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4 **Theological Foundations and**
5 **Policies and Criteria**
6 **for the**
7 **Ordering of Ministry**
8 **of the**
9 **Christian Church**
10 **(Disciples of Christ)**
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12 *Preamble* “Within the universal Body of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is
13 identifiable by its testimony, tradition, name, institutions, and relationships. Across national
14 boundaries, this church expresses itself in covenantal relationships in congregations, Regions,
15 and General ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), bound by God’s
16 covenant of love. Each expression is characterized by its integrity, self-governance, authority,
17 rights, and responsibilities, yet they relate to each other in a covenantal manner, to the end
18 that all expressions will seek God’s will and be faithful to God’s mission.”

19 ~ from paragraph 2 of *The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, revised 2005
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28 Amendment 1.0 9/30/2009
29 Amendment 2.0 5/8/2014
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Preface

This document, *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry, 2009*, became the policy document for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada once the General Assembly adopted the document. It replaced the document, *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry, 2003* on August 1, 2011.

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I. Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

PREFACE

Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) functions interdependently with *Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* to clarify evolving patterns of ministry as we seek to respond in faithful ways to ever changing contexts of service and witness. It is not a comprehensive theology of ministry nor does it attempt to offer the final word on Disciples' understanding of ministry.

A. The Ministry of the Whole People of God

God calls all persons to receive the good news of the Gospel and accept their call to be God's people. In a divided and unbelieving world, those who accept this good news are drawn into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of a new community, the church. In this body, the Holy Spirit unites those who follow Jesus Christ and sends them as witnesses into the world [ref: I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-5; Matthew 28:16-20]. The church's mission is to proclaim and prefigure the justice and joy of the Realm of God. In order to fulfill this mission faithfully, the members of the Body of Christ are given ministries of witness, service and reconciliation.

The ministry of Christ is entrusted to all the people of God. Through baptism they are called to servant ministry lived out in covenant community. Implicit in the confession of faith and the act of baptism is an acceptance of the vocation of the baptized—the special calling shared by all followers of Christ to witness to the sovereign love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit in all of life. The gifts (*charisms*) of the Holy Spirit are different and diverse, but in tremendous and simple ways they proclaim the mighty acts of God and mediate God's loving and reconciling work to and in the world. Every baptized person is called to witness to Christ in whatever situation he or she lives—to express in their daily lives the ministry of Christ.

In Christ the individual becomes a member of “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession” (1Peter 2:9). Thus it has been common to speak of the

112 “priesthood of all believers”¹—the persons who live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in
113 the church and in the world. This language highlights the sacramentality of the work of the
114 laity through whose witness and service the grace of God is made manifest.

115
116 The ministry of God’s people (the *laos* – the Greek term used in the New Testament for
117 “people,” which is the source of our English words “laity, laywomen, laymen”), taken as a
118 whole and in its diverse individual expressions, is to manifest and so continue the saving
119 ministry of Jesus Christ. This ministry includes all who join together in witness to God’s
120 justice and reconciliation through worship, daily work, sharing the Gospel, pastoral care,
121 relief of human suffering, engagement in the struggle for peace and justice, and realization
122 of the unity of the Church Universal. It is within this context of a shared ministry of the
123 people of God that Commissioned ministry and Ordained ministry is to be understood.

124
125 Within the ministry of the whole people of God there is, and has been since the early
126 church, representative ministry called by God and set apart by the Church for distinctive
127 functions. The Commissioned and the Ordained are both of the *laos*, but in recognizing
128 God’s call to particular individuals, the Church designates persons “to re-present to the
129 Church its own identity and calling in Jesus Christ” (*The Nature of the Church, A Word to*
130 *the Church on Ministry*). Authority and blessing to perform this ministry are celebrated in
131 Ordination and Commissioning.

132 133 **B. Historical Survey of Disciples Ministry**

134
135 Alexander Campbell and Barton Warren Stone relied on the Bible, especially the New
136 Testament, as the only rule of faith and practice. This premise shaped their understandings
137 of ministry in its many expressions.

138
139 Campbell’s attitudes on ministry progressed as the movement grew and the changing
140 circumstances of the church demanded new approaches to and appropriations of leadership.
141 Conversely, Stone’s attitudes on ministry remained relatively consistent. While he
142 promoted freedom from ecclesiastical control, he retained a sense of order in ministry and
143 structure. One notable point of agreement between the two is that both regarded ministry

¹ The “priesthood of all believers” refers to the persons who have entered into a covenanted relationship through confession and baptism. It ought not be confused with the role of congregational elders in the administration of the Lord’s Supper. Although in some circumstances anyone can administer the Sacraments/Ordinances of the Church, in Disciples practice it has usually been the duly appointed congregational leaders who administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper. This practice derives not from the “priesthood of all believers” but from early distinctions between the roles of elder and evangelist/preacher. The evangelist, called from outside the congregation, was restricted to ministries of preaching/teaching. The elder(s), called from within the congregation, bore responsibility for congregational governance, including the administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The right and responsibility to preside at the Table is increasingly a role shared by Elders and ministers.

as servanthood even though the forms and functions of that ministry were expressed and authorized in different ways.

Alexander Campbell

Although Alexander Campbell was staunchly anti-clerical, he was clearly pro-ministry. This position was elaborated throughout various pages of the *Christian Baptist* in the 1820s to 1830. The clergy of the day represented for Campbell a class that he could only term self-serving and pompous, promoting a specific set of sectarian or denominational tenets in place of the gospel. His opposition was to a professional clergy—independent of the local congregation, and accountable only to itself—not to the exercise of ministry which he considered essential to the life of the Church:

Campbell developed a specific formula for the church's ministry, quite apart from what others might consider the roles of the clergy:

1. Establish necessary offices for perpetuity and growth
2. Select the best qualified persons for those offices
3. Consecrate or set apart those persons for those offices
4. Give oneself completely to the work and continue growing so that everyone can see the growth.

In *The Christian System* he outlined:

The standing and immutable ministry of the Christian community is composed of Bishops [Elders],² Deacons, and Evangelists. Of each of these there is but one order, though possessing great diversities of gifts. There have been bishops, deacons, and evangelists, with both ordinary and extraordinary gifts. (CS, 82-3)

Campbell argued from Ephesians 4.12, “the work of ministry [is] for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Bishops, deacons and evangelists each had a distinctive role or function on behalf of the Body: *Bishops* engaged in ministries of oversight; *Deacons* in ministries of service; and, *Evangelists* in ministries of proclamation.

From Campbell's perspective in this early period, the movement of ministers from church to church was unacceptable. Appointed from a particular congregation, the leader stayed and served in that congregation or lost credentials.³

² Bishop and Elder are alternate translations of the Greek word *episkopos*.

³ In an 1835 edition of the *Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell wrote: “The jurisdiction of such bishops [elders] is always circumscribed by the congregation which ordained them. A single church is the largest dioceses (sic) known in the New Testament. Neither does his election and ordination give him a perpetual office. Should he leave the church, which under the direction of the Holy Spirit, created him, and become a member of another church, he enters it as a private member, and so continues until that church elect and ordain him, should they call for his services. The bishops [elders] and deacons of the church in Philippi were the bishops [elders] and deacons of the church in Philippi and of no other church; and so of Ephesus, Antioch, Rome, and Jerusalem.”(MH, VIII:10/35, 503)

As the church grew after the union of the Disciples and Christians in 1832, Campbell was compelled to distinguish between elders of oversight in local congregations and preaching elders who moved from congregation to congregation.

Barton Warren Stone

In an 1831 issue of the *Christian Messenger*, Barton Stone wrote that the pastoral office included “bishops, elders, pastors, and evangelists” (CM, 5:7/31, 162). For Stone, the pastoral office was one office with multiple functions, such as: to preach and teach, administer the sacraments/ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and, according to his Presbyterian heritage, provide moral oversight within the congregation, but not from outside it.

Not unlike Campbell, the bishops/elders and pastors, were internal to the congregation while the evangelists were traveling preachers/planters. Although Stone did not specifically identify deacons, a description in the *Christian Messenger* is helpful: “The word *Diakonos* translated *deacon* but commonly, *minister* is frequently applied to all those who minister in the word as well as in other matters” (CM, IX:2/35, 45).

As early as the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* (1804), it was willed that: “the church of Christ resume her native right of internal government – try her candidates for ministry, as to their soundness of faith, acquaintance with experimental religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but Christ speaking in them.” In an 1827 issue of the *Christian Messenger*, Stone spoke again of candidates for ministry implying that those individuals must have had some sort of Standing or recognition in the church. This reaffirmed his position in the *Last Will and Testament* that the church try its candidates. He further argued that only Licensed preachers and Ordained elders were empowered to preach, giving rise to his notion of “pastor.” He evoked a strong Pauline tendency here in that preachers should not wander about the countryside in a freelance manner, but be sent from the churches with letters of commendation (CM, 1:2/27, 80).

Stone lifted up the pastoral office by identifying not only the functions but the authorization. He makes a distinction between choosing or appointing to an office and Ordaining to an office. (CM, IX: 2/35, 45) Through Acts and the Pastoral Epistles, he contends “...that Ordination to the work of ministry was performed by the [imposition] of the hands of the elders in the New Testament church. – Therefore it appears that no person can be legally inducted into the ministry without this act” (Ibid, 46).

