



Alliance
of Baptists

Endorsement Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Welcome to the Alliance
- 06 Covenant and Mission Statement
- 08 Endorsement Policy
- 15 Endorsement Status
- 18 Military Endorsement
- 20 Following Endorsement
- 23 Military Chaplain Candidacy
- 28 Ethics and Complaint Policy
- 32 Appendix 1-3

Welcome to the Alliance of Baptists and our endorsement process.

If you're looking here, you're probably in the early stages of figuring out what endorsement is and if this is the place for you. Our hope is that this guide can help you determine if being endorsed by the Alliance of Baptists is the right fit.

The Alliance of Baptists might be a community for you if:

- You recognize that your gifts and skills can contribute to this small but growing band of disciples who are bravely partnering to follow Jesus of Nazareth in the difficult places of hospitals, prisons, hospices, battlefields, and more
- You're a person who understands what Jesus was talking about in the Gospels, especially Luke 4 and Matthew 25
- You are committed to justice in all areas of life including economic, social, distributive, racial—intersectional—you embrace intersectional social justice
- You are seeking a theological home with like-minded people
- Sanctuary means a place where people feel safe and accepted, loved and cherished
- Commitment to Christ's Beloved Community means for you a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

If this stirs and excites you and seems like a place you can light (land or be or see yourself) theologically, your next step might be to contact our Endorser for a conversation at (endorsement@allianceofbaptists.org) .

Why Baptist?

If you are or have been a member of a Baptist church or denomination, you may be familiar with the "Historic Baptist Freedoms," mentioned in the Alliance Covenant and Mission.

- Recognition of faith in God as central to our lives
- Recognition of the Bible as central to faith and practice
- Priesthood of all believers (soul competency)
- Autonomy of the local congregation:
- Religious freedom
- Separation of church and state
- Believer's baptism

Maybe you have even heard that these principles are so revered among Baptists that Civil Rights Advocate, Will Campbell, once joked that Baptists were God's greatest hope on earth. The problem being that there has yet to be a true Baptist. (Will Campbell was the only white person invited by Dr. Martin Luther King to the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.)

The irony of Rev. Campbell's joke cuts especially deep as we consider that many white Baptist entities have oppressed persons and perpetuated racism and injustice under the banner of religious freedom. In the words of theologian, James Cone, "How could whites confess and live the Christian faith and also impose three-and-a-half centuries of slavery and segregation upon black people?" (Orbis Publishing, 2013.) How? Because for white Baptist Christians in the South, chattel slavery was regarded as an issue of "biblical interpretation."

Baptist history has been largely told by white, male voices. The patriarchal focus and the absence of Black, Indigenous, and other cultural perspectives has obscured the larger reality of Baptists in America. In turn, this has made it easy to ignore history and reduce Baptist Christianity to a religion of principles instead of action.

Help us reclaim what it means to be Baptist as we seek to live into these principles and redefine what it means to be Baptist in this country. Proclaim with us that:

- The Bible is central to faith and practice but theology is a human creation and not definitive of God's story.
- We measure our story by the larger story of Christ and follow the call of Scripture quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:18.
- Autonomy of the local church, religious freedom and separation of church and state are meant to protect and promote the rights of all persons to relate to the Divine as conscience leads.
- The priesthood of all believers is a responsibility to integrate religious thought with religious action and not an excuse to ignore or minimize the beliefs of others.
- Believer's baptism is a conviction of individuals and local congregations and not a test for right belief.
- Reflection, repentance, confession and humility are tools we need to reclaim the lost voices that describe what it is to be "Baptist."

Covenant and Mission Statement

“

Theological Home.

Pursuit of God's Justice.

Partnership in Missions.

”

These three core values guide the Alliance of Baptists. The Alliance began in 1987 as a prophetic voice in Baptist life. Today, we have grown to be a justice movement and community of faith. We are male and female laity and clergy, people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, theological beliefs, and ministry practices. We are about 4,500 individual members and roughly 140 congregations knit together by love for one another and God, combining progressive inquiry, contemplative prayer and prophetic action to bring about justice and healing in a changing world.

Adopted April 10, 2021

We are a people of faith formed by a long tradition of dissent and historic Baptist freedoms. Celebrating this heritage, we seek to cultivate a beloved community, claiming our identity within the body of Christ in the world and our solidarity with all creation. We welcome and affirm all persons with full respect to gender, sexual, racial, and ethnic identities. We hold space for all persons with varying abilities, social standing, or economic status.

