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Proposed Amendments

**Theological Foundations and
Policies and Criteria
for the
Ordering of Ministry
of the
Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)**

Preamble “Within the universal Body of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is identifiable by its testimony, tradition, name, institutions, and relationships. Across national boundaries, this church expresses itself in covenantal relationships in congregations, Regions, and General ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), bound by God’s covenant of love. Each expression is characterized by its integrity, self-governance, authority, rights, and responsibilities, yet they relate to each other in a covenantal manner, to the end that all expressions will seek God’s will and be faithful to God’s mission.”

~ from paragraph 2 of *The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), revised 2005*

35 *Preface*

36
37 This document, *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of*
38 *Ministry, 2009*, becomes the policy document for the Christian Church (Disciples of
39 Christ) in the United States and Canada once the General Assembly adopts the document.
40 It will replace the current document, *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry, 2003*
41 on August 1, 2011.

42
43 Therefore, it will be advantageous and necessary that a reasonable time frame be adopted.
44 The General Commission on Ministry is offering the following:

45
46 Time Frame

47
48 2008

49 Fall GCOM circulates Draft 9.5 to General Ministries Presidents,
50 Commissions/Committees on Ministry through Regional
51 Ministers, Council on Theological Education and the Standing
52 Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform for comment by
53 January 30, 2009.

54
55 2009

56
57 February GCOM considers changes, modifications to Draft 9.5 and prepares
58 Draft 10 to present to the General Board.

59
60 April General Board reviews and takes action on Draft 10.

61
62 July General Assembly considers resolution.

63
64 2009-2011 Period of Implementation

65
66 2011

67 August 1 This ordering of ministry takes effect.

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71

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103 **I. Theological Foundations**
104 **for the Ordering of Ministry**
105 **in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
106

107 PREFACE
108

109 *Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples*
110 *of Christ)* functions interdependently with *Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of*
111 *Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* to clarify evolving patterns of
112 ministry as we seek to respond in faithful ways to ever changing contexts of service and
113 witness. It is not a comprehensive theology of ministry nor does it attempt to offer the
114 final word on Disciples’ understanding of ministry.
115

116 **A. The Ministry of the Whole People of God**
117

118 God calls all persons to receive the good news of the Gospel and accept their call to be
119 God’s people. In a divided and unbelieving world, those who accept this good news are
120 drawn into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of a new community, the church. In this body, the
121 Holy Spirit unites those who follow Jesus Christ and sends them as witnesses into the
122 world [ref: I Corinthians 12.12-13; Ephesians 4.4-5; Matthew 28:16-20]. The church’s
123 mission is to proclaim and prefigure the justice and joy of the Realm of God. In order to
124 fulfill this mission faithfully, the members of the Body of Christ are given ministries of
125 witness, service and reconciliation.
126

127 The ministry of Christ is entrusted to all the people of God. Through baptism they are
128 called to servant ministry lived out in covenant community. Implicit in the confession of
129 faith and the act of baptism is an acceptance of the vocation of the baptized—the special
130 calling shared by all followers of Christ to witness to the sovereign love of God, the grace
131 of Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit in all of life. The gifts (*charisms*)
132 of the Holy Spirit are different and diverse, but in tremendous and simple ways they
133 proclaim the mighty acts of God and mediate God’s loving and reconciling work to and
134 in the world. Every baptized person is called to witness to Christ in whatever situation he
135 or she lives—to express in their daily lives the ministry of Christ.
136

137 In Christ the individual becomes a member of “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people
138 of God’s own possession” (1Peter 2:9). Thus it has been common to speak of the

139 “priesthood of all believers”¹—the persons who live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ
140 in the church and in the world. This language highlights the sacramentality of the work of
141 the laity through whose witness and service the grace of God is made manifest.

142
143 The ministry of God’s people (the *laos* – the Greek term used in the New Testament for
144 “people,” which is the source of our English words “laity, laywomen, laymen”), taken as
145 a whole and in its diverse individual expressions, is to manifest and so continue the
146 saving ministry of Jesus Christ. This ministry includes all who join together in witness to
147 God’s justice and reconciliation through worship, daily work, sharing the Gospel,
148 pastoral care, relief of human suffering, engagement in the struggle for peace and justice,
149 and realization of the unity of the Church Universal. It is within this context of a shared
150 ministry of the people of God that Commissioned ministry and Ordained ministry is to be
151 understood.

152
153 Within the ministry of the whole people of God there is, and has been since the early
154 church, representative ministry called by God and set apart by the Church for distinctive
155 functions. The Commissioned and the Ordained are both of the *laos*, but in recognizing
156 God’s call to particular individuals, the Church designates persons “to re-present to the
157 Church its own identity and calling in Jesus Christ” (*The Nature of the Church, A Word
158 to the Church on Ministry*). Authority and blessing to perform this ministry are celebrated
159 in Ordination and Commissioning.

160 161 **B. Historical Survey of Disciples Ministry**

162
163 Alexander Campbell and Barton Warren Stone relied on the Bible, especially the New
164 Testament, as the only rule of faith and practice. This premise shaped their
165 understandings of ministry in its many expressions.

166
167 Campbell’s attitudes on ministry progressed as the movement grew and the changing
168 circumstances of the church demanded new approaches to and appropriations of
169 leadership. Conversely, Stone’s attitudes on ministry remained relatively consistent.
170 While he promoted freedom from ecclesiastical control, he retained a sense of order in

¹ The “priesthood of all believers” refers to the persons who have entered into a covenanted relationship through confession and baptism. It ought not be confused with the role of congregational elders in the administration of the Lord’s Supper. Although in some circumstances anyone can administer the Sacraments/Ordinances of the Church, in Disciples practice it has usually been the duly appointed congregational leaders who administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper. This practice derives not from the “priesthood of all believers” but from early distinctions between the roles of elder and evangelist/preacher. The evangelist, called from outside the congregation, was restricted to ministries of preaching/teaching. The elder(s), called from within the congregation, bore responsibility for congregational governance, including the administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The right and responsibility to preside at the Table is increasingly a role shared by Elders and ministers.

171 ministry and structure. One notable point of agreement between the two is that both
172 regarded ministry as servanthood even though the forms and functions of that ministry
173 were expressed and authorized in different ways.

174
175
176

Alexander Campbell

177 Although Alexander Campbell was staunchly anti-clerical, he was clearly pro-ministry.
178 This position was elaborated throughout various pages of the *Christian Baptist* in the
179 1820s to 1830. The clergy of the day represented for Campbell a class that he could only
180 term self-serving and pompous, promoting a specific set of sectarian or denominational
181 tenets in place of the gospel. His opposition was to a professional clergy—independent
182 of the local congregation, and accountable only to itself—not to the exercise of ministry
183 which he considered essential to the life of the Church:

184

185 Campbell developed a specific formula for the church’s ministry, quite apart from what
186 others might consider the roles of the clergy:

- 187 1. Establish necessary offices for perpetuity and growth
- 188 2. Select the best qualified persons for those offices
- 189 3. Consecrate or set apart those persons for those offices
- 190 4. Give oneself completely to the work and continue growing so that everyone can
191 see the growth.

192 In *The Christian System* he outlined:

193 The standing and immutable ministry of the Christian community is composed of
194 Bishops [Elders],² Deacons, and Evangelists. Of each of these there is but one
195 order, though possessing great diversities of gifts. There have been bishops,
196 deacons, and evangelists, with both ordinary and extraordinary gifts. (CS, 82-3)

197 Campbell argued from Ephesians 4.12, “the work of ministry [is] for the edifying
198 of the body of Christ.” Bishops, deacons and evangelists each had a distinctive role or
199 function on behalf of the Body: *Bishops* engaged in ministries of oversight; *Deacons* in
200 ministries of service; and, *Evangelists* in ministries of proclamation.

201

202 From Campbell’s perspective in this early period, the movement of ministers from church
203 to church was unacceptable. Appointed from a particular congregation, the leader stayed
204 and served in that congregation or lost credentials.³

² Bishop and Elder are alternate translations of the Greek word *episkopos*.

³ In an 1835 edition of the *Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell wrote: “The jurisdiction of such bishops [elders] is always circumscribed by the congregation which ordained them. A single church is the largest dioceses (sic) known in the New Testament. Neither does his election and ordination give him a perpetual office. Should he leave the church, which under the direction of the Holy Spirit, created him, and become a member of another church, he enters it as a private member, and so continues until that church elect and ordain him, should they call for his services. The bishops [elders] and deacons of the church in Philippi were the bishops [elders] and deacons of the church in Philippi and of no other church; and so of Ephesus, Antioch, Rome, and Jerusalem.”(*MH*, VIII:10/35, 503)

205

206 As the church grew after the union of the Disciples and Christians in 1832, Campbell was
207 compelled to distinguish between elders of oversight in local congregations and
208 preaching elders who moved from congregation to congregation.

