

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34

**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

35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

46
47
48
49
50
51
52

53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64

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/>.

65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98

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](#)

99 **I. Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
100

101 As set out in the *Design of the Christian Church*, the Christian Church (Disciples of
102 Christ) “recognizes an order of ministry, set apart under God, to equip the whole
103 people to fulfill their corporate ministry” (Paragraph 86).
104

105 “Currently, in its Ordering of Ministry, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
106 recognizes a Commissioned ministry and an Ordained ministry. The church expects
107 the women and men it Commissions and Ordains to demonstrate educational
108 qualifications and competencies in several areas of personal integrity and pastoral
109 practice, as well as a clear call to, and passion for, ministry. The church is called to
110 provide significant Congregational and Regional support for those seeking to serve in
111 ministry, whether Ordained or Commissioned” (*TFPCOM*, p. 10).
112

113 In particular, “the church expects to find within the women and men it receives into
114 the order of ministry [the following personal qualifications]:
115

- 116 ■ Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and
117 nurturing spiritual practices;
- 118 ■ A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church;
- 119 ■ An understanding of pastoral identity;
- 120 ■ Capacity to engage in theological reflection;
- 121 ■ Strong moral character and personal integrity;
- 122 ■ Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for
123 healthy ministry;
- 124 ■ Care and compassion for all people, with appropriate relational skills;
- 125 ■ Responsible personal financial management;
- 126 ■ Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God’s gifts; and
- 127 ■ Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry”
128 (*TFPCOM*, p. 16).
129

130 **A. The Commissioned Ministry**
131

132 **i. Definition and Scope:**
133

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

142 Holy Spirit. These [Commissioned] ministries may include pastors,
143 evangelists, Christian educators, ministers of music, youth ministers,
144 parish nurses, chaplains, bi-vocational ministers, recognized
145 congregationally-based or non-congregationally-based community
146 ministers, or others, where Regional nurture and authorization are
147 deemed appropriate” (TFPCOM, p. 16).

148
149 There are currently two categories of Commissioned Ministry:
150 • Those not seeking Ordination, whose call is context specific and
151 affirmed by the Region, in consultation with the calling
152 congregation, Region or General church; and
153 • Those seeking Ordination, serving in a Congregationally or
154 Regionally authorized call, who are under care of a Region in
155 preparation for Ordination.

156
157 Since persons are Commissioned by Regions for ministry in a specific
158 context, change of ministry context requires re-Commissioning. The role
159 and responsibilities of Regions for Commissioned ministry are discussed
160 in more detail below.

161
162 ii. Common Criteria for Commissioned Ministry:

163
164 In order to be Commissioned, persons must
165 • Be baptized members of a Disciples congregation in the
166 commissioning Region and serving in a Congregationally,
167 Regionally or Generally recognized call;
168 • Be recommended for Commissioning by a recognized
169 congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples
170 of Christ)- in the Arizona Region this is understood to include
171 congregations in formation and affiliating congregations, including
172 the one in which their membership is held;
173 • Meet with the Regional Commission on Ministry;
174 • Comply with other reasonable expectations established by the
175 Region from time to time; and
176 • Agree to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian
177 Church (Disciples of Christ)*, (TFPCOM, p. 17).

178
179 iii. Regional Role and Responsibilities, in General:

180
181 Under the TFPCOM, Regions have the following designated
182 responsibilities for Commissioned ministry:

183

- 184
- 185
- 186
- 187
- 188
- 189
- 190
- 191
- 192
- 193
- 194
- 195
- 196
- 197
- 198
- 199
- 200
- 201
- 202
- 203
- 204
- 205
- 206
- 207
- 208
- 209
- 210
- 211
- 212
- 213
- 214
- 215
- 216
- 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).

