



ALABAMA STATE MINISTRIES
CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

**Guide for
Lay Ministry Certificate
and
Ministerial Licensure**

Revised November 1, 2021



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This guide includes steps for lay ministry licensure and steps for ministry licensure in the Church of God of Prophecy. There are often questions regarding which license to pursue when beginning ministry. The following suggestions should be observed:

1. Those persons with no prior ministry experience, who desire to receive ministry license, should first pursue the lay minister's certificate. This certificate will enable the prospective minister to serve in ministry while they pursue full credentials.
2. Once the lay minister's certificate is received, the ministry candidate will immediately begin the process of pursuing full ministry credentialing and ministry licensure in the Church of God of Prophecy.
3. Those persons with prior ministry experience, advanced academic preparation, or who are joining the Church of God of Prophecy with credentials in another organization, may begin immediately in the process of pursuing full ministry credentialing and ministry licensure in the Church of God of Prophecy, without obtaining a lay minister's certificate. The decision for a ministry candidate to forgo the need for a lay minister's certificate is made at the discretion of the state bishop.

General Ministry Advice

The ministry is a high and holy calling and should not be entered into lightly. A deep reverence and sincerity toward God, who has called the candidate, should always be first and foremost in priority as he prepares for entering the ministry. It is not the church that calls, but God. Therefore, one's first allegiance should be to God. The candidate must meet some fundamental requirements and qualifications before he is licensed or ordained. God's work does not operate in a vacuum, but in the real world where civil duties are required, as well as spiritual. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

Lay Ministry Licensure

When a person (who has been saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost, and baptized by immersion) begins to recognize that he/she has been called by God into the ministry, it is necessary that he/she have a time of preparation and study to prepare him/herself for the ministry. The lay ministry period is a time when a ministerial candidate can prove him/herself deserving of being recommended for the ministry by the local church, examined by the presbytery, and licensed by the church. The Lay Minister's Certificate is designed to give the ministerial candidate the recognition needed while gaining experience and being proven. This certificate is to be endorsed by the overseer of the nation/region/state in which the lay minister is working. It is necessary for the local church where he/she is a member to



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recommend the one who desires to work for the Lord to the overseer; and if in his judgment the candidate is worthy of receiving this certificate, it can be granted (55th Assembly Minutes, 1960, p. 134).

Steps for Lay Ministry Licensure in the Church of God of Prophecy

- Calling to Ministry** **Date Completed** _____
Person who feel the calling of ministry on his/her life meets with local church pastor regarding this calling.
- Pastor and Church Endorsement for Lay Ministry** **Date Completed** _____
If the pastor of the local church also recognizes the call of ministry upon the life of the ministerial candidate, the pastor will initially recommend the candidate for the office of lay minister by the local church. In a regular or called conference, the pastor will recommend the candidate to the local church for lay ministry.
- Lay Ministry Application and Permission to Obtain Background Check Mailed to State Bishop** **Date Completed** _____
After the local church approves the recommendation of the pastor, the lay minister's application should be completed by the candidate. The pastor and church clerk will complete and sign the lay minister's endorsement section of that application form. The completed form (both sections) will be sent to the overseer for his action. Send completed Lay Minister's Application and Permission to Obtain a Background Check (all sections completed) to the following:

*Church of God of Prophecy
Attention: State Bishop
PO Box 970
Moulton, AL 35650*
- State Bishop Approval** **Date Completed** _____
The state bishop will either approve or reject the application. If he rejects, he will notify the pastor and the candidate of his reason(s) and advise them what requirements remain to be fulfilled.
- Lay-Minister's Certificate Received** **Date Completed** _____
If the application is approved, the overseer will issue the official Lay-Minister's Certificate for the current calendar year and mail it to the pastor with instructions that it should be presented to the candidate in a public ceremony of installation and consecration.



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6. **Certificate Presentation and Installation*** **Date Completed** _____

After receiving the Lay-Minister's Certificate from the state bishop, the local pastor will present the certificate to the Lay-Minister in a public installation ceremony of consecration. Additionally, the state bishop will write to commend and instruct the candidate regarding the exercise of the ministry, under the guidance of the pastor, and the duty to report to the local church conference.

***Authorization**

The Lay Minister's Certificate authorizes the lay minister to publish, preach, and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ; to conduct prayer meetings; and to hold revivals. He/she cannot receive members, baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, conduct business meetings, or perform weddings.

***Endorsement**

The local church's endorsement of the lay minister is limited to that ministry only and does not authorize further advancement in the ministry without approval of the state bishop and further action by the local church in "regular" or "called" conference.