We lament that over time many of us have contributed to systems of racial, social, economic, and environmental injustice, privileging some while excluding others. As Baptists we confess that we have cherished independence from one another more than responsibility to one another and have allowed systemic injustices to flourish under the banner of individual freedom. We repent and seek transformation.

Embraced in baptismal waters, we freely gather to follow the radical way of Jesus. As disciples we pledge to wrestle with Scripture in community, practice shared leadership, preserve local church freedom, and promote religious liberty.

Guided by the Spirit, we commit ourselves to:

Make the worship of God central in our life together;

Hold the earth sacred, practice creation justice, and

Pursue God's peace and love;

Nurture spiritual formation and support theological education,

Develop ministry, ecumenical, and interfaith partnerships, and

Cultivate relationships of mutual respect and accountability;

Act to dismantle systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, and abusive power,

Raise prophetic voices for liberation and justice, and

Work to eradicate poverty in all forms;

Establish spaces of refuge and renewal with those who are wounded,

Listen to and follow voices that have been silenced, and

Break down barriers that divide us from each other and creation.

We seek to live in joy, humility, and gratitude, welcoming the realm of God.

Endorsement Policy

Purpose

This policy seeks to clarify the nature and function of endorsement within the Alliance of Baptists.

Endorsement is an exclusive covenant relationship between the Alliance of Baptists and the clergy persons the Alliance endorses. The Alliance provides guidance, support and discernment to those seeking to enter pastoral/spiritual care ministry and provides support to those who serve in these ministries. Endorsement is an official declaration by the Alliance of Baptists that a person meets the Alliance's standards to serve in a specialized ministry setting of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education. Endorsement is to a particular ministry setting and level of certification.

Endorsed clergy persons will represent the Alliance adhering to our ethical standards and living out our mission and covenant statements. endorsed clergy persons agree to ongoing participation in the life of the Alliance, to maintaining communication and accountability to the Alliance and to the financial support to the Alliance that is required.

Application Process

The Alliance Endorser receives applications quarterly on the first day of January, April, July and October. All completed materials are submitted electronically to the Endorser at endorsement@allianceofbaptists.org. The application includes a \$125.00 background check fee. This can be paid online on our [Give page](#) under the Chaplain Endorsement payments section.

You will receive an email invitation to complete the background check application.

The Endorser assigns an Endorsement Council committee member to interview the candidate. All members of the Council read and comment on the candidate's materials prior to the interview.

Within six weeks of submitting their application, an Endorsement Council member will contact the candidate to schedule a virtual interview. The interview is conducted by the appointed Endorsement Council member and the Endorser.

The Endorsement Council will review the candidate's application materials and the results of their interview. The Council will make a recommendation to the Board Committee on Endorsement. The Board will affirm or deny the endorsement.

It is the intent of the Alliance to notify the candidate of the Board's decision according to the schedule below. If the decision will be delayed beyond these dates, the candidate will be informed of the delay.

Applications submitted by:	Decision rendered by:
January 1	March 31
April 1	June 30
July 1	September 30
October 1	December 31

Once approved for endorsement, the candidate will receive a celebratory phone call or email. In addition the candidate will receive a letter and a certificate of endorsement. For military chaplains the Endorser will complete the NCMAF form.

Endorsement addresses the following core standards through a process of written papers, interviews, and mutual discernment:

- Academic and clinical education
- Ministerial and theological integrity
- Ministry practice congruent with the Alliance Covenant and Mission
- Embodiment of practices and disciplines that promote equity, justice, collegiality, and diversity in pluralistic environments
- Ongoing spiritual formation and growth

Prerequisites

1 Ordination

Ordination to the gospel ministry by a congregation affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists or a congregation from the Free Church tradition. This includes but is not limited to:

- United Church of Christ
- Christian Church/Disciples of Christ
- American Baptist Churches USA
- Progressive National Baptist Convention
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Missionary Baptists
- Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship
- Southern Baptist Convention

Ordination from denominations outside the Free Church tradition may be accepted if:

- The ordination is recognized by a local congregation from the Free Church tradition or
- The candidate has a year of active immersion in a Free Church tradition.