When queried on the form of Ordination, Campbell, like Stone, responded “Imposition of hands, accompanied with fasting and prayer. Thus have persons been consecrated to sacred offices in the Christian church from the beginning.” And then the question, “*Who may, or who ought to lay hands on the bishops, or deacons, or messengers elect?*” I answer, without dubiety, and in a few words, the community, the whole community as may be approved in behalf of the congregation.” (MH, VIII:10/35,498)

A significant departure from Campbell's position, however, was the authority to Ordain. While Campbell had the congregation appoint and Ordain, Stone had the congregation appoint to the pastoral office but a conference or college of ministers, already Ordained, was the Ordaining body.

Later Views

The search for Ordained ministers from outside the congregational membership addressed some of the leadership problems created by the rapid growth of the churches in the 1840s and 50s. There were times when it was determined that qualified persons simply were not available from within the churches. Young men educated in colleges and even seminaries were beginning to be called to settled ministries. The evangelists, too, were well known and seen as a ready and important pool for resident preachers.

The turn of the 20th century saw a variety of new issues for the Disciples that began to shape understandings of the ordering of ministry. At the 1935 San Antonio International Convention, a Commission on Ordination was appointed. In 1939, the Richmond International Convention approved a new system which called for Ordination councils comprising ministers and elders representing three or more congregations to, in Stone's words, "try her candidates." Announced still as a local church matter, this new approach more fully satisfied Stone's system of Ordinations being conducted by a conference or college of ministers. Such a system began to afford broader church ownership and accountability as ministers moved from congregation to congregation. In effect, the convention was following the example of Black Disciples in North Carolina who had already determined in 1886 that Ordination should not be authorized by a local congregation acting alone and had adopted standards for evaluating candidates for ministry. Some local congregations continued to Ordain their candidates without consultation of supporting churches or state societies, but those were becoming more rare in light of emerging covenantal relationships. At the 1964 Detroit International Convention, the church formally recommended a seminary degree prior to Ordination, even though some state societies and congregations had been enforcing that educational requirement for many years.

Origins of Licensed Ministry

The 1939 Richmond report commended three criteria for Ordination:

1. Good moral character and personal fitness for ministry
2. A full college course, and if possible, graduate training in religion
3. Experience in Christian work which shows real leadership, vision, pastoral qualities, and preaching ability

Persons who fulfilled points 1 and 3 but not point 2 were accorded Licenses - a new category of ministry created from the Ordination report.

Licensed ministry, as we conceive it today, is fairly recent in Disciples history. Barton Stone was Licensed by the Orange Presbytery of North Carolina as a missionary to the lower North Carolina area. Alexander Campbell was Licensed to preach at the Brush Run

Meeting House in 1811. During the Stone-Campbell era, “licensing to preach” was a trial period prior to Ordination to see if the candidate had the disposition for ministry and the qualities for preaching the true gospel without any mixture of human philosophy, deceit, or rudiments of the world (*cf Last Will and Testament*).

In 1948 the church recognized a licensing process which defined certification for a limited period of time, primarily for college students in preparation or candidacy and for “those laymen who desire to serve as part-time ministers” (“License and Ordination of the Christian Minister,” 1948, para.16). Among the primary beneficiaries were small churches that were unable to attract or support full-time ministers. This established a standard of a two-fold office that was incorporated into *The Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* in 1968 and the *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry* in 1971.

Emerging Practice at the Turn of the Millennium

Toward the end of the 20th century, the trend toward higher educational standards for Ordained ministry reached its peak and patterns of preparation began to diversify. Some Regions determined that a single model of ministerial formation was too restrictive to serve faithfully the changing contexts of ministry. A few began to utilize criteria that allowed for the Ordination of ministers without a Master of Divinity degree from an *Association of Theological Schools* (ATS) accredited seminary. The emergence of these *de facto* alternate educational tracks led to calls for a review of expectations with an eye toward developing a new consensus on educational standards for Ordained ministry.

C. Ministry in the Congregation

It is the usual practice among congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to nominate, elect, and install or in other ways recognize for service deacons and elders. Women and men serving in these offices manifest various spiritual gifts, including maturity, prayer, insight, and leadership.

The offices of elder and deacon are ordered by the congregations, through election and recognition with appropriate ceremony, for the performance of certain functions of ministry appropriate to the offices.

- a. a person elected elder is authorized to exercise within the congregation which elects her or him to the ministerial functions it assigns for periods of time which it specifies, such as sharing in the ministration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper and the conduct of worship, and sharing in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. The eldership is a voluntary ministry, each congregation having a plurality of elders [more than one elder].
- b. a person elected deacon is authorized to serve in the congregation which elects her or him for periods of time which it specifies by assisting in the ministration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, in the conduct of worship, and in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. The

314 diaconate is a voluntary ministry (paragraph 87, *The Design of the Christian*
315 *Church*).
316

317 The role of elders and deacons is most evident in the ways these ministries represent the
318 congregation in their communities of faith and in the larger community. For example,
319 elders and deacons are seen visiting persons in hospitals, nursing homes, or with the home-
320 centered. They may also lead congregations in ministries of outreach and social justice.
321

322 It is, however, at the Table that the ministry of the congregation comes into view for the
323 gathered community. The pastor and elders as they preside and pray and the deacons as
324 they serve, re-present the whole ministry of the church.
325

326 **D. Order of Ministry** 327

328 “The church recognizes an order of ministry, set apart under God, to equip the whole people
329 to fulfill their corporate ministry” (Paragraph 86, *Design of the Christian Church*).
330

331 In its ordering of ministry, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes a
332 Commissioned ministry and an Ordained ministry. The church expects the women and men
333 it Commissions and Ordains to demonstrate educational qualifications and competencies
334 in several areas of personal integrity and pastoral practice, as well as a clear call to and
335 passion for ministry. The church is called to provide significant Congregational and
336 Regional support for those seeking to serve in ministry, whether Ordained or
337 Commissioned.
338

339 The church gives grateful acknowledgment to God who in every age grants to women and
340 men the spiritual gifts necessary for such ministry. In making decisions about whom to
341 Commission or Ordain, the church looks to candidates for:

- 342 ❖ the personal, inward call from God, which leads persons to seek such ministry,
- 343 ❖ the God-given gifts and graces,
- 344 ❖ the personal characteristics and aptitudes, and
- 345 ❖ the preparation and promise (e.g., education, skills, etc.) that they have for effective
346 ministry.

347 By these criteria the church discerns whom it will Commission and/or Ordain.⁴
348

349 It bears reiteration that throughout history, Disciples have recognized various methods of
350 preparation for ministry. Over the course of the 20th century, Disciples placed increasing
351 emphasis on a graduate seminary degree as a credential for Ordination, even while
352 recognizing that for some individuals other methods of preparation might be more
353 appropriate in consideration of certain circumstances such as life situation, community,
354 ministry setting, and cultural and ethnic context.
355

356 **1. Commissioned Ministry**

⁴ Adapted from *A Word to the Church on Ministry* (1985), Commission on Theology, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), p 3.

In the development of Disciples understanding of ministry, “Commissioned” ministry is replacing some forms of “Licensed” ministry. Men and women are authorized and Commissioned by their Regions to offer ministry in a particular place for a specified period of time. “The word ‘Commissioned’ means one who is appointed to a position entrusted with a task, or one who is authorized or sent on behalf of another for a task or proclamation” (*The Nazareth Consensus*, page 8, para.1).⁵

The term “Commissioned” contains the word “mission,” which sets the stage for a spiritual expectation. Paul describes himself as one commissioned to preach the gospel as in Col. 1:25: “I became [the church’s] servant according to God’s *commission* that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known...” (NRSV). In II Corinthians Paul writes, “But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has *commissioned* us; ...” (II Cor. 1:21, RSV) and again, “For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God’s word; but as men [and women] of sincerity, as *commissioned* by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ” (II Cor. 2:17, RSV).

The word “Commissioned” has been used and continues to be used by the church for people appointed to various positions or sent forth to carry God’s message. Thus, the term has ecclesiastical connotations of being entrusted with the tasks of ministry. The use of the term “commission” or “commissioned” in English translations of Paul’s letters has further shaped our understanding of the concept in the contemporary setting.

Commissioning is an acknowledgment by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit in the one commissioned, and a commitment by both the Church and the Commissioned to the new relationship. Those Commissioned offer their gifts to the Church and commit themselves to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility. At the same time, they enter into a collegial relationship with all ministers. By receiving the Commissioned minister in the act of commissioning, the Church acknowledges the minister’s call and commits itself to be open to it. This liturgical service occurs in the context of Congregational worship in partnership with the Region.

2. Ordained Ministry

a. The meaning of Ordination

In Ordination — through prayers invoking the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands — the Church confirms in women and men the call of God, acknowledges their gifts and graces, and authorizes this ministry in and for the Church.

The act of Ordination by those who are appointed for this ministry attests the bond of the church with Jesus Christ and the apostolic witness, recalling that it is the risen Lord who is the true Ordainer and bestows the gift. In Ordaining, the church,

⁵ A proposal for transformative action by the Dialogue on Licensed Ministry Action Team, July 2004, growing out of the gathering at Barton College in May 2003.

under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, provides for the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and humble service in the name of Christ. The laying on of hands is the sign of the gift of the Spirit, rendering visible the fact that the ministry was instituted in the revelation accomplished in Christ, and reminding the church to look to him as the source of its commission. ("Ministry," *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*, WCC, para. 40.)

