

**ORDINATION**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Approved by Board of Directors in July 2021

Provisional Approval with Expected Further Legal Review

**This document presents the Policies and Procedures related to Ordination in the Network of Community Entrepreneurs dba Bridges.**

1. **Preamble**
2. Biblical Ordination is an act of a local body of believers who together come to a consensus that the Holy Spirit is calling an individual member to a particular form of service within the body or to ministry outside the body in the name of Jesus. This early common practice of ordination was carried out through the laying on of hands and prayer in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through this outward act, the body ordained that person to that particular service. God’s people are called to many ministries, among which are apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher. People who fulfill these roles and receive services from Bridges are called Bridge Leaders.
3. Through time, arising needs, and the customs of early church fathers and mothers, ordination was further developed into a criterion for the leadership of the institutional Christian church, the serving of sacraments, the creation and ordering of policy and liturgy within the church, and the recognition of the church leader before governments, government leaders, and other institutional bodies. Bridges calls this second type of ordination Legal and Institutional Ordination.

Bridges practices Legal and Institutional Ordination in the United States as an act that recognizes what the Holy Spirit has already accomplished through the practice of Biblical Ordination in an individual person. The person with Legal and Institutional Ordination is confirmed by Bridges as someone authorized to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to administer the rites, ceremonies and ordinances of public worship, and to perform the sacerdotal and other religious functions generally associ­ated with a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This Legal and Institutional Ordination verifies and signifies to others that this individual does meet the requirements of being a Christian minister as defined by the tax code for ministers in the USA. This Legal and Institutional Ordination does not lift the individual to a higher level of importance, value, or influence within the life of Bridges than someone ordained with a Biblical ordination.

1. **Definition of Terms**
2. For the remainder of this document, “ordination” when occurring alone shall refer to “Legal and Institutional Ordination.”
3. People having “ordination” are referred to as “clergy ministers” in this document.

In this document, a body of believers, a local church, a local congregation, and a Christ-following community all refer to the same thing, a local church.

3. Candidates are those who are asking to be ordained by Bridges as clergy ministers.

1. **Definition of Ordination**

1. Ordination is a process by which Bridges, in the light of established norms and under the

direction of the Holy Spirit, examines candidates to recognize, validate, and signify the call and gifts of God, acknowledges those who fulfill such expectations, and inducts them into the ranks of its clergy ministers.

2. The person with Legal and Institutional Ordination is publically confirmed by Bridges as someone authorized to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to administer the rites, ceremonies and ordinances of public worship, and to perform the sacerdotal and other religious functions generally associ­ated with a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. **The Authority to Ordain**
2. Without exception the authority for Biblical Ordination belongs to the local body of believers.
3. In the case of Legal and Institutional Ordination, however, each candidate can only be so ordained by The Board of Directors of Bridges
4. As required in the by-laws, The Board of Directors shall appoint a Committee of Ordination to receive all applications for ordination and make recommendations to the Board of Directors for the approval or disapproval of each application.
5. **Norms By Which Candidates Are To Be Examined:**

Each candidate for ordination shall attempt to fulfill the following expectations and shall be examined according to the following expectations:

1. Hold a formal, or informal, call to ministry from a local body of believers or present evidence of fruitfulness in ministry among those outside the body of believers.

2. Be able to articulate a personal journey of faith, expressing faith in Jesus, knowledge of the Biblical story, reliance on God’s grace, and hope in the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit.

3. Demonstrate an ability to talk to God, listen to God, hear God through Scripture, and hear God through others in the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Give a plain testimony of response to the call of God to a ministry of Jesus Christ.

5. Have attestation by others as to the fruitful manifestation of their personality,

character, mental fitness, and spiritual gifts, in ways edifying to those both in the faith and outside the faith.

6. Intend to live and teach according to Bridges’ statement of faith (or the dynamic equivalent in his/her community of service).

7, Show forth a life and practices that demonstrate the ability to share the teachings, sacraments and ways of Jesus with others

8. Can articulate a desire, plan, and preferred methodology for collaboration with others for Kingdom purposes, with those who identify as Christians and those who do not so identify.

