

CREDENTIAL HANDBOOK

READ THIS BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION



South Dakota Ministry Network

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CREDENTIAL CALENDAR TIMETABLE AND INSTRUCTIONS

Visit our website at sdag.org to complete the Pre-Application by October 1. Once approved to apply, you will be supplied with the formal application and forms.

APPLICATION DEADLINE - November 1

The following items must be **in our office** on or before the above-mentioned date:

New Applicants

- a. Official Application with photo
- b. School Transcript(s) – unless still completing classes – **all classes** are to be completed no later than **Dec 31st**
- c. Authorization & Release Forms
- d. Photocopy of Social Security Card
- e. Background Check Disclosure Form
- f. Supplemental App & Spouse Info Form
- g. Waiver and Disclaimer Form
- h. Fee: All Levels -- \$140

Upgrade Applicants

- a. Upgrade Application with photo
- b. School Transcript(s) – unless still completing classes – all classes to be completed no later than Dec 31st
- c. Authorization & Release Forms
- d. Photocopy of Social Security Card
- e. Background Check Disclosure Form
- f. Supplemental App & Spouse Info Form
- g. **Fee: Licensed Minister -- \$100 if upgrading** within 1 year of being certified
\$120 application fee if upgrading after 2 years
\$20 discount for each person, if both husband & wife are applying the same year.

Ordained Minister --\$100 if upgrading within 2 year of being licensed.

\$120 application fee if upgrading after 2 years

\$20 discount for each person, if both husband & wife are applying the same year.

FINAL DEADLINE - December 16

The following items must be **in our office** on or before the above-mentioned date:

New Applicants

Exams & References

Upgrade Applicant

Exam (no exam for Ordination) & References

Guidelines for taking the exam

The exam(s) are to be taken under the supervision of a designated, approved proctor. The exam links will be emailed to the candidate and the proctor. Exams can also be taken on paper. Study guides are available. **The exam(s) must be completed no later than December 16th.**

Interviews Tuesday of presbyter meetings in January

Applicants who have been approved will be notified shortly after their interview with the presbytery.

Spouses or fiancés are required to attend the interview.

Credentialing Ceremony

The Credentialing Ceremony takes place during the Celebration Service of Network Council the Tuesday night service at 7:00 pm. The rehearsal will begin promptly at 5:30 pm.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

This handbook has been prepared to give helpful information to those who have a call to ministry and may be seeking ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God Fellowship through the South Dakota Ministry Network .

All candidates should acquaint themselves with the teachings, practices, and purposes of the fellowship as revealed through the Constitution & Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. The General Council Constitution & Bylaws can be found at this website: <https://ag.org/About/About-the-AG/Constitution-and-Bylaws>.

All applications for ministerial credentials are to be made through the South Dakota Ministry Network. See pages 5-7 for **Basic Qualifications**, pages 8 for **Specific Qualifications**, and pages 11-12 regarding **Making Application**.

Ministerial credentials are for those who show a genuine call of God to ministry which would take them beyond the confines of their local church. **Ministerial credentials are not for lay people engaged in teaching, worship leading, or occasional exhortation in the local assembly.** It is the responsibility of the Credentials Committee to carefully screen all candidates to determine whether their ministry would be best served as a lay ministry or if the candidate should be credentialed. If you are unsure if a credential is needed, contact the credentialing office.

16 FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

All candidates seeking credentials with the Assemblies of God must agree with the 16 tenets of faith. These are non-negotiable. If a candidate finds they disagree with any of the following fundamental truths, they should discuss their concerns with the Network Secretary before actually beginning the application process. Applicants not agreeing with the 16 fundamental truths will not receive credentials.

WE BELIEVE:

1. **The Scriptures Inspired** 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:21
2. **One True God** Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22
3. **The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ** Matt 1:23, 28:6; Luke 1:31, 35; 24:39; Acts 1:9,11; 2:22; 2:33; 10:38; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22