Disciples understand the meaning of Ordination as an action of God and the community during which the Ordained are strengthened by the Spirit for their task and are upheld by the acknowledgment and prayers of the congregation.

Ordination sets one apart for leadership in the life and witness of the church. While the Ordained ministry cannot be reduced to any mere listing of tasks, it may be identified by leadership with regard to three fundamental aspects of the church's life and witness:

- (1) acting in servant obedience to God's commandment of love in self-sacrifice on behalf of others and in a servant life in the world;
- (2) proclaiming the gospel in faithfulness to Jesus Christ by word (teaching and preaching), by sacrament (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and by deed (mission and service);
- (3) overseeing the life of the community in its worship, education, witness, mission, fellowship, and pastoral nurture through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In selecting men and women for Ordination, the church thus seeks to insure that its ministry of service, proclamation, and oversight shall be constantly upheld by its members.

b. The character of Ordained ministry

Disciples accept Ordination as a gift of the Holy Spirit at work in the community of faith. In every service of Ordination we, therefore, seek to witness to at least four aspects of this ordering of ministry:

- 1) *Apostolic Ministry*: The Ordained enter the *apostolic ministry*. By this we mean they receive their authority and commission from the risen Christ. The first Christian ministers were the apostles in the New Testament, to whom the living Lord revealed himself and sent "to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Ministers in every generation preach, celebrate, witness, and gather disciples in continuity with those early apostles.
- 2) *Representative Ministry*: Ordination witnesses to a *representative ministry*. Those who accept the ministry of the Word, sacrament, and mission are responsible for re-presenting (showing forth) to the world and to all baptized Christians the character of Christ's ministry and witness. A central task of such representative ministry is personally and publicly to point the church to its dependence on Jesus Christ, who is the source of its faith, mission, and unity.

3) *Collegial Ministry*: Those who receive Ordination enter a *collegial ministry*. Ministry is inherently a shared responsibility. No minister is independent or autonomous, all seek to teach and work together to express fellowship (*koinonia*) in support and care for each other. This collegiality relates Ordained and lay persons in common ministry. The ministries of all members of the believing community are complementary, given to one to be supportive of the other. All are to build up the Body of Christ in love. No differences of vocation, function or education should obscure the fact that the one ministry of Christ is shared by the whole people of God. Lay and Ordained are partners together in governance and witness; together they empower the church for effective participation in discovering God's will for all humanity.

4) *Universal Ministry*: Most appropriately, Ordination is a *rite of the Church Universal*. While Ordination is normally done by a particular denomination, and Standing is limited to a particular communion, the intention is that no one is ever Ordained into a particular denomination or tradition, certainly not into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Those Ordained are representative ministers of the Church Universal: one, holy, catholic and apostolic. While we serve with the vision of universality, the Church lives with the pain of a divided ministry. Nevertheless, all ministers are called to point out the community of Jesus Christ, to work to bring new expressions of the one universal Church into being, and to search for forms of unity which the divided churches cannot yet express.⁶

c. **Offices of the Ordained ministry**

The New Testament does not describe a single pattern of ministry which might serve as a blueprint or continuing norm for all future ministry in the Church. In the New Testament there appears rather a variety of forms which existed at different places and times. As the Holy Spirit continued to lead the Church in life, worship and mission, certain elements from this early variety were further developed and became settled into a more universal pattern of ministry (*BEM*, para. 19).

In 1985, the Commission on Theology commended to the whole Church a single order of Ordained ministry which would include three offices.⁷

⁶ Adapted from "Theological and Historical Foundations," Ordination Service and Guidelines for Ordination for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Division of Homeland Ministries and Council on Christian Unity, 1990, pp. 1-2.

⁷ This ordering of ministry appears to be in line with the emerging consensus within the ecumenical movement and is the current pattern accepted by many churches throughout the world, e.g., Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, and United Churches, and thus appears to offer a strong possibility for wider ecumenical relationships in the future.

This pattern of ministerial leadership corresponds to the three aspects of the church's life identified as fundamental:⁸

- ❖ the ministry of service to church and world (the *diaconate* or deacons), where the active witness and mission of the church as servant is advanced;
- ❖ the ministry of proclamation by Word and Sacrament (the *presbyterate*, or pastors), where preaching, teaching, and the sacraments/ordinances (Table and Baptism) of the church are lifted up; and,
- ❖ the ministry of oversight (the *episcopate*, or bishops), where oversight of the community's life occurs.

Thus, within a single order of Ordained ministry, there can be three distinct offices that are at the same time mutually supportive and interrelated. The recognition of these offices does not carry with it any implications of hierarchical structure. The three-fold Ordained ministry, taken as a whole, thus re-presents the fundamental characteristics of ministry shared by all baptized believers. (*A Word to the Church on Ministry*, pp. 3- 4.)

Persons are not Ordained into a particular office, but rather into the order of ministry. The church may call them to a role that emphasizes one of the three offices. However, these offices are not located exclusively in any particular ministerial role. Most ministries encompass varying aspects of all three offices.

d. The act of Ordination

A long and early Christian tradition places Ordination in the context of worship and especially of the Lord's Supper. Such a place for the service of Ordination preserves the understanding of Ordination as an act of the whole community. The act of Ordination by the laying on of hands of those appointed to do so is at one and the same time the invocation of the Holy Spirit, a sacramental sign, and an acknowledgment of gifts and commitment.⁹

In the act of Ordination, the Church Ordains in confidence that God, being faithful to the promise in Christ, enters sacramentally into historical forms of human relationship, and draws upon those relationships for God's purpose. Ordination is thus a sign performed in faith that the spiritual relationship signified is present in, with, and through the words spoken, the gestures made and the forms employed.¹⁰

Finally, Ordination is an acknowledgment by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit in the one Ordained, and a commitment by both the Church and the Ordinand to the new relationship. By receiving the new minister in the act of Ordination, the Church acknowledges the minister's gifts and commits itself to be open to these gifts.

⁸ The nomenclature of *diakonos*, *presbuteros*, and *episkopos* is drawn from I Timothy, chapters 3 and 5, which is rendered in the NRSV as deacon, elder, and bishop, respectively.

⁹ Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 41.

¹⁰ Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 43.

514 Likewise those Ordained offer their gifts to the Church and commit themselves to
515 the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility; at the same time,
516 they enter into a collegial relationship with all ministers.¹¹
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518
519

¹¹ Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 44.

II. Policies and Criteria For The Ordering Of Ministry

A. Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

1. *The Order of Ministry*. The Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) comprises Commissioned Ministers and Ordained Ministers.
2. *Personal Qualifications for the Order of Ministry*. The church expects to find within the women and men it receives into the order of ministry:
 - a. Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices;
 - b. A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church;
 - c. An understanding of pastoral identity;
 - d. Capacity to engage in theological reflection;
 - e. Strong moral character and personal integrity;
 - f. Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for healthy ministry;
 - g. Care and compassion for all people with appropriate relational skills;
 - h. Responsible personal financial management;
 - i. Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God's gifts;
 - j. Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry.

B. The Commissioned Ministry

1. Description: Commissioned ministry provides the Church opportunity for creativity and imagination in acknowledging the fresh work of the Holy Spirit. These ministries may include: pastors, evangelists, Christian educators, ministers of music, youth ministers, parish nurses, chaplains, bi-vocational ministers, recognized congregationally-based or non-congregationally-based community ministers, or others, where Regional nurture and authorization are deemed appropriate.
2. Common criteria of Commissioned ministry:

In order to be Commissioned ministers persons must:

- ❖ Be baptized members of a Disciples congregation in the commissioning Region and serving in a Congregationally, Regionally or Generally recognized call;
- ❖ Be recommended for Commissioning by a recognized congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the one in which his/her membership is held;
- ❖ Meet with the Regional Commission or Committee on Ministry (or that process which serves to function as a Commission on Ministry regardless of the name assigned Regionally) for Commissioning; and
- ❖ Comply with any other expectations of the Region.

In accepting Commissioning, the minister covenants to obey God by caring for the church, offering gifts of mind, body, and spirit to that service, agreeing to fulfill the functions of a minister, and adhering to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

Commissioned Minister Standing authorizes one to perform ministry on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The granting of Commissioning may or may not meet all legal requirements for the performance of marriages.

Persons are Commissioned by Regions for ministry in a specific context. Change of ministry context requires Regional re-Commissioning.

3. Categories of Commissioned Ministry:

- a. Commissioned Minister (Not Seeking Ordination): These are men and women who minister in a particular place for a specified period of time. Their call is context specific and is affirmed by the Region. Expectations for formation and education may be established by the Region, and may be accomplished in consultation with the calling congregation.
- b. Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination): These are women and men serving in a Congregationally or Regionally authorized call who are under the care of a Region and involved in a specified program of study and formation in preparation for Ordination.

4. Candidacy for Commissioning

- a. *Definition:* Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual who has received a call to serve a particular ministry is in preparation with the Region for Commissioning.
- b. Candidacy begins when a person who has received a call from a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or a recognized non-congregational ministry applies to the Region for Commissioning.