2 Relationship with the Alliance

All candidates must demonstrate a one-year relationship with the Alliance of Baptists in one of the following ways prior to application:

- Individual membership and actively participating in the Alliance for one year
- Membership in an Alliance affiliated congregation for one year
- Ordination by an Alliance affiliated congregation one year prior to application.
- Attendance at an Alliance of Baptists Annual Gathering and contact with Alliance staff about endorsement within six months of attending the Annual Gathering.

3 Education Requirements

A graduate theological degree from a school that is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools is preferred. Education from other schools accredited by other accreditation groups that are part of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation will be considered.

While seminary study remains a centerpiece for clergy preparation, a candidate can petition for educational equivalency based on the information included in Appendix 1. candidates who are seeking an educational equivalency should submit information establishing such equivalency to the Endorser for determination prior to completing the application for endorsement.

For candidates with a master's degree in theological studies obtained from an institution outside of the United States or Canada (i.e., countries beyond the scope of Association of Theological Schools accreditation), an audit of the transcript may be required. The \$75.00 cost for the international degree audit will be the responsibility of the candidate. If the degree from an international institution is determined not to meet the educational requirement listed above, the candidate will need to complete a "Request for Educational Equivalencies" (see Appendix 1).

4 CPE Requirements

All candidates must complete at least one unit of CPE at an ACPE accredited center. (Military candidates who have not completed a unit of CPE may be eligible for provisional endorsement.) Provide a letter of verification or certificate of completion.

5 Pastoral Leadership Requirements

Provide letter(s) verifying at least two years of pastoral/spiritual leadership experience in a congregation or specialized ministry setting. A CPE residency satisfies one year of the requirements for endorsement.

Materials

The following are required for your application for endorsement to be considered:

- A letter signifying active participation in a local congregation that is nurturing the candidate in faith and vocational identity for at least the two most recent years.
- Completed Endorsement Application Form.
- Signed Authorization for Release of Personal Information, Accuracy of Statements, Indemnification of Alliance, and Release of Claims Against the Alliance. (See Endorsement Application.)
- Completed Endorsement Checklist. (See Endorsement Application.)
- Two completed Endorsement Reference Forms dated within the last six months: one from a supervisor and one from a professional reference. Send the below link to the online Endorsement Reference Form to your references to be submitted directly through the Alliance website. By sending this link, you are waiving your right to review the contents of the completed reference form. All responses will remain confidential.

<https://allianceofbaptists.org/endorsementreference/>

Essays

Getting to Know You

- All essays are to be written in 12 pt. font and single-spaced.
- A 1-2 page reflection on your life story that includes:
 - Your family of origin.
 - The influences that have shaped you.
 - The primary relationships that are important in sustaining you today.

- A 3-5 page reflection on your faith journey and vocation that includes at minimum the following:
 - How your faith has changed, grown and matured over your lifespan
 - What beliefs are important to you?
 - How your beliefs shape your spiritual life and ministry
 - How you actively engage in and practice your faith?
 - How you have experienced and pursued your call to ministry
 - How have you experienced and lived out your pastoral identity and authority?

- A 2-4 page reflection of your identity as an Alliance of Baptists minister that includes at minimum the following:
 - When and why you became involved in the Alliance of Baptists
 - How you have been actively engaged in the Alliance of Baptists?
 - How you engage the Alliance Covenant and Mission in your life and ministry including any resistance and strong resonance (be sure to address all aspects of the Covenant and Mission paying special attention to: " Act to dismantle systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, and abusive power")?
 - How you hope to nurture and deepen your relationship with the Alliance of Baptists

- A 2-4 page reflection discussing your call to specialized ministry that includes the following:
 - The story of your call to specialized ministry
 - Why you are seeking endorsement with the Alliance of Baptists
 - What institutions and/or organizations require your endorsement
 - Your present occupation and any plans/hopes for future employment
 - How your understanding of your Christian faith prepares you to minister in an ecumenical and interfaith setting
- A 1-2 page reflection describing your active participation in a local congregation that provides you with the opportunity to worship, learn, and grow, as well as to be supported, nurtured, and challenged in your faith. Demonstrate that it is a congregation where you can offer your sacred gifts as well as receive from others.
- A 5-7 page Spiritual Care Case Study that demonstrates your practice of spiritual care including your use of assessment tools and interventions. (See Appendix 2)

Endorsement Status

Transferring Endorsement

If a candidate is endorsed by another denomination, the candidate must provide a statement of the reason to transfer endorsement to the Alliance of Baptists on the Endorsement Application Form. (See Appendix 3)

Approved for Endorsement

Once approved for endorsement the candidate will receive a celebratory phone call or email. In addition the candidate will receive a letter and a certificate of endorsement. For military chaplains the Endorser will complete the NCMAF form.