***Moving/Transfer of Membership**

When a lay minister moves to a new location, his/her membership should be immediately transferred to a church in that area. Preparation for becoming licensed may then continue between the lay minister, the local church, and the state bishop. It is to be understood that this new local church would give its consideration [recommendation] at the end of the year to the person's worthiness of continuing as a lay minister. If the local church deems it wise, the lay minister would be set forth in conference in the regular manner as was done initially by the church from which the lay minister transferred (77th Assembly Minutes, 1982, p. 83).

7. **Lay Ministry Mentoring** **Date Completed** _____

The ministry candidate should secure two copies of *Practice These Things: Mentor Ministry Workbook*, one for the candidate and one for their pastor. The ministry candidate should meet regularly with the pastor, who is their mentor. All assignments from *Practice These Things* should be completed and submitted to their mentor in a timely manner. At the completion of the mentorship (11 lessons), the ministerial candidate must submit all completed assignments to the state overseer. These assignments will become a part of the candidates permanent file. Additionally, it is recommended that the ministry candidate purchase a copy of the *Minister's Pocket Manual: Church of God of Prophecy Edition*, to assist in their duties of ministry. *Practice These Things* (ISBN 978-1-940212-44-9), *Minister's Pocket Manual: Church of God of*



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Prophecy Edition (ISBN 978-1-940212-41-8) and may be purchased from White Wings Books by calling 800-221-5027 or online at www.whitewingbooks.com.

8. **Lay Minister's Reports**

The lay minister should contact the state bishop to request login credential in the Office 365 online reporting/tithing portal. The lay minister should report monthly through the online reporting portal, once login credentials are received. The lay minister should submit a copy of each month's report to their pastor as well. All income from ministry is to be tithed into the state office and forwarded with lay minister's report.

9. **Lay Minister's Certificate Renewal** **Date Completed** _____

It is the sole responsibility of the lay minister to request a renewal of his/her certificate from the state bishop at the beginning of each calendar year. If Lay Minister's Certificates are not renewed by the state bishop prior certificates will be voided and the process of full credentialing will cease until certificate is renewed. The request for renewal should be submitted in writing to:

*Church of God of Prophecy
Attention: State Overseer
PO Box 970
Moulton, AL 35650*

10. **Recommendation for Ministry Licensure** **Date Completed** _____

When the local church concludes that a lay minister has satisfactorily been prepared to become a minister in the church, it could make known its feelings to the state bishop, who could make the recommendation, at his discretion, that the candidate is to be set forth in regular conference (78th Assembly Minutes, 1983, p. 135).

Forms Needed

The following forms may be secured from the state office or online at www.alcogop.org and are needed to complete steps 1-10 for the lay minister's certificate:

- *Lay Minister's Application Form (1 page)*
- *Permission to Obtain Background Check (1 page)*



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Steps for Ministry Licensure/Full Ordination in the Church of God of Prophecy

The following steps are for ministry licensure in the Church of God of Prophecy, in the state of Alabama. The majority of ministers who pursue their full ministry credentials do so through the process of first obtaining a lay ministry certificate. However, certain exceptions to these steps may be made by the state bishop when ministers join the Church of God of Prophecy from other organizations who hold a minister’s license in that organization, have ministry or pastoral experience, or have earned certain academic credentials . In such cases the state bishop will determine which steps may have previously been met and forward the candidate for licensure to proceeding steps. When ministers come from another organization, they may be licensed or ordained after they have been examined to determine their qualifications and their spiritual and doctrinal purity. In exceptional cases, with the specific order of the general overseer/general presbyter, some of the standard provisions for examining candidates may be waived.

The following describes the process needed to license a person as a minister.

1. **Pastor/Church Endorsement in Conference** **Date Completed** _____
 After the candidate for licensure has completed a minimum of one year as a lay minister, the requirements of *Practice These Things*, and has demonstrated competence as a minister, the pastor may recommend, with the state bishop’s approval, to the local church that he/she be set forth for the ministry in a regular or called conference of the local church. Please note, if the candidate for ministry was designated by the state bishop to have previously completed the steps required for lay ministry, the ministry candidate must still secure the pastor and local church endorsement for ministry.

2. **Endorsement Mailed to State Bishop** **Date Completed** _____
 Once the local church has set the candidate forth for the ministry and the church clerk has recorded the action in the minutes of the church conference, the pastor and church clerk will complete the Church and Pastor’s Endorsement. The clerk will forward it to the state bishop for his action.