- 611
612 c. *Steps for Candidacy.* The candidate shall:
613
614 1. be a member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation;
615 2. have a letter of recommendation from the congregation of which the
616 applicant is a member;
617 3. complete the *Ministerial Profile*; and
618 4. meet with the Regional Commission on Ministry.
619
620 d. The Region shall assess the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and
621 educational capacities of the applicant for the practice of ministry. This
622 assessment will be accomplished through such avenues as personal interviews,
623 letters of reference, background checks, psychological and vocational testing,
624 consultation with congregations, and as appropriate, coordination between
625 Regions in reciprocal relationships, and communications with educational
626 institutions.
627
628 e. Upon approval, the Region brings the candidate under care and Commissions
629 her/him for a particular ministry.
630
631 5. Regional Responsibilities: Specifically assigned to Regions are the responsibilities
632 to:
633 a. establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Commissioned minister, which
634 must include the *Ministerial Profile* and a current denominational criminal
635 background check;
636 b. consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic
637 communities whenever considering a person of color;
638 c. bring applicants “under care”;
639 d. provide for their nurture;
640 e. provide opportunities for building collegiality with other ministers;
641 f. make available appropriate programs of study (such as readings, experiential
642 learning, intensive weekend seminars, guided reflection on ministerial practice
643 with a mentor-companion, and distance learning, etc.) in preparation for
644 ministry;
645 g. authorize the designation of an applicant as a Commissioned Minister;
646 h. offer resources and presence of the Regional Minister or the Regional
647 Minister’s designee for services of Commissioning;
648 i. oversee formation processes for candidates for Ordination;
649 j. encourage lifelong learning through continuing education opportunities
650 including training in healthy boundaries and anti-racism; and
651 k. establish additional requirements as desired.
652

653 C. The Ordained Ministry

654

- 655 1. *Description.* By Ordination the church recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in
656 calling particular persons to creative and imaginative servanthood in Christ; accepts
657 their ministry in and for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and for the whole

body of Christ; covenants to undergird the ministry; and grants authority to perform that ministry as a representative of the church. Ordained ministers are baptized members of a Disciples congregation.

In accepting Ordination, the minister covenants to obey God by caring for the church, offering gifts of mind, body and spirit to that service, agreeing to fulfill the functions of a minister, and adhering to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Ordained Minister Standing authorizes one to perform ministry on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordination may or may not meet all the legal requirements for the performance of marriages.

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.

2. *Educational Requirements.* There are two educational tracks in preparation for Ordination: an apprentice track (AT) and a seminary track (ST).

- ❖ Those in the apprentice track will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of ministerial practice by completing a program of study of at least 250 contact hours approved by the Region in which they are under care.

- ❖ Those in the seminary track will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of ministerial practice 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.

Candidates for Ordination are encouraged to follow the seminary track, unless they determine, in consultation with their Region, that their economic, linguistic, vocational, or familial circumstances make the apprentice track more appropriate. Regardless of the educational track chosen, the church expects the women and men it Ordains to demonstrate competency in the following areas of ministerial practice, listed alphabetically:

Biblical Knowledge: Be rooted and grounded in scripture and able to interpret and apply the scriptures in ways that are appropriate to original and contemporary contexts.

Church Administration and Planning: Be able to practice the principles of good administration, planning and implementing short- and long-range goals to enhance Congregational life in collaboration with teams and committees.

Communication: Be an effective communicator and be able to facilitate effective communication within and on behalf of the church.

Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience: Be sensitive to the different manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be committed to confronting and overcoming them.

Ecumenism: Exhibit a commitment to working with other Christians and denominations and with other faiths in programs of common witness and service, and to articulating the vision of the ecumenical and global church as a starting place for mission.

Education and Leader Development: Know the foundations of Christian education and the principles of leader development. Show competency in teaching children, youth, and adults, including lay leaders and staff.

Ethics: Be able to help parishioners think critically about the relationship of their faith to issues of justice, ethics and morality

Evangelism: Be able to motivate Congregational members to share their faith through word and action.

Mission of the Church in the World: Be able to understand and articulate the centrality of the call to mission given by Jesus Christ and the prophets. Be able to empower congregations to engage in mission from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

Pastoral Care: Be able to engage other persons with empathy and assess situations and relationships with the compassion of Christ, with sensitivity to culture and context. Be able to convey the healing power of God to those who suffer.

Proclamation of the Word: Know the practice and theory of Christian preaching. Be able to proclaim the Word of God, share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and help Congregational members apply their faith to daily life.

Spiritual Development: Establish and maintain spiritual disciplines that lead to personal growth and help others develop a rich spiritual life.

Stewardship: Be able to develop and encourage healthy stewards who recognize and share generously God's abundant gifts for all creation.

Theology: Be able to articulate a coherent view of God's nature and activity in relation to the Christian tradition, to critically engage human situations from a perspective of faith, and to help persons recognize theological issues in their daily lives.

Understanding of Heritage: Have knowledge of and appreciation for the history and thought of Christianity and of the history, structure, practices, and ethos of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Worship: Know the purpose and elements of Christian worship. Have the ability to plan and lead meaningful worship by working with the worship team, musicians, and Congregational members.

3. Regional Responsibilities:

Regions are strongly encouraged to offer an apprentice track (AT) program on their own or in collaboration with Regional Fellowships,¹² theological institutions, or ecumenical partners. Those offering an AT program will submit their curriculum to the General Commission on Ministry for evaluation.

Specifically assigned to Regions are the responsibilities to:

- a. establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Ordination;
- b. evaluate the educational experience of candidates for an AT program which would include a high school diploma or its equivalent and some post secondary educational experience;
- c. consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic communities whenever considering a racial/ethnic applicant;
- d. bring applicants “under care” (See II.D.3.);
- e. provide for their nurture;
- f. be in relationship with the sponsoring congregation and the candidate’s educational setting;
- g. authorize and supervise the act of Ordination; and
- h. facilitate continuing education including training in healthy boundaries and anti-racism.

D. Candidacy for Ordination

1. **Definition:** Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual is under the care of a Regional Commission on Ministry and involved in a specified program of study and formation in preparation for Ordination.

¹² Regional Fellowships (Clusters) are gatherings of Regions in geographical proximity. They include: ROSES (Regions Of the Sun Equipping and Serving: Oklahoma, Southwest, and Great River); WRIM (Western Regions In Ministry: Arizona, Pacific Southwest, Northern California-Nevada, Oregon, Northwest, South Idaho, Montana, Central Rocky Mountain); SERF (Southeast Regional Fellowship: Florida, Alabama-Northwest Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee); NIRF (Northeast Inter-Regional Fellowship: Canada, Northeast, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Capital Area, West Virginia and Michigan); HEARTLAND (Heartland Regional Fellowship: Nebraska, Kansas, Greater Kansas City, Mid-America, Upper Midwest, Illinois-Wisconsin, and Indiana).

784 2. *Application for Candidacy.* Application for candidacy is entered into when a man
785 or woman declares the intention to seek Ordination through the Christian Church
786 (Disciples of Christ), and their congregation affirms that intention.
787

788 3. *The Criteria for Candidacy.* The applicant shall be a baptized member of a
789 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation and shall make application for
790 candidacy to the Region of the candidate's membership or to the Region where she
791 or he is a student. In special circumstances and subject to agreement between
792 appropriate Regional Ministers and/or Regional Commissions on Ministry, persons
793 may apply for candidacy in another Region. The applicant shall have a letter of
794 recommendation from a recognized congregation of the Christian Church
795 (Disciples of Christ) in the candidate's Region of membership.
796

797 Upon receipt of the application, the Region will begin the process of assessing
798 (through avenues such as personal interviews, letters of reference, background
799 checks, psychological testing, consultation with congregations, coordination of
800 Regions in reciprocal relationships, and communications with educational
801 institutions), the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and educational capacities
802 of the applicant for the practice of ministry. Upon approval of the application, the
803 Region shall admit the applicant to candidacy. Once accepted as a candidate, the
804 individual comes under the care and direction of the Regional Commission or
805 Committee on Ministry (or that process which serves to function as a Commission
806 on Ministry regardless of the name assigned Regionally).
807

808 4. *The Procedures During Candidacy.* The candidate shall seek Ordination through a
809 discernment process established by the Region. That preparation may include
810 authorization as a Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination). The candidate
811 may complete the educational requirements for either track without serving as a
812 Commissioned Minister.
813

814 Separate from candidacy, Commissioned Minister status authorizes one to perform
815 ministry on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The granting of
816 candidacy may or may not meet all legal requirements for the performance of
817 marriages.
818

819 5. *Preparation for Ordination.* A candidate for Ordination is to prepare himself or
820 herself spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically for her/his ministry.
821 The following areas support and enhance the performance of an applicant's chosen
822 ministry:
823

- 824 a. Participation in the life and work of a congregation of Christians;
- 825
- 826 b. Breadth of theological study so that the candidate shows an
827 understanding of the Christian faith, the Bible, the church universal, the
828 history and polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the
829 formation and function of Christian mission;

- 830
- 831 c. Professional and ecclesiological study plus supervised experience in the
- 832 work of ministry, exhibiting competencies in that form of ministry in
- 833 which the candidate hopes to serve;
- 834
- 835 d. Formation of responsible relations with and concern for the church, both
- 836 as communities of faith and as institution;
- 837
- 838 e. Growth in personal character, Christian insight, spiritual formation,
- 839 wellness and disciplined commitment to ministry;
- 840
- 841 f. Formation of and adherence to ethical principles to guide professional
- 842 relationships and personal conduct as outlined in the *Ministerial Code*
- 843 *of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.
- 844
- 845 6. *Conclusion of Candidacy.* Completion of a prescribed program of study
- 846 (apprentice track) or the receipt of a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent
- 847 from an institution of higher education accredited by the Association of Theological
- 848 Schools (seminary track) does not guarantee Ordination.
- 849

850 Candidacy is concluded by Ordination, voluntary withdrawal by the candidate, or

851 decision of the Region to terminate candidacy. Completion of candidacy within

852 seven years is recommended, but may be extended at the discretion of the Region.