Not approved for Endorsement

If the candidate is not approved for endorsement the candidate may:

- Request to meet with the Endorser for feedback and support
- Reapply for endorsement after meeting requirements set by their interviewing Council.

Endorsed with Recommendations from the Council

If the candidate is approved and the Council offers recommendations, the candidate is expected to discuss how they have addressed these recommendations in their next yearly annual report.

Provisional Endorsement

Consistent with the covenantal relationship of Endorsement, there may arise an instance when an offer of provisional endorsement is extended to a candidate.

A provisional endorsement is temporary in nature and indicates the intent of full endorsement. As such it provides the candidate with the ability to function as a fully endorsed chaplain/pastoral care giver (in their ministry setting) for a set period of time. Examples of this may include, but are not limited to the following:

- A candidate has completed all requirements but the interview process illumines an area where further training, attention, or reflection is necessary for full endorsement.
- An exception to a requirement is deemed appropriate by the members of the Endorsement Council & Committee.

Provisional endorsement is offered at the discretion of the Endorser after consultation with other members of the Endorsement Council. Because the terms of a provisional endorsement will vary depending on the candidate's needs, situation and ministry setting, an offer of provisional endorsement will establish, in writing, any criteria or conditions that need to be completed or addressed by the candidate and a specific timeline for completion of the conditions.

After reviewing the offer, the candidate may accept the provisional endorsement or decide to terminate their application for endorsement. Upon successful completion of the terms of the provisional endorsement, the candidate will reconvene with the Endorsement Council. After reviewing the evidentiary criteria, endorsement will be extended to the candidate, and the Employer/Ministry Setting will be notified that the candidate is fully endorsed.

If at the end of the provisional period they have not met the requirements:

- Candidate will have to reapply
- One extension may be granted to either find new endorsement or complete the process

Military Endorsement

Initial Endorsement: Requirements for endorsement for military chaplaincy follow the standard Alliance endorsement process.

1. Ordination
2. Relationship with the Alliance
3. Educational Requirements
4. CPE Requirements
5. Experience Requirements

Military chaplain applicants who have not completed a unit of CPE may be eligible for provisional endorsement. Under provisional endorsement, military chaplain applicants would receive status as an endorsed Alliance chaplain with the agreement to complete one unit of CPE within two years of endorsement. Failure to fulfill CPE requirement in provided timeframe will result in revocation of endorsement.

Military chaplain applicants who are currently serving as a military chaplain candidate can receive experience credit based upon their length of service and duty status. A letter verifying experience/responsibilities must be provided from the applicant's military supervisor.

Examples of approved chaplain candidate experience:

- Supervised counseling with Service Members
- Supervised service and worship leadership experience
- Evidence of upholding diversity and equality in ministry
- Supervised spiritual and/or religious event planning

Note: Military applicants' experience and training will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Military chaplain applicants currently under ecclesiastical approval with the Alliance of Baptists will receive additional consideration.

Additional application question to provide context on how the candidate's service as a military chaplain will align with the principles and mission of the Alliance of Baptists:

- Reflect on how the Code of Ethics for Military Chaplains (NCMAF) aligns and upholds the Alliance of Baptists Covenant and Mission.

After Endorsement

An Alliance endorsed military chaplain commits to:

- Providing updates to duty assignments, location, and contact information within 30 days of change of duty status.
- Maintaining contact with an Alliance of Baptists affiliated congregation. It is understood that this contact may be virtual dependent on duty location/assignment. Military chaplains serving on their post chapels will receive credit for engagement with this specific community.
- Providing their officer evaluation to the Alliance of Baptists Endorser. These documents will only be reviewed by the Endorser and not distributed for any other use. Include your last evaluation with your annual report.

- Respecting and serving all Service Members and their families with full respect to gender, sexual, racial, and ethnic identities and holding space for all persons with varying abilities, social standing, or economic status.
- Upholding the Alliance of Baptists Covenant and Mission and Code of Ethics at all times, in all circumstances.