4. **The Fall of Man** Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19
5. **The Salvation of Man** Luke 24:27; John 3:3; Romans 8:16; 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; 4:24; Titus 2:11-12; 3:5-7
6. **The Ordinances of the Church** Matt 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:4; 1Corinthians 11:26; 2 Peter 1:4
7. **The Baptism in the Holy Spirit** Mark 16:20; Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:4, 8; 2:42-43; 4:8; 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9; 1Corinthians 12:1-31; Hebrews 12:28
8. **The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit** Acts 2:4; 1Corinthians 12:4-10, 28
9. **Sanctification** Romans 6:1-11,13; 8:1,2,13; 12:1-2; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12, 12:14; 1Peter 1:5; 1:15-16
10. **The Church and Its Mission** Psalm 112:9; Matthew 25:37-40; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 1:8; 4:29-31; 1Corinthians 2:10-16; 12:14; Galatians 2:10, 5:22-26; 6:10; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22; 4:11-16; Colossians 1:29; Hebrews 2:3-4; 12:23; James 1:27
11. **The Ministry** Psalm 112:9; Mark 16:15-20; John 4:23-24; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; Ephesians 4:11,16; James 1:27
12. **Divine Healing** Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; James 5:14-16
13. **The Blessed Hope** Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1Thessalonians 4:16-17; Titus 2:13
14. **The Millennial Reign of Christ** Psalm 72:3-8; Isaiah 11:6-9; Ezekiel 37:21-22; Micah 4:3-4; Zephaniah 3:19-20; Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27, 30; Romans 11:26-27; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6
15. **The Final Judgment** Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20, 20:11-15; 21:8
16. **The New Heavens and the New Earth** 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21-22

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

A person seeking to be credentialed with the Assemblies of God **must have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues**. We believe this is not a one-time experience, but rather, this should be an ongoing experience and a regular part of a minister's devotional life. The candidate must believe and proclaim that the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues.

LEGAL RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

It is a requirement that an applicant for credentials who is not a citizen of the United States of America have proof of a legal working status in the United States. Foreign students temporarily in the United States for educational purposes are not eligible for credentials. It will be necessary for the non-citizen applicant to provide either a copy of their green card or a lawful nonimmigrant temporary work visa before an application will be processed.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

It is highly suggested that an applicant for credentials should be a member of an Assemblies of God church. An exception to this requirement would be for a minister who is credentialed with another organization who wishes to be affiliated with the Assemblies of God or someone attending a Church Plant that does not offer membership.

ABSTINENCE STANDARD

The Assemblies of God believes that for the sake of adhering to the highest ministerial standards, a minister will abstain from alcohol, tobacco or other smoking, gambling, pornography, recreational or illegal drug usage, or any sinful behaviors specifically prohibited by Scripture. Any person applying for credentials would need to agree to this standard.

ABSTINENCE FROM PORNOGRAPHY REQUIREMENT

An applicant for credentials needs to be free of any use of pornography for **at least 12 months before** applying for or upgrading credentials. Those struggling in this area should contact the Network Secretary.

MAKING APPLICATION IF DIVORCED

If an applicant for credentials has been divorced and remarried and their former spouse is still living OR if their spouse has been divorced and has a former spouse still living, the divorce needs to be recognized by the General Council Executive Presbyters before an application for credentials could be processed. Please call the Credential Office to request an Application for Recognition of Divorce.

APPLICATION/FILING FEES (Nonrefundable*)

Certificate of Ministry	\$140*
License [initial application]	
Ordination	
License Upgrade (within one year)	\$100*
License Upgrade (after two years)	\$120
Husband/Wife Discount**	-\$20

*Nonrefundable if applicant withdraws, but partially refundable if withdrawal is at the District's request. The district will retain a \$50 minimum.

**Deduction for second applicant if both husband and wife are applying at the same time.

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR RECOGNITION

(Quoted from the General Council and Network Council Bylaws)

The following qualifications pertain to applicants for ministerial recognition:

1. **Salvation.** Testimony to having experienced the new birth [John 3:5].
2. **Baptism in the Holy Spirit.** Testimony to having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues according to Acts 2:4. The Spirit-filled life will enable a minister to fulfill the fourfold mission of the church.
3. **Evidence of Call.** Clear evidence of a divine call to the ministry, evidenced by a personal conviction, confirmed by the work of the Spirit and the testimony of fellow ministers.
4. **Christian Character.** A blameless Christian life and a good report of those who are without [Titus 1:7; I Timothy 3:7].
5. **Doctrinal Position.** A thorough understanding of and agreement with our doctrinal position as contained in the Statement of Fundamental Truths.
6. **Assemblies of God Polity.** A satisfactory working knowledge of the principles, practices, and purposes of the Fellowship through a study of the General Council and South Dakota Ministry Network Constitution and Bylaws.
7. **Voluntary cooperation and commitment to the Fellowship.** An active loyalty to our constitutional agreements, a cooperative spirit, and a readiness to seek and receive the counsel of older mature Christians and those in positions of authority.

By voluntary it is meant that, upon learning the principles, doctrines, and practices of the Assemblies of God, and by seeing the benefits to be derived from being associated with such an organization, persons of their own free choice decide to become members, thus subscribing to all that for which the organization stands.