853

854 **E. The Act of Ordination**

855

856 Ordination is a process of the Congregational and Regional Church on behalf of the whole

857 church to commend to Christians everywhere individuals who meet the qualifications and

858 have fulfilled the requirements established by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

859 for Ordination.

860

- 861 1. The candidate shall be recommended for Ordination by a recognized congregation
- 862 or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the one in
- 863 which membership is held.
- 864
- 865 2. The act of Ordination shall be under the authorization and guidance of the
- 866 sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Minister, or the
- 867 Regional Minister's designee, presiding.
- 868
- 869 3. The service ordinarily shall be held in a sponsoring congregation.
- 870
- 871 4. Representatives of the recommending congregation or congregations, the Regional
- 872 church, the ecumenical church and, where possible, the General church shall
- 873 participate in the service.
- 874

- 875 5. After the Ministerial Code of Ethics is signed, the signed Ordination document shall
876 be issued by the Region.
877

878 **F. Ministerial Standing** 879

- 880 1. *Definition.* Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is credentialing
881 for ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a call to
882 accountability to the church, and collegiality with other ministers both
883 denominationally and ecumenically.
884
- 885 a. Standing affirms that the Commissioned or Ordained minister is currently
886 engaged in the practice of ministry, whether on an occasional, part-time or
887 full-time basis, with continuous accountability maintained with a
888 congregation, related organization or institution, Region, or General Ministry
889 of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Such ministers are listed in the
890 *Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* and
891 may call upon the church for services and support such as pastoral care,
892 ecclesiastical endorsement, and scholarship aid. In addition they have voting
893 privileges in the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of
894 Christ).
895
- 896 b. Ordained ministers with Standing have access to Search and Call. Candidates
897 for Ordination may be granted access to Search and Call at the discretion of
898 the Regional Minister of the Region where they are under care or the Region
899 of their educational setting.
900
- 901 c. Responsibility for certification of Standing of ministers and for annual review
902 of that Standing within the Order of Ministry is lodged with the Region where
903 the minister is currently engaged in the practice of ministry. Nothing in the
904 Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry is intended to preclude a
905 Region from developing additional appropriate statements or procedures
906 pertaining to Standing within that Region as long as such statements are
907 consistent with the Order of Ministry.
908
- 909 d. For those engaged in non-Regional ministries responsibility for certification
910 of Standing and for annual review of that Standing within the Order of
911 Ministry is lodged with the General Commission on Ministry. For purposes
912 of this document, non-Regional ministries are defined as all ministries outside
913 the United States and Canada, those ministries engaged by and accountable
914 to one of the General Ministries of the church, ministries of the ecumenical
915 church and with interfaith organizations whose responsibilities extend beyond
916 one Region, whether in North America or abroad, and fulltime military, VA
917 and Federal Correctional chaplaincies. All other ministries are hereby defined
918 as Regional as determined by the primary ministry site. The General
919 Commission on Ministry has a credentialing function but is not an Ordaining
920 body; that is the province of Regions in cooperation with congregations. In

covenant with the Regions, the General Commission on Ministry will notify Regions about persons who reside in their Region and hold Standing with the General Commission on Ministry.

- e. Since Regional Ministers “serve as a sign of the ministry of the church in sacrament and service” and lead Regions in promoting “the concept of whole church, and have a primary role in advocating and supporting the denomination’s mission and vision” (*Marks of a Faithful Regional Church*, August, 2006), the responsibility for certification of Standing is jointly lodged with the Region where the Regional Minister serves and with the General Commission on Ministry. Annually, the Regional Minister will complete Standing forms required by both the Region and the General Commission on Ministry.

2. *Certification of Standing of those Commissioned and Ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

- a. By virtue of Commissioning or Ordination according to the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the minister becomes eligible for Standing.
- b. Standing for ministers in active service continues so long as the minister does and reports the following:
 - i. Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by Commissioning or Ordination, either in an occupation recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose or in a service recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose.
 - ii. Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal.
 - iii. Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the community of residence or active ministry where feasible.
 - iv. Adheres to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.
 - v. Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry. (II.A.2.)
 - vi. Seeks annual certification as requested by the Region where the ministry site is located or by the General Commission on Ministry, as appropriate. (See II.F.1.c.)

- 966 c. Standing may be continued at the discretion of the Region or the General
967 Commission on Ministry in cases of disability or other special hardships
968 affecting ministerial service, so long as other criteria for Standing are met.
969
- 970 d. The Region or the General Commission on Ministry will provide means by
971 which the Standing of all ministers in its care will be reviewed annually.
972 Consultation with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic
973 communities is encouraged regarding the Standing of persons of color.
974
- 975 e. When an Ordained Minister moves from a ministry position in one Region to
976 a ministry position in another Region, Standing in the Order of Ministry is
977 retained. Commissioned Ministers who move to another Region must contact
978 that Regional Minister to establish Standing in the new ministry position.
979 Responsibility for review and subsequent certification is assigned to the
980 Region in which the minister functions or to the General Commission on
981 Ministry. The minister shall notify both the former and new Regional
982 Ministers upon relocation.
983
- 984 f. When an Ordained Minister who is not actively seeking relocation moves
985 from a ministry position in one Region to another Region and is no longer
986 engaged in ministry, ministerial Standing will be provisionally retained for up
987 to one year, except in the case of retirement, until review and subsequent
988 certification is granted by the Region into which the minister has moved. The
989 Ordained Minister is required to initiate contact with both the former and new
990 Regional Ministers regarding his or her status.
991
- 992 3. *Certification of Standing of Retired Ministers, Commissioned or Ordained by the*
993 *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*
994
- 995 a. Upon retirement, Commissioned Minister retain Standing if they continue serving
996 in an approved ministry site. Standing of inactive retired Commissioned Ministers
997 may be granted at the discretion of the Region.
998
- 999 b. Ordained Ministers with Standing retain this Standing at the time of
1000 retirement.
1001
- 1002 i. A retired minister who intends to continue practice of ministry, whether on
1003 an occasional, part-time or full time basis must continue to seek annual
1004 certification of Standing as requested by the Region where the ministry site
1005 is located or by the General Commission on Ministry, as appropriate. (See
1006 II.F.1.c.)
1007
- 1008 ii. When Standing is granted, the active retired minister will be listed in the
1009 *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as active retired. (R-
1010 a)
1011
- 1012 iii. To be eligible for such Standing, the active retired minister

- 1013
- 1014 a) Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by
- 1015 Commissioning or Ordination, either in an occupation recognized by
- 1016 the church as ministerial in purpose or in a service recognized by the
- 1017 church as ministerial in purpose.
- 1018
- 1019 b) Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal.
- 1020
- 1021 c) Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- 1022 including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the
- 1023 community of residence or active ministry where feasible.
- 1024
- 1025 d) Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order
- 1026 of Ministry (II.A.2) and to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*
- 1027
- 1028 iv. Retired ministers who are no longer engaging in the practice of ministry on
- 1029 an occasional, part-time or full time basis may seek Standing as inactive
- 1030 retired ministers.
- 1031
- 1032 a) Retired ministers who are granted inactive status will continue to be
- 1033 listed in the *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as
- 1034 inactive, retired ministers (R-i).
- 1035
- 1036 b) Inactive retired ministers must continue to seek annual certification of
- 1037 Standing as requested by the Region where they reside.
- 1038
- 1039 c) To be eligible for such Standing, the inactive retired minister must
- 1040 continue to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* and must hold
- 1041 participating membership in a recognized Disciples congregation in the
- 1042 community of residence where feasible.
- 1043
- 1044 v. If an inactive retired minister decides to once again take up the practice of
- 1045 ministry, that minister must once again seek status as an active retired
- 1046 minister. (See 3.c.i-iv)
- 1047

1048 4. *Suspension or Termination of Ministerial Standing.*

1049

- 1050 a. Procedures leading to a review of Standing may be initiated by the minister,
- 1051 the Region, or the General Commission on Ministry when one or more of the
- 1052 following conditions are present:
- 1053
- 1054 i. The minister desires to be released from the practice of ministry, either
- 1055 temporarily or permanently.
- 1056
- 1057 ii. The minister requests transfer of credentials from the Christian Church
- 1058 (Disciples of Christ) to another denomination or non-Disciples
- 1059 congregation.
- 1060

- iii. The minister enters into a full-time occupation not recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose and/or no longer performs the functions of the office of a minister.
- iv. The minister fails to respond to a request for annual certification from the Region or the General Commission on Ministry.
- v. The minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry (II.A.2.) or fails to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*.
- vi. The retired minister fails to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*.
- b. When the Region or the General Commission on Ministry takes the initiative in the review of Standing, the procedures shall include:
 - i. Written notice to the minister that Standing is to be reviewed with the possibility of suspension or termination.
 - ii. Consultation with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic communities is encouraged regarding the termination of Standing of persons of color.
 - iii. A hearing by a committee appointed by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry.
- c. When the minister takes the initiative in the review, the procedures shall include:
 - i. Written notice to the Region or the General Commission on Ministry requesting that Standing be reviewed with the possibility of termination.
 - ii. A consultation with a committee appointed by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry.
- d. Standing may be granted to a minister whose Standing has been terminated or suspended by another Region or the General Commission on Ministry only upon the recommendation of the terminating or suspending body, whether that is a Region or the General Commission on Ministry.