Transfers

Military chaplains seeking to transfer to the Alliance will follow normal application procedures. The Alliance of Baptists Endorser will contact the current Endorser to inquire if there are any impediments or just cause not to proceed. For military chaplains, the Endorser will use the NCMAF suggested letter. In the event the military chaplain applicant is uncomfortable with current Endorser contact (due to fear of reprisal or early revocation), additional conversations will be held with the applicant. Other references may be required.

Following Endorsement

Maintaining Endorsement

In order to maintain endorsement with the Alliance of Baptists all endorsed chaplains, pastoral counselors, and CPE educators agree to:

- Participate actively in a local congregation
- Make an annual financial contribution to the Alliance of Baptists (minimum of \$150) to maintain membership
- Submit an Annual Report including affirmation of the Covenantal Code of Ethics for endorsed Clergy for the Alliance of Baptists by March 1st of each calendar year

- Notify the Alliance of Baptists Endorser of any change of ministry setting and any legal, ethical, or professional actions filed against the person within one month of the change;

Change in Endorsement

Change in Ministry Setting and Level of Certification of Endorsement

Endorsement is to a particular ministry setting and level of certification. Endorsement may be transferred from one ministry setting or level of certification to another when requested by the endorsee. The endorsee must notify the Endorser, via email, of such a change within one month of the change and include a brief description for such change. Said changes can be emailed to endorsement@allianceofbaptists.org.

Inactive Status

Because endorsement is to a particular ministry setting, the status of an endorsed minister becomes "inactive" at the time when they are no longer serving in the position to which they were endorsed. If this happens, the endorsed person will notify the Endorser, via email at endorsement@allianceofbaptists.org.

Upon such notification, the Endorser shall change the status of the endorsed to "inactive". When the endorsed person accepts another position within a specialized setting, they may apply for active status by contacting the Endorser. If this request occurs within two years of inactive status, they may request that a new endorsement be issued. After notice to the Board Committee on Endorsement, the Endorser may issue a new endorsement.

If this request occurs more than two years from inactive status, the Endorser will work with the Endorsement Council and the Board Committee on Endorsement to determine what, if any, further communication from the candidate is necessary, including and up to completing the entire application process.

Revoking Endorsement

Endorsement will be revoked if the endorsee

- Fails to complete their annual report two years in a row
- Fails to pay their annual dues two years in a row (and does not contact the Endorser regarding their inability to pay)
- Fails to attend an annual gathering (or an online event) every four years).

Endorsee will be made aware that they are at risk of losing their endorsement and given 60 days time to comply with said requirements. If at the end of the 60 days they are in compliance their endorsement will remain. If at the end of the 60 days they are not in compliance their endorsement will be revoked. Once an endorsee's status is revoked they will have to reapply for Endorsement.

Military Chaplain Candidacy Program

Purpose

A Chaplain Candidate will be a full-time theological student in an ATS-accredited school and participating in congregational life. The AOB will follow the maximum time limit set by the military service branch for maintaining the 'approval' status of a chaplain candidate. Approval to serve as a Chaplain Candidate is an official process by the AOB to discern whether a person meets the Alliance's standards to serve in the specialized military training as a Chaplain Candidate.

Application Process

The Alliance Endorser receives applications quarterly on the first day of January, April, July and October. All completed materials are submitted electronically to the Endorser at endorsement@allianceofbaptists.org.

The Endorser assigns an Endorsement Council committee member to interview the chaplain candidate. All members of the Council read and comment on the candidate's materials prior to the interview.

Within six weeks of submitting their application, an Endorsement Council member will contact the chaplain candidate to schedule a virtual interview. The interview is conducted by the appointed Endorsement Council member and the Endorser.

The Endorsement Council will review the candidate's application materials and the results of their interview. The Council will make a recommendation to the Board Committee on acceptance into the program.

Applications submitted by:	Decision rendered by:
January 1	March 31
April 1	June 30
July 1	September 30
October 1	December 31

Prerequisites

1 Relationship with the Alliance

All applicants must demonstrate a one-year relationship with the Alliance of Baptists in one of the following ways prior to application:

- a) Individual membership and actively participating in the Alliance for one year
- b) Membership in Alliance-affiliated congregation for one year
- c) Attend an Alliance of Baptists Annual Gathering and contact Alliance staff about approval within six months of attending the Annual Gathering.