209

210

Barton Warren Stone

211

212 In an 1831 issue of the *Christian Messenger*, Barton Stone wrote that the pastoral office
213 included “bishops, elders, pastors, and evangelists” (*CM*, 5:7/31, 162). For Stone, the
214 pastoral office was one office with multiple functions, such as: to preach and teach,
215 administer the sacraments/ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and, according
216 to his Presbyterian heritage, provide moral oversight within the congregation, but not
217 from outside it.

218

219 Not unlike Campbell, the bishops/elders and pastors, were internal to the congregation
220 while the evangelists were traveling preachers/planters. Although Stone did not
221 specifically identify deacons, a description in the *Christian Messenger* is helpful: “The
222 word *Diakonos* translated *deacon* but commonly, *minister* is frequently applied to all
223 those who minister in the word as well as in other matters” (*CM*, IX:2/35, 45).

224

225 As early as the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* (1804), it was
226 willed that: “the church of Christ resume her native right of internal government – try her
227 candidates for ministry, as to their soundness of faith, acquaintance with experimental
228 religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but
229 Christ speaking in them.” In an 1827 issue of the *Christian Messenger*, Stone spoke again
230 of candidates for ministry implying that those individuals must have had some sort of
231 Standing or recognition in the church. This reaffirmed his position in the *Last Will and*
232 *Testament* that the church try its candidates. He further argued that only Licensed
233 preachers and Ordained elders were empowered to preach, giving rise to his notion of
234 “pastor.” He evoked a strong Pauline tendency here in that preachers should not wander
235 about the countryside in a freelance manner, but be sent from the churches with letters of
236 commendation (*CM*, 1:2/27, 80).

237

238 Stone lifted up the pastoral office by identifying not only the functions but the
239 authorization. He makes a distinction between choosing or appointing to an office and
240 Ordaining to an office. (*CM*, IX: 2/35, 45) Through Acts and the Pastoral Epistles, he
241 contends “...that Ordination to the work of ministry was performed by the [imposition]
242 of the hands of the elders in the New Testament church. – Therefore it appears that no
243 person can be legally inducted into the ministry without this act” (Ibid, 46).

244

245 When queried on the form of Ordination, Campbell, like Stone, responded “Imposition of
246 hands, accompanied with fasting and prayer. Thus have persons been consecrated to
247 sacred offices in the Christian church from the beginning.” And then the question, “*Who*
248 *may, or who ought to lay hands on the bishops, or deacons, or messengers elect?* I
249 answer, without dubiety, and in a few words, The community, the whole community as
250 may be approved in behalf of the congregation.” (*MH*, VIII:10/35,498)

251

252 A significant departure from Campbell's position, however, was the authority to Ordain.
253 While Campbell had the congregation appoint and Ordain, Stone had the congregation
254 appoint to the pastoral office but a conference or college of ministers, already Ordained,
255 was the Ordaining body.

256

257

Later Views

258

259 The search for Ordained ministers from outside the congregational membership
260 addressed some of the leadership problems created by the rapid growth of the churches in
261 the 1840s and 50s. There were times when it was determined that qualified persons
262 simply were not available from within the churches. Young men educated in colleges and
263 even seminaries were beginning to be called to settled ministries. The evangelists, too,
264 were well known and seen as a ready and important pool for resident preachers.

265

266 The turn of the 20th century saw a variety of new issues for the Disciples that began to
267 shape understandings of the ordering of ministry. At the 1935 San Antonio
268 International Convention, a Commission on Ordination was appointed. In 1939, the
269 Richmond International Convention approved a new system which called for Ordination
270 councils comprising ministers and elders representing three or more congregations to, in
271 Stone's words, "try her candidates." Announced still as a local church matter, this new
272 approach more fully satisfied Stone's system of Ordinations being conducted by a
273 conference or college of ministers. Such a system began to afford broader church
274 ownership and accountability as ministers moved from congregation to congregation. In
275 effect, the convention was following the example of Black Disciples in North Carolina
276 who had already determined in 1886 that Ordination should not be authorized by a local
277 congregation acting alone and had adopted standards for evaluating candidates for
278 ministry. Some local congregations continued to Ordain their candidates without
279 consultation of supporting churches or state societies, but those were becoming more rare
280 in light of emerging covenantal relationships. At the 1964 Detroit International
281 Convention, the church formally recommended a seminary degree prior to Ordination,
282 even though some state societies and congregations had been enforcing that educational
283 requirement for many years.

284

285

Origins of Licensed Ministry

286

287 The 1939 Richmond report commended three criteria for Ordination:

288

1. Good moral character and personal fitness for ministry

289

2. A full college course, and if possible, graduate training in religion

290

3. Experience in Christian work which shows real leadership, vision, pastoral
291 qualities, and preaching ability

292

Persons who fulfilled points 1 and 3 but not point 2 were accorded Licenses - a new
293 category of ministry created from the Ordination report.

294

295 Licensed ministry, as we conceive it today, is fairly recent in Disciples history. Barton
296 Stone was Licensed by the Orange Presbytery of North Carolina as a missionary to the

297 lower North Carolina area. Alexander Campbell was Licensed to preach at the Brush Run
298 Meeting House in 1811. During the Stone-Campbell era, “licensing to preach” was a trial
299 period prior to Ordination to see if the candidate had the disposition for ministry and the
300 qualities for preaching the true gospel without any mixture of human philosophy, deceit,
301 or rudiments of the world (*cf Last Will and Testament*).

302
303 In 1948 the church recognized a licensing process which defined certification for a
304 limited period of time, primarily for college students in preparation or candidacy and for
305 “those laymen who desire to serve as part-time ministers” (“License and Ordination of
306 the Christian Minister,” 1948, para.16). Among the primary beneficiaries were small
307 churches that were unable to attract or support full-time ministers. This established a
308 standard of a two-fold office that was incorporated into *The Design for the Christian*
309 *Church (Disciples of Christ)* in 1968 and the *Policies and Criteria for the Order of*
310 *Ministry* in 1971.

311

312 Emerging Practice at the Turn of the Millennium

313

314 Toward the end of the 20th century, the trend toward higher educational standards for
315 Ordained ministry reached its peak and patterns of preparation began to diversify. Some
316 Regions determined that a single model of ministerial formation was too restrictive to
317 serve faithfully the changing contexts of ministry. A few began to utilize criteria that
318 allowed for the Ordination of ministers without a Master of Divinity degree from an
319 *Association of Theological Schools (ATS)* accredited seminary. The emergence of these
320 *de facto* alternate educational tracks led to calls for a review of expectations with an eye
321 toward developing a new consensus on educational standards for Ordained ministry.

322

323 **C. Ministry in the Congregation**

324 It is the usual practice among congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
325 to nominate, elect, and install or in other ways recognize for service deacons and elders.
326 Women and men serving in these offices manifest various spiritual gifts, including
327 maturity, prayer, insight, and leadership.

328

329 The offices of elder and deacon are ordered by the congregations, through
330 election and recognition with appropriate ceremony, for the performance of
331 certain functions of ministry appropriate to the offices.

- 332 a. a person elected elder is authorized to exercise within the congregation
333 which elects her or him to the ministerial functions it assigns for periods
334 of time which it specifies, such as sharing in the ministration of baptism
335 and the Lord’s Supper and the conduct of worship, and sharing in the
336 pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. The eldership is
337 a voluntary ministry, each congregation having a plurality of elders [more
338 than one elder].
- 339 b. a person elected deacon is authorized to serve in the congregation which
340 elects her or him for periods of time which it specifies by assisting in the
341 ministration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, in the conduct of worship,

342 and in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. The
343 diaconate is a voluntary ministry (paragraph 87, *The Design of the*
344 *Christian Church*).
345

346 The role of elders and deacons is most evident in the ways these ministries represent the
347 congregation in their communities of faith and in the larger community. For example,
348 elders and deacons are seen visiting persons in hospitals, nursing homes, or with the
349 home-centered. They may also lead congregations in ministries of outreach and social
350 justice.

351
352 It is, however, at the Table that the ministry of the congregation comes into view for the
353 gathered community. The pastor and elders as they preside and pray and the deacons as
354 they serve, re-present the whole ministry of the church.
355

356 **D. Order of Ministry**

357
358 “The church recognizes an order of ministry, set apart under God, to equip the whole
359 people to fulfill their corporate ministry” (Paragraph 86, *Design of the Christian Church*).
360

361 In its ordering of ministry, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes a
362 Commissioned ministry and an Ordained ministry. The church expects the women and
363 men it Commissions and Ordains to demonstrate educational qualifications and
364 competencies in several areas of personal integrity and pastoral practice, as well as a
365 clear call to and passion for ministry. The church is called to provide significant
366 Congregational and Regional support for those seeking to serve in ministry, whether
367 Ordained or Commissioned.
368

369 The church gives grateful acknowledgment to God who in every age grants to women
370 and men the spiritual gifts necessary for such ministry. In making decisions about whom
371 to Commission or Ordain, the church looks to candidates for:

- 372 ❖ the personal, inward call from God, which leads persons to seek such ministry,
- 373 ❖ the God-given gifts and graces,
- 374 ❖ the personal characteristics and aptitudes, and
- 375 ❖ the preparation and promise (e.g., education, skills, etc.) that they have for
376 effective ministry.

