Policies and Criteria
for the
Ordering of Ministry
of the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona

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

Commission on Ministry
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona
917 E. Sheridan Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85006

602/468-3815
Fax: 602/955-4540
Email: region@azdisciples.org
Regional Website: www.azdisciples.org

Larry Christensen, Chair
Rev. Richie Sanchez, Interim Regional Minister & President
Preface

Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry, as it may be amended from time to time, (TFPCOM) became the policy document on the Ordering of Ministry for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada on August 1, 2011. The TFPCOM, therefore, is the foundational document for all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona (the “Arizona Region”), with respect to the Ordering of Ministry. References to relevant sections of the TFPCOM included in this document are based upon the TFPCOM document as adopted effective August 1, 2011.

As the primary instrument to carry out this aspect of its mission, the Arizona Region has formed a Regional Commission on Ministry (the “RCOM”). Acting on behalf of the Arizona Region, the RCOM will exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities for the Ordering of Ministry set out in the TFPCOM, and will only establish additional policies and criteria (i) to the extent it is authorized to do so under the TFPCOM; and (ii) to the extent that those policies and criteria are consistent with the TFPCOM.

This document, Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona, 2014, (as it may be amended from time to time) (AZPCOM), contains a brief summary of the rights and responsibilities of the Arizona Region for the Ordering of Ministry under the TFPCOM. It also contains additional policies and criteria established by the Arizona Region, primarily through the RCOM, to facilitate the exercise of those rights and the fulfillment of those responsibilities. For more specific information, please refer to the TFPCOM document, which is available on the Regional Website, www.azdisciples.org, or contact the Regional Office or members of the RCOM. The TFPCOM is also available on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) website in English, Spanish, French, and Korean at http://disciples.org/.
# Table of Contents

I. **Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
   A. **The Commissioned Ministry**
      i. **Definition and Scope**
      ii. **Common Criteria for Commissioned Ministry**
      iii. **Regional Role and Responsibilities**
   B. **The Ordained Ministry**
      i. **Definition and Scope**
      ii. **Educational Requirements**
      iii. **Regional Role and Responsibilities**
      iv. **Candidacy for Ordination**
      v. **The Act of Ordination**
      vi. **Ordination in the Arizona Region**
   C. **Ministerial Standing**
      i. **General Definition**
      ii. **Certification of Standing of those Commissioned and Ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
      iii. **Certification of Standing of Retired Ministers, Commissioned or Ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
      iv. **Suspension, Termination, Surrender of Lapse of Ministerial Standing**
   D. **Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries**
      i. **Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ**
      ii. **United Church of Christ Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
      iii. **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ**
      iv. **Granting Standing to Persons Ordained in Other Churches**

II. **Ministerial Conduct**
   A. **Ministerial Code of Ethics**
   B. **Misconduct**
   C. **Right of Appeal**
   D. **Related Additional Regional Policies and Procedures**
I. Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

As set out in the Design of the Christian Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) “recognizes an order of ministry, set apart under God, to equip the whole people to fulfill their corporate ministry” (Paragraph 86).

“Currently, in its Ordering of Ministry, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes a Commissioned ministry and an Ordained ministry. The church expects the women and men it Commissions and Ordains to demonstrate educational qualifications and competencies in several areas of personal integrity and pastoral practice, as well as a clear call to, and passion for, ministry. The church is called to provide significant Congregational and Regional support for those seeking to serve in ministry, whether Ordained or Commissioned” (TFPCOM, p. 10).

In particular, “the church expects to find within the women and men it receives into the order of ministry [the following personal qualifications]:

- Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices;
- A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church;
- An understanding of pastoral identity;
- Capacity to engage in theological reflection;
- Strong moral character and personal integrity;
- Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for healthy ministry;
- Care and compassion for all people, with appropriate relational skills;
- Responsible personal financial management;
- Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God's gifts; and
- Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry” (TFPCOM, p. 16).

A. The Commissioned Ministry

i. Definition and Scope:

Commissioned ministry is a relatively recent phenomenon in the church. In 1948 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) initiated a licensing process which provided certification for ministry for a limited period of time. It was primarily designed to permit college and seminary students to serve the church during their preparation for ministry or for those lay persons who wished to serve as part-time ministers. Under the TFPCOM, the church has expanded this concept of ministry to provide “opportunity for creativity and imagination in acknowledging the fresh work of the
Holy Spirit. These [Commissioned] 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" (TFPCOM, p. 16).

There are currently two categories of Commissioned Ministry:
- Those not seeking Ordination, whose call is context specific and affirmed by the Region, in consultation with the calling congregation, Region or General church; and
- Those seeking Ordination, serving in a Congregationally or Regionally authorized call, who are under care of a Region in preparation for Ordination.

Since persons are Commissioned by Regions for ministry in a specific context, change of ministry context requires re-Commissioning. The role and responsibilities of Regions for Commissioned ministry are discussed in more detail below.

ii. Common Criteria for Commissioned Ministry:

In order to be Commissioned, 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)- in the Arizona Region this is understood to include congregations in formation and affiliating congregations, including the one in which their membership is held;
- Meet with the Regional Commission on Ministry;
- Comply with other reasonable expectations established by the Region from time to time; and
- Agree to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), (TFPCOM, p. 17).

iii. Regional Role and Responsibilities, in General:

Under the TFPCOM, Regions have the following designated responsibilities for Commissioned ministry:
iv. Additional Guidelines and Resources for Commissioned Ministry in the Arizona Region

Those seeking to attain and maintain recognition as Commissioned ministers in the Arizona Region must comply with such additional policies and criteria as may be established by the RCOM, from time to time, as set out in Attachment A (as it may be amended from time to time), attached to and by this reference made a part of this document.
B. The Ordained Ministry

i. Definition and Scope

As set out in the *TFPCOM*, “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 the whole body of Christ; covenants to undergird that ministry; and grants authority to perform that ministry as a representative of the church.

“Historically called a ministry of word and sacrament, among others, this ministry may include pastors, educators, ecumenical leaders, recognized congregationally-based or non-congregationally-based community ministers, chaplains, pastoral counselors, and ministers who serve in the General and Regional church” (*TFPCOM*, p. 19).

ii. Educational Requirements.

The current education track for those preparing for Ordination is a seminary track, in which Candidates will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of ministerial practice set out below by securing a Master of Divinity degree, or its equivalent, from a theological school accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, or its equivalent (*TFPCOM*, p. 19).

Candidates for Ordination are generally expected to follow the seminary track. In some instances an alternate track (AT) may be approved by the Regional Commission on Ministry. (*TFPCOM*, p. 20).

In any event, the church expects Candidates for Ordination to demonstrate competency in the following 16 areas:

- Biblical Knowledge;
- Church Administration and Planning;
- Communication;
- Cross Cultural and Anti-racism Experience;
- Ecumenism;
- Education and Leader Development;
- Ethics;
- Evangelism;
- Mission of the Church in the World;
iii. Regional Role and Responsibilities, in General:

The following responsibilities are specifically assigned to Regions:

- To establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Ordination;
- To 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;
- To connect with the appropriate General Church ministry with respect to specific Candidates, as appropriate;
- To bring applicants “under care”;
- To provide for their nurture;
- To be in relationship with the sponsoring congregation and the Candidate’s educational setting;
- To authorize and supervise the act of Ordination;
- To facilitate continuing education, including training in healthy boundaries and anti-racism; and
- To grant ongoing Standing

iv. Candidacy for Ordination:

Candidacy for Ordination is defined as “... 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” (TFPCOM, p. 22). It begins with the applicant’s declaration of intent to seek Ordination through the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and affirmation of that intention by the local DOC congregation of which the applicant is a member (TFPCOM, p. 22).

To apply for candidacy, an applicant must be a baptized member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation. They should generally apply to the Region where they hold congregational membership or the Region where they are a student. A letter of recommendation from a
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation in the Region in which they are a member should accompany the application (TFPCOM, p. 22).

Once the application is received, the Region will begin the process of assessing the applicant’s spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and educational capacities for the practice of ministry, which will continue throughout the period of candidacy, should the applicant be accepted. Once accepted as a Candidate, the individual will come under the care and direction of the Regional Commission on Ministry.

Early in the pre-candidacy process, 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. During this preliminary phase, the Region will assure that the congregation understands the expectations that the Region has for both the applicant and the congregation, should they be taken under care. Once accepted as a Candidate, the Region (primarily through the RCOM) will continue to work in close cooperation with the sponsoring congregation throughout the period of candidacy.

Following acceptance as a Candidate, they will seek Ordination through a process of discernment established by the Region, which may include authorization as a Commissioned Minister, as well as the following:

- Participation in the life and work of a congregation;
- Breadth of theological study;
- Professional and ecclesiological study;
- Formation of responsible relations with, and concern for, the church;
- Growth in personal character and spiritual formation; and
- Formation of, and adherence to, ethical principles, as set out in the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (TFPCOM, p. 23).

“At the discretion of the Region of care, candidates for Ordination may be granted authorized access to Search and Call. . . . All candidates for Ordination with authorized access to Search and Call . . . may be considered for any ministerial position” (TFPCOM, p. 34 and 35).

Completion of the educational requirements for Ordination does not guarantee Ordination. The period of candidacy is concluded by Ordination, withdrawal from candidacy, or the decision by the Region to
terminate candidacy. Generally, the period of candidacy should not exceed seven years (TFPCOM, p. 24).

v. The Act of Ordination:

The act of Ordination is under the authority and guidance of the sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Minister, or their designee, presiding. The service is usually held in the sponsoring congregation, with representatives of the recommending congregation(s), the Regional church, the ecumenical church and, where possible, the General church participating. After signing the Ministerial Code of Ethics, the Ordained Minister will receive a signed Ordination document from the Region.

vi. Ordination in the Arizona Region:

In the Arizona Region, there are five steps leading to Ordination:

- **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. At this point the potential candidate is encouraged to begin to meet certain specific prerequisites involving exploration of, and personal reflection on, DOC history, polity and theology.

- **Step Two: Initial Approach/Contact with the Regional Commission on Ministry.** 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? In addition, this step includes initial contact by the RCOM with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation of which the applicant is an active participant and which is expected to sponsor their candidacy.