217

218 iv. Additional Guidelines and Resources for Commissioned Ministry in the

219 Arizona Region

220

221 Those seeking to attain and maintain recognition as Commissioned

222 ministers in the Arizona Region must comply with such additional policies

223 and criteria as may be established by the RCOM, from time to time, as set

224 out in Attachment A (as it may be amended from time to time), attached

225 to and by this reference made a part of this document.

226

227 B. The Ordained Ministry

228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247
248
249
250
251
252
253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264
265
266
267
268

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;

- 269 • Pastoral Care;
- 270 • Proclamation of the Word;
- 271 • Spiritual Development;
- 272 • Stewardship;
- 273 • Theology;
- 274 • Understanding of Heritage; and
- 275 • Worship (*TFPCOM*, pp. 20-21).

276
277 iii. Regional Role and Responsibilities, in General:

278
279 The following responsibilities are specifically assigned to Regions:

- 280
- 281 • To establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Ordination;
- 282 • To evaluate the educational experience of candidates for an AT
- 283 program, which would include a high school diploma or its
- 284 equivalent and some post secondary educational experience;
- 285 • To connect with the appropriate General Church ministry with
- 286 respect to specific Candidates, as appropriate;
- 287 • To bring applicants “under care”;
- 288 • To provide for their nurture;
- 289 • To be in relationship with the sponsoring congregation and the
- 290 Candidate’s educational setting;
- 291 • To authorize and supervise the act of Ordination;
- 292 • To facilitate continuing education, including training in healthy
- 293 boundaries and anti-racism; and
- 294 • To grant ongoing Standing

295
296 iv. Candidacy for Ordination:

297
298 Candidacy for Ordination is defined as “. . . that period of time in which

299 the individual is under the care of a Regional Commission on Ministry and

300 involved in a specified program of study and formation in preparation for

301 Ordination” (*TFPCOM*, p. 22). It begins with the applicant’s declaration of

302 intent to seek Ordination through the Christian Church (Disciples of

303 Christ) and affirmation of that intention by the local DOC congregation of

304 which the applicant is a member (*TFPCOM*, p. 22).

305
306 To apply for candidacy, an applicant must be a baptized member of a

307 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation. They should generally

308 apply to the Region where they hold congregational membership or the

309 Region where they are a student. A letter of recommendation from a

310 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation in the Region in which
311 they are a member should accompany the application (*TFPCOM*, p. 22).

312
313 Once the application is received, the Region will begin the process of
314 assessing the applicant’s spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and
315 educational capacities for the practice of ministry, which will continue
316 throughout the period of candidacy, should the applicant be accepted.
317 Once accepted as a Candidate, the individual will come under the care
318 and direction of the Regional Commission on Ministry.

319
320 Early in the pre-candidacy process, the Region will contact the Christian
321 Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation of which the applicant is an
322 active participant and which is expected to sponsor their candidacy.
323 During this preliminary phase, the Region will assure that the
324 congregation understands the expectations that the Region has for both
325 the applicant and the congregation, should they be taken under care.
326 Once accepted as a Candidate, the Region (primarily through the RCOM)
327 will continue to work in close cooperation with the sponsoring
328 congregation throughout the period of candidacy.

329
330 Following acceptance as a Candidate, they will seek Ordination through a
331 process of discernment established by the Region, which may include
332 authorization as a Commissioned Minister, as well as the following:

- 333
- 334 • Participation in the life and work of a congregation;
 - 335 • Breadth of theological study;
 - 336 • Professional and ecclesiological study;
 - 337 • Formation of responsible relations with, and concern for, the
338 church;
 - 339 • Growth in personal character and spiritual formation; and
 - 340 • Formation of, and adherence to, ethical principles, as set out in
341 the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of*
342 *Christ)* (*TFPCOM*, p. 23).
- 343

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

348
349 Completion of the educational requirements for Ordination does not
350 guarantee Ordination. The period of candidacy is concluded by
351 Ordination, withdrawal from candidacy, or the decision by the Region to

352 terminate candidacy. Generally, the period of candidacy should not
353 exceed seven years (*TFPCOM*, p. 24).