9. Display a learning posture that endures through every stage of life

10. Confirm a willingness to commit to consistent and persistent assessment, coaching, support, and training.

1. **The Procedure for Ordination Examination:**

In order to accomplish the ordination of a candidate, Bridges shall proceed as follows:

1. The candidate will submit an application digitally to ordination@bridgesus.org. No hard copies shall be accepted.
2. The application shall include:
   1. Reference Letter from a body of believers affirming a call to a particular form of ministry not to exceed one page
   2. Evidence of fruitfulness in ministry among those outside the church, which is especially required if (a) is unavailable
      1. A written journey of faith not to exceed one page
      2. A written testimony of call not to exceed one page
      3. Reference letters from others who can affirm personality, mental fitness, character, and gifting not to exceed one page per letter.
      4. Signature of Affirmations
         1. Bridges' Vows
         2. Confessions common to all Christian churches
         3. Scriptures with teaching central to Bridges
      5. Signatures of commitment
         1. to follow through with supportive services.
         2. to meet financial commitments to Bridges or other providing agencies
      6. Signature to acknowledge receipt
         1. Bridging Prayer
         2. Ordination Policies and Procedures
3. The Board of Directors may also elect to request that the candidate make and submit a video answering the following questions for The Board of Directors. This requirement for a personal video can be made in place of or in addition to the written application.
   1. Share your journey of faith. What are the time and circumstances through which you developed a relationship with God and with his Son Jesus Christ?
   2. Share your sense of call. Who has God called you to love and serve? What are the times and circumstances through which you developed a sense of confidence that God is calling you to these people at this time?
   3. Share what you are planning to do in ministry.
   4. Share what you believe you are committing to do when you commit to being a clergy minister of Bridges. What are your responsibilities and duties?
4. The Executive Director of Bridges or his/her appointee will ensure that an application is accurate and complete and inform the Board of Directors and the Committee of Ordination.
5. The Board of Directors and the members of the Committee of Ordination will have digital access to all applications within 30 days after applications are submitted correctly and completely.
   1. This application may be automated on line for administrative purposes.
6. The Commission of Ordination shall decide whether a further meeting is necessary with the candidate to examine the candidate adequately. It shall only take two or more voting members to require a live, personal examination of the candidate, whether in person or by electronic video technology.
7. Special Circumstances
   1. In situations in which linguistic, educational, economic, special needs, or special circumstances makes written or video examination impractical or discriminatory, the Committee of Ordination may
      1. choose to wave both the written and video requirements and rely on the in person interview, assuming all special needs, special circumstances, and translation needs are met adequately. In this case, the examination should be video recorded and filed electronically. Waiving of procedures such as written or video examination requires a majority vote of the voting members.
      2. appoint a willing person to assist the candidate in preparing the written or video interview or preparing for the in-person interview. Helping to obtain reference letters, typing, finding a translator, setting up video equipment, and other such tasks not related to the specific ministry to which the candidate is called into ministry are appropriate areas for some assistance. In no case shall the assisting person do the relevant work which is under examination.
8. **Voting**
9. The Committee of Ordination shall vote on each application for ordination. A majority vote for ordination shall be sufficient to recommend ordination to the Board of Directors. If a majority does not approve the candidate for ordination, the Committee of Ordination shall recommend that the Board of Directors decline the application for ordination.
10. At the Board of Directors meeting, approval of ordination requires a 2/3 (two-thirds vote) of voting members present at a rightly called meeting of The Board of Directors.
11. Candidates should ask about the schedule for approval of ordinations. Candidates should not expect The Board of Directors to call special meetings for the sake of ordination applications. Ordination applications are handled at regularly called meetings of The Board of Directors.
12. All votes about ordination shall be recorded in the minutes of the voting body, approved at a future meeting, and filed digitally with the records of Bridges.
13. **Notification**
14. The Bridges Board of Directors through her minutes shall instruct the Executive Director to notify the candidate of the decision of The Board of Directors about the ordination application. The minutes shall record the decision and the reasons given for the decision, if any.
15. The Executive Director or his/her designee shall communicate the decision of the Board in a pastoral way and deliver the decision through an email from a Bridges email address from the Bridges’ servcr.
16. Certificates of Ordination shall be issued to successful candidates bearing the Bridges Logo and the signature of the current Chair of the Board of Directors and the current Executive Director. This certificate shall be delivered digitally.
17. Regalia and Identification
18. Additional digital copies of ordination certification may be requested by the candidate at a cost of $50 per request. Requests may be sent to ordination@bridgesus.org.
19. Additional hard copies of the ordination certificate may be requested by the candidate at a cost of $75 per copy. Requests may be sent to ordination@bridgesus.org.
20. Letters of attestation under Bridges’ letter head of ordination may be requested by the clergy minister at the cost of $100 per letter. Requests may be sent to ordination@bridgesus.org.
21. **Services of Ordination**
    * 1. A service of ordination is appropriate but not necessary for the completion of the ordination.
      2. The newly ordained minister clergy is responsible for a service of ordination if he or she desires to have one.
22. **To remain a clergy minister in good standing with Bridges, the following items should be met:**
23. Participation regularly in a minimum of one (1) or more ACTS Support Services from Bridges.
24. Completion of the Annual Ordination Report Form every January
25. Remain Current with
    1. Payment for Support Services (Monthly or Annually)
    2. Monthly Administrative Fee of $25

