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

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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:
• To establish procedures to identify candidates for Commissioned ministry; candidates for Commissioned ministry are those persons who have received a call from a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or a recognized non-congregational ministry and have applied to the Region for Commissioning;

• To establish procedures to evaluate applicants and candidates for Commissioned ministry, which must include the *Ministerial Profile* and may include a current denominational criminal background check and such additional methods as the Region deems to be reasonable and necessary (e.g., personal interviews, letters of reference, etc.);

• To consult and/or notify General Offices with respect to specific candidates, as appropriate;

• To bring applicants/candidates “under care”;

• To provide for their nurture;

• To provide opportunities for building collegiality with other ministers;

• To make available appropriate programs of study (such as readings, experiential learning, intensive weekend seminars, guided reflection on ministerial practice with a mentor-companion, and distance learning, etc.) in preparation for ministry;

• To authorize the designation of an applicant/candidate as a Commissioned Minister;

• To offer resources and presence of the Regional Minister or their designee for services of Commissioning;

• To oversee formation processes for candidates for Ordination;

• To encourage lifelong learning through continuing education opportunities, including training in healthy boundaries and anti-racism; and

• To establish additional requirements as desired (*TFPCOM*, pp. 18-19).

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 reinstating 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;
- 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
(\textit{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.