

1 **Attachment B**
2 **Additional Guidelines and Resources for Ordained Ministry**
3 **in the Arizona Region**
4

5 **I. Additional Guidelines for Ordained Ministry**
6

7 Those seeking Ordination in the Arizona Region must comply with all relevant
8 requirements set out in the *TFPCOM* and the additional requirements set out in this
9 Attachment B. In the Arizona Region, Ordination is a five-step process, beginning with a
10 period of preparation, referred to as “Preliminary Inquiries” and culminating in the “Act
11 of Ordination,” which is a formal recognition by the Congregational and Regional
12 Church, on behalf of the whole church, that the Candidate has met all qualifications and
13 requirements established by the DOC for Ordination.
14

15 Preferably two years, but not less than one year, prior to the expected date of
16 graduation from Seminary and/or desired Ordination, applicants seeking Ordination will
17 begin the following process:
18

19 **A. Step One: Preliminary Inquiries**
20

21 This step begins with the potential candidate’s initial contact with the Regional
22 Office expressing interest in, and requesting information about, Ordination.
23

- 24 i. In response to the inquiry and upon request, the Regional Office will provide,
25 at a minimum, the following:
- 26 a. Information about Ordained ministry, including a copy of the
27 Expectations for Ordination Candidate under Care of the Commission on
28 Ministry*. (See Section II, “Current Regional Forms and Informational
29 Materials Relating to Ordained Ministry” for the most current version of
30 each of the forms/informational pieces marked with an “*” below.)
 - 31 b. A copy of the appropriate form of application (Candidate Form*),
32 including a list of relevant supporting documentation to be submitted
33 with the application.
 - 34 c. A copy of the Disciples of Christ (DOC) Discovery* document establishing
35 guidelines for the exploration of, and personal reflection on, DOC
36 history, polity and theology.
- 37 ii. At this point, the potential candidate is encouraged to begin to meet certain
38 specific prerequisites set out in the DOC Discovery* document.
39

40 **B. Step Two: Initial Approach/Contact with the Regional Commission on Ministry**
41 **(RCOM).**
42

43 This step involves concrete actions evidencing the seriousness of the potential
44 candidate's interest in Ordination. Such actions begin with the submission of a
45 formal application and completion of the specific prerequisites noted above. They
46 include a period of determining "fitness and fit"--is the applicant mentally,
47 psychologically, and physically fit, and would ordination in the DOC be a good fit in
48 terms of theology, polity, and understanding of ministry?
49

50 As noted above, this is primarily a period of exploration for both the RCOM and the
51 applicant, including an initial and, possibly, follow-up interviews. The RCOM will
52 focus on the gathering of information (including input from the sponsoring
53 congregation) necessary to determine whether to take the applicant "under care" as
54 a Candidate for Ordination. This phase might vary significantly, depending upon
55 whether the applicant is active in the Region or other manifestations of the DOC.
56

- 57 i. The applicant will submit an application on an appropriate form provided by the
58 Regional Office, including evidence in writing of their educational preparation
59 and theological base appropriate for the ministry they will be performing.
60 (Candidate Form*)
- 61 ii. In addition, the applicant will request an initial interview with the Commission
62 to obtain additional information about Ordained ministry, the process for
63 Ordination and what it means to be "taken under care" by the Commission.
- 64 iii. In preparation for the initial interview, the applicant will do the following:
 - 65 a. Submit a comprehensive (at least 3-5 pages) statement paper on the
66 topic "Why I want to be ordained into the Ministry of the Christian
67 Church (Disciples of Christ)";
 - 68 b. Begin the exploration and reflection process outlined in the DOC
69 Discovery document.
- 70 iv. There may be additional interviews with the applicant, as well.
- 71 v. At this point, if not before, the Region will contact the Christian Church (Disciples
72 of Christ) congregation of which the applicant is an active participant (and which
73 is expected to sponsor their candidacy) to assure that the congregation
74 understands the Region's expectations for both the applicant and the
75 congregation, should they be taken under care. At a minimum, such contact will
76 include
 - 77 a. Providing the congregation with a document outlining such
78 expectations, as well as the role of the Region (the RCOM, in particular),
79 and other manifestations of the DOC in the Ordination process;
 - 80 b. Establishing lines of communication between the congregation and the
81 Region; and
 - 82 c. Offering congregational leaders an opportunity to meet with the RCOM
83 to answer questions and create a workable arrangement of ongoing
84 communication, support and feedback, should the applicant's candidacy
85 be approved.