5. *Surrender of Standing*

When a minister surrenders Standing, Standing can be granted again only upon the recommendation of the body to which Standing was surrendered, whether that is a Region or the General Commission on Ministry. The Region or General

1106 Commission on Ministry shall address any outstanding allegations of misconduct
1107 before reinstating Standing.

1108
1109 6. *Lapsed Standing*

1110
1111 When a minister's Standing has lapsed, Standing may only be granted after
1112 consultation with the body where the Standing was previously held, whether the
1113 Region or the General Commission on Ministry.

1114
1115 **G. Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries**

1116
1117 1. *Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ*

1118
1119 The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ
1120 recognize the Ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries
1121 of grace within that church and these ministries to be valid and full ministries of
1122 the one Church of Jesus Christ.

1123 The Ordained ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the
1124 United Church of Christ are reconciled. An Ordained minister with Ordained
1125 ministerial Standing in one church may function, whenever invited, and as
1126 established procedures permit, as an Ordained minister of the other.

1127 The designations "Ordained Ministerial Partner" and "Ordained Ministerial
1128 Partner Standing" manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition
1129 and reconciliation of the Ordained ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of
1130 Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

1131 a. Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained ministerial
1132 Standing in the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of
1133 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1134 b. Each member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds
1135 Ordained ministerial Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is
1136 an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the United Church of Christ.

1137 c. When a person no longer has Ordained ministerial Standing in either the
1138 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or the United Church of Christ, that
1139 person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner and Ordained Ministerial
1140 Partner Standing is nullified.

1141
1142 d. *United Church of Christ ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner*
1143 *Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

1144
1145 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an Ordained
1146 minister with Standing in the United Church of Christ who has been called to
1147 an Ordained ministry setting in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

- i. Once a United Church of Christ Ordained minister has demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to the Regional Commission on Ministry where the minister resides, that Ordained Ministerial Partner may be granted access to the Search and Call process in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is not given at this point in the process.
- ii. A United Church of Christ Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a call in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) applies for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the Region in which the Ordained minister's calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is reviewed by the Region for certification annually.
- iii. A United Church of Christ Ordained minister has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) only when serving a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calling body.
- iv. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall maintain Ordained ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ.
- v. Ordained ministerial Standing shall be held in the association in which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calling body is located.
- vi. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing shall maintain relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including (where feasible) holding associate membership in a recognized Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation in the community.
- vii. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in a Region has voting privileges in the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- viii. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall relate to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for his/her primary support in Ordained ministry.

- 1193 ix. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial
1194 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be
1195 accountable to the Region for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and
1196 to the United Church of Christ for Ordained ministerial Standing.
1197
- 1198 x. When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the United Church
1199 of Christ minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the
1200 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the association of the United
1201 Church of Christ in which the United Church of Christ minister's
1202 Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and
1203 invited to participate in the procedures.
1204
- 1205 xi. When a United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained
1206 Ministerial Partner Standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of
1207 Christ) accepts a call in another Region, he/she shall be subject to review
1208 and subsequent annual certification of Ordained Ministerial Partner
1209 Standing by the new Region.
1210
- 1211 Recognition of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing may be granted by the
1212 General Commission on Ministry to an Ordained minister with Standing in the
1213 United Church of Christ who serves as a National Officer or in a joint ministry
1214 position for both churches.
1215
- 1216 e. *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ministers with Ordained Ministerial*
1217 *Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ.*
1218
- 1219 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an Ordained
1220 minister with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who has
1221 been called to an Ordained ministry setting in the United Church of Christ.
1222 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical
1223 authorization to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in
1224 the United Church of Christ.
1225
- 1226 i. Once a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained minister has
1227 demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and
1228 practices of the United Church of Christ to the Association Committee
1229 where the minister resides, that Ordained ministerial partner may be
1230 granted access to the Search and Call process in the United Church of
1231 Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of
1232 Christ is not given at this point in the process.
1233
- 1234 ii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained Ministerial Partner who
1235 secures a call in the United Church of Christ applies for Ordained
1236 Ministerial Partner Standing to the Association in which the Ordained
1237 minister's calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained Ministerial
1238 Partner Standing is reviewed by the Association annually.

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- iii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained minister has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ only when serving a United Church of Christ calling body.
 - iv. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall maintain Ordained ministerial Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - v. Ordained ministerial Standing shall be held in the Region in which the United Church of Christ calling body is located.
 - vi. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing shall maintain relations with the United Church of Christ including (where feasible) holding associate membership in a recognized United Church of Christ congregation in the community.
 - vii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in an Association has voting privileges in the Association and Conference and is eligible for election as a delegate to General Synod or election as a member of any Covenanted Ministry Board in the United Church of Christ.
 - viii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall relate to the United Church of Christ for his/her primary support in Ordained ministry.
 - ix. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall be accountable to the Association for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for Ordained ministerial Standing.
 - x. When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ, the Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister's Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and invited to participate in the procedures.
 - xi. When a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ accepts a call in another Association, he/she shall be subject to review and

transfer of the Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the new Association.

Recognition of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing may be granted by the appropriate United Church of Christ Association to an Ordained minister with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who serves as a General Ministry Executive or in a joint ministry position for both churches.

2. *Persons Ordained in Other Churches.* Ministers Ordained by other denominations or non-Disciples congregations may be considered for recognition of Ordination and the granting of Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Provisional or temporary Standing may be granted to individuals applying for recognition of Ordination by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Responsibility for this process is lodged in the Region except in the case of Military Chaplains stationed overseas.
 - a. Provisional or temporary Standing of applicants may be granted upon the fulfillment of the following requirements:
 - i. Consultation with appropriate officials of the denomination or congregation from which the candidate transfers.
 - ii. Satisfactory investigation of personal and ministerial references and a criminal background check.
 - iii. Filing of appropriate forms with the Region to which the applicant is applying or with the General Commission on Ministry.
 - iv. Provisional or temporary Standing shall be reviewed annually by either the granting Region or the General Commission on Ministry.
 - b. Removal of the provisional or temporary conditions for Standing may be granted by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry upon fulfillment of the following requirements:
 - i. Membership in a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - ii. Demonstrated knowledge and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - iii. Fulfillment of the prerequisites and preparation, including educational attainment, for the Order of Ministry.
 - iv. One year minimum service under the supervision or mentoring of a Disciples of Christ minister with Standing.

v. Manifesting the personal qualifications for the order of ministry as listed in item II.A.2.

vi. Commitment to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

H. Ministerial Search and Call

1. *The General Principles.* Ministerial Search and Call is the term applied to the process developed to facilitate the calling of ministers who hold Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

a. The covenantal relationship among ministers, Congregations, Regions, and General Ministries of the church serves to build up the whole church of Jesus Christ. This document identifies general principles for ministerial Search and Call. The Office of Search and Call (Disciples Home Missions) administers these procedures of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

b. Freedom and responsibility are inherent in the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Congregations, Regions, and General Ministries of the church are accorded full freedom to issue ministerial calls within their own established or constitutional provisions. Ministers, likewise, are accorded full freedom to accept or reject a call to any particular service. All, however, covenant to work within the Order of Ministry in the interest of assuring an orderly and responsible system of Search and Call.

c. The Church is best served when Regional Ministers and National Pastors/Leaders of Racial Ethnic communities work together covenantally in the Search and Call process. Primary responsibility for the Search and Call process is lodged with the Regions. Regions are encouraged to consult the National Pastors/Leaders. National Pastors/Leaders may offer their counsel to the Regional Minister in Search and Call with the understanding that the primary responsibility for Search and Call lies with the Region.

2. *Operating Principles.*

a. Ordained ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will have complete and unhindered access to Search and Call of the church.