- **Step Three: Period of Candidacy.** During this step, the Candidate for Ordination will be taken under care by the RCOM. Shortly after being taken under care, the Candidate will undergo an assessment/evaluation to determine their mental and psychological fitness for ministry, in general, and Ordination, in
particular. During this period, the RCOM will work with the Candidate to identify their gifts and abilities and to formulate an individualized plan for further discernment and enhancement of those gifts and abilities. In addition, the Candidate is expected to maintain a high level of congregational participation, which will give them the opportunity to utilize those gifts and abilities in the actual practice of ministry. The RCOM will continue to work closely with the sponsoring congregation to assess the Candidate’s progress and fitness for congregational and other forms of ministry.

- 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. This is the point at which the RCOM will determine whether to recommend them for Ordination and concludes with one of the following actions:
  - Ordination (following the RCOM’s determination that they have met all relevant requirements);
  - The Candidate’s withdrawal from candidacy; or
  - The decision by the Region to terminate their candidacy.

- 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.

In order to meet the specific requirements of the five-step process outlined above, those seeking Ordination in the Arizona Region must comply with such additional policies and criteria as may be established by the RCOM, from time to time, as set out in Attachment B (as it may be amended from time to time), attached to and by this reference made a part of this document.

C. Ministerial Standing

i. General Definition:

“Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is credentialing for ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a call to accountability to the church, and collegiality with other ministers both denominationally and ecumenically (TFPCOM, p.24).”
Standing affirms that Commissioned and Ordained ministers are currently engaged in the practice of ministry, with continuous accountability maintained with a local congregation or other manifestation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and grants to them the following privileges:

- Lists such ministers in the *Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*;
- Permits such ministers to call upon the church for various services and support; and
- Grants to such ministers voting privileges in the General Assembly of the DOC.

Ordained ministers also have access to Search and Call (*TFPCOM*, p.25).

Responsibility for certification of Standing depends upon the nature of the ministry in which the Commissioned or Ordained minister is engaged:

- Responsibility for certification of Standing of ministers and for annual review of that Standing within the Order of Ministry is lodged with the Region where the minister is currently engaged in the practice of ministry. Regions are permitted to create additional policies and procedures related to Standing as long as they are consistent with the Order of Ministry;

- For those engaged in non-Regional ministries, responsibility for certification of Standing and for annual review of that Standing within the Order of Ministry is lodged with the General Commission on Ministry (GCOM). The GCOM will notify Regions about persons within their Region that have Standing with the GCOM;

- Responsibility for certification of Standing of Regional Ministers is jointly lodged with the Region where the Regional Minister serves and the GCOM (*TFPCOM*, p.25).

ii. Certification of Standing of those Commissioned and Ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

A minister becomes eligible for Standing by virtue of Commissioning or Ordination according to the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ). Standing for ministers in active service continues as long as the minister does and reports the following:

- Performs faithfully the duties of a minister in a “ministerial” occupation;
- Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal;
- Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including participating membership in a recognized local Disciples congregation, where feasible;
- Adheres to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*;
- Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the *TFPCOM*; and
- Seeks and meets the requirements for annual certification as requested by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry, as appropriate (*TFPCOM*, p.26).

The Region (or GCOM) will provide for annual review of Standing for all ministers in its care, in consultation with, or notification to, such General Offices, as may be appropriate. Standing may be continued, at the discretion of the Region or GCOM, in cases of disability or other special hardships affecting ministerial service (*TFPCOM*, p.26).

Standing is retained when an Ordained Minister moves from a ministry position in one Region to a ministry position in another; nevertheless, the minister should notify both the former and new Regional Ministers. Responsibility for review and subsequent certification is assigned to the new Region (or to the GCOM, if applicable). In contrast, Commissioned Ministers who move to another Region must contact that Regional Minister and meet the new Region’s requirements for Commissioned Ministry (which is generally context specific) in order to establish Standing in the new ministry position (*TFPCOM*, pp.26-27).

When an Ordained Minister who is not actively seeking relocation moves from a ministry position in one Region to another Region and is no longer engaged in ministry, ministerial Standing generally will be provisionally retained for up to one year, until review and certification is granted by the new Region. The Ordained Minister is required to initiate contact with both the former and new Regional Ministers (*TFPCOM*, p.27).

iii. Certification of Standing of Retired Ministers, Commissioned or Ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Although not clearly defined in the *TFPCOM*, the term “retirement” or “retired” minister appears to include both those Commissioned and Ordained Ministers who no longer continue in an active ministerial position and those who are treated as “retired” for pension fund purposes but continue in active ministry beyond that point. In the latter case, those Commissioned and Ordained Ministers who continue in active ministry are referred to as “active retired” ministers. Those who no longer engage in active ministry are referred to as “inactive retired” ministers.

With respect to Standing upon retirement, Commissioned Ministers retain Standing as active retired ministers if they continue serving in an approved ministry site and continue to meet the requirements for annual certification of Standing by the Region where the ministry site is located or by the GCOM, as appropriate. Standing may be granted to “inactive retired” Commissioned Ministers, but only at the discretion of the Region (*TFPCOM*, p.27).

Ordained Ministers with Standing retain their Standing at the time of retirement, on the terms and conditions set out below (*TFPCOM*, p.27-28):

- A retired minister who intends to continue ministry must continue to seek and meet the requirements for annual certification of Standing by the Region where the ministry site is located or by the GCOM, as appropriate;
- The active retired minister will be listed in the *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as active retired;
- To be eligible for such Standing, the active retired minister
  - Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by Commissioning or Ordination in a recognized ministerial occupation or service;
  - Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal;
  - Maintains relations with the DOC, including participating membership in a recognized local Disciples congregation, where feasible; and
  - Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the *TFPCOM*, and to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics.*
• Retired ministers who are no longer engaged in the practice of ministry may seek Standing as inactive retired ministers, on the terms and conditions set out below (TFPCOM, p.28);
  • Inactive retired ministers will continue to be listed in the Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as inactive retired ministers;
  • Inactive retired ministers must continue to seek and meet the requirements for annual certification of Standing by the Region where they reside; and
  • Inactive retired ministers must continue to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics and must hold participating membership in a recognized local Disciples congregation, where feasible.

• If an inactive retired minister decides to once again take up the practice of ministry, that minister must once again seek status as an active retired minister (TFPCOM, p.28).

iv. Suspension, Termination, Surrender or Lapse of Ministerial Standing

Subject to the special rules that apply to disciplinary review of those who have Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC or UCC, the following rules will apply with respect to suspension, termination, surrender or lapse of ministerial Standing.

Review of Standing may be initiated by the minister, the Region, or the GCOM when one or more of the following conditions are present (TFPCOM, pp.28-29):

• The minister desires to be released from the practice of ministry;
• The minister requests transfer of credentials from the DOC to another denomination or non-Disciples congregation;
• The minister enters into a full-time non-ministerial occupation and/or no longer performs the functions of a minister;
• The minister fails to meet the requirements for annual certification by the Region or the GCOM;
• The minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the TFPCOM, or fails to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics.

When initiated by the Region or the GCOM, the review of Standing process will include the following (TFPCOM, p.29):
• Written notice to the minister that Standing is to be reviewed, with the possibility of suspension or termination;
• Consultation with, or notification to, such General Offices, as may be appropriate; and
• A hearing by a committee appointed by the Region or the GCOM.

When initiated by the Minister, the review of Standing process will include the following (*TFPCOM, p.29*):

• Written notice to the Region or GCOM that Standing is to be reviewed, with the possibility of suspension or termination; and
• Consultation with a committee appointed by the Region or the GCOM.

Additional rules relating to termination, suspension, surrender or lapse of Standing include the following (*TFPCOM, pp.29-30*):

• Standing may be granted to a minister whose Standing has been terminated or suspended by another Region or GCOM only upon the recommendation of the terminating or suspending body.
• When a minister surrenders Standing, Standing can be granted again only upon the recommendation of the body to which Standing was surrendered. Before reinstituting Standing, however, the Region or GCOM must address any outstanding allegations of misconduct.
• When a minister’s Standing has lapsed, Standing may only be granted after consultation with the body where the Standing was previously held.

Those seeking Standing in the Arizona Region must comply with such additional policies and criteria as may be established by the RCOM, from time to time, as set out in Attachment C, with respect to general requirements, and in Attachment D, with respect to issues relating to potential misconduct, attached to and by this reference made a part of this document.

D. Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries

  i. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ

  “The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DOC) and the United Church of Christ (UCC) recognize the Ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that church and these ministries to
be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ” (*TFPCOM*, p. 30).

The Ordained ministries of the DOC and the UCC are reconciled; that is, an Ordained minister with Ordained ministerial Standing in one church may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an Ordained minister of the other. The designations "Ordained Ministerial Partner" and "Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing" reflect this recognition and reconciliation, as set out below:

- Each member of the UCC who holds Ordained ministerial Standing in the UCC is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the DOC;
- Each member of the DOC who holds Ordained ministerial Standing in the DOC is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the UCC; and
- When a person no longer has Ordained ministerial Standing in either the DOC or the UCC, that person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner, and Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is nullified.

ii. United Church of Christ Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an Ordained minister with Standing in the UCC who has been called to an Ordained ministry setting in the DOC. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing authorizes the Ordained Ministerial Partner to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in the DOC, on the following terms and conditions (*TFPCOM*, pp. 30-32):

- Once a UCC Ordained minister has demonstrated knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the DOC to the RCOM where the minister resides, that Ordained Ministerial Partner may be granted access to the Search and Call process in the DOC. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC, however, is not granted at this point in the process;
- A UCC Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a call in the DOC applies for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the Region in which their calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is reviewed by the Region for certification annually;
- A UCC Ordained minister has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC only when serving a DOC calling body;
• A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC will maintain Ordained ministerial Standing in the UCC;

• Ordained ministerial Standing will be held in the UCC Association in which the DOC calling body is located;

• A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing will maintain relations with the DOC, including (where feasible) holding associate membership in a recognized DOC congregation in the community;

• A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in a Region has voting privileges in the General Assembly of the DOC;

• A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC shall relate to the DOC for their primary support in Ordained ministry;

• A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC will be accountable to the Region for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and to the UCC for Ordained ministerial Standing;

• When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the UCC minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC, the association of the UCC in which the UCC minister’s Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained will be informed and invited to participate in the process.