354
355 v. The Act of Ordination:

356
357 The act of Ordination is under the authority and guidance of the
358 sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Minister, or
359 their designee, presiding. The service is usually held in the sponsoring
360 congregation, with representatives of the recommending
361 congregation(s), the Regional church, the ecumenical church and, where
362 possible, the General church participating. After signing the *Ministerial*
363 *Code of Ethics*, the Ordained Minister will receive a signed Ordination
364 document from the Region.

365
366 vi. Ordination in the Arizona Region:

367
368 In the Arizona Region, there are five steps leading to Ordination:

- 369
- 370 • Step One: Preliminary Inquiries. This step begins with the
371 potential candidate's initial contact with the Regional Office
372 expressing interest in, and requesting information about,
373 Ordination. At this point the potential candidate is encouraged to
374 begin to meet certain specific prerequisites involving exploration
375 of, and personal reflection on, DOC history, polity and theology.
376
 - 377 • Step Two: Initial Approach/Contact with the Regional Commission
378 on Ministry. This step involves concrete actions evidencing the
379 seriousness of the potential candidate's interest in Ordination.
380 Such actions begin with the submission of a formal application
381 and completion of the specific prerequisites noted above. They
382 include a period of determining "fitness and fit"--is the applicant
383 mentally, psychologically, and physically fit, and would ordination
384 in the DOC be a good fit in terms of theology, polity, and
385 understanding of ministry? In addition, this step includes initial
386 contact by the RCOM with the Christian Church (Disciples of
387 Christ) congregation of which the applicant is an active participant
388 and which is expected to sponsor their candidacy.
389
 - 390 • Step Three: Period of Candidacy. During this step, the Candidate
391 for Ordination will be taken under care by the RCOM. Shortly
392 after being taken under care, the Candidate will undergo an
393 assessment/evaluation to determine their mental and
394 psychological fitness for ministry, in general, and Ordination, in

395 particular. During this period, the RCOM will work with the
396 Candidate to identify their gifts and abilities and to formulate an
397 individualized plan for further discernment and enhancement of
398 those gifts and abilities. In addition, the Candidate is expected to
399 maintain a high level of congregational participation, which will
400 give them the opportunity to utilize those gifts and abilities in the
401 actual practice of ministry. The RCOM will continue to work
402 closely with the sponsoring congregation to assess the
403 Candidate's progress and fitness for congregational and other
404 forms of ministry.

405
406 • Step Four: Final Preparation. This step involves final interviews
407 with the Candidate and input from the sponsoring congregation,
408 as well as a review of prior contacts, assessments, evaluations,
409 references, and recommendations as to the Candidate's
410 preparation and fitness for Ordination. This is the point at which
411 the RCOM will determine whether to recommend them for
412 Ordination and concludes with one of the following actions:

- 413
414 • Ordination (following the RCOM's determination that they
415 have met all relevant requirements);
416 • The Candidate's withdrawal from candidacy; or
417 • The decision by the Region to terminate their candidacy.

418
419 • Step Five: Act of Ordination. Assuming that the RCOM is
420 satisfied that the Candidate is ready for Ordination, the final step
421 consists of the actual planning for, and carrying out of, the
422 Ordination service.

423
424 In order to meet the specific requirements of the five-step process outlined
425 above, those seeking Ordination in the Arizona Region must comply with such
426 additional policies and criteria as may be established by the RCOM, from time to
427 time, as set out in Attachment B (as it may be amended from time to time),
428 attached to and by this reference made a part of this document.

429
430 C. Ministerial Standing

431
432 i. General Definition:

433
434 "Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is credentialing for
435 ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a call to
436 accountability to the church, and collegiality with other ministers both
437 denominationally and ecumenically (*TFPCOM*, p.24).

