Attachment B
Additional Guidelines and Resources for Ordained Ministry
in the Arizona Region

I. Additional Guidelines for Ordained Ministry

Those seeking Ordination in the Arizona Region must comply with all relevant requirements set out in the TFPCOM and the additional requirements set out in this Attachment B. In the Arizona Region, Ordination is a five-step process, beginning with a period of preparation, referred to as “Preliminary Inquiries” and culminating in the “Act of Ordination,” which is a formal recognition by the Congregational and Regional Church, on behalf of the whole church, that the Candidate has met all qualifications and requirements established by the DOC for Ordination.

Preferably two years, but not less than one year, prior to the expected date of graduation from Seminary and/or desired Ordination, applicants seeking Ordination will begin the following process:

A. Step One: Preliminary Inquiries

This step begins with the potential candidate’s initial contact with the Regional Office expressing interest in, and requesting information about, Ordination.

i. In response to the inquiry and upon request, the Regional Office will provide, at a minimum, the following:
   a. Information about Ordained ministry, including a copy of the Expectations for Ordination Candidate under Care of the Commission on Ministry*. (See Section II, “Current Regional Forms and Informational Materials Relating to Ordained Ministry” for the most current version of each of the forms/informational pieces marked with an “**” below.)
   b. A copy of the appropriate form of application (Candidate Form*), including a list of relevant supporting documentation to be submitted with the application.

ii. At this point, the potential candidate is encouraged to begin to meet certain specific prerequisites set out in the DOC Discovery* document.

B. Step Two: Initial Approach/Contact with the Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM).
This step involves concrete actions evidencing the seriousness of the potential candidate’s interest in Ordination. Such actions begin with the submission of a formal application and completion of the specific prerequisites noted above. They include a period of determining “fitness and fit”—is the applicant mentally, psychologically, and physically fit, and would ordination in the DOC be a good fit in terms of theology, polity, and understanding of ministry?

As noted above, this is primarily a period of exploration for both the RCOM and the applicant, including an initial and, possibly, follow-up interviews. The RCOM will focus on the gathering of information (including input from the sponsoring congregation) necessary to determine whether to take the applicant “under care” as a Candidate for Ordination. This phase might vary significantly, depending upon whether the applicant is active in the Region or other manifestations of the DOC.

i. The applicant will submit an application on an appropriate form provided by the Regional Office, including evidence in writing of their educational preparation and theological base appropriate for the ministry they will be performing. (Candidate Form*)

ii. In addition, the applicant will request an initial interview with the Commission to obtain additional information about Ordained ministry, the process for Ordination and what it means to be “taken under care” by the Commission.

iii. In preparation for the initial interview, the applicant will do the following:
   a. Submit a comprehensive (at least 3-5 pages) statement paper on the topic “Why I want to be ordained into the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)”;
   b. Begin the exploration and reflection process outlined in the DOC Discovery document.

iv. There may be additional interviews with the applicant, as well.

v. At this point, if not before, the Region will contact the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation of which the applicant is an active participant (and which is expected to sponsor their candidacy) to assure that the congregation understands the Region’s expectations for both the applicant and the congregation, should they be taken under care. At a minimum, such contact will include
   a. Providing the congregation with a document outlining such expectations, as well as the role of the Region (the RCOM, in particular), and other manifestations of the DOC in the Ordination process;
   b. Establishing lines of communication between the congregation and the Region; and
   c. Offering congregational leaders an opportunity to meet with the RCOM to answer questions and create a workable arrangement of ongoing communication, support and feedback, should the applicant’s candidacy be approved.
vi. Prior to the RCOM making its decision, the applicant will do the following:
   a. Complete the exploration and reflection process outlined in the DOC Discovery document;
   b. Formally contact a local Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation (the “sponsoring congregation”) to sponsor their candidacy for Ordination and to provide a letter of recommendation. (This ordinarily is the applicant’s home congregation, but may also be the church in which they are active as a student or in which they presently serve).
   c. Should the applicant’s candidacy be approved, the Candidate will continue “active participation” (as defined in Step Three below) in the life of the sponsoring congregation throughout the period of candidacy.
   d. Submit to the Regional Office a statement by an ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who can speak to the applicant’s personality and churchmanship.

At the culmination of this step, the RCOM will decide whether to take the applicant “under care” as a Candidate for Ordination.

C. Step Three: Period of Candidacy

During this step, the Candidate for Ordination will be taken under the care of the RCOM, which will continue to work in close cooperation with the sponsoring congregation throughout the period of candidacy. The RCOM, with input from the sponsoring congregation, will work with the Candidate to identify their gifts and abilities, to formulate an individualized plan for further discernment and enhancement of those gifts and abilities, and to periodically assess and evaluate the Candidate’s progress.

i. Shortly after being taken under care, the Candidate will undergo an assessment to determine their mental and psychological fitness for ministry, in general, and Ordination, in particular.