• When a UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the DOC accepts a call in another Region, they shall be subject to review and subsequent annual certification of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing by the new Region.

iii. 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 DOC who has been called to an Ordained ministry setting in the UCC. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing authorizes the DOC Ordained Ministerial Partner to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in the UCC, on essentially the same terms and conditions as set out in Section II.D.ii above with respect to UCC Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC (TFPCOM, pp. 32-34), with the following differences:

• The DOC Ordained Ministerial Partner must demonstrate knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the UCC to the UCC Association Committee where the
• The UCC Association in which the DOC Ordained Ministerial Partner’s calling body is located will perform functions with respect to that Ordained Ministerial Partner (and the granting and ongoing certification of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing) comparable to those performed by the DOC Region for a UCC Ordained Ministerial Partner;

• A DOC 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 UCC; and

• When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the DOC minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the UCC, the Region of the DOC in which the DOC minister’s Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and invited to participate in the process.

iv. Granting Standing to 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). Provisional or temporary Standing may be granted to individuals applying for recognition of Ordination by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Responsibility for this process is lodged in the Region, except in the case of Military Chaplains stationed overseas (TFPCOM, p. 34).

The following requirements must be met before provisional or temporary Standing may be granted (TFPCOM, p. 34):

• Consultation with appropriate officials of the denomination or congregation from which the candidate transfers;
• Satisfactory investigation of personal and ministerial references and a criminal background check; and
• Filing of appropriate forms with the Region to which the applicant is applying or with the GCOM.

Provisional or temporary Standing shall be reviewed annually by either the granting Region or the GCOM.
The provisional or temporary conditions for Standing may be removed by the Region or the GCOM upon fulfillment of the following requirements (TFPCOM, pp. 34-35):

- Membership in a recognized congregation of the DOC;
- Demonstrated knowledge and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the DOC;
- Fulfillment of the prerequisites and preparation, including educational attainment, for the Order of Ministry;
- One year minimum service under the supervision or mentoring of a DOC minister with Standing;
- Manifesting the personal qualifications for the Order of Ministry as listed in Section II.A.2. of the TFPCOM; and
- Commitment to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Those seeking recognition and reconciliation of Ordained ministries in the Arizona Region must comply with such additional policies and criteria as may be established by the RCOM, as set out in Attachment C (as it may be amended from time to time), with respect to general requirements, and in Attachment D (as it may be amended from time to time), with respect to issues relating to potential misconduct, attached to and by this reference made a part of this document.

II. Ministerial Conduct

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DOC) requires all DOC Commissioned and Ordained ministers engaged in active ministry (including active retired ministers) to continue to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2. of the TFPCOM. This includes, but is not limited to, strong moral character and personal integrity. In addition, all Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing in the DOC, whether active, retired active or retired inactive, must adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as set out in Section II.I. of the TFPCOM, as it may be amended from time to time.

A. Ministerial Code of Ethics

Under the TFPCOM, all DOC Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing must periodically (at least annually) do the following:

i. Believing that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God and proclaiming him Lord and Savior of the world, reaffirm their vows as a minister;
ii. Through dedication and discipline, pledge to continue to lead and serve with integrity;

iii. Relying on the grace of God, continue to commit themselves to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics in the following four areas:
   • Personal conduct;
   • Relationship to the church/ministry currently served;
   • Relationships to ministry colleagues; and
   • Relationships to the community and the wider church (TFPCOM, pp. 42-43).

B. Misconduct

Under the TFPCOM, “the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) understands ministerial misconduct to be activity which violates the covenantal character of the ministerial office as expressed in the Ministerial Code of Ethics. Investigation and adjudication of violations of the Ministerial Code of Ethics shall be the responsibility of the Region through the . . .” RCOM of that Region or the GCOM, as applicable (TFPCOM, p. 44).

At a minimum, appropriate processes will be implemented at the Regional and general levels of the DOC to do the following:

i. Regions (or the GCOM) will report formal actions and decisions to remove Standing for misconduct to the Office of Search and Call and/or other appropriate General Church office(s) with responsibility for ministerial vocations, which may change from time to time. These actions will be communicated to all Regions.

ii. In extreme situations of alleged misconduct, ministerial Standing may be temporarily suspended by the Region (or the GCOM) during the period of investigation and adjudication.

iii. With respect to sexual misconduct, it is the responsibility of each Region to have specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of ministers with Standing in the Region. Each Region will periodically and systematically review its definitions and procedures. It is the responsibility of the Region to communicate such definitions and procedures to ministers and congregations within the Region (TFPCOM, p. 44).

iv. In addition, from time to time, the RCOM shall establish specific definitions for other categories of serious ministerial misconduct or abuse of power and procedures for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating those charges, as well. Such categories may include, but not be limited to, personal relationships within the congregation (including
C. Right of Appeal

The GCOM understands that the Right to Appeal extends to persons who, at the time of their appeal, are subject to a decision with adverse effect regarding Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing. The GCOM will not consider any appeal if legal proceedings are pending or in process (TFPCOM, pp. 44-45).

The Region may also implement an intermediate level of appeal at the Regional level for decisions with adverse effect regarding Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing.

D. Related Additional Regional Policies and Procedures

Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing in the Arizona Region must comply with, and are subject to, such additional policies and procedures regarding ministerial ethics and conduct (including investigation and adjudication of suspected misconduct) as may be established by the RCOM, from time to time, and set out in Attachment D (as it may be amended from time to time), attached to and by this reference made a part of this document.
Attachment A

Additional Guidelines and Resources for Commissioned Ministry in the Arizona Region

I. Additional Guidelines for Commissioned Ministry

Those seeking to attain and maintain recognition as Commissioned ministers in the Arizona Region must comply with all relevant requirements set out in the *TFPCOM* and the additional requirements set out in this Attachment A. Assuming that all requirements are met, such recognition may be granted for a specific ministry in a specific place for a specified period (usually one year).

A. The procedures for candidates seeking recognition as Commissioned ministers include the following initial steps:

1. The Candidate 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*) (See Section II, “Current Regional Forms and Informational Materials Relating to Commissioned Ministry” for the most current version of each of the forms/informational pieces marked with an “*” below.)

2. In response to the Candidate’s application, the Regional Office will provide information to the Candidate about Commissioned ministry, including a copy of the Commissioned Ministry Requirements Completion Check List*.

3. In addition, the Candidate may request an initial interview with the Commission to obtain additional information about Commissioned ministry, the process for recognition and what it means to be “taken under care” by the Commission.

4. The Candidate will submit a comprehensive statement giving evidence of their understanding of the Christian faith, the nature and work of the church and its ministry, which, at a minimum, will include completing the prerequisites set out in the Disciples of Christ (DOC) Discovery* document involving exploration of, and personal reflection on, DOC history, polity and theology.

5. Following receipt of the above-noted items (i-iv), the Commission will set an interview date with the Candidate.

Assuming that all of the above requirements have been met, prior to being Commissioned, the Candidate must complete the following additional steps:

6. The Candidate will complete the Wallace SC&W Foundations Course or other currently approved program (Option 1)* or obtain a Certificate of Ministry or
vii. The Candidate will complete a “Disciples History and Polity” class approved by the Commission.

viii. The Candidate will request their congregation to recommend them for Commissioning and to send a letter of recommendation signed by the minister and board moderator to the Commission on Ministry.

ix. The Candidate will complete a candidate assessment/evaluation with an approved counseling center.

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

B. The Commission on Ministry will review the information gathered during the process of Candidacy to determine if the Candidate displays the qualities and standards necessary to grant Commissioned status to a specific ministry for the period of one year. Such qualities and standards include, but are not limited to, those set out in the *TFPCOM*, Paragraph II.A.2 (p. 16) and the *AZPCOM*, Section I (p. 4). In addition, the Candidate must adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. Assuming that the Candidate meets all relevant requirements, they will be recognized as a Commissioned minister for one year, so long as they have a specific place to practice ministry. In the event that their ministry or location is changed or the period of Commissioning expires, they will need to seek re-Commissioning.

C. Minimum annual continuing education requirements for ongoing recognition as a Commissioned Minister will include the following:

i. The Commissioned Minister must complete a minimum 10 hours of ongoing education/training, which can include Regional Workshops, Certificate of Ministry courses, as well as formal Continuing Education seminars or coursework.

ii. The Commissioned Minister must participate in Regional and General events.

iii. The Commissioned Minister must attend Commission approved Clergy Ethics & Boundary Training within the first year of Commissioning and once every four years thereafter.

D. Procedures for Candidates seeking re-Commissioning.

i. Candidates are Commissioned for a specified ministry in a particular place for a limited period of time, generally one year. Thus, Commissioned Ministers need to seek re-Commissioning every 12 months. Failure to do so will result in a loss of Standing as a minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
ii. The Candidate will submit an application for re-Commissioning that is provided by the Regional Commission on the Ministry.

iii. The Candidate will be responsible for obtaining evaluations/recommendations from their congregation and/or ministry supervisor and having them sent to the Commission.

iv. The Candidate may be asked to participate in an annual review with the Commission. (A Candidate may also request an interview).

v. Upon approval of the Commission for re-Commissioning, an appropriate ministerial Standing card will be issued.

E. The Act of Commissioning

i. The Candidate will be Commissioned in the local congregation in which the Candidate is serving. A sample service is available from the Regional Office, upon request.

ii. The Regional Minister or a representative from the Commission on Ministry will preside in a service of Commissioning.

iii. The following persons may be included in the Commissioning Service.

a. Pastor(s) of the congregation

b. Board Chair or Moderator

c. Regional Minister and/or member(s) of the Commission on Ministry

d. Other leaders as appropriate

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

A. Candidate Form (COM FORM 04/11)

B. Commissioned Ministry Requirements Completion Check List (current)

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

D. COMMISSIONED MINISTRY CURRICULUM (1/19/12), (including information on both Option 1 [Wallace SC&W Foundations Course] and Option 2 [Certificate of Ministry or equivalent certification from COM-approved seminary]

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

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 information, please check with the Regional Office or Regional Office website: www.azdisciples.org
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 TFP/COM 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.
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/
Attachment C

Additional Guidelines and Resources for Standing in the Arizona Region

I. Additional Guidelines for Ministerial Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DOC) is credentialing for ministry within the DOC. It is a call to accountability to the church and collegiality with other ministers, denominationally and ecumenically. Those seeking Standing in the Arizona Region must comply with all relevant requirements set out in the TFPCOM and the additional requirements set out in this Attachment C.