438
439
440
441
442
443

444
445
446
447
448
449
450
451
452
453
454
455
456
457
458
459
460
461
462
463
464
465
466
467
468
469
470
471
472
473
474
475
476
477
478

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

479 (Disciples of Christ). Standing for ministers in active service continues as
480 long as the minister does and reports the following:

- 481
- 482 • Performs faithfully the duties of a minister in a “ministerial”
483 occupation;
- 484 • Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal;
- 485 • Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),
486 including participating membership in a recognized local Disciples
487 congregation, where feasible;
- 488 • Adheres to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church*
489 *(Disciples of Christ)*;
- 490 • Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the
491 Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the *TFPCOM*; and
- 492 • Seeks and meets the requirements for annual certification as
493 requested by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry,
494 as appropriate (*TFPCOM*, p.26).
- 495

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

501

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

511

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

518

519 iii. Certification of Standing of Retired Ministers, Commissioned or Ordained
520 by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

521 Although not clearly defined in the *TFPCOM*, the term “retirement” or
522 “retired” minister appears to include both those Commissioned and
523 Ordained Ministers who no longer continue in an active ministerial
524 position and those who are treated as “retired” for pension fund
525 purposes but continue in active ministry beyond that point. In the latter
526 case, those Commissioned and Ordained Ministers who continue in active
527 ministry are referred to as “active retired” ministers. Those who no
528 longer engage in active ministry are referred to as “inactive retired”
529 ministers.
530

531 With respect to Standing upon retirement, Commissioned Ministers
532 retain Standing as active retired ministers if they continue serving in an
533 approved ministry site and continue to meet the requirements for annual
534 certification of Standing by the Region where the ministry site is located
535 or by the GCOM, as appropriate. Standing may be granted to “inactive
536 retired” Commissioned Ministers, but only at the discretion of the Region
537 (*TFPCOM*, p.27).
538

539 Ordained Ministers with Standing retain their Standing at the time of
540 retirement, on the terms and conditions set out below (*TFPCOM*, p.27-
541 28):
542

- 543 • A retired minister who intends to continue ministry must continue
544 to seek and meet the requirements for annual certification of
545 Standing by the Region where the ministry site is located or by the
546 GCOM, as appropriate;
- 547 • The active retired minister will be listed in the *Yearbook of the*
548 *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as active retired;
- 549 • To be eligible for such Standing, the active retired minister
 - 550 • Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by
551 Commissioning or Ordination in a recognized ministerial
552 occupation or service;
 - 553 • Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and
554 renewal;
 - 555 • Maintains relations with the DOC, including participating
556 membership in a recognized local Disciples congregation,
557 where feasible; and
 - 558 • Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to
559 the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of the
560 *TFPCOM*, and to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*.
561

- 562 • Retired ministers who are no longer engaged in the practice of
- 563 ministry may seek Standing as inactive retired ministers, on the
- 564 terms and conditions set out below (*TFPCOM*, p.28);
- 565 • Inactive retired ministers will continue to be listed in the
- 566 *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as
- 567 inactive retired ministers;
- 568 • Inactive retired ministers must continue to seek and meet the
- 569 requirements for annual certification of Standing by the
- 570 Region where they reside; and
- 571 • Inactive retired ministers must continue to adhere to the
- 572 *Ministerial Code of Ethics* and must hold participating
- 573 membership in a recognized local Disciples congregation,
- 574 where feasible.
- 575
- 576 • If an inactive retired minister decides to once again take up the
- 577 practice of ministry, that minister must once again seek status as
- 578 an active retired minister (*TFPCOM*, p.28).
- 579

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

581
582 Subject to the special rules that apply to disciplinary review of those who
583 have Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the DOC or UCC, the
584 following rules will apply with respect to suspension, termination,
585 surrender or lapse of ministerial Standing.