For the minister, by cooperation, it is meant to the best of one's ability, complying with all decisions setting forth and defining duties and responsibilities incumbent upon members of the organization. It includes active participation and respect for the will of the majority expressed through constitutional processes.

Hence, for the minister, voluntary cooperation means that when the minister decides to become a cooperating member of the Assemblies of God, this cooperation and participation thereby becomes obligatory and not optional.

8. **Basic Educational Requirements.** No specific level of formal academic achievement [diploma or degree] shall be a requirement for credentials; credential applicants shall meet the following criteria:
- a. All applicants are required to be interviewed by the South Dakota Network Credentials Committee and, in preparation for the interview, pass a standard exam approved by the General Presbytery whereby they demonstrate knowledge of the Bible, Assemblies of God doctrines, and ministerial practices, unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee or permitted by General Presbytery policy; and either
 - b. Successfully complete equivalent training to that indicated above, preferably in paragraph (3) below, preferably, in an endorsed Assemblies of God post-secondary school; or in a seminary, college, Bible college, or school approved by the South Dakota Network Credentials Committee consistent with criteria established by the General Council Credentials Committee; or
 - c. Successfully complete courses prescribed by the General Presbytery, offered in correspondence through Global University of the Assemblies of God, or pass the final examinations in the prescribed courses; or
 - d. Be recommended by the South Dakota Network Credentials Committee as qualifying for credentials through self-study and ministerial experience. Such candidates shall have a proven and fruitful ministry of substantial duration. Requests from the South Dakota Network for such a candidate shall be presented to the General Council Credentials Committee and may be granted on a case-by-case basis.
9. **Mandatory Screening.** All applicants for ministerial credentials shall be screened through a designated screening agency established by the General Council Executive Presbytery. The screening shall be done prior to the submission of the application to the office of the General Secretary.
10. **Marriage Status.** The General Council disapproves of any married persons holding ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God if either marriage partner has a former spouse living, unless the divorce is recognized under one of the following biblical categories:
- a. Recognition of pre-conversion divorce (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - b. Recognition of abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15)
 - c. Recognition of spousal infidelity (Matthew 19:9)
 - d. Recognition of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Matthew 18:6; Ephesians 5:28-33; Colossians 3:19)
 - e. Recognition of ecclesiastical annulment – a pronouncement declaring a marriage invalid as hereinafter provided. In such cases there must be clear and satisfactory evidence of deception, or fraud, unknown to the applicant at the time of marriage. Additionally, the lack of consummation or other conditions which have a profound impact preventing the creation of a valid marriage union can constitute an ecclesiastical annulment.

Each case requiring a recognition of divorce or ecclesiastical annulment shall be decided by the Executive Presbytery on an individual basis as to whether the termination of that marriage is consistent with the scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the granting or holding of ministerial credentials. Appeals of the decisions of the Executive Presbytery may be made to the General Presbytery.

11. Eligibility of women. The scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word [Joel 2:29; Acts 21:9; I Corinthians 11:5]. Women who meet the qualifications for ministerial credentials are eligible for whatever grade of credentials their qualifications warrant and have the right to administer the ordinances of the church and are eligible to serve in all levels of church ministry, and/or district and General Council leadership.

12. Ministers from Other Organizations. If a minister from another reputable body desires to affiliate with the Assemblies of God, the Credentials Committees of both the General Council and the South Dakota Network are under no obligation to accept the applicant's previous ministerial status, but will judge each candidate on his or her own merits as to the level of credentials to be granted. Such applicants shall be required to:

- a. Conform to Assemblies of God criteria for recognition.
- b. Complete an application for ministerial recognition.
- c. Submit a letter of recommendation from a neighboring Assemblies of God minister or sectional presbyter for the applicant's area.
- d. Submit a recommendation from the body with which the minister was formerly affiliated. If such is not available, letters of recommendation should be sought from three reputable ordained ministers who are familiar with the applicant's ministry, two of whom should be from the applicant's former credentialing body.
- e. Pass the credential examination.
- f. Complete such courses as may be prescribed by the General Presbytery for ministers transferring from other credentialing bodies.
- g. Meet with the Network Credentials Committee for an oral interview.
- h. Be recommended by the Network Credentials Committee for action by the General Council Credentials Committee.
- i. All previously ordained ministers so approved shall receive recognition as ordained Assemblies of God ministers with laying on of hands by the Network Presbytery at the next annual Network Council. All other applicants so approved shall receive the appropriate level of credential recognition.
- j. Ministers who receive Assemblies of God recognition will relinquish their ministerial credentials with any other organization, unless an exception is granted by the General Council Credentials Committee upon recommendation of the South Dakota Network Credentials Committee for a minister serving as a missionary in this country who hold a credential with a member by of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, or in special and/or unique cases.

SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS

1. Residency requirements of applicants. Applicants for all credentials must be residents of or hold credentials in the South Dakota Network and appear before its credentials committee.

2. **Certified Minister** - They shall show promise of usefulness in the gospel work. They shall devote full or part-time to Christian ministry and, at the discretion of the South Dakota Network Credentials Committee, remain under the supervision of a pastor or a ministry coach or mentor. They shall show evidence of a divine call and be actively engaged in some aspect of ministry and proclamation of the gospel, except in case of ill health or advanced age.

3. **Licensed Minister** - Qualifications for License shall include clear evidence of a divine call, character, and preparation suitable for that calling, practical ministry experience, and an evident purpose to devote one's life in service to the proclamation of the gospel.

4. **Ordained Minister** - Qualifications for Ordination are outlined in the New Testament [I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9]. In addition:

- a. Applicants must be 23 years of age or older.
- b. They must have met all the requirements in making application and in completing the prescribed application form.
- c. One must show evidence of a divine call and has held a ministry license and has been actively engaged in ministry for at least 2 full consecutive years immediately prior thereto.
- d. Residency Requirements of Applicants. Applicants must be residents of or hold credentials in the South Dakota Network and appear before its Credentials Committee. The South Dakota Network is required to refrain from approving any applicant for ordination who may have been licensed in another district, until such licensed minister shall have been a member of the South Dakota Network for at least 1 year. If the applicant has not been a member of the South Dakota Network for 2 full consecutive years, he must meet the requirements and secure the endorsement of the Officiary of the district in which he was previously licensed, as well as the South Dakota Network.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

For applicants who have attended an endorsed Assemblies of God college with a ministry major, (or at least 24 credit hours of Bible/Theo classes) credit will be given as follows for those who have completed:

2 yrs [48 hrs] Certificate of Ministry

3 yrs [72 hrs] License

4 yrs [96 hrs] Ordination

For applicants who have not had formal Bible/ministry training, the General Council Presbytery has adopted the Ministerial Studies Diploma with courses as the minimum standard for credentials for applicants.

GLOBAL UNIVERSITY / BEREAN SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

The Berean School of the Bible is a branch of Global University, Springfield, Missouri. The courses may be ordered directly from them by visiting their website at www.globaluniversity.edu. If it is preferable to take the courses at the college level to receive college credit, then enrollment should be made with Global University rather than Berean.

NON-MINISTRY MAJOR - AG COLLEGE GRADUATE

An applicant who has attended an endorsed Assemblies of God college/university but did not have a ministry major should request to have their transcript evaluated by the Credentials Coordinator to determine what supplemental coursework would need to be taken.

NON-AG BIBLE COLLEGE GRADUATE

Applicants who have attended a non-Assemblies of God Bible college should request that their transcript be evaluated. Applicants who attended a non-AG Bible college would be **required to take a minimum of three courses: Assemblies of God History, Missions, Intro to Pentacostal Doctrine and Relationships and Ethics in Ministry.**

NOTE: If you were Certified before 2021, class requirements for the Certified and Licensed levels have changed. Please reach out to the credential department for evaluation of your transcript.

Berean Class Options for Credentials

Certified (Level 1) Courses
Christ in the Synoptic Gospels
Introduction to Pentecostal Doctrine
AG History, Mission, & Governance
Introduction to Hermeneutics: How to Interpret the Bible
Spirit-Empowered Church: an Acts 2 Ministry Model
Introduction to Theology: A Pentecostal perspective
Old Testament Survey
New Testament Survey
Beginning Ministerial Internship
Relationship & Ethics in Ministry
Licensed (Level 2) Courses
Romans: Justification by Faith
Eschatology: A Study of Things to Come
Introduction to Homiletics
Effective Leadership
Introduction to AG Missions
The Local Church in Evangelism
Conflict Management
Acts: The Holy Spirit at Work in Believers
Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, & Philippians
Intermediate Ministerial Internship
Ordained (Level 3) Courses
Pentateuch
Poetic Books
Corinthian Correspondence
Prayer and Worship
Pastoral Ministry
Preaching in the Contemporary World
Church Administration, Finance, and Law
Advanced Ministerial Internship

MAKING APPLICATION

The cycle for completing the Credential Application paperwork is May thru November of each year. No applications will be accepted after November 1st of each year.