Responsibility for certification of Standing of ministers and for annual review of that Standing is generally lodged with the Region where the minister is currently engaged in the practice of ministry or otherwise resides. Responsibility for certification of Standing of Regional Ministers is jointly lodged with the Region where they serve and the GCOM.

A. Certification of Standing of those Commissioned and Ordained by the DOC

A minister becomes eligible for Standing by virtue of Commissioning or Ordination according to the Order of Ministry of the DOC.

i. Standing for ministers in active service continues as long as the minister continues to do and report the following:
   a. Performs faithfully the duties of a minister in a “ministerial” occupation;
   b. Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal;
   c. Maintains relations with the DOC, including participating membership in a recognized local Disciples congregation, where feasible;
   d. Adheres to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). *(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);
   e. Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the TFPCOM; and
   f. Seeks and meets the requirements for annual certification on such terms and conditions as required by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry, as appropriate (TFPCOM, p.26).

ii. As part of the annual certification process to maintain Standing, the Arizona Region requires that all Commissioned and Ordained ministers engaged in active practice of ministry do the following:
   a. Timely submit a request for continued Standing, in the prescribed format
(annual Ministerial Standing Form*), documenting they continue to meet all of the prerequisites set out in Section I.A.i. above and have also met the following additional requirements:

1. Attended RCOM approved Clergy Ethics and Boundary Training within the past four years. Ministers new to the Arizona Region, including those newly Ordained or Commissioned, will be required to complete such training within the first 12 months of their ministry in Arizona.

2. Completed a minimum of 10 hours of continuing education for the year, including, but not limited to, Regional Workshops, Certificate of Ministry courses, as well as formal Continuing Education seminars or coursework.

iii. Those Commissioned and Ordained ministers with DOC Standing who are actively engaged in ministry have the following privileges:

a. Are listed in the Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

b. Are permitted to call upon the church for various services and support; and

c. Are granted voting privileges in the General Assembly of the DOC.

Ordained ministers also have access to Search and Call (TFPCOM, p.25).

iv. When moving from one Region to another, the following rules apply:

a. An Ordained minister retains Standing when moving from a ministry position in one Region to a ministry position in another; however, the minister should notify both the former and new Regional Ministers.

b. Since Commissioned ministry is congregation and ministry specific, a Commissioned minister who moves to another Region must contact that Regional Minister to qualify for and establish Standing in the new ministry position, based upon the requirements of the new Region.

c. When an Ordained minister moves from a ministry position in one Region to another Region and is no longer engaged in ministry, ministerial Standing generally will be provisionally retained for up to one year. If he or she wishes to retain Standing, he or she must notify both the former and new Regional Ministers.

B. Certification of Standing of Retired Ministers (Active and Inactive), Commissioned or Ordained by the DOC

i. Although not clearly defined in the TFPCOM, the term “retirement” or “retired” minister appears to include both those Commissioned and Ordained Ministers who no longer continue in an active ministerial position and those who are treated as “retired” for pension fund purposes but continue in active ministry beyond that point. In the latter case, those Commissioned and Ordained Ministers who continue in active ministry are
referred to as “active retired” ministers. Those who no longer engage in
active ministry are referred to as “inactive retired” ministers. For purposes of
certification of Standing of retired ministers, the Arizona Region adopts the
definitions set out in this paragraph.

ii. In the Arizona Region, upon retirement, Commissioned Ministers retain
Standing as active retired ministers if they continue serving in an approved
ministry site within the Arizona Region and continue to meet the
requirements of Sections I.A.i. and ii. set out above. As long as they continue
to meet these requirements they will also continue to have the privileges set
out in Section I.A.iii. above. Because Commissioned Ministry is congregation
and context specific, the Arizona Region generally does not grant Standing to
“inactive retired” Commissioned Ministers. However, under the TFPCOM,
the Region has the authority to do so.

iii. In the Arizona Region, Ordained Ministers with Standing retain their Standing
at the time of retirement, on the terms and conditions set out below:

a. A retired Ordained Minister who intends to continue active ministry
(whether occasional, part-time or full-time) within the Arizona Region
must continue to seek and meet the requirements for annual certification
of Standing by the Region or by the GCOM, as appropriate.

1. In the Arizona Region, to maintain Standing, active retired
ministers must continue to meet the requirements and follow the
annual certification process set out for non-retired Commissioned
and Ordained ministers in Sections I.A.i. and ii. above.

2. As long as they continue to meet these requirements, active
retired Ordained Ministers will also continue to have the
privileges set out in Section I.A.iii. above, except that they will be
listed in the Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
as active retired.

b. Retired Ordained Ministers who are no longer engaged in the practice of
ministry may seek Standing as inactive retired ministers, on the terms
and conditions set out below:

1. Inactive retired ministers will continue to be listed in the Yearbook
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as inactive retired
ministers;

2. Inactive retired ministers must continue to adhere to the
Ministerial Code of Ethics,* hold participating membership in a
recognized local Disciples congregation, where feasible, and
timely submit a request for continued Standing in the prescribed
format.

3. If an inactive retired minister decides to once again take up the
practice of ministry, that minister must once again seek status as
an active retired minister.
C. Certification of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the DOC and UCC

i. The Ordained ministries of the DOC and the UCC are reconciled. An Ordained minister with Ordained ministerial Standing in one church may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an Ordained minister of the other, with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in that church. When a person no longer has Ordained ministerial Standing in either the DOC or the UCC, that person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner, and Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is nullified.

ii. The specific requirements, duties and privileges to attain and maintain Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in either the DOC or the UCC are more fully set out in Section II.G. of the TFP COM and Section I.D. of the A2PCOM.

iii. In addition, in the Arizona Region, in order to attain and maintain Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Arizona Region, an Ordained UCC minister who seeks to serve a DOC congregation in Arizona must also do the following:

   a. Contact the Regional Office to set up a meeting with the RCOM.
   b. Prior to the meeting, submit the following information in writing:
      1. A preliminary statement of their understanding of ministry within the DOC, including reasons for the request for Ordained Ministerial Standing with the DOC; the meaning of “church”; the role and authority of ministers and their understanding of DOC history, polity and practices;
      2. Documentation of their Ordination;
      3. Resume or personal information schedule (Form*?);
      4. References from clergy and laity concerning their performance in ministry;
      5. Evidence of present Standing in a UCC Conference or Association.
   c. Successfully complete a regionally approved course of study in the history, polity and practices of the DOC, as evidenced by a certificate.
   d. Appear before the RCOM and demonstrate sufficient knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the DOC, at which time they may be granted access to the DOC Search and Call process, but are not yet granted Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing. Such Standing is only granted when, having met all other requirements, the Ordained UCC minister has been called to an Ordained DOC ministry in the Arizona Region.
      1. To pursue Search and Call, the Ordained UCC minister must request the appropriate Center for Leadership and Ministry, Homeland Ministries forms from the Regional Office.
      2. When the forms and references are completed and submitted to the Center for Leadership and Ministry, they will be processed in the next regular submission to the Regions.
e. In addition to all other requirements, prior to the granting of ordained Ministerial Partner Standing, the Ordained UCC minister must meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the TFPCOM, and agree to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics*.

f. When a call to an Arizona DOC congregation is extended and accepted, the RCOM issues a written statement granting Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC. A copy of this statement will be forwarded to the Center for Leadership and Ministry, Homeland Ministries.

g. It is the expectation of the RCOM that this process will be completed within one year.

iv. Once granted, an Ordained UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC shall relate to the DOC for their primary support in Ordained ministry.

a. They, however, will continue to retain Ordained ministerial Standing in the UCC Association in which the DOC calling body is located.

i. In the event of a disciplinary review, the UCC Association in which the UCC minister’s Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained will be informed and invited to participate in the procedures.

ii. As long as the Ordained UCC minister maintains Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the DOC, they will be required to seek and meet the requirements for annual certification of such Standing, on the same terms and conditions as Ordained DOC ministers engaged in active ministry in the Arizona Region.

v. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing may also be granted to an Ordained minister with Standing in the DOC who has been called to an Ordained ministry setting in the UCC, on such terms and conditions as more fully set out in Section II.G. of the TFPCOM and Section I.D. of the AZPCOM.

a. Once granted, an Ordained DOC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the UCC shall relate to the UCC for their primary support in Ordained ministry.

b. They, however, will continue to retain Ordained ministerial Standing in the DOC Region in which the UCC calling body is located. In the event of a disciplinary review, the Region in which the UCC minister’s Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained will be informed and invited to participate in the procedures.

D. Granting of Standing to Persons Ordained in Other Churches

i. Ministers Ordained by other denominations or non-Disciples congregations may be considered for recognition of Ordination and the granting of Standing in the DOC. Provisional or temporary Standing may be granted to individuals
applying for recognition of Ordination by the Region in which they are engaged in ministry or reside.

ii. The minister seeking provisional or temporary Standing in the Arizona Region must do the following:
   a. Contact the Regional Office to set up a meeting with the RCOM.
   b. Prior to the meeting, submit the following information in writing:
      1. A preliminary statement of their understanding of ministry within the DOC, including reasons for the request for Ordained Ministerial Standing with the DOC; the meaning of “church”; the role and authority of ministers and their understanding of DOC history, polity and practices;
      2. Documentation of their Ordination and qualifications for Ordination;
      3. Resume or personal information schedule (Form*?);
      4. References from clergy and laity concerning their performance in ministry;
      5. Evidence of present Standing (or comparable certification) in another denomination or non-Disciples congregation; and
      6. Contact information for appropriate officials of the denomination or congregation from which the applicant transfers.

iii. Upon completion of the above prerequisites, the RCOM will make its decision, taking into consideration the information provided in writing and during interviews, as well as additional information obtained from the following sources:
   a. Consultation with appropriate officials of the denomination or congregation from which the candidate transfers; and
   b. Filing of other appropriate forms with the Arizona Region.