377 By these criteria the church discerns whom it will Commission and/or Ordain.⁴
378

379 It bears reiteration that throughout history, Disciples have recognized various methods of
380 preparation for ministry. Over the course of the 20th century, Disciples placed increasing
381 emphasis on a graduate seminary degree as a credential for Ordination, even while
382 recognizing that for some individuals other methods of preparation might be more
383 appropriate in consideration of certain circumstances such as life situation, community,
384 ministry setting, and cultural and ethnic context.

⁴ Adapted from *A Word to the Church on Ministry* (1985), Commission on Theology, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), p 3.

385

386 **1. Commissioned Ministry**

387

388 In the development of Disciples understanding of ministry, “Commissioned” ministry is
389 replacing some forms of “Licensed” ministry. Men and women are authorized and
390 Commissioned by their Regions to offer ministry in a particular place for a specified
391 period of time. “The word ‘Commissioned’ means one who is appointed to a position
392 entrusted with a task, or one who is authorized or sent on behalf of another for a task or
393 proclamation” (*The Nazareth Consensus*, page 8, para.1).⁵

394

395 The term “Commissioned” contains the word “mission,” which sets the stage for a
396 spiritual expectation. Paul describes himself as one commissioned to preach the gospel as
397 in Col. 1:25: “I became [the church’s] servant according to God’s *commission* that was
398 given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known...” (NRSV). In II Corinthians
399 Paul writes, “But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has *commissioned*
400 *us*;...” (II Cor. 1:21, RSV) and again, “For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God’s
401 word; but as men [and women] of sincerity, as *commissioned* by God, in the sight of God
402 we speak in Christ” (II Cor. 2:17, RSV).

403

404 The word “Commissioned” has been used and continues to be used by the church for
405 people appointed to various positions or sent forth to carry God’s message. Thus, the
406 term has ecclesiastical connotations of being entrusted with the tasks of ministry. The use
407 of the term “commission” or “commissioned” in English translations of Paul’s letters has
408 further shaped our understanding of the concept in the contemporary setting.

409

410 Commissioning is an acknowledgment by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit in the one
411 commissioned, and a commitment by both the Church and the Commissioned to the new
412 relationship. Those Commissioned offer their gifts to the Church and commit themselves
413 to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility. At the same time, they
414 enter into a collegial relationship with all ministers. By receiving the Commissioned
415 minister in the act of commissioning, the Church acknowledges the minister’s call and
416 commits itself to be open to it. This liturgical service occurs in the context of
417 Congregational worship in partnership with the Region.

418

419 **2. Ordained Ministry**

420

421 **a. The meaning of Ordination**

422 In Ordination — through prayers invoking the Holy Spirit and the laying on of
423 hands — the Church confirms in women and men the call of God, acknowledges
424 their gifts and graces, and authorizes this ministry in and for the Church.

⁵ A proposal for transformative action by the Dialogue on Licensed Ministry Action Team, July 2004, growing out of the gathering at Barton College in May 2003.

425 The act of Ordination by those who are appointed for this ministry attests the
426 bond of the church with Jesus Christ and the apostolic witness, recalling that it is
427 the risen Lord who is the true Ordainer and bestows the gift. In Ordaining, the
428 church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, provides for the faithful
429 proclamation of the Gospel and humble service in the name of Christ. The laying
430 on of hands is the sign of the gift of the Spirit, rendering visible the fact that the
431 ministry was instituted in the revelation accomplished in Christ, and reminding
432 the church to look to him as the source of its commission. ("Ministry," *Baptism*
433 *Eucharist and Ministry*, WCC, para. 40.)
434

435 Disciples understand the meaning of Ordination as an action of God and the
436 community during which the Ordained are strengthened by the Spirit for their task
437 and are upheld by the acknowledgment and prayers of the congregation.
438

439 Ordination sets one apart for leadership in the life and witness of the church.
440 While the Ordained ministry cannot be reduced to any mere listing of tasks, it
441 may be identified by leadership with regard to three fundamental aspects of the
442 church's life and witness:

- 443 (1) acting in servant obedience to God's commandment of love in self-sacrifice
444 on behalf of others and in a servant life in the world;
- 445 (2) proclaiming the gospel in faithfulness to Jesus Christ by word (teaching and
446 preaching), by sacrament (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and by deed
447 (mission and service);
- 448 (3) overseeing the life of the community in its worship, education, witness,
449 mission, fellowship, and pastoral nurture through the leading of the Holy
450 Spirit.

451
452 In selecting men and women for Ordination, the church thus seeks to insure that
453 its ministry of service, proclamation, and oversight shall be constantly upheld by
454 its members.

455 **b. The character of Ordained ministry**

456 Disciples accept Ordination as a gift of the Holy Spirit at work in the community
457 of faith. In every service of Ordination we, therefore, seek to witness to at least
458 four aspects of this ordering of ministry:

- 459 1) *Apostolic Ministry*: The Ordained enter the *apostolic ministry*. By this we
460 mean they receive their authority and commission from the risen Christ. The
461 first Christian ministers were the apostles in the New Testament, to whom the
462 living Lord revealed himself and sent "to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
463 Ministers in every generation preach, celebrate, witness, and gather disciples
464 in continuity with those early apostles.
- 465 2) *Representative Ministry*: Ordination witnesses to a *representative ministry*.
466 Those who accept the ministry of the Word, sacrament, and mission are
467 responsible for re-presenting (showing forth) to the world and to all baptized

468 Christians the character of Christ's ministry and witness. A central task of
469 such representative ministry is personally and publicly to point the church to
470 its dependence on Jesus Christ, who is the source of its faith, mission, and
471 unity.

472 3) *Collegial Ministry*: Those who receive Ordination enter a *collegial ministry*.
473 Ministry is inherently a shared responsibility. No minister is independent or
474 autonomous, all seek to teach and work together to express fellowship
475 (*koinonia*) in support and care for each other. This collegiality relates
476 Ordained and lay persons in common ministry. The ministries of all members
477 of the believing community are complementary, given to one to be supportive
478 of the other. All are to build up the Body of Christ in love. No differences of
479 vocation, function or education should obscure the fact that the one ministry
480 of Christ is shared by the whole people of God. Lay and Ordained are partners
481 together in governance and witness; together they empower the church for
482 effective participation in discovering God's will for all humanity.

483 4) *Universal Ministry*: Most appropriately, Ordination is a *rite of the Church*
484 *Universal*. While Ordination is normally done by a particular denomination,
485 and Standing is limited to a particular communion, the intention is that no one
486 is ever Ordained into a particular denomination or tradition, certainly not into
487 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Those Ordained are representative
488 ministers of the Church Universal: one, holy, catholic and apostolic. While we
489 serve with the vision of universality, the Church lives with the pain of a
490 divided ministry. Nevertheless, all ministers are called to point out the
491 community of Jesus Christ, to work to bring new expressions of the one
492 universal Church into being, and to search for forms of unity which the
493 divided churches cannot yet express.⁶

494 **c. Offices of the Ordained ministry**

495
496 The New Testament does not describe a single pattern of ministry which might
497 serve as a blueprint or continuing norm for all future ministry in the Church. In
498 the New Testament there appears rather a variety of forms which existed at
499 different places and times. As the Holy Spirit continued to lead the Church in life,
500 worship and mission, certain elements from this early variety were further
501 developed and became settled into a more universal pattern of ministry (*BEM*,
502 para. 19).
503

⁶ Adapted from "Theological and Historical Foundations," Ordination Service and Guidelines for Ordination for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Division of Homeland Ministries and Council on Christian Unity, 1990, pp. 1-2.

504 In 1985, the Commission on Theology commended to the whole Church a single
505 order of Ordained ministry which would include three offices.⁷

506

507 This pattern of ministerial leadership corresponds to the three aspects of the
508 church's life identified as fundamental:⁸

509

510 ❖ the *ministry of service* to church and world (the *diaconate* or deacons), where
511 the active witness and mission of the church as servant is advanced;

512 ❖ the *ministry of proclamation* by Word and Sacrament (the *presbyterate*, or
513 pastors), where preaching, teaching, and the sacraments/ordinances (Table and
514 Baptism) of the church are lifted up; and,

515 ❖ the *ministry of oversight* (the *episcopate*, or bishops), where oversight of the
516 community's life occurs.