- 1375 b. Commissioned ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of
1376 Christ) will have access to Search and Call. Circulation of their Search and Call
1377 forms is normally limited to the Region for which their ministry is
1378 commissioned.
1379
- 1380 c. At the discretion of the Region of care candidates for Ordination may be
1381 granted authorized access to Search and Call.
1382
- 1383 d. Ordained Ministerial Partners with Standing in the United Church of Christ
1384 will have complete and unhindered access to Search and Call of the church
1385 once they have been qualified by a Region to seek a call.
1386
- 1387 e. Congregations, Regions, institutions, and General Ministries of the church
1388 will be provided assistance from the Office of Search and Call.
1389
- 1390 f. Any Search and Call forms in the Office of Search and Call will be open to
1391 the minister concerned except for confidential references for which a waiver
1392 has been signed.
1393
- 1394 g. Confidentiality, when assured to the persons completing the reference forms,
1395 will not be violated.
1396
- 1397 h. All candidates for Ordination with authorized access to Search and Call and
1398 Ordained Ministers with Standing may be considered for any ministerial
1399 position.
1400
- 1401 i. All candidates for Ordination with authorized access to Search and Call and
1402 Ordained Ministers with Standing shall have access to information regarding
1403 available ministerial openings in the church.
1404
- 1405 j. Every congregation, Region, educational or related institution, and General
1406 Ministry will strive to be open to the ministry of all persons putting aside
1407 prejudice and considering candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry.
1408
- 1409 3. *Responsibilities.* It is expected that all parties using Search and Call will abide by
1410 the established procedures of the Office of Search and Call.
1411
- 1412 a. Ministers. Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing in the
1413 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have the responsibility to seek the
1414 advice and counsel of the Region within which they hold Standing and to
1415 avail themselves of the resources of the Office of Search and Call. They have
1416 the freedom to accept or reject any call offered to them, and to negotiate
1417 whatever terms of call or service seem appropriate. In all matters, ministers
1418 will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
1419

- 1420 i. Ministers will provide information for a permanent file to the Office
1421 of Search and Call upon entry into the ministry of the Christian
1422 Church (Disciples of Christ) and maintain current data in that file.
- 1423 ii. For purposes of Search and Call, the minister will update the
1424 *Ministerial Profile* and complete reference requests, the *Ministerial*
1425 *Disclosure Form* and criminal background check. The Search and Call
1426 forms will be circulated as prepared and submitted by the minister.
- 1427 iii. Ordained ministers seeking a call shall utilize the process provided
1428 by the Office of Search and Call.
- 1429 iv. Commissioned ministers (seeking ordination and not seeking
1430 ordination) who desire to relocate shall request the assistance of
1431 the appropriate Regional or Area Ministers.
- 1432 v. Ministers will be as specific and honest as possible about any
1433 limiting factors in relocation, such as geographical preferences and
1434 salary requirements.
- 1435 vi. Ministers will instruct the Office of Search and Call to send
1436 reference forms to the persons whom they have identified as
1437 references. It is the responsibility of the minister to ensure that these
1438 persons complete and submit the reference forms. Once received,
1439 references will be held and submit the reference forms. Once
1440 received, references will be held in confidence from the minister if a
1441 waiver has been signed by the minister.
- 1442 vii. Ministers will negotiate with only one congregation at a time. A
1443 search committee and candidate are “in negotiation” when both
1444 agree that they will not discuss relocation with any other search
1445 committee or candidate until either party declares negotiations
1446 ended. It is the obligation of ministers to be specific with
1447 congregations about their degree of interest.
- 1448 viii. Ministers will stay in communication with search committees who
1449 have indicated interest, especially informing a congregation
1450 **immediately** when a decision has been made not to consider
1451 accepting a call to that particular congregation.
- 1452 ix. Ministers will contact the appropriate Region if they wish to be a
1453 candidate for a specific congregation in that Region and request that
1454 their name be submitted to the search committee.
- 1455 x. Ministers will not initiate Search and Call by contacting a
1456 congregation directly.
- 1457 xi. Ministers will advise the Region, if contacted directly by a
1458 congregation, should mutual interest in exploring a possible call be
1459 determined.
- 1460 xii. Ministers will advise the Region where currently located, the Region
1461 where moving, the Office of Search and Call, and the Pension Fund,
1462 as soon as a call has been accepted.
- 1463
- 1464

- b. Congregations. Within the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and according to *The Design*, congregations have the right and responsibility to seek and call their own leadership, to establish the terms of call, to undergird the ministry, and to effect terminations within their own procedures. In all matters, congregations will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church and are encouraged to seek the advice and counsel of the Region/Area.
- i. Congregations will advise Regions of impending vacancies and work within Regional procedures to receive advice and counsel in seeking ministerial leadership.
- ii. Congregations will have freedom to consider any minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or any Ordained Ministerial Partner who has been qualified by a Region to seek a call. The congregation should inform the Region and request biographical and reference material on all ministers it wishes to consider.
- iii. Congregations will keep the Region informed of all names being considered, including persons who apply directly to the congregation and persons whose names are suggested by members of the congregation.
- iv. Congregations will be fair and open in the consideration of all candidates putting aside prejudice and considering candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry.
- v. The congregational search committee will treat with confidentiality all information including personal biographical information and reference material, taking care to ensure that the information does not go beyond the search committee. When the call has been issued and accepted, all records relating to the minister called to serve, including any minutes of the search committee regarding that minister, shall be given to the Region for reasons of safekeeping and confidentiality. All records relating to other candidates in the search process shall be destroyed.
- vi. The congregational search committee will stay in communication with candidates whom the search committee has contacted. The search committee will inform, in a timely manner, candidates who are no longer being considered for the position.
- vii. The search committee will inform, in a timely manner, candidates who are no longer being considered for the position.
- viii. The congregational search committee may talk with a number of candidates concurrently but will negotiate with only one at a time. A search committee and candidate are “in negotiation” when both agree that they will not discuss relocation with any other candidate or search committee until either party declares negotiations ended. It is

- 1509 the obligation of the search committee to be specific with the
1510 minister about its degree of interest.
- 1511 ix. Congregations will issue a Letter of Call providing copies of the call for
1512 the congregation, the minister, the Region, and the Office of Search
1513 and Call.
- 1514 x. Congregations will reimburse the called candidate for the Criminal
1515 Background Check.
- 1516 xi. Congregations will provide a fair salary (including housing allowance –
1517 parsonage provision) within the capabilities of the congregation, as
1518 well as adequate benefits (pension, health insurance, continuing
1519 education, vacation, sabbatical and Social Security offset).
- 1520 xii. Congregations will provide for the reimbursement of church-related
1521 expenses to cover actual expenses of accomplishing ministry.
1522
1523
- 1524 c. Regions. Regions bear the primary responsibility for providing advice and
1525 counsel to both congregations and ministers in Search and Call. Regions will
1526 work collaboratively with General Racial Ethnic Ministries to address
1527 ministerial vacancies among their constituencies. Regions may delegate or
1528 share this responsibility with their areas, districts or other subdivisions. In all
1529 matters, Regions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole
1530 church.
1531
- 1532 i. Each Region will provide advice and counsel to congregations either
1533 at the request of the congregation or at the initiation of the Region
1534 when it is known that new ministerial leadership is being or will be
1535 sought.
- 1536 ii. Each Region will receive and review all ministerial search and call
1537 materials from the Office of Search and Call, giving special attention
1538 to those persons who have indicated an interest in their Region.
- 1539 iii. Each Region will refer all ministers within the Region who wish to
1540 seek relocation to the Office of Search and Call for entry into Search
1541 and Call.
- 1542 iv. Each Region will share with search committees Search and Call
1543 forms of a selection of candidates who appear to meet the
1544 requirements of the congregations and institutions with whom the
1545 Region is working.
- 1546 v. Each Region will encourage congregations to give fair and equal
1547 consideration to candidates putting aside prejudice and considering
1548 candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry.
- 1549 vi. Each Region will share with specific search committees Search and
1550 Call forms of any minister with Standing in the Christian Church
1551 (Disciples of Christ), or any Ordained Ministerial Partner qualified by

- 1552 a Region to seek a call, who requests consideration in that
1553 congregation.
- 1554 vii. Each Region will maintain a list of churches seeking ministerial
1555 leadership in the Region and make it available upon request to
1556 ministers with Standing.
- 1557 viii. If a Region is contacted by a search committee about a minister not
1558 actively seeking a call, the Region will inquire about that minister's
1559 interest. The minister has the right to know the name and location
1560 of the interested congregation. If said minister is interested, the
1561 Region will direct said minister to Search and Call.
- 1562 ix. Each Region will provide, upon request of ministers seeking a call, a
1563 list of congregations which have received their *Ministerial Profile*.
- 1564 x. Each Region will treat all Search and Call forms with strict
1565 confidentiality.
- 1566 xi. Each Region will communicate to the Office of Search and Call any
1567 formal actions and decisions to remove Standing for misconduct of
1568 a minister. The minister shall be informed and given a copy of the
1569 report which will also be placed in the minister's file. (See also J. 1.
1570 below.)
- 1571 xii. Each Region will refer all requests for assistance from congregations
1572 outside the Region to the appropriate Regional office.
- 1573 xiii. Each Region will regularly notify the Office of Search and Call of all
1574 relocations occurring within, to, or from the Region.
- 1575 xiv. Each Region will authorize access to Search and Call to
1576 a. candidates for ordination whose ordinations have been
1577 authorized in their Region and
1578 b. Ordained ministers from other denominations who have been
1579 given temporary recognition and who are in the process of
1580 transferring Standing to the Christian Church (Disciples of
1581 Christ).
- 1582 xv. Each Region will make information available about Regional staff
1583 vacancies through such channels as denominational websites,
1584 Regional publications, Disciples Home Missions, and other
1585 publications.
- 1586
- 1587 d. Disciples Home Missions. The Office of Search and Call at Disciples Home
1588 Missions is the primary locus of the ministerial records of the Christian
1589 Church (Disciples of Christ) related to Search and Call and is responsible for
1590 coordinating the Search and Call process of the church. In all matters,
1591 Disciples Home Missions will function within the covenantal relationship of
1592 the whole church.
- 1593
- 1594 i. The Office of Search and Call will maintain the permanent files of all
1595 ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

