

COMMISSIONED MINISTRY OVERVIEW



Commissioned Ministry acknowledges the calling of the Holy Spirit and a commitment to professional education for ministry. Commissioned ministers may include pastors, evangelists, Christian educators, ministers of music, youth ministers, parish nurses, chaplains, and bi-vocational ministers.

There are currently two categories of Commissioned Ministry (AZPCOM, pg. 5):

- 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.

Criteria for Commissioned Ministry (TFPCOM, pg. 16-17 & AZPCOM, Att. A):

- Be baptized members of a Disciples congregation in the Arizona 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 Arizona. 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 regarding the process & requirements for becoming commissioned;
- Successfully complete a psychological and ministry assessment and background check approved the Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM);
- Comply with other reasonable expectations established by the Region including continuing education, ministerial supervisor evaluations, and yearly standing requirements (knowledge, growth, and competency in the 16 general areas of ministerial practices and the specialty area of ministry for which the candidate is being commissioned is expected); and
- Agree to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Additional Information:

- Commissioned Ministers are normally commissioned by the Region for a period of one year, renewable upon review.
- The Commissioned Minister status is not automatically transferable to another Region. The Commissioned Minister must: request a transfer, request the Regional Minister send a recommendation letter to the Region in which the Commissioned Minister wishes to serve
- All Commissioned Ministers are assigned an Ordained Minister as a Mentor, with whom they meet regularly.
- Referenced and Related documents are available at www.azdisciples.org.

COMMISSIONED MINISTRY CANDIDATE CHECKLIST



This checklist is to aid the potential candidate for Commissioned Ministry. As a potential candidate, please read all the documentation in the “Commissioned Ministry Packet” and “Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church in Arizona” as part of completing this checklist. The items listed below will usually be completed in this order however there are times when the Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM) may adjust or add tasks as appropriate. Keep the Regional Office apprised of your progress. If you have any questions about or during this process, please contact the Regional Office at any time.

	<u>Task</u>	<u>Date Completed</u>
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Review Commission on Ministry page on azdisciples.org	_____
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Download Commissioned Ministry Packet from azdisciples.org	_____
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a meeting with the Regional Minister	_____
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate Form	_____
5a	<input type="checkbox"/> DOC Discovery Part 1: Independent Exploration (800-1200 words)	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Visits	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Read information put out by the General church at disciples.org and Region at azdisciples.org.	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Visits with ministers	_____
5b	<input type="checkbox"/> DOC Discovery Part 2: Personal Reflections (1200-1500 words)	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> The Lord’s Supper	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Baptism	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Christian Unity	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Why I want to be a DOC	_____
	Recommendations	_____
6a	<input type="checkbox"/> Minister of Congregation where you intend to serve	_____
6b	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderator of Congregation where you intend to serve	_____
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Request Initial Interview with the RCOM	_____

	<u>Task</u>	<u>Date Completed</u>
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Interview <i>Additional interviews may be requested by either the candidate or the RCOM.</i>	_____
9	<input type="checkbox"/> RCOM approved educational program <i>(this may be completed earlier in process)</i>	_____
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Congregation's Formal Request for Commissioning <i>(signed by Senior Minister and Board Chair/Moderator)</i>	_____
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychological and Ministry Assessment	_____
12a	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete a Ministerial Profile	_____
12b	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete a RCOM approved Background Check	_____
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved by RCOM for Commissioned Ministry	_____
14	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan Commissioning Service with congregation and Regional Minister	_____
15a	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioning Service – Official Commissioning Date	_____
15b	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sign Ministerial Code of Ethics as part of service</i>	_____

Continuing education is a critical component of commissioned ministry. After commissioning it is expected that the following be completed within one year.

- RCOM Approved Disciples History and Polity course _____
- RCOM Approved Clergy Healthy Boundaries Training
Clergy Health Boundary Training is required every four years after your first training.

Yearly, commissioned clergy are required to complete the following to maintain standing.