586
587 Review of Standing may be initiated by the minister, the Region, or the
588 GCOM when one or more of the following conditions are present
589 (*TFPCOM*, pp.28-29):

- 590
- 591 • The minister desires to be released from the practice of ministry;
- 592 • The minister requests transfer of credentials from the DOC to
- 593 another denomination or non-Disciples congregation;
- 594 • The minister enters into a full-time non-ministerial occupation
- 595 and/or no longer performs the functions of a minister;
- 596 • The minister fails to meet the requirements for annual
- 597 certification by the Region or the GCOM;
- 598 • The minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for
- 599 admission to the Order of Ministry, as set out in Section II.A.2 of
- 600 the *TFPCOM*, or fails to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*.
- 601

602 When initiated by the Region or the GCOM, the review of Standing
603 process will include the following (*TFPCOM*, p.29):

604

- 605
- 606
- 607
- 608
- 609
- 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.

610

611 When initiated by the Minister, the review of Standing process will

612 include the following (*TFPCOM*, p.29):

613

- 614
- 615
- 616
- 617
- 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.

618

619 Additional rules relating to termination, suspension, surrender or lapse of

620 Standing include the following (*TFPCOM*, pp.29-30):

621

- 622
- 623
- 624
- 625
- 626
- 627
- 628
- 629
- 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.

630

631

632

633

634 Those seeking Standing in the Arizona Region must comply with such additional

635 policies and criteria as may be established by the RCOM, from time to time, as

636 set out in Attachment C, with respect to general requirements, and in

637 Attachment D, with respect to issues relating to potential misconduct, attached

638 to and by this reference made a part of this document.

639

640 D. Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries

641

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

643

644 "The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DOC) and the United Church of

645 Christ (UCC) recognize the Ordained ministries of the other church to be

646 efficacious ministries of grace within that church and these ministries to

647 be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ" (*TFPCOM*, p.
648 30).

649
650 The Ordained ministries of the DOC and the UCC are reconciled; that is,
651 an Ordained minister with Ordained ministerial Standing in one church
652 may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit,
653 as an Ordained minister of the other. The designations "Ordained
654 Ministerial Partner" and "Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing" reflect
655 this recognition and reconciliation, as set out below:

- 656
- 657 • Each member of the UCC who holds Ordained ministerial Standing
 - 658 in the UCC is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the DOC;
 - 659 • Each member of the DOC who holds Ordained ministerial
 - 660 Standing in the DOC is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the UCC;
 - 661 and
 - 662 • When a person no longer has Ordained ministerial Standing in
 - 663 either the DOC or the UCC, that person is no longer an Ordained
 - 664 Ministerial Partner, and Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is
 - 665 nullified.

666

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

669
670 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an
671 Ordained minister with Standing in the UCC who has been called to an
672 Ordained ministry setting in the DOC. Ordained Ministerial Partner
673 Standing authorizes the Ordained Ministerial Partner to exercise the
674 rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in the DOC, on the
675 following terms and conditions (*TFPCOM*, pp. 30-32):

- 676
- 677 • Once a UCC Ordained minister has demonstrated knowledge of,
 - 678 and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the DOC
 - 679 to the RCOM where the minister resides, that Ordained
 - 680 Ministerial Partner may be granted access to the Search and Call
 - 681 process in the DOC. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the
 - 682 DOC, however, is not granted at this point in the process;
 - 683 • A UCC Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a call in the DOC
 - 684 applies for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the Region in
 - 685 which their calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained
 - 686 Ministerial Partner Standing is reviewed by the Region for
 - 687 certification annually;
 - 688 • A UCC Ordained minister has Ordained Ministerial Partner
 - 689 Standing in the DOC only when serving a DOC calling body;