517

518 Thus, within a single order of Ordained ministry, there can be three distinct offices
519 that are at the same time mutually supportive and interrelated. The recognition of
520 these offices does not carry with it any implications of hierarchical structure. The
521 three-fold Ordained ministry, taken as a whole, thus re-presents the fundamental
522 characteristics of ministry shared by all baptized believers. (*A Word to the Church
523 on Ministry*, pp. 3- 4.)

524

525 Persons are not Ordained into a particular office, but rather into the order of
526 ministry. The church may call them to a role that emphasizes one of the three
527 offices. However, these offices are not located exclusively in any particular
528 ministerial role. Most ministries encompass varying aspects of all three offices.

529 **d. The act of Ordination**

530 A long and early Christian tradition places Ordination in the context of worship
531 and especially of the Lord's Supper. Such a place for the service of Ordination
532 preserves the understanding of Ordination as an act of the whole community. The
533 act of Ordination by the laying on of hands of those appointed to do so is at one
534 and the same time the invocation of the Holy Spirit, a sacramental sign, and an
535 acknowledgment of gifts and commitment.⁹

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⁷ This ordering of ministry appears to be in line with the emerging consensus within the ecumenical movement and is the current pattern accepted by many churches throughout the world, e.g., Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, and United Churches, and thus appears to offer a strong possibility for wider ecumenical relationships in the future.

⁸ The nomenclature of *diakonos*, *presbuteros*, and *episkopos* is drawn from I Timothy, chapters 3 and 5, which is rendered in the NRSV as deacon, elder, and bishop, respectively.

⁹ Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 41.

537 In the act of Ordination, the Church Ordains in confidence that God, being
538 faithful to the promise in Christ, enters sacramentally into historical forms of
539 human relationship, and draws upon those relationships for God's purpose.
540 Ordination is thus a sign performed in faith that the spiritual relationship signified
541 is present in, with, and through the words spoken, the gestures made and the
542 forms employed.¹⁰

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544 Finally, Ordination is an acknowledgment by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit
545 in the one Ordained, and a commitment by both the Church and the Ordinand to
546 the new relationship. By receiving the new minister in the act of Ordination, the
547 Church acknowledges the minister's gifts and commits itself to be open to these
548 gifts. Likewise those Ordained offer their gifts to the Church and commit
549 themselves to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility; at
550 the same time, they enter into a collegial relationship with all ministers.¹¹

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¹⁰ Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 43.

¹¹ Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 44.

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II. Policies and Criteria For The Ordering Of Ministry

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A. Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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1. *The Order of Ministry.* The Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) comprises Commissioned Ministers and Ordained Ministers.
 2. *Personal Qualifications for the Order of Ministry.* The church expects to find within the women and men it receives into the order of ministry:
 - a. Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices;
 - b. A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church;
 - c. An understanding of pastoral identity;
 - d. Capacity to engage in theological reflection;
 - e. Strong moral character and personal integrity;
 - f. Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for healthy ministry;
 - g. Care and compassion for all people with appropriate relational skills;
 - h. Responsible personal financial management;
 - i. Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God's gifts;
 - j. Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry.

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B. The Commissioned Ministry

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1. Description: Commissioned ministry provides the Church opportunity for creativity and imagination in acknowledging the fresh work of the Holy Spirit. These ministries may include: pastors, evangelists, Christian educators, ministers of music, youth ministers, parish nurses, chaplains, bi-vocational ministers, recognized congregationally-based or non-congregationally-based community ministers, or others, where Regional nurture and authorization are deemed appropriate.
 2. Common criteria of Commissioned ministry:

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In order to be Commissioned ministers persons must:

- ❖ Be baptized members of a Disciples congregation in the commissioning Region and serving in a Congregationally, Regionally or Generally recognized call;
- ❖ Be recommended for Commissioning by a recognized congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the one in which his/her membership is held;
- ❖ Meet with the Regional Commission or Committee on Ministry (or that process which serves to function as a Commission on Ministry regardless of the name assigned Regionally) for Commissioning; and
- ❖ Comply with any other expectations of the Region.

In accepting Commissioning, the minister covenants to obey God by caring for the church, offering gifts of mind, body, and spirit to that service, agreeing to fulfill the functions of a minister, and adhering to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

Commissioned Minister Standing authorizes one to perform ministry on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The granting of Commissioning may or may not meet all legal requirements for the performance of marriages.

Persons are Commissioned by Regions for ministry in a specific context. Change of ministry context requires Regional re-Commissioning.

3. Categories of Commissioned Ministry:

- a. Commissioned Minister (Not Seeking Ordination): These are men and women who minister in a particular place for a specified period of time. Their call is context specific and is affirmed by the Region. Expectations for formation and education may be established by the Region, and may be accomplished in consultation with the calling congregation.
- b. Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination): These are women and men serving in a Congregationally or Regionally authorized call who are under the care of a Region and involved in a specified program of study and formation in preparation for Ordination.

4. Candidacy for Commissioning

- a. *Definition:* Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual who has received a call to serve a particular ministry is in preparation with the Region for Commissioning.
- b. Candidacy begins when a person who has received a call from a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or a recognized non-congregational ministry applies to the Region for Commissioning.

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- c. *Steps for Candidacy.* The candidate shall:
 - 1. be a member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation;
 - 2. have a letter of recommendation from the congregation of which the applicant is a member;
 - 3. complete the *Ministerial Profile*; and
 - 4. meet with the Regional Commission on Ministry.
 - d. The Region shall assess the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and educational capacities of the applicant for the practice of ministry. This assessment will be accomplished through such avenues as personal interviews, letters of reference, background checks, psychological and vocational testing, consultation with congregations, and as appropriate, coordination between Regions in reciprocal relationships, and communications with educational institutions.
 - e. Upon approval, the Region brings the candidate under care and Commissions her/him for a particular ministry.
5. Regional Responsibilities: Specifically assigned to Regions are the responsibilities to:
- a. establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Commissioned minister, which must include the *Ministerial Profile* and a current denominational criminal background check;
 - b. consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic communities whenever considering a person of color;
 - c. bring applicants “under care”;
 - d. provide for their nurture;
 - e. provide opportunities for building collegiality with other ministers;
 - f. make available appropriate programs of study (such as readings, experiential learning, intensive weekend seminars, guided reflection on ministerial practice with a mentor-companion, and distance learning, etc.) in preparation for ministry;
 - g. authorize the designation of an applicant as a Commissioned Minister;
 - h. offer resources and presence of the Regional Minister or the Regional Minister’s designee for services of Commissioning;
 - i. oversee formation processes for candidates for Ordination;
 - j. encourage lifelong learning through continuing education opportunities including training in healthy boundaries and anti-racism; and
 - k. establish additional requirements as desired.

C. The Ordained Ministry

- 1. *Description.* By Ordination the church recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in calling particular persons to creative and imaginative servanthood in Christ; accepts their ministry in and for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and for

692 the whole body of Christ; covenants to undergird the ministry; and grants
693 authority to perform that ministry as a representative of the church. Ordained
694 ministers are baptized members of a Disciples congregation.

695
696 In accepting Ordination, the minister covenants to obey God by caring for the
697 church, offering gifts of mind, body and spirit to that service, agreeing to fulfill
698 the functions of a minister, and adhering to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* of the
699 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

700
701 Ordained Minister Standing authorizes one to perform ministry on behalf of the
702 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordination may or may not meet all the
703 legal requirements for the performance of marriages.

704
705 Historically called a ministry of word and sacrament, among others, this ministry
706 may include pastors, educators, ecumenical leaders, recognized congregationally-
707 based or non-congregationally-based community ministers, chaplains, pastoral
708 counselors, and ministers who serve in the General and Regional church.

709
710 2. *Educational Requirements.* There are two educational tracks in preparation for
711 Ordination: an apprentice track (AT) and a seminary track (ST).

712
713 ❖ Those in the apprentice track will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of
714 ministerial practice by completing a program of study of at least 250 contact
715 hours approved by the Region in which they are under care.

716
717 ❖ Those in the seminary track will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of
718 ministerial practice by securing a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent
719 from a theological school accredited by the Association of Theological
720 Schools in the United States and Canada or its equivalent.

721
722 Candidates for Ordination are expected to follow the seminary track, unless they
723 determine, in consultation with their Region, that their economic, linguistic,
724 vocational, or familial circumstances make the apprentice track more appropriate.
725 Regardless of the educational track chosen, the church expects the women and
726 men it Ordains to demonstrate competency in the following areas of ministerial
727 practice, listed alphabetically:

728
729 ***Biblical Knowledge:*** Be rooted and grounded in scripture and able to interpret
730 and apply the scriptures in ways that are appropriate to original and
731 contemporary contexts.

732
733 ***Church Administration and Planning:*** Be able to practice the principles of
734 good administration, planning and implementing short- and long-range goals
735 to enhance Congregational life in collaboration with teams and committees.