ii. Throughout the period of candidacy, the RCOM will provide ongoing guidance and oversight, including, but not limited to,
   a. Oversight of the Candidate’s academic progress. This would include review of transcripts and references from instructors, evaluations of the Candidate’s course work, whether they completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, etc.
   b. Oversight of the Candidate’s “active participation” in the life and work of a DOC congregation (at least one year for those not formerly affiliated with the DOC) and other manifestations of the DOC. Active participation in the life and work of a DOC congregation might include service as a Commissioned Minister. This would include evaluations of supervised
practice of ministry, references from those who worked with the Candidate within the congregation, etc. “Active participation” might also include, but not be limited to, the following:

i. Frequent attendance at worship;

ii. Participation in Sunday services, as appropriate (e.g., act as diaconate or usher, read scripture, make announcements);

iii. Participation in (or leading of) a Sunday school class, Bible study, or other small group study;

iv. Volunteering to help with/facilitate social events, children’s church, Sunday school classes, discussion groups, nursery, youth groups, outreach projects, facility care, etc.;

v. Involvement in congregational committees, task forces and special projects;

vi. Singing in the choir or playing in a musical group;

vii. Participation in community events/projects as a member of the sponsoring congregation; and

viii. Participation in Regional and General church events/projects, including assemblies, retreats, workshops and church camp.

c. Engagement with the Candidate and the sponsoring congregation in an ongoing assessment of their spiritual, personal and professional growth. This would include the Candidate’s self-assessment of progress in relation to the 16 areas of ministerial practice. Such assessment will also include recommendations by the RCOM, with input from the sponsoring congregation, for certain additional educational and practical opportunities to enhance the Candidate’s readiness for ministry.

D. Step Four: Final Preparation

This step involves final interviews with the Candidate and input from the sponsoring congregation, as well as a review of prior contacts, assessments, evaluations, references, and recommendations as to the Candidate’s preparation and fitness for Ordination.

i. In preparation for the final interview, the Candidate for Ordination must do the following:

   a. Complete the Ministerial Profile;

   b. Submit a comprehensive (at least 3-5 pages) statement paper outlining their personal theology and understanding of ordained ministry, and specific plans for the direction of their ministry following Ordination in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

   ii. Additional factors on which the Regional Commission on Ministry will base its decision include, but are not limited to,
a. The Candidate’s academic record;
b. Actual leadership experience in the church;
c. Assessment of the Candidate’s spiritual, personal and professional
growth throughout the period of Candidacy, including their self-
assessment of progress in relation to the 16 areas of ministerial practice,
with input from the sponsoring congregation.

iii. The RCOM will also take into consideration relevant additional feedback from
the sponsoring congregation and others within the Region with whom the
Candidate has been involved, including a letter of recommendation from
the congregation (presumably the sponsoring congregation) proposing to
partner with the Region in the Candidate’s Ordination, if approved.

iv. In addition, the Region may require such additional assurances of the
Candidate’s fitness for Ordination as they deem reasonable and necessary,
including, but not limited to, personal interviews, letters of reference, or a
criminal background check.

v. At the discretion of the RCOM, candidates for Ordination may be granted
authorized access to Search and Call and may be considered for any ministerial
position for which they are otherwise qualified.

vi. At the completion of this step, the RCOM will determine whether to
recommend the Candidate for Ordination and will conclude with one of the
following actions:
   a. Ordination (following the RCOM’s determination that they have met all
      relevant requirements);
   b. The Candidate’s withdrawal from candidacy; or
   c. The decision by the Region to terminate their candidacy.

E. Step Five: Act of Ordination

Assuming that the RCOM is satisfied that the Candidate is ready for Ordination, the
final step consists of the actual planning for, and carrying out of, the Ordination
service.

Ordination is a process of the Congregational and Regional Church, on behalf of the
whole church, to commend to Christians everywhere individuals who meet the
qualifications and have fulfilled the requirements established by the DOC for
Ordination. This process culminates in a celebrative service of Ordination, which
meets the following guidelines:

i. The candidate will be recommended for Ordination by a recognized
congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),
including the one in which membership is held.
ii. The act of Ordination will be under the authorization and guidance of the 
sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Minister, or the 
Regional Minister’s designee, presiding.

iii. The service ordinarily will be held in a sponsoring congregation.

iv. Representatives of the recommending congregation or congregations, the 
Regional church, the ecumenical church and, where possible, the General church 
shall participate in the service.

v. The Candidate will create a committee from the recommending congregation or 
congregations and the RCOM to plan the Ordination service.

vi. After the Ministerial Code of Ethics* is signed, the signed Ordination document 
will be issued by the Region.

II. Current Regional Forms and Informational Materials Relating to Ordained Ministry*

A. Candidate Form (COM FORM 04/11)

B. Expectations for Ordination Candidate under Care of the Commission on Ministry (5/09)

C. Disciples of Christ (DOC) Discovery (Rev 6/13)

D. Commission on Ministry: Disciples Ministry in Arizona (1/12)

E. Summary of “A Handbook for Working with Candidates for Ordination for Use by 
Regional Commissions on Ministry” (11/13)

F. Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

*These forms/informational pieces may be revised or replaced from time to time. To assure that you 
have the most current version, please check with the Regional Office or Regional Office website: 
www.azdisciples.org/