- 86 vi. Prior to the RCOM making its decision, the applicant will do the following:
87 a. Complete the exploration and reflection process outlined in the DOC
88 Discovery document;
89 b. Formally contact a local Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
90 congregation (the “sponsoring congregation”) to sponsor their
91 candidacy for Ordination and to provide a letter of recommendation.
92 (This ordinarily is the applicant’s home congregation, but may also be
93 the church in which they are active as a student or in which they
94 presently serve).
95 c. Should the applicant’s candidacy be approved, the Candidate will
96 continue “active participation” (as defined in Step Three below) in the
97 life of the sponsoring congregation throughout the period of candidacy.
98 d. Submit to the Regional Office a statement by an ordained minister of the
99 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who can speak to the applicant’s
100 personality and churchmanship.

101
102 At the culmination of this step, the RCOM will decide whether to take the applicant
103 “under care” as a Candidate for Ordination.
104

105 C. Step Three: Period of Candidacy
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107 During this step, the Candidate for Ordination will be taken under the care of the
108 RCOM, which will continue to work in close cooperation with the sponsoring
109 congregation throughout the period of candidacy. The RCOM, with input from the
110 sponsoring congregation, will work with the Candidate to identify their gifts and
111 abilities, to formulate an individualized plan for further discernment and
112 enhancement of those gifts and abilities, and to periodically assess and evaluate the
113 Candidate’s progress.
114

- 115 i. Shortly after being taken under care, the Candidate will undergo an assessment
116 to determine their mental and psychological fitness for ministry, in general, and
117 Ordination, in particular.
118 ii. Throughout the period of candidacy, the RCOM will provide ongoing guidance
119 and oversight, including, but not limited to,
120 a. Oversight of the Candidate’s academic progress. This would include
121 review of transcripts and references from instructors, evaluations of the
122 Candidate’s course work, whether they completed a unit of Clinical
123 Pastoral Education, etc.
124 b. Oversight of the Candidate’s “active participation” in the life and work of
125 a DOC congregation (at least one year for those not formerly affiliated
126 with the DOC) and other manifestations of the DOC. Active participation
127 in the life and work of a DOC congregation might include service as a
128 Commissioned Minister. This would include evaluations of supervised

- 129 practice of ministry, references from those who worked with the
130 Candidate within the congregation, etc. "Active participation" might also
131 include, but not be limited to, the following:
- 132 i. Frequent attendance at worship;
 - 133 ii. Participation in Sunday services, as appropriate (e.g., act as
134 diaconate or usher, read scripture, make announcements);
 - 135 iii. Participation in (or leading of) a Sunday school class, Bible study,
136 or other small group study;
 - 137 iv. Volunteering to help with/facilitate social events, children's
138 church, Sunday school classes, discussion groups, nursery, youth
139 groups, outreach projects, facility care, etc.;
 - 140 v. Involvement in congregational committees, task forces and
141 special projects;
 - 142 vi. Singing in the choir or playing in a musical group;
 - 143 vii. Participation in community events/projects as a member of the
144 sponsoring congregation; and
 - 145 viii. Participation in Regional and General church events/projects,
146 including assemblies, retreats, workshops and church camp.
- 147 c. Engagement with the Candidate and the sponsoring congregation in an
148 ongoing assessment of their spiritual, personal and professional growth.
149 This would include the Candidate's self-assessment of progress in relation
150 to the 16 areas of ministerial practice. Such assessment will also include
151 recommendations by the RCOM, with input from the sponsoring
152 congregation, for certain additional educational and practical
153 opportunities to enhance the Candidate's readiness for ministry.
154