736

737 **Communication:** Be an effective communicator and be able to facilitate
738 effective communication within and on behalf of the church.
739
740 **Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience:** Be sensitive to the different
741 manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be committed to
742 confronting and overcoming them.
743
744 **Ecumenism:** Exhibit a commitment to working with other Christians and
745 denominations and with other faiths in programs of common witness and
746 service, and to articulating the vision of the ecumenical and global church as a
747 starting place for mission.
748
749 **Education and Leader Development:** Know the foundations of Christian
750 education and the principles of leader development. Show competency in
751 teaching children, youth, and adults, including lay leaders and staff.
752
753 **Ethics:** Be able to help parishioners think critically about the relationship of
754 their faith to issues of justice, ethics and morality
755
756 **Evangelism:** Be able to motivate Congregational members to share their faith
757 through word and action.
758
759 **Mission of the Church in the World:** Be able to understand and articulate the
760 centrality of the call to mission given by Jesus Christ and the prophets. Be
761 able to empower congregations to engage in mission from our doorsteps to the
762 ends of the earth.
763
764 **Pastoral Care:** Be able to engage other persons with empathy and assess
765 situations and relationships with the compassion of Christ, with sensitivity to
766 culture and context. Be able to convey the healing power of God to those who
767 suffer.
768
769 **Proclamation of the Word:** Know the practice and theory of Christian
770 preaching. Be able to proclaim the Word of God, share the Good News of
771 Jesus Christ, and help Congregational members apply their faith to daily life.
772
773 **Spiritual Development:** Establish and maintain spiritual disciplines that lead
774 to personal growth and help others develop a rich spiritual life.
775
776 **Stewardship:** Be able to develop and encourage healthy stewards who
777 recognize and share generously God's abundant gifts for all creation.
778
779 **Theology:** Be able to articulate a coherent view of God's nature and activity
780 in relation to the Christian tradition, to critically engage human situations
781 from a perspective of faith, and to help persons recognize theological issues in
782 their daily lives.

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Understanding of Heritage: Have knowledge of and appreciation for the history and thought of Christianity and of the history, structure, practices, and ethos of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Worship: Know the purpose and elements of Christian worship. Have the ability to plan and lead meaningful worship by working with the worship team, musicians, and Congregational members.

3. Regional Responsibilities:

Regions are strongly encouraged to offer an apprentice track (AT) program on their own or in collaboration with Regional Fellowships,¹² theological institutions, or ecumenical partners. Those offering an AT program will submit their curriculum to the General Commission on Ministry for evaluation.

Specifically assigned to Regions are the responsibilities to:

- a. establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Ordination;
- b. evaluate the educational experience of candidates for an AT program which would include a high school diploma or its equivalent and some post secondary educational experience;
- c. consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic communities whenever considering a racial/ethnic applicant;
- d. bring applicants “under care” (See II.D.3.);
- e. provide for their nurture;
- f. be in relationship with the sponsoring congregation and the candidate’s educational setting;
- g. authorize and supervise the act of Ordination; and
- h. facilitate continuing education including training in healthy boundaries and anti-racism .

D. Candidacy for Ordination

1. *Definition:* Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual is under the care of a Regional Commission on Ministry and involved in a specified program of study and formation in preparation for Ordination.

¹² Regional Fellowships (Clusters) are gatherings of Regions in geographical proximity. They include: ROSES (Regions Of the Sun Equipping and Serving: Oklahoma, Southwest, and Great River); WRIM (Western Regions In Ministry: Arizona, Pacific Southwest, Northern California-Nevada, Oregon, Northwest, South Idaho, Montana, Central Rocky Mountain); SERF (SouthEast Regional Fellowship: Florida, Alabama-Northwest Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee); NIRF (Northeast Inter-Regional Fellowship: Canada, Northeast, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Capital Area, West Virginia and Michigan); HEARTLAND (Heartland Regional Fellowship: Nebraska, Kansas, Greater Kansas City, Mid-America, Upper Midwest, Illinois-Wisconsin, and Indiana).

818 2. *Application for Candidacy.* Application for candidacy is entered into when a man
819 or woman declares the intention to seek Ordination through the Christian Church
820 (Disciples of Christ), and their congregation affirms that intention.

821

822 3. *The Criteria for Candidacy.* The applicant shall be a baptized member of a
823 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation and shall make application
824 for candidacy to the Region of the candidate's membership or to the Region where
825 she or he is a student. In special circumstances and subject to agreement between
826 appropriate Regional Ministers and/or Regional Commissions on Ministry,
827 persons may apply for candidacy in another Region. The applicant shall have a
828 letter of recommendation from a recognized congregation of the Christian Church
829 (Disciples of Christ) in the candidate's Region of membership.

830

831 Upon receipt of the application, the Region will begin the process of assessing
832 (through avenues such as personal interviews, letters of reference, background
833 checks, psychological testing, consultation with congregations, coordination of
834 Regions in reciprocal relationships, and communications with educational
835 institutions), the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and educational
836 capacities of the applicant for the practice of ministry. Upon approval of the
837 application, the Region shall admit the applicant to candidacy. Once accepted as a
838 candidate, the individual comes under the care and direction of the Regional
839 Commission or Committee on Ministry (or that process which serves to function
840 as a Commission on Ministry regardless of the name assigned Regionally).

841

842 4. *The Procedures During Candidacy.* The candidate shall seek Ordination through
843 a discernment process established by the Region. That preparation may include
844 authorization as a Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination). The candidate
845 may complete the educational requirements for either track without serving as a
846 Commissioned Minister.

847

848 Separate from candidacy, Commissioned Minister status authorizes one to
849 perform ministry on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The
850 granting of candidacy may or may not meet all legal requirements for the
851 performance of marriages.

852

853 5. *Preparation for Ordination.* A candidate for Ordination is to prepare himself or
854 herself spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically for her/his ministry.
855 The following areas support and enhance the performance of an applicant's
856 chosen ministry:

857

858 a. Participation in the life and work of a congregation of Christians;

859

860 b. Breadth of theological study so that the candidate shows an
861 understanding of the Christian faith, the Bible, the church universal,
862 the history and polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),
863 and the formation and function of Christian mission;

- 864
865 c. Professional and ecclesiological study plus supervised experience in
866 the work of ministry, exhibiting competencies in that form of ministry
867 in which the candidate hopes to serve;
868
869 d. Formation of responsible relations with and concern for the church,
870 both as communities of faith and as institution;
871
872 e. Growth in personal character, Christian insight, spiritual formation,
873 wellness and disciplined commitment to ministry;
874
875 f. Formation of and adherence to ethical principles to guide professional
876 relationships and personal conduct as outlined in the *Ministerial Code*
877 *of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.
878
879 6. *Conclusion of Candidacy*. Completion of a prescribed program of study
880 (apprentice track) or the receipt of a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent
881 from an institution of higher education accredited by the Association of
882 Theological Schools (seminary track) does not guarantee Ordination.
883
884 Candidacy is concluded by Ordination, voluntary withdrawal by the candidate, or
885 decision of the Region to terminate candidacy. Completion of candidacy within
886 seven years is recommended, but may be extended at the discretion of the Region.
887

888 **E. The Act of Ordination**

- 889
890 Ordination is a process of the Congregational and Regional Church on behalf of the
891 whole church to commend to Christians everywhere individuals who meet the
892 qualifications and have fulfilled the requirements established by the Christian Church
893 (Disciples of Christ) for Ordination.
894
895 1. The candidate shall be recommended for Ordination by a recognized congregation
896 or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the one
897 in which membership is held.
898
899 2. The act of Ordination shall be under the authorization and guidance of the
900 sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Minister, or the
901 Regional Minister's designee, presiding.
902
903 3. The service ordinarily shall be held in a sponsoring congregation.
904
905 4. Representatives of the recommending congregation or congregations, the
906 Regional church, the ecumenical church and, where possible, the General church
907 shall participate in the service.
908

909 5. After the Ministerial Code of Ethics is signed, the signed Ordination document
910 shall be issued by the Region.

911

912 **F. Ministerial Standing**

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914 1. *Definition.* Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is credentialing
915 for ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a call to
916 accountability to the church, and collegiality with other ministers both
917 denominationally and ecumenically.

918

919 a. Standing affirms that the Commissioned or Ordained minister is currently
920 engaged in the practice of ministry, whether on an occasional, part-time or
921 full-time basis, with continuous accountability maintained with a
922 congregation, related organization or institution, Region, or General
923 Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Such ministers are
924 listed in the *Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of*
925 *Christ)* and may call upon the church for services and support such as
926 pastoral care, ecclesiastical endorsement, and scholarship aid. In addition
927 they have voting privileges in the General Assembly of the Christian Church
928 (Disciples of Christ).