2 Student

Must be a full-time theological student in an ATS accredited school

3

Local Congregation

Must be participating in congregational life

Please note that chaplain candidates will be expected to maintain individual membership at a giving level of at least \$75 to the AOB per year.

Materials

The following are required for your application for approval to be considered:

1. A letter signifying active participation in the local congregation that is nurturing the applicant in faith and vocational identity for at least the two most recent years (if applicable, the congregation just before a relocation for seminary).
2. Completed Approval Application Form
3. Affirmation that you have read and can affirm the principles and intention of the AOB Code of Ethics
4. One Reference Form dated within the last six months from a professional reference
<https://allianceofbaptists.org/endorsementreference/>
5. Signed Authorization for Release of Personal Information, Accuracy of Statements, Indemnification of Alliance, and Release of Claims Against the Alliance (see Approval Application)
6. A recent photograph

Essays

A) An original 1-2 page reflection on your life story that includes the following:

- Your family of origin
- The influences that have shaped you
- The primary relationships that are important in sustaining you today

B) An original 3-4 page reflection on your faith journey that includes at minimum the following:

- What beliefs or primary spiritual values are important to you?
- How do your beliefs shape your spiritual life and personal devotion? · How has your faith changed and grown as you are integrating your theological education and lived experience of faith?
- Describe your sense of calling to the vocational ministry at this point.
- How do you see theological education as significant for the practice of ministry?

C) An original 1-2 page reflection on your identity and relationship with the Alliance of Baptists that includes the following :

- When and why you became involved with the Alliance of Baptists
- How will you stay engaged and nurture your relationship with the AOB while you are a student?

D) We recognize the U.S. Military Chaplain Candidate Programs are designed for individuals to explore their compatibility with and potential to serve as a military chaplain. While a full-time theological student, the Chaplain Candidate program is a time of

Essays (Continued)

spiritual, professional, and personal discernment. At the same time, a chaplain candidate is a commissioned officer and, as such, has terms of commitment specific to the service branch and to the oath of office as a military officer. The following questions give us a better understanding of your interest in a Chaplain Candidate program (3-4 pages):

- What about the Chaplain Candidate program interests you at this point?
- What is your understanding of the role of a chaplain candidate?
- What personal curiosity and theological questions do you take into the training of a chaplain candidate?
- What will you be able to draw from your background, your connection to the Alliance, your education thus far, and your faith experience to support your functioning as a chaplain candidate?
- How will you take care of yourself and meet your primary requirements as a full-time theological student?
- If you are already strongly considering military chaplaincy as a career, how are you thinking now about getting the congregational experience and ministerial requirements necessary for endorsement? (e.g., ministry in congregational life, ordination requirements, and CPE)

Please note: Chaplain Candidates will be expected to maintain individual membership at a giving level of at least \$75 to the AOB per year.

Application Submission

All completed materials must be submitted electronically to the AoB endorser at **endorsement@allianceofbaptists.org**.

Ethics and Complaint Policy

Purpose: The Alliance of Baptist provides this policy and procedure for our endorsed clergy. We regard a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about an endorsed clergy person or the accusation of an ethical violation. The Alliance of Baptists Endorser will receive all complaints and initiate a response. A complaint can be received by email or in writing. Any complaint requires a prompt response from the Alliance of Baptists Endorser.

Endorsed clergy are required to notify the Endorser of any complaint or accusation of an ethical violation immediately.

Purpose

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicize the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure our Endorser, staff and Board members know what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way while supporting the endorsed clergy during the process.
- To make sure that complaints are, whenever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps the endorsed clergy improve and resolve all issues
- To deal with any complaints promptly, sensitively, and with appropriate confidentiality
- To require endorsed clergy to review and sign this document annually

The Alliance of Baptist Endorser (“the Endorser”) will

- Acknowledge a complaint in writing
- Respond within a stated period of time
- Deal reasonably and sensitively to the complaint
- Take action to resolve the complaint

Procedure

All complaints and reports of misconduct relating to Alliance of Baptists endorsed clergy will be handled as follows:

- Any member of the Alliance of Baptists Board, staff or Endorsing Council, who receive such information shall promptly inform the Endorser
- The Endorser shall inform the complainant in writing that the complaint has been received
- The President of the Board is informed of the complaint
- In consultation with the Endorser, the President will determine if legal counsel is appropriate
- If legal counsel is not appropriate, then the President and Endorser will develop a plan of action to respond to the complaint
- If legal counsel is appropriate, the President shall promptly confer with the legal counsel for the Alliance of Baptists and take whatever action the President and counsel conclude is appropriate
- The President and legal counsel will consider how and when to consult with the Executive Committee and/or the full Board of Directors of the Alliance of Baptists as dictated by the nature and urgency of the issue raised
- The President and legal counsel will consider whether consultation with the Endorsing Council is appropriate under the circumstance

- The Endorser will be informed throughout the process
- The Endorser will keep the endorsed clergy person informed. The endorsed clergy will be offered support from a member of the Endorsing Council during the complaint process
- The endorsed clergy person will be informed of the resolution of the complaint and given opportunity to respond to the resolution

Covenantal Code of Ethics Policy

The Alliance of Baptists (AoB) is a faith community knit together by love for one another and God, combining progressive inquiry, contemplative prayer, and prophetic action to bring about justice and healing in a changing world. The ideals and principles in this Covenantal Code of Ethics present a shared framework of professional ministry responsibility that affirms commitment to the core values of the Alliance of Baptists community. All endorsed clergy of the AoB are responsible for fostering respect for the values embodied in this Code and for ensuring compliance. AoB endorsed clergy must demonstrate commitment to the following shared values:

- Will reaffirm their commitment annually with their signature in the annual report process
- Will work cooperatively and collegially with those served in the ministry to which one has been called
- Will stand in a supportive relationship with colleagues in ministry, offering and receiving counsel and support in times of need
- Will maintain the highest ethical standards with colleagues, institutions, or congregations where employed

- Will use ministerial status, position and authority in ways that do not abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children
- Will personally and professionally support persons who experience discrimination based on gender, sexual identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, national origin, religion, physical ability, or mental ability
- Will seek to know, understand, and respect the diversity of opinions, beliefs, and practices of others
- Will be a good steward of that which God provides and handle personal finances and those of partners in ministry and place of employment honestly and with great care
- Will seek to grow in faith, knowledge, and the practice of ministry through spiritual practices, study, professional development, and service
- Will honor all confidences shared in the capacity as endorsed clergy, unless not allowed by law, and will maintain such confidentiality even when the pastoral relationship has ended
- Will navigate transitions between ministries carefully to support the ministry of those who follow the endorsed clergy as well as the well-being of those with whom a pastoral relationship has been developed

The Alliance of Baptists endorsement candidate affirms that with God's help and the help of colleagues in ministry, this covenant is binding.

Signature

Date

--	--

Endorsement candidate's full name typed in the above Signature box serves as legal signature.

Appendix 1

Request for Educational Equivalencies

As noted in the Educational Requirements, a master's degree in theological studies from a school accredited by the Association of Theological Schools is the primary way to establish educational requirements for Endorsement. However, recognizing that there are multiple paths of education and multiple ways to be formed for ministry, candidates can establish the educational requirements for Endorsement with educational equivalencies. Candidates may submit an application for an education equivalency based on a combination of theological course work, vocational experience and formation including professional or volunteer experience. Such requests will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Endorsement Council and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please submit a statement proposing an educational equivalency addressing the following requirements. Include a rationale for your request and enclose any additional documentation to support your request. Submit your documentation along with the Request for Educational Equivalency Form (below) to endorsement@allianceofbaptists.org.

Requests for educational equivalency should demonstrate:

1. Thorough knowledge of the Bible demonstrated by course work (graduate level in a school accredited by an accrediting agency determined by the U.S. Secretary of Education to be reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training provided by the institutions of higher education programs they accredit).

- Skill with methods of biblical interpretation, including the historical interpretive traditions of the church and contemporary methods, particularly those from historically underrepresented communities demonstrated by course work (graduate level in a school accredited by an accrediting agency determined by the U.S. Secretary of Education to be reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training provided by the institutions of higher education programs they accredit).
- Knowledge of the history of the Christian church in the world.
- Deepening understanding of varied theological ways of thinking, including various theological heritages, liturgies and spiritual practices.
- Experience in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.
- Theological experience in cultural settings different from one's own background.
- Knowledge gained in other ministerial training and experiences around best practices for ministers including clergy/pastoral ethics and pastoral care.