- 690 • A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
- 691 in the DOC will maintain Ordained ministerial Standing in the UCC;
- 692 • Ordained ministerial Standing will be held in the UCC Association
- 693 in which the DOC calling body is located;
- 694 • A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
- 695 will maintain relations with the DOC, including (where feasible)
- 696 holding associate membership in a recognized DOC congregation
- 697 in the community;
- 698 • A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
- 699 in a Region has voting privileges in the General Assembly of the
- 700 DOC;
- 701 • A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
- 702 in the DOC shall relate to the DOC for their primary support in
- 703 Ordained ministry;
- 704 • A UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
- 705 in the DOC will be accountable to the Region for Ordained
- 706 Ministerial Partner Standing and to the UCC for Ordained
- 707 ministerial Standing;
- 708 • When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the UCC
- 709 minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the
- 710 DOC, the association of the UCC in which the UCC minister’s
- 711 Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained will be informed and
- 712 invited to participate in the process.
- 713 • When a UCC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner
- 714 Standing with the DOC accepts a call in another Region, they shall
- 715 be subject to review and subsequent annual certification of
- 716 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing by the new Region.

717
718 iii. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ministers with Ordained Ministerial
719 Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ

720
721 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an
722 Ordained minister with Standing in the DOC who has been called to an
723 Ordained ministry setting in the UCC. Ordained Ministerial Partner
724 Standing authorizes the DOC Ordained Ministerial Partner to exercise the
725 rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in the UCC, on essentially
726 the same terms and conditions as set out in Section II.D.ii above with
727 respect to UCC Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in
728 the DOC (*TFPCOM*, pp. 32-34), with the following differences:

- 729
- 730 • The DOC Ordained Ministerial Partner must demonstrate
- 731 knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and
- 732 practices of the UCC to the UCC Association Committee where the

- 733 minister resides, before being granted access to the Search and
734 Call process in the UCC;
- 735 • The UCC Association in which the DOC Ordained Ministerial
736 Partner’s calling body is located will perform functions with
737 respect to that Ordained Ministerial Partner (and the granting and
738 ongoing certification of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing)
739 comparable to those performed by the DOC Region for a UCC
740 Ordained Ministerial Partner;
 - 741 • A DOC minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
742 in an Association has voting privileges in the Association and
743 Conference and is eligible for election as a delegate to General
744 Synod or election as a member of any Covenanted Ministry Board
745 in the UCC; and
 - 746 • When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the DOC
747 minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the
748 UCC, the Region of the DOC in which the DOC minister’s Ordained
749 ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and invited
750 to participate in the process.

751
752 iv. Granting Standing to Persons Ordained in Other Churches

753
754 Ministers Ordained by other denominations or non-Disciples
755 congregations may be considered for recognition of Ordination and the
756 granting of Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
757 Provisional or temporary Standing may be granted to individuals applying
758 for recognition of Ordination by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
759 Responsibility for this process is lodged in the Region, except in the case
760 of Military Chaplains stationed overseas (*TFPCOM*, p. 34).

761
762 The following requirements must be met before provisional or temporary
763 Standing may be granted (*TFPCOM*, p. 34):

- 764
765 • Consultation with appropriate officials of the denomination or
766 congregation from which the candidate transfers;
- 767 • Satisfactory investigation of personal and ministerial references
768 and a criminal background check; and
- 769 • Filing of appropriate forms with the Region to which the applicant
770 is applying or with the GCOM.

771
772 Provisional or temporary Standing shall be reviewed annually by either
773 the granting Region or the GCOM.
774

775 The provisional or temporary conditions for Standing may be removed by
776 the Region or the GCOM upon fulfillment of the following requirements
777 (*TFPCOM*, pp. 34-35):
778

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

790
791 Those seeking recognition and reconciliation of Ordained ministries in the
792 Arizona Region must comply with such additional policies and criteria as may be
793 established by the RCOM, as set out in Attachment C (as it may be amended
794 from time to time), with respect to general requirements, and in Attachment D
795 (as it may be amended from time to time), with respect to issues relating to
796 potential misconduct, attached to and by this reference made a part of this
797 document.
798