929

930 b. Ordained ministers with Standing have access to Search and Call.
931 Candidates for Ordination may be granted access to Search and Call at the
932 discretion of the Regional Minister of the Region where they are under care
933 or the Region of their educational setting.

934

935 c. Responsibility for certification of Standing of ministers and for annual
936 review of that Standing within the Order of Ministry is lodged with the
937 Region where the minister is currently engaged in the practice of ministry.
938 Nothing in the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry is intended to
939 preclude a Region from developing additional appropriate statements or
940 procedures pertaining to Standing within that Region as long as such
941 statements are consistent with the Order of Ministry.

942

943 d. For those engaged in non-Regional ministries responsibility for certification
944 of Standing and for annual review of that Standing within the Order of
945 Ministry is lodged with the General Commission on Ministry. For purposes
946 of this document, non-Regional ministries are defined as all ministries
947 outside the United States and Canada, those ministries engaged by and
948 accountable to one of the General Ministries of the church, ministries of the
949 ecumenical church and with interfaith organizations whose responsibilities
950 extend beyond one Region, whether in North America or abroad, and
951 fulltime military, VA and Federal Correctional chaplaincies. All other
952 ministries are hereby defined as Regional as determined by the primary
953 ministry site. The General Commission on Ministry has a credentialing
954 function but is not an Ordaining body; that is the province of Regions in

- 955 cooperation with congregations. In covenant with the Regions, the General
956 Commission on Ministry will notify Regions about persons who reside in
957 their Region and hold Standing with the General Commission on Ministry.
958
- 959 e. Since Regional Ministers “serve as a sign of the ministry of the church in
960 sacrament and service” and lead Regions in promoting “the concept of
961 whole church, and have a primary role in advocating and supporting the
962 denomination’s mission and vision” (*Marks of a Faithful Regional Church*,
963 August, 2006), the responsibility for certification of Standing is jointly
964 lodged with the Region where the Regional Minister serves and with the
965 General Commission on Ministry. Annually, the Regional Minister will
966 complete Standing forms required by both the Region and the General
967 Commission on Ministry.
968
- 969 2. *Certification of Standing of those Commissioned and Ordained by the Christian*
970 *Church (Disciples of Christ)*
971
- 972 a. By virtue of Commissioning or Ordination according to the Order of
973 Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the minister becomes
974 eligible for Standing.
975
- 976 b. Standing for ministers in active service continues so long as the minister
977 does and reports the following:
978
- 979 i. Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by
980 Commissioning or Ordination, either in an occupation recognized by the
981 church as ministerial in purpose or in a service recognized by the church
982 as ministerial in purpose.
983
- 984 ii. Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal.
985
- 986 iii. Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
987 including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the
988 community of residence or active ministry where feasible.
989
- 990 iv. Adheres to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church*
991 *(Disciples of Christ)*.
992
- 993 v. Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order
994 of Ministry. (II.A.2.)
995
- 996 vi. Seeks annual certification as requested by the Region where the ministry
997 site is located or by the General Commission on Ministry, as
998 appropriate. (See II.F.1.c.)
999

- 1000 c. Standing may be continued at the discretion of the Region or the General
1001 Commission on Ministry in cases of disability or other special hardships
1002 affecting ministerial service, so long as other criteria for Standing are met.
1003
- 1004 d. The Region or the General Commission on Ministry will provide means by
1005 which the Standing of all ministers in its care will be reviewed annually.
1006 Consultation with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic
1007 communities is encouraged regarding the Standing of persons of color.
1008
- 1009 e. When an Ordained Minister moves from a ministry position in one Region
1010 to a ministry position in another Region, Standing in the Order of Ministry
1011 is retained. Commissioned Ministers who move to another Region must
1012 contact that Regional Minister to establish Standing in the new ministry
1013 position. Responsibility for review and subsequent certification is assigned
1014 to the Region in which the minister functions or to the General Commission
1015 on Ministry. The minister shall notify both the former and new Regional
1016 Ministers upon relocation.
1017
- 1018 f. When an Ordained Minister who is not actively seeking relocation moves
1019 from a ministry position in one Region to another Region and is no longer
1020 engaged in ministry, ministerial Standing will be provisionally retained for
1021 up to one year, except in the case of retirement, until review and subsequent
1022 certification is granted by the Region into which the minister has moved.
1023 The Ordained Minister is required to initiate contact with both the former
1024 and new Regional Ministers regarding his or her status.
1025
- 1026 3. *Certification of Standing of Retired Ministers, Commissioned or Ordained by the*
1027 *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*
1028
- 1029 a. Upon retirement, Commissioned Ministers retain Standing if they continue serving
1030 in an approved ministry site. Standing of inactive retired Commissioned Ministers
1031 may be granted at the discretion of the Region.
1032
- 1033 b. Ordained Ministers with Standing retain this Standing at the time of
1034 retirement.
1035
- 1036 i. A retired minister who intends to continue practice of ministry, whether on
1037 an occasional, part-time or full time basis must continue to seek annual
1038 certification of Standing as requested by the Region where the ministry site
1039 is located or by the General Commission on Ministry, as appropriate. (See
1040 II.F.1.c.)
1041
- 1042 ii. When Standing is granted, the active retired minister will be listed in the
1043 *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as active retired.
1044 (aR)
1045
- 1046 iii. To be eligible for such Standing, the active retired minister

- 1047
- 1048 a) Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by
- 1049 Commissioning or Ordination, either in an occupation recognized by
- 1050 the church as ministerial in purpose or in a service recognized by the
- 1051 church as ministerial in purpose.
- 1052
- 1053 b) Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal.
- 1054
- 1055 c) Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- 1056 including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the
- 1057 community of residence or active ministry where feasible.
- 1058
- 1059 d) Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order
- 1060 of Ministry (II.A.2) and to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*
- 1061
- 1062 iv. Retired ministers who are no longer engaging in the practice of ministry on
- 1063 an occasional, part-time or full time basis may seek Standing as inactive
- 1064 retired ministers.
- 1065
- 1066 a) Retired ministers who are granted inactive status will continue to be
- 1067 listed in the *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as
- 1068 inactive, retired ministers (iR).
- 1069
- 1070 b) Inactive retired ministers must continue to seek annual certification of
- 1071 Standing as requested by the Region where they reside.
- 1072
- 1073 c) To be eligible for such Standing, the inactive retired minister must
- 1074 continue to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* and must hold
- 1075 participating membership in a recognized Disciples congregation in the
- 1076 community of residence where feasible.
- 1077
- 1078 v. If an inactive retired minister decides to once again take up the practice of
- 1079 ministry, that minister must once again seek status as an active retired
- 1080 minister. (See 3.c.i-iv)

1081

1082 4. *Suspension or Termination of Ministerial Standing.*

1083

- 1084 a. Procedures leading to a review of Standing may be initiated by the minister,
- 1085 the Region, or the General Commission on Ministry when one or more of
- 1086 the following conditions are present:
- 1087
- 1088 i. The minister desires to be released from the practice of ministry, either
- 1089 temporarily or permanently.
- 1090
- 1091 ii. The minister requests transfer of credentials from the Christian Church
- 1092 (Disciples of Christ) to another denomination or non-Disciples
- 1093 congregation.
- 1094

- 1095 iii. The minister enters into a full-time occupation not recognized by the
1096 church as ministerial in purpose and/or no longer performs the functions
1097 of the office of a minister.
1098
1099 iv. The minister fails to respond to a request for annual certification from
1100 the Region or the General Commission on Ministry.
1101
1102 v. The minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for admission
1103 to the Order of Ministry (II.A.2.) or fails to adhere to the *Ministerial*
1104 *Code of Ethics*.
1105
1106 vi. The retired minister fails to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*.
1107
1108 b. When the Region or the General Commission on Ministry takes the
1109 initiative in the review of Standing, the procedures shall include:
1110
1111 i. Written notice to the minister that Standing is to be reviewed with the
1112 possibility of suspension or termination.
1113
1114 ii. Consultation with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial
1115 Ethnic communities is encouraged regarding the termination of Standing
1116 of persons of color.
1117
1118 iii. A hearing by a committee appointed by the Region or the General
1119 Commission on Ministry.
1120
1121 c. When the minister takes the initiative in the review, the procedures shall
1122 include:
1123
1124 i. Written notice to the Region or the General Commission on Ministry
1125 requesting that Standing be reviewed with the possibility of
1126 termination.
1127
1128 ii. A consultation with a committee appointed by the Region or the
1129 General Commission on Ministry.
1130
1131 d. Standing may be granted to a minister whose Standing has been terminated
1132 or suspended by another Region or the General Commission on Ministry
1133 only upon the recommendation of the terminating or suspending body,
1134 whether that is a Region or the General Commission on Ministry.
1135

1136 5. *Surrender of Standing*
1137

1138 When a minister surrenders Standing, Standing can be granted again only upon
1139 the recommendation of the body to which Standing was surrendered, whether that
1140 is a Region or the General Commission on Ministry,. The Region or General

1141 Commission on Ministry shall address any outstanding allegations of misconduct
1142 before reinstating Standing.

1143

1144 6. *Lapsed Standing*

1145

1146 When a minister's Standing has lapsed, Standing may only be granted after
1147 consultation with the body where the Standing was previously held, whether the
1148 Region or the General Commission on Ministry.