155 D. Step Four: Final Preparation

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157 This step involves final interviews with the Candidate and input from the sponsoring
158 congregation, as well as a review of prior contacts, assessments, evaluations,
159 references, and recommendations as to the Candidate's preparation and fitness for
160 Ordination.
161

- 162 i. In preparation for the final interview, the Candidate for Ordination must do the
163 following:
 - 164 a. Complete the *Ministerial Profile*;
 - 165 b. Submit a comprehensive (at least 3-5 pages) statement paper outlining
166 their personal theology and understanding of ordained ministry, and
167 specific plans for the direction of their ministry following Ordination in
168 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 169 ii. Additional factors on which the Regional Commission on Ministry will base its
170 decision include, but are not limited to,

- 171 a. The Candidate’s academic record;
172 b. Actual leadership experience in the church;
173 c. Assessment of the Candidate’s spiritual, personal and professional
174 growth throughout the period of Candidacy, including their self-
175 assessment of progress in relation to the 16 areas of ministerial practice,
176 with input from the sponsoring congregation.
- 177 iii. The RCOM will also take into consideration relevant additional feedback from
178 the sponsoring congregation and others within the Region with whom the
179 Candidate has been involved, including a letter of recommendation from
180 the congregation (presumably the sponsoring congregation) proposing to
181 partner with the Region in the Candidate's Ordination, if approved.
- 182 iv. In addition, the Region may require such additional assurances of the
183 Candidate’s fitness for Ordination as they deem reasonable and necessary,
184 including, but not limited to, personal interviews, letters of reference, or a
185 criminal background check.
- 186 v. At the discretion of the RCOM, candidates for Ordination may be granted
187 authorized access to Search and Call and may be considered for any ministerial
188 position for which they are otherwise qualified.
- 189 vi. At the completion of this step, the RCOM will determine whether to
190 recommend the Candidate for Ordination and will conclude with one of the
191 following actions:
- 192 a. Ordination (following the RCOM’s determination that they have met all
193 relevant requirements);
194 b. The Candidate’s withdrawal from candidacy; or
195 c. The decision by the Region to terminate their candidacy.

196
197 E. Step Five: Act of Ordination
198

199 Assuming that the RCOM is satisfied that the Candidate is ready for Ordination, the
200 final step consists of the actual planning for, and carrying out of, the Ordination
201 service.
202

203 Ordination is a process of the Congregational and Regional Church, on behalf of the
204 whole church, to commend to Christians everywhere individuals who meet the
205 qualifications and have fulfilled the requirements established by the DOC for
206 Ordination. This process culminates in a celebrative service of Ordination, which
207 meets the following guidelines:
208

- 209 i. The candidate will be recommended for Ordination by a recognized
210 congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),
211 including the one in which membership is held.

- 212 ii. The act of Ordination will be under the authorization and guidance of the
213 sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Minister, or the
214 Regional Minister’s designee, presiding.
215 iii. The service ordinarily will be held in a sponsoring congregation.
216 iv. Representatives of the recommending congregation or congregations, the
217 Regional church, the ecumenical church and, where possible, the General church
218 shall participate in the service.
219 v. The Candidate will create a committee from the recommending congregation or
220 congregations and the RCOM to plan the Ordination service.
221 vi. After the Ministerial Code of Ethics* is signed, the signed Ordination document
222 will be issued by the Region.
223

224 **II. Current Regional Forms and Informational Materials Relating to Ordained Ministry***
225

- 226 A. Candidate Form (COM FORM 04/11)
227
228 B. Expectations for Ordination Candidate under Care of the Commission on Ministry (5
229 /09)
230
231 C. Disciples of Christ (DOC) Discovery (Rev 6/13)
232
233 D. Commission on Ministry: Disciples Ministry in Arizona (1/12)
234
235 E. Summary of “A Handbook for Working with Candidates for Ordination for Use by
236 Regional Commissions on Ministry” (11/13)
237
238 F. *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

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