Step #1

Candidate must complete the **Pre-Application** found on the website at www.sdag.org. **Please allow a minimum of one week for your application to be reviewed. If you have transcripts, please email to credentialing@sdag.org.**

Step #2

Once approved, candidates will receive an email with directions that will contain the Official Application and supporting documents. It also allows you to upload your documents into a secure location.

Upon receipt of the Official Application for Ministerial Credentials, Information Authorization & Release form(s), Background Check Disclosure, and application/filing fee, a **background/credit check** will be run on the applicant. Credit issues may affect an applicant's eligibility for credentials.

Step #3

Take the exams: All applicants must pass all exams with 70% or better.

- The Exam is broken down into three parts:
 - **Bible Knowledge – No helps allowed** – taken by Certified, new License, and Recognizing Ordination from another Organization candidate.
 - **Doctrine** – A **Bible without any concordances, notes, or dictionaries** can be used –taken by Certified, new Licensed, and Recognizing Ordination from another Organization candidates.
 - The 16 Fundamental Truth section of the Doctrine Exam must have 9 or more (more than 50%) correct no matter what the overall score of the Doctrine Exam is or the applicant will be asked to rewrite this portion of the exam.
 - Each Fundamental Truth and the 2 references are worth 1 point, so if even one number is incorrect, the whole point is missed.
 - **Polity** – **paper copy of the AG Constitution & Bylaws can be used** – taken by new License, Upgrade to License, and Recognizing Ordination from another Organization candidates.
- There is no exam for those **Upgrading to Ordination**.
- Comprehensive Study Guides are provided.

Proctored Exam: The exam proctor should not be related to any of the candidates and must hold the same credential level or higher as the test being administered. Proctored Exams will be taken online. (Exceptions on an individual basis). You and your proctor will be sent an email with online instructions. After completion of the exam, your exam will be graded by the credentialing coordinator, and you will be emailed your exam score. **The exams can also be taken on paper.**

Step #4

Be Interviewed:

- 1). All applicants will be required to meet with the South Dakota Network Credentials Committee for an interview.
- 2). The purpose of the interview is to get acquainted, assist in areas of concern that may have been indicated on the application or on the written exam, and advise of benefits and responsibilities as a member of the South Dakota Network.
- 3). The applicant will be notified of the time and place for the interview. **It is required that the spouse/fiancée/fiancé [where applicable] be a part of the interview.**
- 4). Following the interview, the Credentials Committee [the Network Presbytery Board] will approve or disapprove the granting of credentials. If approved, your file will be sent to General Council for final approval and issuing of the credential.
- 5). The SD Network Secretary's Office will notify the applicant if the decision of the Network Credentials Committee is to deny or delay credentials. Should the applicant not agree with their recommendation, the applicant may appeal to the Network Credentials Committee.

Step #5

Celebration Service: Approved credential candidates will be recognized at the Network Council which convenes in April of each year. Attendance is required at this event for all credential candidates and their spouse/fiancée/fiancé.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

DEADLINE DATE: All application materials from Steps 1 & 2 need to be received in the Network Office on or before November 1. **Step 3 (Exams)** must be completed by December 16. No applications will be accepted after November 1st.

IT IS THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO BE SURE THEIR FILE IS COMPLETE BY THE DEADLINE DATE. IT IS NOT THE CREDENTIALING COORDINATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REMIND THE APPLICANT OF THIS REQUIREMENT.

EXCEPTION FOR EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS: Global University Applicants who have not completed their coursework by November 1st will be allowed a short extension of December 31st to complete their educational requirements.

MINISTER'S TITHE RESPONSIBILITY

SOUTH DAKOTA MINISTRY NETWORK :

100% of your tithe (10% of income) on ministerial income is to be paid to the South Dakota Network. This is a requirement for the annual renewal of ministerial credentials (Network Bylaws, Article V Ministry, Section 5, paragraph a page 23).

Online giving is available on our website (www.sdag.org) for Network tithes. We suggest you schedule a recurring gift.

GENERAL COUNCIL DUES: (payable at giving.ag.org/home)

PAY DIRECTLY TO GENERAL COUNCIL – not to be included in your tithe to the Network. (GC Bylaws, Article VII, Section 10, paragraph f)

Certified Ministers \$ 10 per month (\$ 120)

Licensed Ministers \$ 20 per month (\$ 240)

Ordained Ministers \$ 25 per month (\$ 300)

[The tithe due to the South Dakota Network can be reduced by the amount paid to General Council.](#)

If you have any questions regarding your tithe and/or dues, please reach out to sarah@sdag.org.