In addition, the Region may require a criminal background check.

iv. If granted, the minister’s provisional or temporary Standing will be subject to the following course of action, during which their provisional or temporary Standing will be reviewed by the RCOM on an annual basis. This course of action will be for a period of 12 to 18 months (at the discretion of the RCOM) and may include the following:
   a. Assignment of an Ordained DOC minister with Standing in the Arizona Region as a mentor. The mentor’s recommendation will be a part of the data used by the RCOM to determine the applicant’s appropriateness for Standing;
   b. Active participation in a DOC congregation, where feasible;
   c. Directed study, including suggested readings and other continuing education events/experiences;
   d. Interviews with established DOC leaders;
   e. Participation in various national and Regional DOC events, including Assemblies, workshops, etc.;
f. Completion of a regionally approved course of study in the history, polity and practices of the DOC, as evidenced by a certificate;

g. Completion of the Ministerial Profile* and other appropriate forms; and

h. Completion of an assessment to determine their mental and psychological fitness for ministry, in general, and Ordination, in particular.

v. At the end of the period of directed study, a second interview with the RCOM will be scheduled during which the minister will be asked to share their experiences, including insights gained and increased knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the DOC.

a. In addition to satisfactory completion of all the above-noted prerequisites, including various evaluations, assessments, background checks and other references, the minister must also meet the following additional requirements in order for the provisional or temporary conditions for Standing to be removed:

1. Membership in a recognized DOC congregation;

2. Fulfillment of the prerequisites and preparation, including educational attainment, for the Order of Ministry;

3. One year minimum service under the supervision or mentoring of a DOC minister with Standing;

4. Manifesting the personal qualifications for the Order of Ministry as listed in Section II.A.2. of the TFPCOM; and

5. Commitment to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

vi. If, based upon its review, the RCOM determines that the minister is qualified to have the provisional or temporary conditions for Standing removed, the RCOM will present to the minister a Certificate of Ministerial Recognition to ministerial Standing in the DOC, along with a DOC ministerial Standing card.

a. As long as the minister Ordained by another church or non-Disciples congregation has Standing with the DOC, they will be required to seek and meet the requirements for annual certification of such Standing, on the same terms and conditions as Ordained DOC ministers engaged in active ministry in the Arizona Region.

E. Suspension, Termination, Surrender or Lapse of Ministerial Standing

Subject to the special rules that apply to disciplinary review of those who have Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC or UCC, the following rules will apply with respect to suspension, termination, surrender or lapse of ministerial Standing:

i. Review of Standing may be initiated by the minister, the Region, or the GCOM, when one of the following applies:

a. The minister desires to be released from the practice of ministry;
b. The minister requests transfer of credentials from the DOC to another denomination or non-Disciples congregation;

c. The minister enters into a full-time non-ministerial occupation and/or no longer performs the functions of a minister;

d. The minister fails to meet the requirements for annual certification by the Region or the GCOM;

e. The minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the TFP COM, or fails to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics*.

ii. When initiated by the Region, the review of Standing process will include the following:

a. Written notice to the minister that Standing is to be reviewed, with the possibility of suspension or termination;

b. Consultation with, or notification to, such General Offices, as may be appropriate;

c. A hearing by a committee appointed by the Region or the GCOM;

d. When a review is instituted in relation to a UCC minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC, the association of the UCC in which the UCC minister’s Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained will be informed and invited to participate in the process;

e. When a review is instituted in relation to a DOC minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the UCC, the Region of the DOC in which the DOC minister’s Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and invited to participate in the process.

iii. When initiated by the minister, the review of Standing process will include the following:

a. Written notice to the Region that Standing is to be reviewed, with the possibility of suspension or termination;

b. Consultation by a committee appointed by the Region.

iv. Standing may be granted to a minister whose Standing has been terminated or suspended by another Region or GCOM only upon the recommendation of the terminating or suspending body.

v. When a minister surrenders Standing, Standing can be granted again only upon the recommendation of the body to which Standing was surrendered, assuming any outstanding allegations of misconduct have been addressed.

vi. When a minister’s Standing has lapsed, Standing may only be granted after consultation with the body where the Standing was previously held.

Additional policies and procedures relating to review of Standing, including the investigation and adjudication of suspected ministerial misconduct, the outcome of which may affect ministerial Standing, are set out in Attachment D (as it may be amended from time to time) to the AZPCOM.
II. Current Regional Forms and Informational Materials Relating to Standing*

A. Annual Ministerial Standing Form

B. Ministerial Record Form

C. 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/
Attachment D
Additional Guidelines and Resources for Ministerial Conduct in the Arizona Region

I. Additional Guidelines for Ministerial Conduct in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

To maintain Standing, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DOC) requires all DOC Commissioned and Ordained ministers engaged in active ministry (including active retired ministers) to continue to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the TFPCOM. This includes, but is not limited to, strong moral character and personal integrity. In addition, all Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing in the DOC, whether active, retired active or retired inactive, must continue to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as set out in Section II.I. of the TFPCOM, as it may be amended from time to time.

To assure that all such DOC Commissioned and Ordained ministers within the Arizona Region continue to meet the highest standards of ethical ministerial conduct, the Arizona Region has implemented the following policies and procedures:

A. Annual Certification (and Recertification) of Standing of those Commissioned and Ordained by the DOC

In order to maintain Standing as a Commissioned or Ordained minister (whether active, retired active or retired inactive) within the Arizona Region, a minister must continue to meet the applicable requirements set out in Attachment C to the AZPCOM, as it may be amended from time to time.

i. With respect to ministerial conduct, ministers in active service (including retired active) must continue to do and report the following:
   a. Meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the TFPCOM; and
   b. Adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).* (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).
   c. As part of the annual certification process, all Commissioned and Ordained ministers engaged in active practice of ministry must timely submit a request for continued Standing, in the prescribed format (annual Ministerial Standing Form*), documenting that they continue to meet applicable requirements.

ii. With respect to ministerial conduct, retired Ordained ministers who are no
longer engaged in the practice of ministry may seek and maintain Standing as retired inactive ministers, so long as they continue to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), hold participating membership in a recognized local Disciples congregation, where feasible, and timely submit a request for continued Standing, in the prescribed format. If an inactive retired minister decides to once again take up the practice of ministry, that minister must once again seek status as an active retired minister.

B. Misconduct

In the Arizona Region, ministerial misconduct is defined as activity which violates the covenantal character of the ministerial office as expressed in the Ministerial Code of Ethics. Investigation and adjudication of violations of the Ministerial Code of Ethics is the responsibility of the Region through the RCOM (or the GCOM, if applicable).

The Arizona Region has implemented the following procedures to meet its obligations regarding ministerial misconduct:

i. The Arizona Region will report formal actions and decisions to remove Standing for misconduct to the Office of Search and Call and/or other appropriate General Church office(s) with responsibility for ministerial vocations, which may change from time to time.

ii. In extreme situations of alleged misconduct, the Arizona Region may temporarily suspend Standing during the period of investigation and adjudication.

iii. With respect to sexual misconduct, the Arizona Region has established key definitions, Regional goals and general guidelines, which are currently set out in Appendix I, entitled Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy (as it may be amended from time to time), attached to and by this reference made a part of this Attachment D.

a. The Arizona Region will periodically and systematically review the key definitions, Regional goals and general guidelines contained in the Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy and will communicate this information to ministers and congregations in the Region.

b. The policies relating to identification, investigation and adjudication of suspected clergy sexual misconduct shall generally follow and be consistent with other Regional policies and procedures relating to potential clergy misconduct set out in the AZPCOM and related attachments, including Sections C., D., and E. below.

iv. With respect to other serious categories of ministerial misconduct, the Arizona Region may adopt such additional definitions, policies and
procedures as they deem necessary and appropriate to identify, investigate and adjudicate suspected misconduct in those categories, as well.

a. Definitions and unique aspects of each category will be set out in Appendix II, entitled Other Categories of Serious Clergy Misconduct, (as it may be amended from time to time), attached to and by this reference made a part of this Attachment D.

b. General policies and procedures to identify, investigate and adjudicate such misconduct are set out in Sections C., D. and E. below.

C. Complaint, Investigation and Negotiation

i. Prior preparation

a. The RCOM will identify a pool of persons (e.g., psychotherapists and other counselors with relevant expertise, lawyers with expertise in liability and insurance, human resource professionals, other advisers) authorized to assist them in the investigation and adjudication of suspected misconduct, if applicable. This pool will also include persons to act as translators or interpreters, as necessary to assure that all persons involved in the process set out in this policy understand the process, the information disclosed, and the consequences of actions proposed and/or taken. The RCOM will also identify and be prepared to provide such assistive devices as may be necessary to conduct a fair and thorough investigation and adjudication of any and all complaints received.

b. The RCOM will identify and train a standing Response Team of four persons, including men and women. Members will be selected for a three-year term, on a rotating basis. The chair of the RCOM or a designee will be an ex-officio member, who is to be kept informed and act as a liaison to the RCOM. The training will include an overview of the RCOM’s policies and procedures for investigation and adjudication of alleged misconduct, development of effective interviewing techniques (including appropriate documentation), and training on potential areas of misconduct, including, but not limited to, sexual misconduct.

c. During every step in the process, the RCOM will provide such resources, including the assistance of translators and interpreters, as well as other appropriate assistive devices, as may be necessary to conduct a fair and thorough investigation and adjudication of any and all complaints received.

ii. Receiving the complaints

a. Any person may submit a complaint charging misconduct by a minister. The complaint will be initially received and reviewed by the
Regional Minister and the RCOM chair. If reported orally, the receiver must reduce it to writing. In any event, it must be signed by the complainant.

b. The complaint must be specific with respect to the alleged misconduct, with corroborating documents and other witness statements, if possible.

c. If the alleged misconduct, if true, would constitute a crime subject to mandatory reporting under Arizona state law, the Regional Minister and RCOM chair will report it to the applicable authorities. Such reporting may occur at any time during the investigation and/or adjudication process or after the final adjudication, as appropriate.

iii. Initial response to the complaint

a. The initial response to any ethical complaint against a minister will be made by the Regional Minister. The focus of this response, to both the complainant and the minister named in the complaint, will be pastoral in nature with the aim of resolving the issue of the complaint, if possible, at the pastoral level. Even if resolved at this point, a record of the complaint and its resolution will be retained in the minister’s file.

b. If pastoral resolution is not possible, a brief summary of the complaint will be brought to the RCOM through the chair with a recommendation to investigate or not to investigate.

1. If the recommendation is not to investigate and the RCOM approves, both the complainant and the minister accused of misconduct will be notified of the decision, the reasons behind it and any recommendations made by the RCOM.

2. If the recommendation is to investigate, and the RCOM approves, throughout the process that follows it will be the responsibility of the Regional Minister and RCOM chair to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is offered to both the complainant, and the victim(s) if different, and the minister named in the complaint.