4. Update Paperwork for Your Bridges Leader Role each January

1. Sign Contract Annually

2. Describe Your Ministry in One Paragraph

3. Provide Pictures of You and Your Ministry to Bridges for Public Use

4. Ensure your information on the Bridges’ website is up to date

5. Update Paperwork for Your Project, in applicable, each January

1. Complete W9 and deliver by Dropbox or snail mail (email is discouraged for this document.)

2. Sign Project Contract and send by email with your signature.

3. Provide by email a short description of your project

4. Provide by email the annual Budget for Your Project

5. Provide by email the Maximum Cost of Your Project

6. Continue to Meet the Norms of Examination as outlined above in section E.

1. **The Removal of Ordination**
2. In this section, one needs to remember that the removal of Legal and Institutional Ordination in Bridges does not impact Biblical Ordination. Biblical Ordination is under the sole authority of the local body. Ordination in Bridges verifies and signifies to others that this individual does meet the requirements of being a Christian minister as defined by the tax code for ministers in the USA.
3. When Bridges removes ordination, Bridges is removing the verification and signification. This verification and signification can be reinstated if the requirements of the examination are once again affirmed.
4. The Board of Director of Bridges reserves the right to remove ordination from a minister clergy at any time for any reason that creates an uncertainty that the person continues to meet the norms used in the examination process. If there is some question or doubt about the clergy minister’s ability to continue to meet the standards of the examination, the verification and signification shall be removed until such time as the Board of Directors is able to affirm that the standards of the examination are being met by the individual person.
5. Ordination of a person may be removed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The Committee of Ordination may recommend the removal of ordination for clergy ministers to the Board of Directors of Bridges.
6. Typical reasons for removing ordination would include but not be limited to the following reasons:
7. The clergy minister leaves the call to which the clergy minister was ordained
8. The clergy minister loses the support of one or more of the references used in the examination process.
9. The clergy minister fails to meet their financial obligations as a clergy minister to Bridges.
10. The clergy minister is accused of doing something that results in a criminal or civil lawsuit.
11. There is a sexual harassment allegation against the person.
12. Accusations of involvement in any type of harassment of minors, bullying of minors, or exploitation of minors.

6. After the vote to remove an ordination by The Board of Directors, The Board of Directors shall record such motion and vote in the minutes of the Board of Director’s meeting and provide instructions in the minutes for the Executive Director to inform the person of the decision.

7. To the extent permitted and advised by counsel, The Board of Directors is encouraged to be more specific rather than less specific in the minutes about the reason or reasons for voting to remove an ordination. This may assist the person to seek reinstatement of their ordination and remind future Boards about the areas that need to be examined specifically in a re-examination.

