Internal Revenue Service Publication 15 (Circular E, Employer's Tax Guide). The amount due each pastor is calculated on the Pastoral Worksheet for Calculating Cash Salary, Housing Declaration and Social Security. The reimbursement is taxable income for the calculation of federal, state and local payroll taxes.

1002.11 Disability Coverage. Local churches shall provide disability coverage for the pastors in accordance with the regulations of the Benefits Corporation by the payment of the established amount per year to the Benefits Corporation. Payments are to be made in January.

1002.12. Continuing Education Benefit. All Pastors are strongly encouraged to be life-long learners. It is understood that continuing education takes on many shapes and forms. Pastors are encouraged to earn C.E.U.'s from seminary courses, class audits, or seminars. Life-long learning also occurs through reading professional journals and books. The emphasis is to be a growth-oriented Pastor involved in activities which are meant to improve pastoral skills and provide personal enrichment.

1002.12.1 Churches with Full Time Pastors shall make available an amount beginning at \$1,000 in addition to the cash salary, as a fringe benefit to be used for the purpose of life-long learning. These funds may also be applied to a student pastor's tuition at college or seminary.

1002.12.2 Churches with Part Time Pastors are encouraged to make money available in addition to the cash salary, as a fringe benefit to be used for the purpose of life-long learning. These funds may also be applied to a student pastor's tuition at college or seminary.

1002.13. Vacation Schedule. Full-time and part-time pastors serving up to nine years in the active ministry of the Evangelical Congregational Church shall receive a minimum of three weeks; pastors serving the tenth to nineteenth years, a minimum of four weeks; pastors serving the twentieth to twenty-ninth years, a minimum of five weeks; and pastors having completed thirty years, at least five weeks. Vacation time shall be counted on the basis of the year of pastoral assignment, not the calendar year.

1002.14. Ministry Leave. Pastors shall annually be granted a minimum of one week of "Ministry Leave" for the purpose of personal spiritual development, study, service, or global experience. This leave requires prior scheduling approval by the local church Board or Ministry Council and accountability to that body.

1002.15. Release from Assignment. If either a pastor is released from his assigned pastoral position by the National Conference, Conference Network Team or if the pastor resigns his assigned pastoral position of his own volition before the end of the assignment year, effective immediately upon the date of departure of said pastor, the terms of the Statement for Pastor's Salary, as had been approved for that pastor, are considered null and void.

1003 Expenses. Local churches shall assume travel expenses for the pastor at the IRS for mileage logged covering local pastoral care and administration.

1004 Other Employment. (1) A fulltime pastor desiring to seek employment outside his pastorate is required to first consult the District Field Director and the Bishop and then the local church's Pastoral Relations Committee before approval can be granted for the pastor to be so involved. (2) A pastor receiving less than the minimum salary for a fulltime pastor established by the National Conference is permitted to seek other employment.

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1005 Miscellaneous Benefits.

1005.1. Death Benefit. At the death of a full-time pastor who was assigned by appointment, a cash sum in the amount of \$5,000 shall be paid to the surviving wife and/or dependent children living in the residence. This amount shall be paid from the Disability Fund.

1005.2 Severance. In the event that an active pastor with EC credentials awaiting reassignment is unable to be assigned, the National Conference will appeal to our churches for funds to provide the third quarter health insurance for the pastor and his family. If the pastor has made every effort to secure employment but is unable to do so, an appeal may be made to our churches for funds to pay additional quarters.

1100. Miscellaneous

1101 Electronic Meetings. The meetings of any National Conference body may make use of teleconferencing or videoconferencing technology. Those involved in meeting by these media shall be considered present for quorum purposes, afforded the same rights as those physically in attendance, and have their participation governed by the same rules as those physically present. Special care should be taken to distribute the agenda and any other relevant documents prior to the meeting so that those participating by teleconference can participate fully and also to identify participants in the meeting. E-mail may be used for disseminating information, making announcements and distributing agendas, reports and minutes. Because of the non-interactive nature of e-mail, it may not be used as a medium for decision making or in place of holding meetings of committees or groups.

1102 Gifts and Bequests to National Conference. The Evangelical Congregational Church welcomes and encourages its members and friends to make gifts and bequests to the National Conference and further encourages that those gifts be made without restriction.

1102.1 Restricted Gifts. When restricted gifts or bequests are offered, they will only be accepted if the restriction is within the law and not contradictory to the *Discipline* of the church as determined by the Finance Committee.

1102.2 Gifts less than \$50,000. When a gift or bequest of a value of \$50,000 or less is received, it shall be referred to the Finance Committee of the National Conference to determine appropriate disposition.

1102.3 Gifts over \$50,000. When a gift or bequest of a value over \$50,000 is received, it shall be referred to the Finance Committee of the national Conference to make recommendation to the National Ministry Team for appropriate disposition.

1102.4. Real Estate or Personal Property. Gifts or bequests of real estate or personal property shall first be referred to the Property Committee which shall assess the nature, condition and value of the gift and make recommendations to the Finance Committee for disposition. The value of gifts-in-kind and the value of real estate shall be included in the above dollar limits.

1103 Conflict of Interest. All members of the Evangelical Congregational National Executive Committee, Church Center Staff, Loan and Investment Committee and Finance Committee shall disclose all real or apparent conflict or dualities of interest that they discover or that have been brought to their attention in connection with this organization's activities. "Disclosure" shall mean providing properly, to the appropriate person, a written description of the facts compromising the real or apparent conflict or duality of interest. An annual disclosure statement shall be circulated to committee members, officers, and certain identified agents and employees to assist them in considering such disclosures, but disclosure is appropriate and required whenever conflicts or dualities of interest may occur. The written notices of disclosures shall be filed with the Bishop's office or such other person or office designated by the Bishop to receive such notifications. All disclosures of real or apparent conflict or duality of interest shall be noted for the record in the minutes of each committee with the NEC overseeing the Church Center Staff.

An individual committee member, officer, agent or employee who believes that he or she or an immediate member of his or her immediate family might have a real or apparent conflict of interest, in addition to filing a notice of disclosure, must abstain from:

1. Participating in discussion or deliberations with respect to the subject of the conflict (other than to present factual information or to answer questions)
2. using his or her personal influence to affect deliberations
3. making motions

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4. voting
5. executing agreements, or
6. taking similar actions on behalf of the organizations where the conflict or duality of interest might pertain by law, agreement, or otherwise.

At the discretion of the governing body or a committee thereof, a person with a real or apparent conflict or duality of interest may be excused from all or any portion of discussion or deliberations with respect to the subject of the conflict. A member of the governing body or a committee thereof, who, having disclosed a conflict or duality of interest, nevertheless shall be counted in determining the existence of a quorum at any meeting in which the subject of the conflict is discussed. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect the individual's disclosure, the vote thereon, and the individual's abstention from participating and voting. The Bishop shall ensure that all committee members, officers, agents, employees, and independent contractors of the organization are made aware of the organization's policy with respect to conflicts or duality of interest.

1104 Denominational Children and Youth Protection Policy. All denominational employees, clergy, missionaries and volunteers who may work with children and youth under the age of 18 in denominational-level ministries of the E.C. Church must undergo a background check in accordance with laws of the state in which the ministry takes place. They must also sign a statement agreeing to follow all denominational policies with respect to working with children and youth. The protection policy includes an explanation of the policy, guidelines for recruitment, selection, and supervision of workers, a response to possible abuse situation, as well as an Applicant's Statement.