



## **Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches, USA**

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments: to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.

In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. When needed, I will seek out best practices from others and share my guidance when it might edify and empower wise choices for others. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth below in this Code of Ethics.

### **CENTEREDNESS**

- A. I will grow in and show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.
- B. I will strive for a disciplined life by tending to my mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing in such ways as keeping hours of prayers, devotion and rest, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, constructive use of social media, and regularly engaging in educational and leisure activities for ministerial and personal development.
- C. I will strive for balance and will work toward being fully present in my obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called.
- D. I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status.

### **COMPETENCE**

- A. I will not use my ministerial status, position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children. I will be constantly mindful of my ministerial status, position, and authority, and will use them to advocate for those in need.
- B. I will not plagiarize; I will be truthful in all my communication and give due credit to others' words.

- C. I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.
- D. I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when, in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.
- E. I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.

## **COLLEGIALITY**

- A. I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.
- B. I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.
- C. I will work to gain greater awareness and sensitivity to colleagues who experience discrimination on any basis in order to discern and undertake my obligations for support.
- D. I will, upon my resignation or retirement, discontinue my ministerial leadership roles with my former constituents and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without request and/or consent.
- E. I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.
- F. I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_