3. In either case, a record of the complaint and the RCOM’s decision will be maintained in the minister’s file.

iv. Investigation of the complaint

a. Upon a decision by the RCOM to investigate, the Chair and the Regional Minister will assign two members of the Response Team to begin a timely investigation and meet with the complainant within 30 days. Where sexual misconduct is alleged, the response team must include one man and one woman.

b. The Response Team will first meet with the complainant and victim(s) if they are different.
1. The Response Team will explain the process to be followed as per this policy and provide a copy of this policy.

2. The response team will work with the complainant(s) to make a written record of the complaint(s), including all evidence supporting the allegation(s) made. The complainant(s) will be requested to sign their individual portion(s) of the record.

c. The Response Team will then meet with the minister named in the complaint.
   1. The Response Team will present the complaint and explain the process to be followed as per this policy and provide a copy of this policy.
   2. The Response Team will work with the minister named in the complaint to develop a written record of their response to the complaint and any evidence supporting the response. The minister will be requested to sign this statement.

d. The Response Team may also interview other persons as deemed necessary to the investigation. A written record of each interview will be made and the person interviewed will be requested to sign the statement.

e. The Response Team will notify the appropriate leadership of the employing or calling body that this matter is under investigation, communicating to the appropriate leadership a summary of the complaint and response and a copy of this policy.

v. Negotiation of settlement of complaint
   a. Negotiation of a settlement may occur at any point in the process prior to completion of the investigation. If a settlement is reached, subject to the approval of the RCOM, the investigation is concluded. All negotiations will be conducted by the Chair of the RCOM and the Regional Minister.
   b. If the minister admits culpability for the substance of the charge(s) in the complaint, negotiation may be held with the minister and complainant in order to determine the appropriate consequences for all involved.
      1. Among the possible consequences, the minister may agree:
         a) To resign their position;
         b) To enter into mediation with the complainant to negotiate an appropriate settlement;
         c) To obtain professional counseling;
         d) To pay for counseling for the victim(s);
         e) To accept a period of supervised probation;
         f) To surrender Standing for cause.
      2. Any negotiated settlement will be forwarded to the RCOM and, if approved, will be reported in writing to the
complainant, any victims (if different from the complainant), and the minister. A copy of the terms of the settlement will be retained in the minister’s file.

c. If the minister does not admit culpability or if negotiation fails to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution approved by the RCOM, the RCOM may proceed to a formal hearing.

D. Formal Hearing

i. A formal fact-finding hearing is an ecclesiastical meeting, not a trial or court proceeding. The goal is to find the truth of what happened through a fair, timely, and effective process that respects and preserves the rights of all concerned: the accused minister, the Region, the complainant, any victims (if different from the complainant) and any witnesses. Hearing Board members are neutral decision makers (clergy and laity from the RCOM) who should have no prior involvement in the case (other than as a member of the RCOM), and who must be able to render a fair recommendation. They may be challenged and removed if found to be biased.

ii. It is expected that all parties will conduct themselves in a respectful and compassionate manner at the hearing. Hearings are closed except to the Hearing Board, the accused minister, the complainant, one or more members of the Response Team and the witnesses (who are present only during the time they testify, unless they request and receive permission from the Hearing Board to remain in the room after their testimony). Others may attend the hearing only with the approval of the Hearing Board or the RCOM.

iii. Other specific procedures include the following:
   a. A formal hearing may be requested by the RCOM, the minister named in the complaint or by the complainant.
   b. Three members of the RCOM appointed by the Chair shall comprise the Hearing Board.
   c. The hearing will seek to be fair to all concerned, but is not held to strict legal procedures.
   d. This is an ecclesiastical and not a legal proceeding. Both the minister and the complainant may select an advocate to provide support, care and procedural guidance, with 15 days advance notice to the Regional Minister and the RCOM chair.
   e. At least ten days prior to the formal hearing the Response Team will communicate its written report, including the charges and the response by the minister accused, to the members of the Hearing Board.
   f. At the hearing, the Response Team will present a summary of their findings and in doing so may call witnesses. The minister and complainant may also call witnesses.
g. The Hearing Board will make a written report of their findings and recommendations to the RCOM within 15 days of the conclusion of the hearing. The RCOM will make the final adjudication decision.

h. The recommendations of the Hearing Board and the decision for action on the part of the RCOM may include any of the consequences listed under Section E. below.

i. All decisions and rationale of the RCOM will be recorded in the minister’s investigative file. This file will be secured in the Office of the Regional Minister for a minimum of fifty years. The Regional Minister will notify, in writing, the complainant, the minister and the appropriate employer of the action taken.

v. Investigation Disposition

i. The RCOM’s responsibility and authority pertains to the minister’s Standing. The RCOM has no authority in matters of the minister’s relationship to their place of employment or calling.

ii. The actions of the RCOM regarding a minister’s Standing affect that minister’s access to search and call. Each ministerial profile contains a Disclosure and Release Form requiring the minister to disclose any disciplinary reviews for ministerial misconduct that resulted in censure, suspension of Standing, or termination of Standing and whether any official disciplinary proceedings are currently pending. A detailed explanation is required for any and all affirmative answers.

iii. Based on the written record of the Response Team or Hearing Board, the RCOM has several options for disposition of the case:

a. Dismissal of the complaint. If the RCOM determines that the complaint is without merit, they may dismiss the complaint. A confidential record of the proceedings will be kept, but the minister will not be required to disclose the complaint in future requests for Standing or in the ministerial profile for search and call.

b. Probation. If the RCOM determines that the complaint has merit and determines that the minister should take action, but that the nature of the complaint is not something that needs to be reported beyond the Region, the Hearing Board (as defined above) or the RCOM may choose to place a minister on probation until the minister has completed a set of required actions to the RCOM’s satisfaction.

1. A timeline for completing the actions will be established. Satisfaction of the requirements is at the discretion of the RCOM. Should the minister fail to complete the tasks in the allotted time, the RCOM may impose a letter of censure, suspension of Standing or removal (termination) of Standing for cause.
2. While a minister is on probation, the Regional Minister will withhold the Regional reference from the minister’s search and call profile. If the minister has an active profile, the Regional Minister will pull the regional reference, in effect removing the profile from circulation.

3. Once the RCOM is satisfied that the probationary requirements have been met, the Regional reference can be restored, and the minister’s profile may be circulated. A letter indicating that the minister has satisfied the requirements of probation will be placed in the minister’s file.

c. **Letter of censure.** If the Hearing Board or the RCOM determines that the complaint has merit, but the act(s) of the minister is/are not serious enough to warrant suspension or termination of Standing, but any actions taken since the complaint are insufficient to accomplish restitution, the RCOM will provide a letter of censure in the minister’s file.

   1. A letter of censure would allow the minister to retain Standing, and the minister would still have access to search and call. However, the minister would have to indicate on the Disclosure and Release that the complaint resulted in censure and would have to provide a detailed explanation.

d. **Suspension of Standing.** If the Hearing Board or the RCOM determines that the complaint warrants disciplinary action against the minister’s Standing, one option is to suspend the minister’s Standing. In the event of suspension, the minister’s Standing is terminated, subject to the necessary notifications and requirements for reinstatement. Suspension of Standing will carry with it criteria under which the minister can apply for reinstatement of Standing. These criteria might include the passage of a set amount of time or the completion of specific tasks or both.

e. **Removal of Standing for cause.** In the case of egregious actions, the Hearing Board or RCOM may determine to remove a minister’s Standing for cause, subject to the necessary notifications. When Standing is removed for cause, a minister may not apply for reinstatement for 36 months from the date that termination of Standing is effective. As with any termination of Standing, reinstatement may only be granted by the Region that terminated Standing.

f. **Voluntary surrender of Standing.** In some cases the minister may voluntarily surrender Standing. In such cases, the RCOM has the discretion to continue to investigate the matter at issue. When a minister surrenders Standing, the RCOM has sole discretion regarding any future reinstatement of Standing, and ongoing investigation may
be necessary to inform such decisions. Surrender of Standing is handled like termination of Standing as regards reporting and reinstatement. Reinstatement may only be granted by the region where Standing was surrendered.

F. Restoration of Standing

i. Restoration of Standing is reentry into the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) after a clergy person has had their Standing removed or resigned their Standing because of an actual or pending investigation, clergy misconduct or disciplinary action. This process attempts to offer clergy forgiveness and reevaluates the individual’s personal and spiritual fitness for returning to ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

   a. After a minimum period of 36 months from the time Standing was removed, the offender may petition the commission for the restoration of Standing. The restoration may be granted if all the requirements are completed and the RCOM votes in favor of restoration of Standing.

   b. The following requirements are the established protocol intended to provide a course of action for justice, reconciliation, forgiveness and mercy to clergy (Commissioned or Ordained) who have had their Standing removed or resigned their Standing because of alleged or substantiated clergy misconduct.

      1. Criteria for Restoration Candidacy; the offender shall

         a) Be an active and participating member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in an Arizona congregation for at least one year prior to the petition.

         b) Give a full account of the events that resulted in the removal of Standing to the pastor and board of the local congregation where the applicant holds membership.

         c) Seek and obtain the forgiveness, approval, and support from the congregation in which the applicant holds membership.

         d) Request that the local congregation where they are presently a member submit a strong letter of recommendation to the Commission in support of the individual’s restoration to ministry.

         e) Seek forgiveness and reconciliation from the individual(s)/congregation that they harmed.

         f) Make financial restitution to the Region for all appropriate expenses incurred as a result of their behavior.
g) Request that their counselor and/or pastor furnish a written report on the rehabilitation actions and results to the RCOM.