799 II. Ministerial Conduct

800
801 The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DOC) requires all DOC Commissioned and
802 Ordained ministers engaged in active ministry (including active retired ministers) to
803 continue to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry,
804 as set out in Section II.A.2 of the *TFPCOM*. This includes, but is not limited to, strong
805 moral character and personal integrity. In addition, all Commissioned and Ordained
806 ministers with Standing in the DOC, whether active, retired active or retired inactive,
807 must adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of*
808 *Christ)* as set out in Section II.I. of the *TFPCOM*, as it may be amended from time to
809 time.
810

811 A. Ministerial Code of Ethics

812
813 Under the *TFPCOM*, all DOC Commissioned and Ordained ministers with
814 Standing must periodically (at least annually) do the following:
815

- 816 i. Believing that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God and proclaiming
817 him Lord and Savior of the world, reaffirm their vows as a minister;

- 818 ii. Through dedication and discipline, pledge to continue to lead and serve
819 with integrity;
820 iii. Relying on the grace of God, continue to commit themselves to adhere to
821 the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* in the following four areas:
822 • Personal conduct;
823 • Relationship to the church/ministry currently served;
824 • Relationships to ministry colleagues; and
825 • Relationships to the community and the wider church (*TFPCOM*,
826 pp. 42-43).

827
828 B. Misconduct

829
830 Under the *TFPCOM*, “the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) understands
831 ministerial misconduct to be activity which violates the covenantal character of
832 the ministerial office as expressed in the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*. Investigation
833 and adjudication of violations of the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* shall be the
834 responsibility of the Region through the . . .” RCOM of that Region or the GCOM,
835 as applicable (*TFPCOM*, p. 44).

836
837 At a minimum, appropriate processes will be implemented at the Regional and
838 general levels of the DOC to do the following:

- 839
840 i. Regions (or the GCOM) will report formal actions and decisions to
841 remove Standing for misconduct to the Office of Search and Call and/or
842 other appropriate General Church office(s) with responsibility for ministerial
843 vocations, which may change from time to time. These actions will be
844 communicated to all Regions.
845 ii. In extreme situations of alleged misconduct, ministerial Standing may be
846 temporarily suspended by the Region (or the GCOM) during the period of
847 investigation and adjudication.
848 iii. With respect to sexual misconduct, it is the responsibility of each Region
849 to have specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for
850 receiving, investigating, and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of
851 ministers with Standing in the Region. Each Region will periodically and
852 systematically review its definitions and procedures. It is the
853 responsibility of the Region to communicate such definitions and
854 procedures to ministers and congregations within the Region (*TFPCOM*,
855 p. 44).
856 iv. In addition, from time to time, the RCOM shall establish specific
857 definitions for other categories of serious ministerial misconduct or
858 abuse of power and procedures for receiving, investigating, and
859 adjudicating those charges, as well. Such categories may include, but not
860 be limited to, personal relationships within the congregation (including

861 dating), impairment, exercise of undue influence, abuse of the elderly
862 and disabled, and financial mismanagement.

863
864 C. Right of Appeal

865
866 The GCOM understands that the Right to Appeal extends to persons who, at the
867 time of their appeal, are subject to a decision with adverse effect regarding
868 Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing. The GCOM
869 will not consider any appeal if legal proceedings are pending or in process
870 (*TFPCOM*, pp. 44-45).

871
872 The Region may also implement an intermediate level of appeal at the Regional
873 level for decisions with adverse effect regarding Ordination, Commissioning,
874 transfer of credentials, and/or Standing.

875
876 D. Related Additional Regional Policies and Procedures

877
878 Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing in the Arizona Region must
879 comply with, and are subject to, such additional policies and procedures
880 regarding ministerial ethics and conduct (including investigation and adjudication
881 of suspected misconduct) as may be established by the RCOM, from time to
882 time, and set out in Attachment D (as it may be amended from time to time),
883 attached to and by this reference made a part of this document.

884
885