- 10 Hours of Continuing Education
Ideally continuing education for the commissioned minister will help the minister grow in the 16 competencies.
- Evaluation Letter from Supervising Minister (or Board)
This letter should be sent directly to the Regional Office before the January 31st Standing Form deadline. A letter from the Board is only appropriate where a supervising minister does not exist.
- Submit a completed annual Ministerial Standing Form
 (due Jan. 31 each year)
- Meet with the RCOM as needed or requested

CANDIDATE FORM



Candidate Information

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) yes ____ no ____

Congregation Name: _____

City: _____

Pastor Name: _____

Request Interview with Commission on Ministry

I have read the information available on www.azdisciples.org/ministries/commission-on-ministry/ and would like to connect regarding:

_____ Inquiry/Discernment (would like to discuss options with COM)

_____ Ordained Ministry (please complete corresponding section on pg 2)

- Seminary Track
- Apprentice Track

_____ Commissioned Ministry (please complete corresponding section on pg 2)

_____ Recognition of Ordained Standing -currently ordained in another denomination
(please complete corresponding section on pg 2)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Pastor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Ordained Ministry

College: _____

Degree/Date Completed: _____

Seminary: _____

Degree/Date Completed: _____

Expected Completion: _____

Work Experience: _____

Additional Information: _____

Commissioned Ministry

College: _____

Degree/Date Completed: _____

Additional Ministry Education: _____

Work Experience: _____

Additional Information: _____

Recognition of Ordained Standing

Seminary: _____

Degree/Date Completed: _____

Ordained Denomination/Date: _____

Current Standing
Denomination & Judicatory: _____

Additional Information: _____

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST (DOC) DISCOVERY



Prior to scheduling your interview with the Commission on Ministry, please complete the following prerequisites and submit your writings to the Regional Office.

PART 1 - INDEPENDENT EXPLORATION (800-1200 words)

- Visit various DOC churches. Contact COM for suggestions to ensure a diverse sampling.
- Read information put out by the General church at disciples.org on Disciples identity.
- Explore the General and Regional DOC websites.
- Visit one-to-one with two selected DOC ministers.
- In light of your experience, write a report of these explorations. Use the following questions to guide your thoughts:
 - What similarities and differences did you observe in the worship services? What appealed or spoke to you? What seemed distracting or uncomfortable?
 - What is your impression of the information on Disciples identity at disciples.org? For whom would they be most helpful and how would you use them?
 - What questions did you have for the ministers? Did you have an “ah ha” moment during or following your visit? If so, what was it? What questions did the ministers raise in your mind?
 - What was your impression of the websites? What did you find especially helpful? How would you make use of these resources?
 - How do you understand the relationship between the congregational, regional, and national (general) manifestations in the Disciples understanding of “church?”

PART 2 – PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (1200-1500 words)

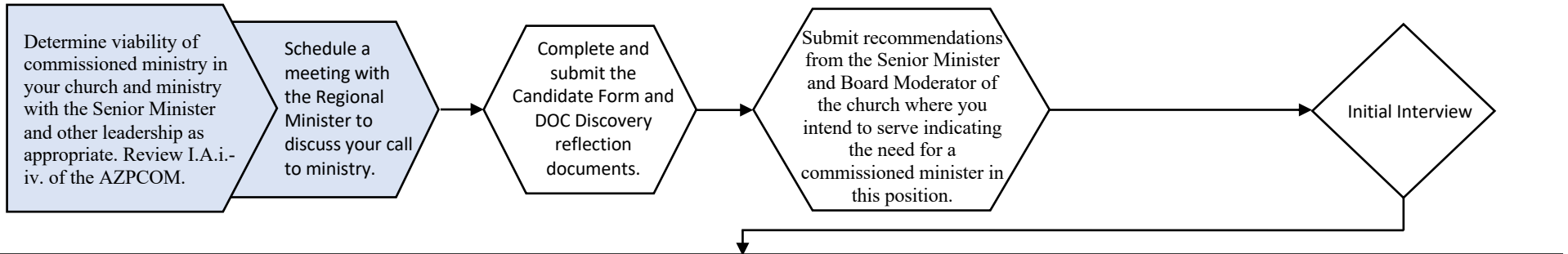
Use the following questions to guide your thoughts:

- Reflect on your understanding of the Lord's Supper.
 - How has your understanding and experience of the Lord's Supper evolved over time?
 - Why celebrate the Lord's Supper every week?
 - How would you respond to the person who says having communion weekly diminishes its meaning and makes it feel commonplace?
 - Reflect on your spiritual experience as you prepare to give of your inner self to those who come forward to receive Holy Communion. Is it your desire to give eye to eye contact in an attempt to offer your spirit and love to those who are served by you? Why or why not?
- Reflect on your understanding of baptism.
 - What is your understanding of baptism and the importance of being baptized?
 - How do you understand the role of "believers' baptism and receiving people who have a different baptismal expression, i.e. baptism as an infant and confirmation when older?
 - How would you respond to the person who wants to be re-baptized?
 - What is the relationship between the Lord's Supper and baptism?
- Reflect on your understanding of Christian unity.
 - What do you see as the goal of Christian unity, and how would you further that goal as part of your ministry if commissioned or ordained in the DISCIPLES OF CHRIST?
 - Is the phrase "Unity is our polar star": still credible for Disciples?
- Understanding of Disciples Ministry
 - In your view, what does it mean to be a "Biblical church?"
 - What is the most important thing that Disciples of Christ have to offer the world?
 - The Preamble of the Disciple Design states: "We rejoice in God's covenant of love, which binds us to God and one another". How do you understand this covenant relationship?
- Reflect on "Why I want to be a DOC."
 - What have you learned about the Disciples of Christ and its members that attracts you to the denomination? What has most clearly connected with your ministry and call? Were there places of disconnection or questioning and what were they?
 - What goals and aspirations do you hope to attain as a pastor and supporter of the DOC?

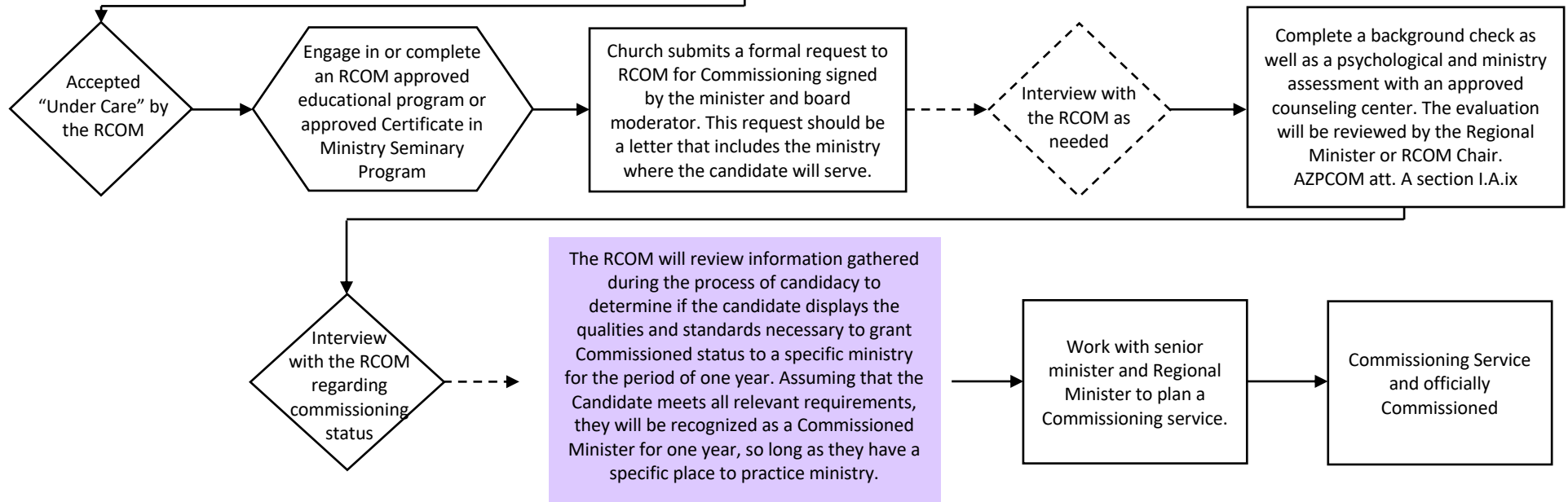
COMMISSIONED MINISTRY PROCESS AT A GLANCE