2. Procedures for Restoration Candidacy

a) The applicant for restoration to ministry will follow the procedures for Candidacy to the Ordering of Ministry as outlined in Section I.A. of the AZPCOM and related Attachment A (Commissioned Ministry) and Section I.B. of the AZPCOM and related Attachment B (Ordained Ministry).

b) Upon completion of a satisfactory interview with the RCOM and favorable vote, the offender is accepted as a candidate and taken under care for restoration.

c) The requirements to be fulfilled by the offender during the restoration period are outlined in the above-referenced sections of the AZPCOM and related attachments. If the Ordained Minister offender has completed the academic requirements, that requirement is waived for the Ordained Minister. However, the Commissioned Minister offender will be required to complete any educational requirements outstanding. In addition, the RCOM may require additional research, study and writing in areas that it deems appropriate to assist the offender in the restoration process.

d) If the RCOM determines that this individual is fit for restoration to ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), it will vote and submit its recommendation to the Regional entity responsible for such determinations to reinstate this individual’s Standing. The authorized Regional entity will receive a full report from the chair of the RCOM that this individual has completed all requirements, exhibited genuine repentance for the substantiated misconduct, received a favorable recommendation from the local congregation, and by the recommendation of the RCOM is now deemed fit to reenter ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

e) The authorized Regional entity will vote on this matter and if approved, the candidate’s Standing will be restored. If Standing is restored, the offender will receive notification in writing and notification will also be sent to the appropriate General Church office(s) with
responsibility for ministerial vocations, which may change from time to time. Only after the completion of this process, will all rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with being a Commissioned or Ordained minister within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada as determined in the Ordering of Ministry, be fully reinstated.

G. Right of Appeal

i. Right of appeal at the Regional level
   a. All decisions by the RCOM or Hearing Board with adverse effect regarding Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing may be appealed at the discretion of the Regional Moderator within 30 days from the date on which the decisions become final.
      1. The acceptable grounds for appeal are:
         a) The appellant believes the Region violated its own related written policies and procedures.
         b) The appellant believes the Region violated the Theological Foundations, Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
      2. An appeal will not be considered, however, if legal proceedings are pending or in process.

ii. Right of appeal at the General level
   a. The right of appeal at the Regional level does not in any way infringe upon, hinder or limit any right of appeal to the GCOM by persons subject to decisions with adverse effect on Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing. Such right of appeal shall be in accordance with relevant provisions in the TFP COM (as it may be amended from time to time) and applicable policies and procedures established by the GCOM.

II. Current Regional Forms and Informational Materials Relating to Standing*

A. Annual Ministerial Standing Form

B. Ministerial Record Form?

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

D. The Arizona Regional Christian Church Policy and Procedure for Response to Clergy Sexual Misconduct
*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/
This Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy is Appendix I to Attachment D of the Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona (AZPCOM).
This policy has been established by the Regional Commission on the Ministry (RCOM), acting on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona (the Arizona Region) to assure that all clergy with Standing (whether as Commissioned or Ordained ministers) within the Arizona Region meet the highest standards of personal and professional conduct.

The RCOM has identified sexual misconduct as an extremely serious breach of ministerial ethics, and, acting on behalf of the Arizona Region, has created this Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy to establish key definitions, Regional goals and general guidelines to address this issue. The RCOM has also established more specific policies and procedures to identify, investigate and adjudicate allegations of various types of clergy misconduct, including sexual misconduct. These specific policies, as set forth in Attachment D, Sections C., D., and E., will be used to respond to allegations of clergy sexual misconduct involving Ordained or Commissioned clergy whose Standing as ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is maintained through the Arizona Region.

Preamble
Let us begin with a statement reflecting the theological understanding of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in its General, Regional and congregational manifestations, of the value and worth of each human being and the role of the church in honoring and protecting the dignity of each person it serves.

Historically the church has believed, and continues to believe, that all people are created by God, in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. The Church Universal believes that God intends all people to have worth and dignity in all relationships with God and others.

God intends justice for all. Pastoral misconduct involving inappropriate sexual behavior or sexual harassment within the pastoral relationship is a misuse of the power and responsibility of the pastoral role. Such misconduct distorts a person's feelings of equity, worth, and dignity. The abused person usually has less power in the relationship than the abuser, often feels dehumanized and victimized, and bears the scars of the violation of trust for years.

When pastoral misconduct involving sexual behavior or harassment occurs within the pastoral relationship, it poses a threat to the quality of community life and compromises the church’s ministry. The church is called to prevent such violations and to respond with integrity when allegations of pastoral misconduct surface.

The professional pastoral office is a position of trust, power and responsibility. As such it provides unique opportunities for caring and close personal relationships and often
unquestioned authority. Unfortunately, a few pastors have exploited this vulnerability. This policy is offered as a guideline for actions to be taken should such a situation occur.

Actions that violate the integrity of ministry not only injure the persons involved, but also compromise the entire church and its ministry, and the effect may go far beyond these actions. Considering these consequences, this policy addresses not only the individuals immediately involved, but also those peripherally involved such as spouses, immediate families, and other staff members.

What does it mean for the church to respond with integrity when a person it has authorized for ministry in the name of the church is charged with violating the relationship? The church has responded in a range of ways, representing many points on a spectrum.

At one end of the spectrum the church has strongly valued the collegium of the clergy at almost any cost. Persons have gone to great lengths to assist a pastor when an allegation is made. In its most extreme form, this end of the spectrum could be described as covering-up or denying misconduct in the pastoral role. This extreme not only embodies an injustice to past and potential victims, but also prevents the possibility for true repentance, reconciliation, and restoration on the part of the clergyperson.

The other end of this spectrum virtually presumes the guilt of the person whose fitness is being questioned prior to any careful process of investigation and adjudication.

Either extreme on the spectrum falls short of ensuring a genuine opportunity for assessing the realities of a situation and taking actions that stand in support of the healing and integrity of all persons involved, as well as ensuring the integrity of the pastoral role and the ministry of the church. It is important to take seriously the pain and injustice experienced by those making accusations of misconduct as well as to respond with justice and mercy to those whose fitness is being questioned.

“It is the responsibility of each Region to have specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating sexual misconduct allegations of ministers with Standing in the Region. Each Region will periodically and systematically review its definitions and procedures. It is the responsibility of the Region to communicate such definitions and procedures to ministers and congregations within the Region” (TFPCOM p. 43-44).

**Key Terms**

The following section contains definitions of key terms as used in this policy:

**Clergy Sexual Misconduct**: A range of behaviors defined as sexual harassment; sexual misconduct; adultery and promiscuity; and child sexual abuse between a minister and their parishioners, clients, and those the minister supervises or serves in a professional capacity within or outside the church. Such behavior crosses appropriate professional boundaries and is an abuse of the trust placed in, and the responsibilities and privileges of, the pastoral role. Such
misconduct violates pastoral ethics. In all instances, the minister is responsible for maintaining professional boundaries, regardless of the behavior of other persons.

**Sexual Harassment:** Under applicable federal law, generally defined to include sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal, written, electronic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of an individual’s employment (in this case, paid or volunteer) or their continued status in an institution.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment based on the declared judgment of the affected individual.
- Such conditions create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another individual regardless of the specific setting or circumstances or the relationship between the two individuals most directly involved.

**Sexual Minsconduct:** Includes any of the following:

- Sexual contact with a minor. (Minor is defined by law in the state or province where the alleged misconduct occurred.)
- Sexual harassment.
- Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.
- Sexual malfeasance, which is defined as a breach of trust resulting from sexual contact (contact with genitalia, buttocks or breasts) within a ministerial or professional relationship.
- Unwelcome or offensive behaviors, including winks, leers, suggestive comments, crude language, pinching or tickling someone, or inappropriate hugs and kisses.

**Child Sexual Abuse:** Includes, but is not limited to, any sexualized contact or interaction between a minor and an adult. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a minor and an adult is always considered forced.

**Policy Goals**

As noted above, the role of the RCOM, acting on behalf of the Arizona Region, is to assure that all clergy with Standing (whether as Commissioned or Ordained ministers) within the Arizona Region meet the highest standards of personal and professional conduct.

Within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), persons who have Standing for ministry agree to abide by commonly held values and norms for the ethical conduct of ministry. These values are expressed in the “Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry” (TFPCOM) and in the “Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona.”
Clergy Sexual Misconduct is unethical behavior and provides the basis for disciplinary action within the Arizona Region. The ministerial relationship exists whenever the bond between the parties involved is primarily a result of the minister's role and identity as a professional minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Because the ministerial office in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is one involving formal vestment, the pastor is inherently in a position of power and authority relative to parishioners, employees, clients, students and colleagues. This means that those with whom the minister serves in a ministerial relationship are vulnerable to that power and authority.

Sexual contact or sexualized behavior within the ministerial relationship is therefore a violation of ethics. When pastors use the power of their office to manipulate or coerce sexual contact with persons whom they have been called to serve, the pastoral office has been compromised and the personhood of the parishioner, client, or employee has been abused by that sexual misconduct.

The vision of the Region is for all members to be able to work together in an atmosphere of mutual support and trust. Since any form of sexual intimidation or exploitation violates trust and damages the integrity and credibility of the church's mission, the RCOM's specific goals in establishing this policy are the following:

- To educate pastors and congregations about sexual misconduct;
- To respond to all forms of sexual intimidation and exploitation within our Region;
- To help the perpetrator and victim address the issues of repentance, treatment, and rehabilitation;
- To provide pastoral care for the victim and the perpetrator, the families of the victim and the perpetrator, and the congregation(s) involved in their leadership;
- To provide support and guidance for the involved congregation;
- To provide appropriate guidelines for action when clergy are the victims of sexual harassment.

In order to maintain the integrity of the ministerial office and to protect those who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse within a ministerial relationship, it is necessary to adhere to policies that define and appropriately respond to allegations of clergy sexual misconduct involving Ordained or Commissioned clergy with Standing in the Arizona Region. As noted above, the purpose of this Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy is to provide a theological framework and to establish key definitions, Regional goals and general guidelines.

In addition to providing general guidelines, the RCOM has also established detailed policies and procedures for the identification, investigation, and adjudication of all types of clergy misconduct, including alleged clergy sexual misconduct, which are set out in Attachment D., Sections C., D., and E. Establishing and utilizing standard practices for all types of alleged clergy misconduct assure consistency and avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts. These policies and
procedures provide for the following:

- A resource pool of professional advisors and a standing trained Response Team prepared to conduct an investigation, if appropriate;
- Provision of pastoral care for those primarily involved throughout the process;
- Opportunity for negotiation and early resolution, if possible;
- A formal hearing process where the Response Team, complainant(s) and minister can provide input, including witness testimony;
- Timely disposition by the Hearing Board or the RCOM, ranging from dismissal of the complaint to voluntary or involuntary termination of the minister’s Standing;
- Limited appeal rights to the Regional and General church; and
- Possible restoration of Standing.

In addition to its other goals, the RCOM, acting on behalf of the Arizona Region, will, from time to time, sponsor continuing education events which address areas such as maintaining appropriate personal and professional boundaries, sexual ethics, use and abuse of power, and managing stress. The student-in-care process, periodic review, and times of transfer of Standing are strategic occasions for the Region to communicate expectations regarding professional behaviors as well as the required Healthy Boundaries Training every four years.

