

# ORDAINED MINISTRY OVERVIEW



Ordained ministers are set apart for “leadership in the life and witness of the church.” Ordination into Christian ministry is understood to be for life, and once a minister is ordained in one Region they are recognized by all Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Requirements for Ordained Ministry are described in detail in the Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona (AZPCOM).

## Criteria for Ordained Ministry (TFPCOM, pg. 18-23 & AZPCOM, Att. B):

- All Ordained Ministers and candidates for becoming an Ordained Minister must be a baptized member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation;
- Maintain an ongoing relationship with the Regional Commission on Ministry;
- Successful completion of a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an institution of higher education accredited by the Association of Theological Schools or the Association for Biblical Higher Learning;
- Theological study and competence in 16 general areas of ministerial practices as defined in the General Commission on Ministry (GCOM) document “Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)” (TFPCOM);
- Supervised field experience in the work of ministry, exhibiting competencies in the area of ministry in which the candidate desires to serve;
- Successful completion of a psychological and ministry assessment approved the Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM);
- Comply with other reasonable expectations established by the Region including (but not limited to) continuing education, and yearly standing requirements; and
- Agree to adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

## Additional Information:

- Ordained Ministers must meet requirements for standing within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Standing as an Ordained Minister within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is credentialed by the Region in which the minister serves and is reviewed annually.
- Any minister from another denomination seeking recognition and standing must meet the same qualifications and standards of preparation for Disciples of Christ ministry set forth in the Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry. Provisional or temporary standing may be granted upon fulfillment of certain requirements.
- Referenced and Related documents are available at [www.azdisciples.org](http://www.azdisciples.org).

# ORDAINED MINISTRY CANDIDATE CHECKLIST



This checklist is to aid the potential candidate for Ordained Ministry. As a potential candidate, it is critical you read all the documentation in the “Ordained Ministry Packet” and “Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church in Arizona” (AZPCOM) 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. 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>
<b>Step One: Preliminary Inquires</b>	
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Review Commission on Ministry page on azdisciples.org	_____
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Download Ordained Ministry Packet from azdisciples.org	_____
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a meeting with the Regional Minister	_____
 <b>Step Two: Initial Approach/Contact with the RCOM</b>	
4a <input type="checkbox"/> Candidate Form	_____
4b <input type="checkbox"/> Attach current transcripts (if applicable)	_____
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	_____
6 <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive (at least 3-5 page) statement paper: “Why I feel called to ministry and want to be ordained into the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?”	_____

**Task**

**Date Completed**

Written support for candidacy highlighting your personal gifts and skills for ordained ministry from:

- 7a  Ordained Disciples Minister \_\_\_\_\_
- 7b  Moderator of Sponsoring Congregation \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 8  Request Initial Interview with the RCOM \_\_\_\_\_
- 9  Initial Interview \_\_\_\_\_

*Additional interviews may be requested by either the candidate or the RCOM.*

**Step Three: Period of Candidacy (under care)**

- 10  Agree to the Ministerial Code of Ethics \_\_\_\_\_
- 11  Receive guidance through ongoing relationship with the RCOM, including self-initiated contact in regular intervals \_\_\_\_\_
- 12  Actively participate in the life and work of a Disciples congregation and other manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 13  Broad theological study leading to the completion of a M.Div. degree or equivalent from an ATS accredited seminary \_\_\_\_\_
- 14  Psychological and Ministry Assessment during second year of seminary \_\_\_\_\_
- 15  Supervised Field Education in a congregation or other ministry setting and/or Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) \_\_\_\_\_

Specific course requirements as part of or in addition to a M.Div. or equivalent degree program

- 16a  Disciples History, Polity, and Theology course (seminary level or RCOM approved course) \_\_\_\_\_
- 16b  Submit to RCOM a project or paper from Disciples History, Polity, and Theology course \_\_\_\_\_
- 16c  RCOM approved Clergy Healthy Boundary training \_\_\_\_\_
- 16d  RCOM approved Anti-Racism / Pro-Reconciliation training \_\_\_\_\_

**Step Four: Final Preparation**

- 17a  Complete Ministerial Profile \_\_\_\_\_
- 17b  Complete RCOM approved Background Check \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Task</b>	<b><u>Date Completed</u></b>
18	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit a comprehensive (at least 3-5 pages) statement paper outlining your personal theology and understanding of ordained ministry following Ordination in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	_____
19	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit a complete or updated transcript	_____
20a	<input type="checkbox"/> Request a letter of recommendation from sponsoring congregation proposing to partner with the Region in the candidates Ordination, if approved	_____
20b	<input type="checkbox"/> Request a letter of recommendation from congregation in which membership is held, if different from sponsoring congregation	_____
21	<input type="checkbox"/> Ordination Interview	_____

*The RCOM will: review the candidates academic record; assess the candidates spiritual, personal, and professional growth including self-assessment of progress in relation to the 16 areas of ministerial practice; consider relevant feedback from the sponsoring congregation, others within the region with whom the candidate has been involved, and evaluation by the minister(s) of the sponsoring congregation; and consider the candidates “fitness and fit” for ordained ministry.*

**At the completion of Step Four, the RCOM will determine whether to recommend the candidate for ordination and will conclude with one the following actions:**

- Ordination; \_\_\_\_\_
- The Candidate’s withdrawal from candidacy; or \_\_\_\_\_
- The decision by the Region to terminate candidacy \_\_\_\_\_

**Step Five: Act of Ordination**

- 22  Create a committee from the recommending congregation or congregations and the RCOM to plan the Ordination service \_\_\_\_\_
- 23  Sign the Ministerial Code of Ethics \_\_\_\_\_
- 24  Ordination Service \_\_\_\_\_

# 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/](http://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](http://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](http://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?



# *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