All documents mentioned in this process can be obtained in English or Spanish by visiting www.azdisciples.org or contacting the Regional Office. It is recommended that candidates review these documents before beginning their process.



At various points during the Commissioning Process the RCOM may request additional steps from a candidate before proceeding to the next section. This is a process of discernment for both the candidate and the Commission, and the Commission attempts to work with each candidate, encouraging, supporting, and nurturing, according to their needs and gifts within ministry.



My Ministerial Code of Ethics

Believing that Jesus is the Christ, Son of the living God, and proclaiming him Lord and Savior of the world, I reaffirm my vows as a minister. Through dedication and discipline, I will lead and serve with integrity. Relying on the grace of God, I commit myself to the following:

Personal Conduct

- Witnessing to the ministry of Jesus Christ
- Dedicating time, strength, vitality, and energy for effective ministry
- Growing in faith, knowledge and the practice of ministry through the spiritual disciplines, study, continuing education, and service
- Living a life that honors my commitments to my family, including the need for privacy and time together
- Taking time for physical and spiritual renewal, recreation, and vacation
- Being a faithful steward of God's gifts to me by managing time, talents, and financial resources responsibly and generously
- Accepting responsibility for all debts that I incur
- Keeping physically and emotionally fit, and refraining from substance abuse and other abusive behaviors
- Using my position, power, and authority in non-exploitive ways
- Maintaining high moral standards in my sexual behavior
- Regarding all persons with equal respect and concern, and undertaking to minister impartially
- Employing social media with integrity and grace within the context of personal, congregational, collegial, wider church and community relationships

Relationship to The Church That I Serve

- Nurturing and offering my gifts for ministry to the Church
- Calling forth and nurturing the gifts of others in the church, and joining their gifts with mine, for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ and the health of the Church
- Preaching and teaching the gospel without fear or favor, and speaking the truth in love
- Administering the sacraments/ordinances and services of the Church with integrity and not for financial gain
- Working cooperatively and collegially with those whom I serve in the particular ministry to which I have been called
- Administering the corporate finances of the Church with personal integrity
- Refraining from accepting any gift which would compromise the church's ministry
- Protecting confidences; covenanting to only tell those who need to know, what they need to know, when they need to know it

- Acting to prevent and to report known or suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect
- Encouraging and participating in the regular evaluation of my ministry and cooperating with the Region in an annual review of my ministerial Standing
- Seeking the counsel of the Regional Minister and/or the Racial/Ethnic Executive Pastor as appropriate should divisive tensions threaten my relationship with those I serve

Relationship to Ministry Colleagues

- Engaging in covenantal relationships with colleagues which involve nurture, discipline, family support, vigorous dialogue, mutual teaching/ learning, and spiritual formation
- Supporting colleagues in ministry and their families, and not exploiting their problems or crises
- Performing pastoral services within another congregation or for a member of another congregation only at the request of that congregation's current pastor and elders

- Supporting and at no time speaking maliciously of the ministry of my predecessors or another minister
- Encouraging the ministry of my successor upon my retirement or other departure from a ministry position, without interfering or intruding, and by making it clear to former parishioners that I am no longer their pastor nor will I perform any pastoral services unless requested by the congregation's current pastor and elders

Relationship to The Community and The Wider Church

- Participating responsibly in the life and work of my community, bearing prophetic witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and working toward a just and morally responsible society
- Participating faithfully in the life and work of all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Seeking to know, understand, and respect the diversity of opinions and people within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Being a responsible representative of the one Church of Jesus Christ and participating in activities that strengthen its unity, ministry, witness and mission

Signature