1149

1150 **G. Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries**

1151

1152 1. *Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ*

1153

1154 The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ
1155 recognize the Ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries
1156 of grace within that church and these ministries to be valid and full ministries of
1157 the one Church of Jesus Christ.

1158 The Ordained ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the
1159 United Church of Christ are reconciled. An Ordained minister with Ordained
1160 ministerial Standing in one church may function, whenever invited, and as
1161 established procedures permit, as an Ordained minister of the other.

1162 The designations "Ordained Ministerial Partner" and "Ordained Ministerial
1163 Partner Standing" manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition
1164 and reconciliation of the Ordained ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of
1165 Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

1166 a. Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained ministerial
1167 Standing in the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of
1168 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1169 b. Each member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds
1170 Ordained ministerial Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is
1171 an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the United Church of Christ.

1172 c. When a person no longer has Ordained ministerial Standing in either the
1173 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or the United Church of Christ, that
1174 person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner and Ordained Ministerial
1175 Partner Standing is nullified.

1176

1177 d. *United Church of Christ ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner*
1178 *Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

1179

1180 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an Ordained
1181 minister with Standing in the United Church of Christ who has been called to
1182 an Ordained ministry setting in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1183 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical
1184 authorization to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in
1185 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
1186

1187 i. Once a United Church of Christ Ordained minister has demonstrated
1188 knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of
1189 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to the Regional Commission
1190 on Ministry where the minister resides, that Ordained Ministerial Partner
1191 may be granted access to the Search and Call process in the Christian
1192 Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in
1193 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is not given at this point in the
1194 process.
1195

1196 ii. A United Church of Christ Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a
1197 call in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) applies for Ordained
1198 Ministerial Partner Standing to the Region in which the Ordained
1199 minister's calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained Ministerial
1200 Partner Standing is reviewed by the Region for certification annually.
1201

1202 iii. A United Church of Christ Ordained minister has Ordained Ministerial
1203 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) only when
1204 serving a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calling body.
1205

1206 iv. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial
1207 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall
1208 maintain Ordained ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ.
1209

1210 v. Ordained ministerial Standing shall be held in the association in which
1211 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calling body is located.
1212

1213 vi. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial
1214 Partner Standing shall maintain relations with the Christian Church
1215 (Disciples of Christ) including (where feasible) holding associate
1216 membership in a recognized Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
1217 congregation in the community.
1218

1219 vii. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial
1220 Partner Standing in a Region has voting privileges in the General
1221 Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
1222

1223 viii. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial
1224 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall
1225 relate to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for his/her primary
1226 support in Ordained ministry.
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- ix. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be accountable to the Region for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and to the United Church of Christ for Ordained ministerial Standing.
 - x. When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the United Church of Christ minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the association of the United Church of Christ in which the United Church of Christ minister's Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and invited to participate in the procedures.
 - xi. When a United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) accepts a call in another Region, he/she shall be subject to review and subsequent annual certification of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing by the new Region.
- e. *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ.*
- Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an Ordained minister with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who has been called to an Ordained ministry setting in the United Church of Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.
- i. Once a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained minister has demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ to the Association Committee where the minister resides, that Ordained ministerial partner may be granted access to the Search and Call process in the United Church of Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ is not given at this point in the process.
 - ii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a call in the United Church of Christ applies for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the Association in which the Ordained minister's calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is reviewed by the Association annually.
 - iii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained minister has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ only when serving a United Church of Christ calling body.

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- iv. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall maintain Ordained ministerial Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - v. Ordained ministerial Standing shall be held in the Region in which the United Church of Christ calling body is located.
 - vi. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing shall maintain relations with the United Church of Christ including (where feasible) holding associate membership in a recognized United Church of Christ congregation in the community.
 - vii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in an Association has voting privileges in the Association and Conference and is eligible for election as a delegate to General Synod or election as a member of any Covenanted Ministry Board in the United Church of Christ.
 - viii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall relate to the United Church of Christ for his/her primary support in Ordained ministry.
 - ix. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall be accountable to the Association for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for Ordained ministerial Standing.
 - x. When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ, the Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister's Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and invited to participate in the procedures.
 - xi. When a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ accepts a call in another Association, he/she shall be subject to review and transfer of the Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the new Association.
2. *Persons Ordained in Other Churches.* Ministers Ordained by other denominations or non-Disciples congregations may be considered for recognition of Ordination and the granting of Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1320 Provisional or temporary Standing may be granted to individuals applying for
1321 recognition of Ordination by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
1322 Responsibility for this process is lodged in the Region except in the case of
1323 Military Chaplains stationed overseas.

1324
1325 a. Provisional or temporary Standing of applicants may be granted upon the
1326 fulfillment of the following requirements:

1327
1328 i. Consultation with appropriate officials of the denomination or
1329 congregation from which the candidate transfers.

1330
1331 ii. Satisfactory investigation of personal and ministerial references and a
1332 criminal background check.

1333
1334 iii. Filing of appropriate forms with the Region to which the applicant is
1335 applying or with the General Commission on Ministry.

1336
1337 iv. Provisional or temporary Standing shall be reviewed annually by either the
1338 granting Region or the General Commission on Ministry.

1339
1340 b. Removal of the provisional or temporary conditions for Standing may be
1341 granted by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry upon
1342 fulfillment of the following requirements:

1343
1344 i. Membership in a recognized congregation of the Christian Church
1345 (Disciples of Christ).

1346
1347 ii. Demonstrated knowledge and appreciation for the history, polity, and
1348 practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1349
1350 iii. Fulfillment of the prerequisites and preparation, including educational
1351 attainment, for the Order of Ministry.

1352
1353 iv. One year minimum service under the supervision or mentoring of a
1354 Disciples of Christ minister with Standing.

1355
1356 v. Manifesting the personal qualifications for the order of ministry as
1357 listed in item II.A.2.

1358
1359 vi. Commitment to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian*
1360 *Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

1361
1362 **H. Ministerial Search and Call**

1363
1364 1. *The General Principles.* Ministerial Search and Call is the term applied to the
1365 process developed to facilitate the calling of Ordained ministers who hold

1366 Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It provides a covenantal
1367 framework within which ministers and Congregations, Regions, and General
1368 Ministries of the church can serve to build up the whole church of Jesus Christ.
1369 The Order of Ministry identifies general principles for Search and Call. The
1370 Office of Search and Call (Disciples Home Missions) administers these
1371 procedures of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
1372

1373 a. Freedom and responsibility are inherent in the tradition of the Christian
1374 Church (Disciples of Christ). Congregations, Regions, and General Ministries
1375 of the church are accorded full freedom to issue ministerial calls within their
1376 own established or constitutional provisions. Ministers, likewise, are accorded
1377 full freedom to accept or reject a call to any particular service. All, however,
1378 covenant to work within the Order of Ministry in the interest of assuring an
1379 orderly and responsible system of Search and Call.
1380

1381 b. The Church is best served when Regional Ministers and National
1382 Pastors/Leaders of Racial Ethnic communities work together covenantally in
1383 the Search and Call process. Primary responsibility for the Search and Call
1384 process is lodged with the Regions. Regions are encouraged to consult the
1385 National Pastors/Leaders. National Pastors/Leaders may offer their counsel to
1386 the Regional Minister in Search and Call with the understanding that the
1387 primary responsibility for Search and Call lies with the Region.
1388

1389 2. *Operating Principles.*
1390

1391 a. Ordained ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of
1392 Christ) will have complete and unhindered access to Search and Call of the
1393 church.
1394

1395 b. Ordained Ministerial Partners with Standing in the United Church of Christ
1396 will have complete and unhindered access to Search and Call of the church
1397 once they have been qualified by a Region to seek a call.
1398

1399 c. Congregations, Regions, institutions, and General Ministries of the church
1400 will be provided assistance from the Office of Search and Call.
1401

1402 d. Any *Ministerial Profile* in the Office of Search and Call will be open to the
1403 minister concerned except for confidential references for which a waiver has
1404 been signed.
1405

1406 e. Confidentiality, when assured to the persons completing the reference
1407 forms, will not be violated.
1408

1409 f. At the discretion of the Region of care candidates for Ordination may be
1410 granted authorized access to Search and Call.
1411

