



Credentialing is the starting point of the ministry marathon.

Your Bible training, whether from a seminary, Gateway Theological Institute or another institution has equipped you well. The hours of lectures, shelves of books and numerous papers have prepared you for a life of vocational ministry. By God's abundant grace, you are now ready to start your journey. But ministry doesn't begin with your degree. Ministry begins when your call is confirmed, and you are sent to the ministry field.

That's where ordination comes in. The ministry of spiritual care over God's church requires not only the biblical equipping that our schooling provides, but also a validation of our calling and shepherding skills, as well as confirmation of our character. Ordination benefits us by calibrating all four of these areas and helps to ensure pastoral effectiveness and ministry longevity.

**EFCA credentialing begins with licensing which leads to Ordination or a Certificate of Ministry and it places a strong emphasis on the importance of sound teaching.** With an ardent commitment to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, we recognize that as ministers of the gospel, each of us are the product of our theological beliefs. Likewise, the EFCA is the product of our doctrine together.

Our doctrine unites us and moves us forward. It is our standard of life, faith and commitment to each other. Credentialing provides an objective standard by which ministry servants are tested, refined and recognized. This begins with an examination of one's doctrine, followed by his calling, his character and giftedness, which ultimately sets the stage for effective and supported church ministry.

We invite and strongly encourage every EFCA pastor and vocational ministry leader to seek the appropriate credentialing. This helpful and enjoyable process will...

- EDIFY you as you discover and refine your theological strengths and weaknesses.
- HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE before your peers and church members.
- PROVIDE a measure of safety to the flock of Christ.
- INCORPORATE you into the fellowship of EFCA ministers.
- PUBLICLY CONFIRM the call of God in your life of ministry.
- PROVIDE LEGAL STATUS for the exercise of your ministry.

The process begins at the district level. Your District Board of Ministerial Standing will provide the mentoring and opportunity for examination. The district examines and makes recommendations to the National Board of Ministerial Standing. The final decision will be made by that board after careful consideration of your theological paper and the minutes taken at your scheduled council.

While the exam can admittedly be intimidating and humbling, the benefits fully outweigh the challenge. Our sincere hope is to encourage and empower you to do the Lord's work at the church level while holding each other accountable, motivating one another to good works and supporting each other in our faith. In love, we want to help you succeed as a faithful pastor.

Call your district office to learn more or read about the process in our Credentialing FAQs [here](#).

**Paulo Freire**

*EFCA East Board of Ministerial Standing*

Hope Church | Wantage, NJ