3. **Practice These Things Assignments to State Bishop** **Date Completed** _____
 If the ministry candidate was a lay minister, internship assignments completed and approved by the pastor should be sent to the state bishop for the candidate’s file. Note, assignment should be mailed to the state bishop at one time, after all assignments required are completed.



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4. **Enroll in Foundations: Minister's Development Program** Date Completed _____

When the state bishop has received and approved the Church and Pastor's Endorsement form, the candidate should enroll in the online Foundations: Minister's Development Program. **PLEASE NOTE: You do NOT need to wait to enroll in the Foundations: Minister's Development Program (online).** This program is extensive and will take a great deal of time. Candidates should enroll as early as possible in the program.

The Foundations: Minister's Development Program is completely free and available online. All candidates must fully complete the Foundations: Minister's Development Program to receive full credentials in the Church of God of Prophecy. The Foundations: Minister's Development Program consists of the following six courses (each course has 7 lessons):

- The Ministers and God's Word
- The Minister's Personal Life
- The Minister and Practical Ministry
- The Minister's Role as Leaders
- The Minister's Commitment to Evangelism and Discipleship
- The Minister and the Church of God of Prophecy

To complete the Foundations: Minister's Development Program, the following steps are necessary:

- A. Go to cblcogop.org to enroll in Foundations: Minister's Development Program.
- B. Continue the course through *Teachable*, the online learning management system. You will move through each course at your own pace.
- C. After successfully completing all six Foundations: Minister's Development Program courses, the Center for Biblical Leadership will provide a "Certificate of Achievement" to the North America Presbyter's office as well as the Alabama State Bishop's office.

5. **Complete Ministerial License Application** Date Completed _____

After completing the Foundations Minister's Development Program the candidate should complete the Application for Ministerial License and submit it to the state bishop.



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6. **Meet Ministerial Review Board*** **Date Completed** _____
- When the ministry candidate has completed the application, the overseer will arrange for the candidate to appear before the state review board, including the state bishop, who will examine the candidate regarding his/her knowledge of the Scriptures, doctrine, church history, polity, personal and family devotional life, family life, personal business, financial situation, and personal standing with those outside the church.
- *The review board may desire a meeting prior to the official meeting to become acquainted with the applicant. The official meeting with the review board will open with prayer; after which, the moderating overseer will read an appropriate scripture verse/passage and speak regarding the purpose of the meeting, the profound significance of the sacred calling to the ministry, and why adequate preparation is important. Following this, general questions may be asked by members of the review board in the areas named above. The applicant will be counseled as the situation requires and as the Spirit of the Lord directs. When the review board is satisfied that the candidate is ready for licensure or ordination, it shall recommend that the candidate be licensed or ordained by the presbytery. Should the review board decide that the candidate is not ready to be licensed, it will make such recommendation, or the candidate may be given more time to prepare. When more time is needed, a date will be set, with the candidate's consent, for a second meeting with the review board. If he/she is not approved after the third appearance before the board, the Presbytery may conclude that he/she not be reconsidered for at least one full year, at which time the candidate would be required to start from the beginning.
7. **Recommendation by State Bishop for Licensure** **Date Completed** _____
- The authority of licensure is limited to the Presbytery, composed of the general overseer/presbyter and national/regional/state overseers. Review boards serve in advisory roles. Upon approval by the review board, a recommendation letter will be written by the overseer to be placed in the candidate's file in the national/regional/state office, who will also forward a copy along with the Church and Pastor's Endorsement and the completed application to the general presbyter's office. Upon receipt of the recommendation letter and other specified forms, the general overseer/presbyter will, after his approval, issue a license or ordination certificate and mail it to the overseer for his signature.
8. **Ordination of Minister** **Date Completed** _____
- Once received from the general overseer/presbyter, the ministry license will be presented to the new minister in a public service including prayer and "laying on of hands" by a member of the presbytery, usually the state bishop.



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After licensing, the minister continues to be a private member of the local church and is subject to its government and discipline as prescribed by the International Assembly. However, in matters relating to his/her ministry, the minister is under the supervision of the Presbytery. The local church may take no action regarding the termination of a licensed minister.

Licensed ministers are authorized to preach and defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ, establish churches, baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, and the washing of the saints' feet. Those who pastor have the authority to conduct local business conferences and solemnize the rites of matrimony in legal marriages. Ministers who are not currently pastoring a church may receive permission from their overseer to solemnize the rites of matrimony in legal marriages that are biblically valid according to the Church's understanding. When the general overseer's office receives approval from the state bishop's office, a special permit will be issued and mailed directly to the minister.