The Region will continue to encourage all Ordained and Commissioned ministers, Regional staff persons, paid professional church staff and volunteer leaders to be sensitized to risk factors that may lead to the violation of professional boundaries. In particular, clergy and laity are encouraged to seek support from Regional staff at the first indication of a questionable situation. Often, early intervention or counsel can help to avert a more serious situation.

The Region will use multiple communication channels to make the Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy (Attachment D, Appendix I) available to church members and to the public.

**Role of Regional Minister/Staff**

In responding to allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct, there is great potential for confusing the roles and responsibilities of the Regional staff. Therefore, the Regional Staff will receive special training in responding to allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct.

The Regional Minister will respond promptly to all allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. However, there is a unique tension between the pastoral, administrative and adjudicative functions of the office of Regional Minister. It may not be possible to function effectively as the pastor to either party or the congregation, or as staff to the RCOM which will investigate, act on the charge, and determine the disposition of the allegation. In that case, the Regional Minister may recuse themselves from some or all of these functions and make provision for other Regional Staff/Ministers to assume related responsibilities. The role of the Regional Minister is primarily to coordinate the various functions, not necessarily to personally perform them.

After the investigation has begun, the Regional Minister may meet with all parties if they desire,
permitting each to have an advocate present. The Regional Minister may be present at all
hearings and may address questions to all parties, but may abstain from voting on the final
adjudication.

Other Regional Staff/Ministers not otherwise involved may serve as the advocate for the
accused minister or be called upon to provide procedural counsel and advice to the RCOM.
Regional/Staff Ministers may consult with other Regional Ministers for guidance and support in
implementing this policy.

If the person being investigated is the Regional Minister, the process for investigation and
hearings shall be carried out as outlined in this policy, but the recommendation will go to the
appropriate Regional and/or General church authorities which shall be authorized to take
appropriate action. If the Regional Minister is the person being accused, they shall also be
allowed to have pastoral advocacy, but this may need to come from outside the region. Only
the appropriate Regional and/or General church authorities can terminate the Regional
Minister’s employment or remove their Standing in the Arizona Region (TFPCOM, p. 25).
Appendix II
Other Categories of Ministerial Misconduct

This policy, which is Appendix II to Attachment D of the Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona (AZPCOM), has been established by the Regional Commission on the Ministry (RCOM), acting on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona (the Arizona Region), to assure that all clergy with Standing (whether as Commissioned or Ordained ministers) within the Arizona Region meet the highest standards of personal and professional conduct.

In the Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy (the “Sexual Misconduct Policy”), which is Appendix I to Attachment D, the RCOM has identified sexual misconduct as an extremely serious breach of ministerial ethics. From time to time, the RCOM shall also establish specific definitions for additional categories of serious ministerial misconduct. Policies and procedures for identifying, investigating and adjudicating such additional categories of misconduct are set out in Sections C., D. and E. of Attachment D.

The following is a list, with applicable definitions and examples, of additional categories of serious ministerial misconduct. Although the RCOM has attempted to distinguish key aspects of each category of misbehavior, there may be elements of certain ministerial misconduct that are identified under multiple categories. For example, abuse of the elderly or disabled may also involve exercise of undue influence and/or financial mismanagement. The RCOM reserves the right to periodically reevaluate, further refine and add to the categories set out below.

In addition, in order to determine whether a serious breach of ministerial conduct has occurred with respect to one or more of the categories of misconduct set out below, the RCOM will apply a total facts and circumstances scope of review. Depending upon the alleged misconduct, the RCOM will consider certain related facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Specific examples of the alleged misconduct
- Frequency of the alleged misconduct
- Multiplicity and credibility of sources identifying and/or reporting the misconduct
- Seriousness of the alleged misconduct with respect to the adverse impact to individuals involved, as well as the congregation and the larger church
- Efforts to avoid, minimize and/or resolve the issue
- Attempts to mitigate against harm or to make restitution
- Acknowledgment of inappropriate behavior and other evidence of repentance
- Efforts to bring about reconciliation
- Willingness to seek professional help and otherwise work at changing unacceptable behavior

Inappropriate Personal Relationships within the Congregation
Applicable principles from the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*:

- Maintaining high moral standards in my sexual behavior
- Regarding all persons with equal respect and concern and undertaking to minister impartially
- Protecting confidences; covenanted to only tell those who need to know, what they need to know, when they need to know it
- Seeking to know, understand, and respect the diversity of opinions and people within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) [including the congregation currently being served]
- Seeking the counsel of the Regional Minister should divisive tensions threaten my relationship with those I serve
- Supporting and at no time speaking maliciously of the ministry of my predecessors or another minister
- Encouraging the ministry of my successor upon my retirement or other departure from a ministry position, without interfering or intruding and by making it clear to former parishioners that I am no longer their pastor, nor will I perform any pastoral services unless requested by the congregation’s elders and current pastor

Inappropriate relationships within the congregation generally involve a serious, sometimes egregious, failure to meet one or more of the ethical principles set out above. For example, as a general rule, it may be problematic for a minister to enter into a dating relationship with a member of the congregation or organization they serve. Such behavior tends to strain professional boundaries, and the subtlety of power abuse issues in such a relationship makes it challenging. Very close personal relationships with parishioners may also lead to inappropriate sharing of personal and/or confidential information, including information entrusted to the pastor by other members of the congregation.

In addition, even in a congregation that is part of a denomination that encourages mutual respect for different points of view, there are likely to be significant differences of opinion, from time to time. The minister needs to minister to the entire congregation and to avoid being perceived as taking one side against another. Significant divisions can also occur when there are tensions among clerical staff, particularly when clergy are inappropriately critical of colleagues within the congregation. Additional problems stemming from confusion and mixed loyalties with respect to prior and successor pastors may arise following significant transitions in pastoral leadership.

**Impairment**

Applicable principles from the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*:

- Dedicating time, strength, vitality, and energy for effective ministry
- Taking time for physical and spiritual renewal, recreation, and vacation
• Keeping physically and emotionally fit and refraining from substance abuse and other abusive behaviors

Professional ministry is one of the helping professions. Persons in the helping professions generally care about people. Unfortunately, in doing so, they may forget to care for themselves. The stress of everyday life, potentially conflicting loyalties, and often unrealistic and unreasonable expectations, can take their toll on ministers. Addictions of all types, including opioid addiction, are at epidemic levels. Ministers, like the rest of society, can develop inappropriate, even abusive, behavior patterns, which can negatively impact not only the individual, but also their family, friends and congregation.

Intemperate, erratic or irrational behavior may be indicative of potential impairment issues.

**Exercise of Undue Influence**

Applicable principles from the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*:

• Using my position, power, and authority in non-exploitive ways

• Regarding all persons with equal respect and concern and undertaking to minister impartially

• Administering the corporate finances of the church with personal integrity

The potential for exercising undue influence is an ongoing concern, given the nature of the pastor/parishioner relationship and the inherent imbalance of power. Unfortunately, because of the subtlety of abuse of power issues in this context, it may be difficult to detect. Moreover, pastors often interact with parishioners in circumstances where they are particularly vulnerable. These include situations where parishioners have experienced significant losses—death of family member or friend, employment termination or demotion, breakdown of marital relationship, empty nest—or are otherwise experiencing significant challenges—serious illness, marital infidelity, legal or financial difficulties.

In addition, many ministers act as counselors, on either a short- or long-term basis, which may develop into a level of intimacy that may lead to confusion as to the nature of the relationship.

At all times, the minister must continually ask themselves whether their motives and actions are primarily in the best interests of individual parishioners, as well as the congregation, rather than for their own personal gain. Finally, the minister must determine whether the influence being exerted is “undue.” That is, the minister must consider the manner and degree of influence being exerted, even in what they otherwise believe to be a “good” cause.

**Abuse of the Elderly and Disabled**

Applicable principles from the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*:

• 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
Acting to prevent and to report known or suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect

Adult abuse includes the abuse of any older adult aged 65 and over and adults with developmental or physical disabilities or mental illness under the age of 65. Abuse can happen in a person’s own home or the home of family or friends. It can also occur in a professional care setting such as a nursing facility, a residential care facility, an assisted living facility, an adult foster home, a retirement home or a room and board home.

Specific types of adult abuse include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Physical harm or injury
- Failure to provide basic care
- Abandonment by the caregiver
- Verbal/emotional abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Unwanted sexual contact
- Involuntary seclusion
- Wrongful restraint
- Self-neglect

As noted above, there may be elements of certain ministerial misconduct that fall under multiple categories. A prime example would be elder abuse involving the exercise of undue influence and/or financial exploitation. Many elderly individuals, in particular, may have outlived close family and friends who would otherwise be able to advise and protect them. Because of the nature of the pastoral relationship and the potential for abuse of power, they may be particularly vulnerable to this type of abuse by unscrupulous clergy. On the other hand, caring pastors may be in an excellent position to identify and report suspected adult abuse by others.

Financial Mismanagement or Impropriety

Applicable principles from the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*:

- 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
- Administering the sacraments/ordinances and services of the church with integrity and not for financial gain
- Administering the corporate finances of the church with personal integrity
- Refraining from accepting any gift which would compromise the church’s ministry
All who respond to God’s love through Jesus Christ, including ministers, are called to be responsible stewards of God’s gifts, including financial resources. They are not only accountable for the generous, but prudent, use of their own resources, but for the wise and prudent use of resources entrusted to them for the benefit of the work of their congregations or organizations.

Mismanagement of financial resources generally refers to instances where a person fails to observe applicable laws or ethical guidelines when handling finances for another person or organization. Most mismanagement involves some form of negligence or neglect on the part of the responsible individual and the failure to implement appropriate internal controls.

Financial impropriety, on the other hand, usually involves misuse of someone else’s financial resources for private gain. There is generally an element of intent, or, at the very least, gross negligence or willful disregard of the likelihood of harm to the financial resources of others, including both individuals and organizations. Examples of financial impropriety, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Misappropriation of funds
- Forgery
- Theft
- Embezzlement
- Misrepresentation or fraud
- Padding the expense account

As noted above, financial impropriety involving exploitation of vulnerable parishioners, in particular, may be part of a larger scheme of adult abuse.