

Browncroft Pastoral Licensure Overview

What is pastoral licensure at Browncroft?

In some ways, licensing is similar to ordination. As stated in Article 8 of the Browncroft Bylaws, *"We recognize that it will be the purpose of the Lord to call out from among us those men whom He has called into the work of the Christian ministry, and whom He has by gift and endowment, qualified for such work."* Licensing of the specific pastoral staff is another form of the church's acknowledgment of such a call, but at a lower level than ordination. It recognizes the authority of the licensed individual to carry out certain types of ministry, such as officiating wedding services, leading communion services, and conducting baptisms on behalf of Browncroft Community Church, without direct supervision of an ordained minister. Additional responsibilities without direct supervision might also include funerals, preaching, and teaching.

There are some differences in scope between ordination and licensing. Typically, churches recognize the ordination, which another church of like faith confers. We intend that licensing at Browncroft would be limited to ministry at Browncroft. However, by clearly stating what licensing at Browncroft represents and requires, we also believe that the licensed staff member would have some degree of acknowledgment when moving to a different church. At Browncroft, we require that a candidate for ordination would already have received an advanced degree from a seminary, plus experience, which would have provided the foundation for a working knowledge of theology and ministry skills required of an ordained minister. Licensing acknowledges the ministry call and qualifications for the pastoral staff member who has significant experience in pastoral ministry, the capability of administering the ordinances of the church, demonstrated spiritual leadership character and abilities, working knowledge of doctrine and the Scriptures, and preaching/teaching ability, and may not possess an advanced seminary degree.

What are the benefits of pastoral licensure for Browncroft and the individual?

The benefit of licensing for the church is the availability of additional pastoral staff who can perform certain types of ministry responsibilities in the absence of an ordained minister. The benefit to the licensed individual is the confirmation by the congregation and Browncroft leadership of the person's call to ministry.

What are the qualifications for pastoral licensure at Browncroft?

- A full-time member of the Browncroft pastoral staff for at least two years or part-time member for at least four years
- Demonstrated ability to lead communion service as well as to conduct a baptism
- Demonstrated ability in preaching or teaching, as well as pastoral prayer
- Demonstrated spiritual leadership and relational skills, both in group settings as well as one-on-one
- Demonstrated knowledge of the Scriptures as well as key doctrines of the faith
- Recommendation by pastoral staff leadership to Elder Board
- An affirmative vote by the Licensing Examination Panel comprised of at least five Elders and a member of the pastoral staff
- Approval by the Elder Board to bring to the voting Members of Browncroft Community Church
- Affirmation and approval by the voting Members of Browncroft Community Church