9. North America Office 365 Reporting/Tithing Portal Date Completed _____

If the minister has not previously joined the Office 365 online reporting/tithing portal, following ministerial ordination, the state bishop will make request for the new minister to join the North America Ministries' online tithing and reporting portal, Office 365. North America Ministries IT personnel will contact the new minister with login information and reporting and tithing instructions.

Forms Needed

The following forms may be secured from the state office or online at www.alcogop.org and are needed to complete steps 1-10 for the minister's licensure:

- *Permission to obtain Background Check (1 page)*
- *Church and Pastor's Endorsement Form (1 page)*
- *Authorization to Release Information Form (1 page)*
- *Ministerial License Application Form (2 pages)*



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Important Notes of Interest for the Ministry

State Bishop’s Jurisdiction

The general practice has been that jurisdiction over a minister (minister’s license) under appointment is with their supervising state bishop. For ministers not under appointment, jurisdiction follows his current place of residence—where he actually lives—and not necessarily where his membership is registered.

Reporting System of the Ministry*

Effective October 1, 1996, licensed ministers and pastors are to send the tithes of income from the ministry with their monthly reports to the state office.

Bishops

Report and tithe from income from the ministry monthly to the state office.

Licensed Ministers

Report and tithe from income from the ministry monthly to the state office.

Lay Ministers

Report monthly to the State Office and report quarterly to the Local Church Conference. Tithe from income from the ministry should be sent with report to the state office. Duplicate report to be forwarded to the state overseer by the church clerk. Note: Lay ministers tithe to the local church unless they are an appointed pastor in which case they should tithe to the state office as other pastors do. Lay ministers certificates should be renewed at the first of each calendar year at the state office.

Retired Ministers

Report monthly and pay tithes from the ministry to the state office. Report annually to the state office if no tithe from ministry.

Those not participating online reporting and tithing should send their report and tithe to:

*Church of God of Prophecy
Attention: State Bishop
PO Box 970
Moulton, AL 35650*

Note: Minister licenses “lapse” if the minister does not report for 24 consecutive months.



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General Ministerial Competencies

It is important to note that these competencies form developmental guidelines and not necessarily prescribed checklists. With the exception of our Lord, no one, not even the apostles, possessed all of these skills, abilities, and functional knowledge. Therefore, these should be used as motivation for continued growth, not as barriers to ministry. Furthermore, it should be strongly emphasized that the mere exhibition of all these competencies would never guarantee success in ministry. Apart from calling, anointing, and a helpless dependence on the Holy Spirit, achievement of these items by an individual is of little, real value. These competencies may be modified in order to best reflect the desired outcomes and goals of regional leadership and to meet the needs of the region's and local church's ministries. These can also serve, at all levels, as a basis for the criteria against which evaluations can be done. In order to be fully equipped for the work of ministering, a person should know or be able to do the following:

1. Learn and practice the process of personal spiritual and character formation in developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and, in so doing, become conformed to His image.
2. Have a general knowledge of the nature, history, importance, background, and content of the Bible.
3. Have a working knowledge of the various methods of Bible study and be able to utilize these methods in their growth and ministerial work.
4. Become familiar with the various types of evangelism (personal, mass, cross-cultural, etc.), in order to be personally equipped to effectively share the gospel.
5. Develop communication skills that will enable effective interaction with other people, (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, listening).
6. Develop relational skills that will enable them to work effectively with those to whom and with whom they minister.
7. Understand and practice biblical principles of stewardship in regard to time, money, and service, and teach others to be committed to these principles.
8. Develop and utilize the basic skills of counseling so that a broad spectrum of people can be helped.
9. Have a working knowledge of the history of Christianity, including the major events, people, and movements that have brought Christianity to its current state.
10. Have a working knowledge of the history, polity, organization, and doctrine of the Church of God of Prophecy.
11. Understand the major issues of Christian ethics and how those issues impact the daily life of the Christian.
12. Be aware of ways in which the Christian faith can be lived out practically, not just theoretically, by developing and participating in practical ministries that relate to the actual life situations of people.



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13. Learn and practice the skills necessary to be a lifelong learner, so that the process of personal development can continue.
14. Be knowledgeable of the major issues of systematic theology and relate them to the lives of those to whom they minister.
15. Develop the leadership and appropriate administrative skills necessary to carry out ministry in the church and world.

These competencies are considered of such vital importance that all who acknowledge a call to, or gifting for, any area of ministry, lay or professional, should strive to develop them.¹

¹ Ministry Policy Manual. (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House), 2016, 72-73