

Dear Friend:

Thank you for contacting us about your interest in ministry as an American Baptist Home Mission Societies chaplain or pastoral counselor. Ecclesiastical endorsement is required by employers for ministry in specialized settings such as the military, health care institutions, and counseling practices. It is also a common requirement for professional certification. The ABHMS Committee on Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors grants approval for training and ecclesiastical endorsement to serve. Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Services supports the work of the Committee.

Enclosed you will find the application and forms including the *Ecclesiastical Endorsement Standards* booklet. Please look at this booklet first, before starting on the application. Most questions about the application can be answered by referring to the *Standards*. Carefully review the list of standards for your category. These standards are mandated by the committee and followed by this office in assisting you. Exceptions are not routinely granted; however, the committee is willing to consider well presented, reasonable requests. Please consider the recommendations below before you submit the forms:

- Include a letter indicating the endorsement or approval you are requesting and if you have any inquiries.
- If the application package includes all the material requested, the average time to issue the ecclesiastical endorsement is twelve weeks from the date we receive the application. Otherwise, the review of your application by each of the six members of the committee will be determined once you complete sending all the documents needed.
- Prepare your biographical sketch in accordance to the specifications mentioned on our Ecclesiastical Endorsement Standards booklet. Indicate the headings below:
 - 1) description of family dynamics
 - 2) faith journey
 - 3) strengths and weaknesses
 - 4) attitudes toward women in ministry
 - 5) ministry to and with racial/ethnic persons
 - 6) ministry in a pluralistic environment
 - 7) ministry to systems

Before you mail your application please take the time to verify that all the requirements are included. The members of the endorsing committee carefully study the accuracy of the applicant in completing each requirement.

We receive a large amount of documents for each application, we would appreciate not to include any other document than the ones mentioned in the book of requirements. We will mail back or discard any document that is not part of the application package.

Best wishes as you seek to follow the leading of the Spirit of God!

Sincerely,



Rev. Paul E. Clark
Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent
Chaplaincy & Pastoral Counseling Services