Procedure: Once a candidate makes a request for an educational equivalency, the Endorser will assign a small group from within the Endorsement Council to assess the candidate's transcripts. This group will have two months to complete its assessment to ensure the candidate received at least:

- 24 documented hours of pastoral ministry (examples: spiritual care ministry, pastoral counseling, supervised ministry, preaching)**
- any combination of education in theology, ethics, and philosophy of religion
- Coursework in religious history or world religions.

** documented hours as required by your degree-granting institution.

Appendix 2

Case Study

Use this template to describe a ministry experience that demonstrates your competence as a chaplain. (For individuals who have recently completed CPE this is not a verbatim. This is a time for you to “toot your own horn”—not seek educational consultation.) Your spiritual care case should be focused on the ministry context for which you are seeking endorsement (i.e. something related to death and dying if you are going into hospice work.)

This template includes four sections: Introduction, Dialogue, Spiritual Assessment and Analysis of Care Encounter. (Use 12 point font, single space, 5-7 pages.)

Introduction

- Background information—How did you come to be involved in the situation? Did you have any prior knowledge of the care recipient? If so, please offer a brief synopsis. What was the location of the care encounter? Briefly describe what you noticed as the visit began (in yourself and around you).

Dialogue Verbatim Record

- Provide the who's who of the care encounter using initials (i.e. Chaplain = Ch; care recipient = CR, etc)
- Use parentheses to include “stage directions” (i.e. Ch leaned in and was teary eyed; CR was staring at the wall as we talked.)
- Italics: Relevant internal emotions and thoughts that inform your care (i.e. I feel such deep sadness as she described her loss.)

Spiritual Assessment

- Demonstrate your ability to assess the care recipient's spiritual and emotional resources and needs. (You can use a spiritual assessment tool.)
 - Assessment includes
 - Spiritual and emotional needs
 - Spiritual and emotional resources
 - What interventions did you offer?
 - What was the outcome?
- Where did you sense the Holy in this encounter? How did you respond to the Holy?
- What theological themes emerged from this encounter?
- What would you focus on if you saw this person again?
What is the continued work to be done?
- Blessing—What is your wish/desire for this person (even if you don't see them again, what is your prayer for them?)

Analysis of the Spiritual Care encounter

As you reflect on this now

- How did social location* (yours and the care recipient's) impact the visit? (This includes distractions, biases/prejudices, transferences.)
- How did your care encounter demonstrate your understanding of the Alliance Covenant and Mission?
- How did the care you offered demonstrate your understanding of the Alliance Code of Ethics? (above in document)

Appendix 3

Guidelines for Transferring Endorsement

The Alliance of Baptists operates with openness and respect as it communicates with endorsed persons and other endorsing bodies on sensitive issues related to changing endorsement. In cooperation with other endorsing agencies, the Alliance of Baptists seeks to:

- Maintain the integrity of pastoral/spiritual care, counseling, and education in specialized ministry
- Ensure protection and quality ministry to those receiving pastoral/spiritual care service
- Respect the theological integrity and practices of endorsing agencies and faith groups

The endorsement process is a mutual trust relationship. A change in Endorsers means a change in faith group affiliation. Since one can only be endorsed by one faith group at a time, such a change can be complicated for the various relationships involved: the endorsed person, the Endorsers (current and future), and the employing agency/professional organization.

Each request to change endorsing bodies will be considered individually by the Alliance of Baptists. When an endorsed person in specialized ministry feels the need or the call to change faith group affiliation and endorsement, the following guidelines will inform that process:

- Endorsed person completes the Alliance of Baptists Endorsement Application Process.

- After application to the Alliance of Baptists has been considered and accepted, but before endorsement with the Alliance of Baptists can be formally granted, the Alliance of Baptists Endorser contacts the current Endorser to inquire if there are any impediments or just cause not to proceed. For military chaplains, the Endorser will use the NCMAF suggested letter.
- Alliance Endorser informs current (previous) Endorser when the process has been completed.
- Previous Endorser notifies appropriate agencies of endorsement withdrawal and provides copies of those letters to new Endorser.
- The Alliance sends confirmation of Alliance endorsement to appropriate certifying organizations, employers, and institutions as identified by endorsed person. Copies of confirmation will also be sent to endorsed person.
- It is the responsibility of the newly endorsed person to see that these procedures are followed.



Special Thanks To:

Lynn McLaughlin

Angela Chavis

Megan Joyner

Peggy Sanderford Ponder

Karen Ballard

Malu Fairley-Collins