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- ii. The Office of Search and Call will maintain the Ministers Directory of the Year Book and Directory reflecting the current listing of ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as reported by the Regions and the General Commission on Ministry.
 - iii. The Office of Search and Call will receive, process and make available Search and Call materials of ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Qualified Ordained Ministerial Partners, and others authorized by Regions to Regions and General Ministries. The Search and Call forms will be circulated as prepared and submitted by the minister.
 - iv. The Office of Search and Call will collect and release reference material to Regions or General Ministries upon permission of the minister applying for Search and Call assistance.
 - v. The Office of Search and Call will protect the confidentiality of references when confidentiality has been promised.
 - vi. The Office of Search and Call will secure permission from any minister not actively seeking a call before releasing references to Regions or General Ministries. The minister has the right to know the name and location of the interested congregation. Information in the permanent file may be released without permission to Regional Ministers or to the Chair of the General Commission on Ministry in regard to ethical and conduct matters.
 - vii. The Office of Search and Call will secure, maintain, and release to Regions, and on request, to ministers with Standing, a list of staff vacancies in regions, general units of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ecumenical organizations.
 - viii. The Office of Search and Call will make available education and informational materials regarding Search and Call to congregations, Regions, institutions and General Ministries.
 - ix. The Office of Search and Call will refer all requests from congregations for names of potential candidates to the appropriate Regions.
 - x. The Office of Search and Call will refer all candidates for Ordination seeking student preaching/pastoral positions to the field education office of the appropriate institution or to the Region.
 - xi. The Office of Search and Call will share with Regions, and where appropriate, General Ministries, the record of any formal action by a Region's commission on the ministry or the General Commission on Ministry concerning the conduct of a minister who is entering Search and Call.
- e. Educational institutions. The undergraduate departments of religion and the theological educational institutions have unique responsibilities with respect to the search and call process of the church. Each relates to a limited number

of congregations in which pre-theological and theological students may be serving. The theological institutions have responsibility for relating their graduating students who are candidates for Standing as Ordained ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to Search and Call. In Search and Call, educational institutions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.

- i. Educational institutions will relate to congregations served by students in partnership with the Region in matters pertaining to the employment of students during their pre-theological and theological education.
- ii. Educational institutions will refer requests from congregations for search and call assistance that is outside the student field placement process to the appropriate Region.
- iii. Educational institutions will cooperate with Regions in orienting students to the Search and Call process of the church.

f. General Ministries. In all matters, General Ministries will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.

- i. General Ministries will refer all requests for Search and Call assistance to the Office of Search and Call and the appropriate Regional Minister. They will refer requests for candidates' names to the appropriate Region.
- ii. General racial/ethnic ministries will work collaboratively with Regions to address ministerial vacancies among their constituencies.

4. *Right of Review and Counsel.* The right to review and counsel is limited to perceived violations of Search and Call and should be initiated with the appropriate Region, institution or General Ministry. A request for review and counsel beyond the Region shall be to the General Commission on Ministry.

I. Ministerial Code of Ethics

Believing that Jesus is the Christ the 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

- 1684 • Dedicating time, strength, vitality, and energy for effective ministry
- 1685 • Growing in faith, knowledge, and the practice of ministry through the spiritual disciplines, study, continuing education, and service
- 1686 • Living a life that honors my commitments to my family, including the need for
- 1687 privacy and time together
- 1688 • Taking time for physical and spiritual renewal, recreation, and vacation
- 1689 • Being a faithful steward of God's gifts to me by managing time, talents, and
- 1690 financial resources responsibly and generously
- 1691 • Accepting responsibility for all debts that I incur
- 1692 • Keeping physically and emotionally fit and refraining from substance abuse and
- 1693 other abusive behaviors
- 1694 • Using my position, power, and authority in non-exploitive ways
- 1695 • Maintaining high moral standards in my sexual behavior
- 1696 • Regarding all persons with equal respect and concern and undertaking to minister
- 1697 impartially
- 1698
- 1699

1700 *Relationships to the Church which I Serve*

- 1701 • Nurturing and offering my gifts for ministry to the church
- 1702 • Calling forth and nurturing the gifts of others in the church and joining their gifts
- 1703 with mine for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ and the health of the church
- 1704 • Preaching and teaching the gospel without fear or favor and speaking the truth in
- 1705 love
- 1706 • Administering the sacraments/ordinances and services of the church with integrity
- 1707 and not for financial gain
- 1708 • Working cooperatively and collegially with those whom I serve in the particular
- 1709 ministry to which I have been called
- 1710 • Administering the corporate finances of the church with personal integrity
- 1711 • Refraining from accepting any gift which would compromise the church's ministry
- 1712 • Protecting confidences; covenanting to only tell those who need to know, what they
- 1713 need to know, when they need to know it
- 1714 • Acting to prevent and to report known or suspected cases of physical or sexual
- 1715 abuse or neglect
- 1716 • Encouraging and participating in the regular evaluation of my ministry and
- 1717 cooperating with the Region in the annual review of my ministerial Standing
- 1718 • Seeking the counsel of the Regional Minister and/or the Racial/Ethnic Executive
- 1719 Pastor as appropriate should divisive tensions threaten my relationship with those I
- 1720 serve
- 1721

1722 *Relationships to Ministry Colleagues*

- 1723 • Engaging in covenantal relationships with colleagues which involve nurture,
- 1724 discipline, family support, vigorous dialogue, mutual teaching/learning, and
- 1725 spiritual formation
- 1726 • Supporting colleagues in ministry and their families while not exploiting their
- 1727 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

Relationships 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 towards 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 which strengthen its unity, ministry, witness, and mission

J. Misconduct

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) understands ministerial misconduct to be activity which violates the covenantal character of the ministerial office as expressed in the Ministerial Code of Ethics. Investigation and adjudication of violations of the Ministerial Code of Ethics shall be the responsibility of the Region through the committee or Commission on Ministry or the General Commission on Ministry.

1. Reporting

Regions or the General Commission on Ministry will report formal actions and decisions to remove Standing for misconduct to the Office of Search and Call, Disciples Home Missions, and these actions will be communicated to all Regions.

2. Suspension of Standing

In extreme situations of alleged misconduct, ministerial Standing may be temporarily suspended by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry during the period of investigation and adjudication.

3. Sexual Misconduct

- a. It is the responsibility of each Region to have specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of ministers with Standing in the Region. Each

1774 Region will periodically and systematically review its definitions and
1775 procedures. It is the responsibility of the Region to communicate such
1776 definitions and procedures to ministers and congregations within the Region.
1777

- 1778 b. It is the responsibility of the General Commission on Ministry to have specific
1779 definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating,
1780 and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of ministers engaged in non-
1781 Regional ministries. The General Commission on Ministry will periodically
1782 and systematically review its definitions and procedures. It is the
1783 responsibility of the General Commission on the Ministry to communicate
1784 such definitions and procedures to ministers, ministries, and other
1785 organizations in the General and ecumenical church.
1786

1787 **K. Right of Appeal**

1788
1789 The General Commission on Ministry understands that the Right to Appeal extends to
1790 persons who, at the time of their appeal, are subject to a decision with adverse effect
1791 regarding Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing. The
1792 General Commission on Ministry will not consider any appeal if legal proceedings are
1793 pending or in process.
1794

1795 **L. Amendment Process**

1796
1797 The Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of
1798 Christ) may be amended two ways:
1799

- 1800 1. By a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the General Assembly present
1801 and voting, providing such amendments shall have been regularly filed 180
1802 days in advance of the meeting of the General Assembly and circulated among
1803 the congregations and Regions 60 days in advance of the General Assembly.
1804
1805 2. By a two-thirds vote of the members of the General Board of the Christian
1806 Church (Disciples of Christ) present and voting, providing such amendments
1807 shall have been mailed to the members of the General Board of the Christian
1808 Church (Disciples of Christ) at least 30 days prior to the time of the vote.
1809

1810
1811 Basic Policy Approved Louisville General Assembly 1971

1812 Section II on Candidacy approved Kansas City General Assembly 1977

1813 Section V on Ministerial Standing amended Anaheim General Assembly 1981

1814 Section VI on Ministerial Relocation amended Des Moines General Assembly 1985

1815 Section VII on Amendment Process amended Louisville General Assembly 1987

1816 Section V.C. on Recognition and Reconciliation of the Ordained Ministries of the
1817 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ amended

1818 Pittsburgh General Assembly 1995

1819 Section VIII on Sexual Misconduct amended Pittsburgh General Assembly 1995

1820 Theological Foundations and Revised Policies and Criteria approved Indianapolis
1821 General Assembly 2009
1822 Section II.H. on Ministerial Search and Call amended General Board 2009—————
1823 —————
1824 Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for The Ordering of Ministry, 2009, is
1825 an operating document of the General Commission on Ministry, effective August 2011.
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1833 Phone: 888/346-2631; Fax: 317/635-4426
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