- 1412 g. All candidates for Ordination with authorized access to Search and Call and
1413 Ordained Ministers with Standing may be considered for any ministerial
1414 position.
1415
- 1416 h. All candidates for Ordination with authorized access to Search and Call and
1417 Ordained Ministers with Standing shall have access to information regarding
1418 available ministerial openings in the church.
1419
- 1420 i. Every congregation, Region, educational or related institution, and General
1421 Ministry will strive to be open to the ministry of all persons putting aside
1422 prejudice and considering candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry.
1423
- 1424 3. *Responsibilities*. It is expected that all parties using Search and Call will abide
1425 by the established procedures of the Office of Search and Call.,
1426
- 1427 a. Ministers. Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing in the
1428 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have the responsibility to seek the
1429 advice and counsel of the Region and to avail themselves of the resources of
1430 the Office of Search and Call. They have the freedom to accept or reject any
1431 call offered to them, and to negotiate whatever terms of call or service seem
1432 appropriate. In all matters, ministers will function within the covenantal
1433 relationship of the whole church.
1434
- 1435 b. Congregations. Within the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of
1436 Christ) and according to *The Design*, congregations have the right and
1437 responsibility to seek and call their own leadership, to establish the terms of
1438 call, to undergird the ministry, and to effect terminations within their own
1439 procedures. In all matters, congregations will function within the covenantal
1440 relationship of the whole church and are encouraged to seek the advice and
1441 counsel of the Region/Area.
1442
- 1443 c. Regions. Regions bear the primary responsibility for providing advice and
1444 counsel to both congregations and ministers in Search and Call. Regions
1445 may delegate or share this responsibility with their areas, districts or other
1446 subdivisions. In all matters, Regions will function within the covenantal
1447 relationship of the whole church.
1448
- 1449 d. Disciples Home Missions. The Office of Search and Call at Disciples Home
1450 Missions is the primary locus of the ministerial records of the Christian
1451 Church (Disciples of Christ) related to Search and Call and is responsible
1452 for coordinating the Search and Call process of the church. In all matters,
1453 Disciples Home Missions will function within the covenantal relationship of
1454 the whole church.
1455
- 1456 e. General Ministries. In all matters, General Ministries will function within
1457 the covenantal relationship of the whole church.

1458

1459 **I. Ministerial Code of Ethics**

1460

1461 Believing that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, and proclaiming him Lord
1462 and Savior of the world, I reaffirm my vows as a minister. Through dedication and
1463 discipline I will lead and serve with integrity. Relying on the grace of God, I commit
1464 myself to the following:

1465

1466 *Personal Conduct*

1467

- Witnessing to the ministry of Jesus Christ
- Dedicating time, strength, vitality, and energy for effective ministry
- Growing in faith, knowledge, and the practice of ministry through the spiritual disciplines, study, continuing education, and service
- Living a life that honors my commitments to my family, including the need for privacy and time together
- Taking time for physical and spiritual renewal, recreation, and vacation
- Being a faithful steward of God's gifts to me by managing time, talents, and financial resources responsibly and generously
- Accepting responsibility for all debts that I incur
- Keeping physically and emotionally fit and refraining from substance abuse and other abusive behaviors
- Using my position, power, and authority in non-exploitive ways
- Maintaining high moral standards in my sexual behavior
- Regarding all persons with equal respect and concern and undertaking to minister impartially

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1484 *Relationships to the Church which I Serve*

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- Nurturing and offering my gifts for ministry to the church
- Calling forth and nurturing the gifts of others in the church and joining their gifts with mine for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ and the health of the church
- Preaching and teaching the gospel without fear or favor and speaking the truth in love
- Administering the sacraments/ordinances and services of the church with integrity and not for financial gain
- Working cooperatively and collegially with those whom I serve in the particular ministry to which I have been called
- Administering the corporate finances of the church with personal integrity
- Refraining from accepting any gift which would compromise the church's ministry
- Protecting confidences; covenanting to only tell those who need to know, what they need to know, when they need to know it
- Acting to prevent and to report known or suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect
- Encouraging and participating in the regular evaluation of my ministry and cooperating with the Region in the annual review of my ministerial Standing

- 1503 • Seeking the counsel of the Regional Minister should divisive tensions threaten my
1504 relationship with those I serve
1505

1506 *Relationships to Ministry Colleagues*

- 1507 • Engaging in covenantal relationships with colleagues which involve nurture,
1508 discipline, family support, vigorous dialogue, mutual teaching/learning, and
1509 spiritual formation
1510 • Supporting colleagues in ministry and their families while not exploiting their
1511 problems or crises
1512 • Performing pastoral services within another congregation or for a member of
1513 another congregation only at the request of that congregation's elders and current
1514 pastor
1515 • Supporting and at no time speaking maliciously of the ministry of my
1516 predecessors or another minister
1517 • Encouraging the ministry of my successor upon my retirement or other departure
1518 from a ministry position, without interfering or intruding and by making it clear to
1519 former parishioners that I am no longer their pastor, nor will I perform any
1520 pastoral services unless requested by the congregation's elders and current pastor
1521

1522 *Relationships to the Community and the Wider Church*

- 1523 • Participating responsibly in the life and work of my community, bearing prophetic
1524 witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and working towards a just and morally
1525 responsible society
1526 • Participating faithfully in the life and work of all expressions of the Christian
1527 Church (Disciples of Christ)
1528 • Seeking to know, understand, and respect the diversity of opinions and people
1529 within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
1530 • Being a responsible representative of the one church of Jesus Christ and
1531 participating in activities which strengthen its ministry, witness, and mission
1532

1533 **J. Misconduct**
1534

1535 The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) understands ministerial misconduct to be
1536 activity which violates the covenantal character of the ministerial office as expressed in
1537 the Ministerial Code of Ethics. Investigation and adjudication of violations of the
1538 Ministerial Code of Ethics shall be the responsibility of the Region through the
1539 committee or Commission on Ministry or the General Commission on Ministry.
1540

1541 1. *Reporting*
1542

1543 Regions or the General Commission on Ministry will report formal actions and
1544 decisions to remove Standing for misconduct to the Office of Search and Call,
1545 Disciples Home Missions, and these actions will be communicated to all Regions.
1546

1547 2. *Suspension of Standing*
1548

1549 In extreme situations of alleged misconduct, ministerial Standing may be
1550 temporarily suspended by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry
1551 during the period of investigation and adjudication.

1552
1553 *3. Sexual Misconduct*

1554
1555 a. It is the responsibility of each Region to have specific definitions of sexual
1556 misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating
1557 sexual misconduct charges of ministers with Standing in the Region. Each
1558 Region will periodically and systematically review its definitions and
1559 procedures. It is the responsibility of the Region to communicate such
1560 definitions and procedures to ministers and congregations within the
1561 Region.

1562
1563 b. It is the responsibility of the General Commission on Ministry to have
1564 specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving,
1565 investigating, and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of ministers
1566 engaged in non-Regional ministries. The General Commission on Ministry
1567 will periodically and systematically review its definitions and procedures. It
1568 is the responsibility of the General Commission on the Ministry to
1569 communicate such definitions and procedures to ministers, ministries, and
1570 other organizations in the General and ecumenical church.

1571
1572 **K. Right of Appeal**

1573
1574 The General Commission on Ministry understands that the Right to Appeal extends to
1575 persons who, at the time of their appeal, are subject to a decision with adverse effect
1576 regarding Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing. The
1577 General Commission on Ministry will not consider any appeal if legal proceedings are
1578 pending or in process.

1579
1580 **L. Amendment Process**

1581
1582 The Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of
1583 Christ) may be amended two ways:

1584
1585 1. By a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the General Assembly present
1586 and voting, providing such amendments shall have been regularly filed 180
1587 days in advance of the meeting of the General Assembly and circulated among
1588 the congregations and Regions 60 days in advance of the General Assembly.

1589
1590 2. By a two-thirds vote of the members of the General Board of the Christian
1591 Church (Disciples of Christ) present and voting, providing such amendments
1592 shall have been mailed to the members of the General Board of the Christian
1593 Church (Disciples of Christ) at least 30 days prior to the time of the vote.

1594

1595
1596 Basic Policy Approved Louisville General Assembly 1971
1597 Section II on Candidacy approved Kansas City General Assembly 1977
1598 Section V on Ministerial Standing amended Anaheim General Assembly 1981
1599 Section VI on Ministerial Relocation amended Des Moines General Assembly 1985
1600 Section VII on Amendment Process amended Louisville General Assembly 1987
1601 Section V.C. on Recognition and Reconciliation of the Ordained Ministries of the
1602 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ amended
1603 Pittsburgh General Assembly 1995
1604 Section VIII on Sexual Misconduct amended Pittsburgh General Assembly 1995
1605 New Theological Foundations and Revised Policies and Criteria recommended to the
1606 Indianapolis General Assembly 2009 by the General Commission on Ministry
1607
1608 Policies and Criteria for The Order of Ministry, 2003
1609 is an operating document of the General Commission on Ministry
1610
1611
1612 Distributed by
1613 Disciples Home Mission
1614 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada
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