1. **Reinstatement of Ordination**
2. A person may apply to be ordained after having ordination removed.
3. The person must re-apply using the same process as a new candidate
4. Before reapplying, the person is advised to
   1. Seek to address any known reasons for the removal of ordination
   2. Obtain or create evidence that the reason has been addressed
   3. Wait at least 12 months before reapplying.
5. **Appeals**
6. If a commission has made a decision about ordination that a candidate would like to appeal, the candidate may send a letter of appeal to the Board of Directors not to exceed 2 typed, double spaced pages in length.
7. If the Board of Directors has made a decision about ordination that the candidate would like to appeal, the candidate may not appeal. There is no higher body to which to appeal. However, the candidate may wait one year and reapply.

APPENDIX A

BRIDGING VOWS

**The Bridging Vows**

I will in my daily life

With the help of God

Walk in the Spirit

On the Bridging path

And Seek to

Love God and

Love people

Accept help

Offer safe and sacred space to many

Rescue the one who has wandered

Befriend the friendless

Eat with other peoples gladly

Forgive

Confess my faults freely

Work for justice that heals

Make disciples who make disciples

Foster Christ-following communities

Fostering strong bonds with the larger church

Rely on Jesus alone for my salvation

And for the salvation of others

Join in the mission of God

Embrace the suffering of Christ

Find the supports needed

Offer and receive hospitality

Give with gratitude

Serve with joy

Die with hope

May God help me

And make it so.

APPENDIX B

CREEDS AFFIRMED

1. The Apostles Creed

2. The Nicene Creed

**APOSTLES CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
      creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
      who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
      and born of the virgin Mary.  
      He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
      was crucified, died, and was buried;  
      he descended to hell.  
      The third day he rose again from the dead.  
      He ascended to heaven  
      and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
      From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
      the holy catholic\* church,  
      the communion of saints,  
      the forgiveness of sins,

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,  
      the Father almighty,  
      maker of heaven and earth,  
      of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
      the only Son of God,  
      begotten from the Father before all ages,  
           God from God,  
           Light from Light,  
           true God from true God,  
      begotten, not made;  
      of the same essence as the Father.  
      Through him all things were made.  
      For us and for our salvation  
           he came down from heaven;  
           he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,  
           and was made human.  
           He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;  
           he suffered and was buried.  
           The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.  
           He ascended to heaven  
           and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
           He will come again with glory  
           to judge the living and the dead.  
           His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,  
      the Lord, the giver of life.  
      He proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
      and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.  
      He spoke through the prophets.  
      We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
      We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
      We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,  
      and to life in the world to come. Amen.

APPENDIX C

SCRIPTURES AFFIRMED

1. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20

2. The Great Commandment of Matthew 22:36-40

3.   The Great Inclusion of Luke 13:22-30 and Matthew 8:5-13

**MATHEW 8:5-13**

When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, 6“Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” 7And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 10When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. 11I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

**Matthew 22:36-40**

**36**“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

**37**Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’[[a](about:blank#fen-NIV-23910a)]([A](about:blank#cen-NIV-23910A)) **38**This is the first and greatest commandment. **39**And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[[b](about:blank#fen-NIV-23912b)]([B](about:blank#cen-NIV-23912B)) **40**All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”([C](about:blank#cen-NIV-23913C))

**Luke 13:22-30**

Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”  He said to them, 24 “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. 25 Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’

“But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’

26 “Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’

27 “But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’

28 “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. 29 People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. 30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”

APPENDIX C

BRIDGING PRAYER RECEIVED

THE BRIDGING PRAYER

May God

Open our Eyes

To the People On Our Path

To the Differences In Us

To the Barriers Between Us

To the Possibilities Among Us

Quicken our Hearts

For the needs so near us

For the cries behind closed doors

For the lonely sigh in the night

For the longing unfulfilled

Tears which no one hears

Focus our Minds

On the solutions more than the problems

On the hope more than the despair

On the few more than the many

On God more than ourselves

Shape our Lives

Like that of our Lord Jesus

For the path Jesus showed us

Using the skills Jesus used

So that we can be a Bridge for Others

To Connect with God

And Each Other

Amen

APPENDIX D

ANNUAL REPORTING FORM



Ordination

Annual Reporting Form

**Name:**

**Date of form completion:**

Name of Ministry:

**Name of Project (if applicable)**

This report covers the Calendar Year from Jan 1 through Dec 31 of the year: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Describe Your Ministry**
2. **Describe the people you have served in ministry this past year. Who are they? How do they describe themselves?**
3. **Check the one Group from the list below that best describes the people you serve.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **7 Basic Groups** | **Examples of 7 Basic Groups** |
|  | **For Reporting** |  |
| **Number** | **Broad Category of People We Serve** | **Type of People in these Categories:** |
| **1** | **OUTCASTS** | **HOMELESS, PREGNANT TEENAGERS, REFUGEES, PRISONERS** |
| **2** | **URGENT NEED** | **HURRICANE VICTIMS, HUNGER, SICK, CANCER,** |
| **3** | **VULNERABLE** | **BATTERED WOMEN, HOMELESS CHILDREN, ELDERLY, ANYONE BEING ABUSED BY SOMEONE MORE POWERFUL** |
| **4** | **INFLUENCIAL** | **ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, LAWYERS,** |
| **5** | **NETWORKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS** | **YOGA, COMMON INTEREST CLUBS,** |
| **6** | **OTHER FAITHS** | **BUDDHISTS, MUSLIMS, HINDUS, JEWS, ATHIESTS, SECULARISTS, AGNOSTICS, PAGANS, WITCHES,** |
| **7** | **CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS** | **Provide Bridge Leaders with help in marketing, fund development, serving the poor, etc** |

1. **From the list below, the people or activities which represents your ministry. You may check no more than two.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2CM | **COUNSELING MINISTRIES** |
| 4EN | **ENTERTAINMENT/MEDIA** |
| 1HI | **IMIGRANT FAMILIES** |
| 3HM | **HOMELESS PEOPLE** |
| 1LG | **LGBTQ FRIENDS** |
| 3LI | **LOW INCOME HOUSING** |
| 5LS | **LOCAL STUDENTS** |
| 5NM | **NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTRY** |
| 1PT | **PREGNANT TEENS/YOUTH** |
| 5CI | **COMMON INTEREST CLUBS** |
| 3PF | **POOR URBAN FAMILIES** |
| 3WC | **WOMEN / CHILDREN** |
| 5YF | **YOGA/FITNESS** |
| 1IN | **INCARCERATED** |
| 6IF | **INTERFAITH** |
| 7BL | **BRIDGE LEADERS AND COMMUNITIES** |
| 2DV | **Domestic Violence** |
| 2EE | **Earth and Environment** |
| 2CC | **Comfort/Care for the Sick/Grieving** |
| 3MB | **Micro Business and Loans** |

1. **General Questions**
2. **Have you completed your annual Bridges assessments?**
3. **Are your payments for the monthly administrative fee for the administrative services or ordination paid in full for the year?**
4. **Questions Specifically Related to traditional ministerial activities:**
5. **Have you provided the sacrament of Baptism? How many?**
6. **Have you provided the sacrament of The Lord’s Supper? How many?**
7. **Have you facilitated an action of Biblical Ordination? How many?**
8. **Have you conducted a Christian wedding? How many?**
9. **Have you conducted a funeral? How many?**
10. **Questions for Your Reflection**
11. **Share a story of what has happened that could be shared publicly to encourage others.**
12. **Of the 12 steps of the Bridging path, which step do you most identify with currently? Why and in what way?**
13. **Describe a situation that demonstrates how you have practices one or more of the Bridging Skills and identify with step of the Bridging Path with which that skill is most associated.**

## Where do you see God at work in your ministry area and how have you been consistent in joining in His work, or how have you adapted your ministry to remain true in following God in what God is doing?"

1. **Affirmation of Continuing to Meet the Norms of Ordination**
2. **Is there any reason that you may no longer meet the norms of ordination that you met in the examination process to be ordained?**

Where do you see God at work in your ministry area and how have you been consistent in joining in His work, or how have you adapted your ministry to remain true in following God in what He is doing?"

**Yes/ No/ Not Sure**

1. **Please Explain More if you answered No or Not Sure**