POLICIES AND CRITERIA

FOR THE ORDER OF MINISTRY

CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO

(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Approved by Regional Church Council

28 October 2017
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry
in the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ) ........................................ 3

I. Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ........................................ 4
   A. The Order of Ministry ...................................................................................... 4
   B. Personal Qualifications for the Order of Ministry ............................................ 4
   C. Preparation for Service in the Order of Ministry ............................................. 5
   D. Church Membership for the Order of Ministry .............................................. 5

II. Membership of the COM ................................................................................... 7

III. The Commissioned Ministry ............................................................................ 9
   A. Description ..................................................................................................... 9
   B. Categories of Ministerial Commissions ............................................................ 9
      1. Annual Commission ................................................................................... 9
      2. Extended Commission ............................................................................... 9
   C. Steps to be Taken by the Candidate for Commissioning ............................... 10
   D. Procedure for Annual Renewal of Ministerial Commission ............................ 12
   E. Procedure for Maintenance of Standing Related to an Extended Commission .... 13
   F. Right of Appeal ............................................................................................ 13

IV. The Ordained Ministry ...................................................................................... 15
   A. Description ..................................................................................................... 15
   B. Education Requirements ................................................................................ 16
   C. Competencies ................................................................................................ 16
   D. Responsibilities Specifically Assigned to the Regions ..................................... 19
   E. Candidacy for Ordination ................................................................................ 20
      1. Definition ................................................................................................... 20
      2. The Procedures During Candidacy ................................................................ 20
      3. Commissioned Minister Status ................................................................... 20
      4. Preparation for Ordination .......................................................................... 20
      5. Requirements for Entering “In Care” Status .................................................. 22
      6. Requirements for Maintaining “In Care” Status ............................................ 22
   F. Conclusion of Candidacy ................................................................................ 23
   G. Maintenance of Standing ............................................................................... 25
H. Lapsed Standing............................................................................................................. 25
I. Right of Appeal .............................................................................................................. 26
V. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with
   United Church of Christ Partners ................................................................................ 27
   A. Definitions ................................................................................................................. 27
   B. Process for Granting Standing .................................................................................. 28
   C. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing ..................................................................... 29
VI. Persons Ordained in Another Tradition..................................................................... 35
   A. General Premise ........................................................................................................ 35
   B. Ecclesiastical Premise .............................................................................................. 35
   C. Personal Premise ....................................................................................................... 36
   D. Requirements and Procedures ................................................................................   37
VII. Clergy Ethics Policy and Procedures ....................................................................... 42
   A. Premise ....................................................................................................................... 42
   B. Definitions ................................................................................................................ 43
   C. Types of Clergy Misconduct and Evidence of Lack of Fitness
      for Ministry .................................................................................................................. 51
   D. Guidelines and Principles ......................................................................................... 52
   E. Procedure ................................................................................................................... 55
   F. Formal Review .......................................................................................................... 59
   G. Procedures for Ministerial Partners, Regional Staff, Violations Occurring in
      Another Region ........................................................................................................... 62
   H. Rights of Appeal ........................................................................................................ 66
   I. Lack of Cooperation by Accused Minister .................................................................. 66
VIII. Review of Procedures............................................................................................... 67
   Appendix 1 – Allegations of Ethical Misconduct Form ............................................... 68
   Appendix 2 – Pastoral Care Agreement/ Waiver Form ............................................... 69
   Appendix 3 – Response Team Support Agreement / Waiver Form............................... 70
   Appendix 4 - WGME Check List for Clergy Misconduct .............................................. 71
   Appendix 5 – Candidate Information ............................................................................ 73
   Appendix 6 – Confirmation of Receipt ......................................................................... 74
Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry
in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ohio

In the light of Scripture, and with reference to the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) [henceforth abbreviated CC(DoC)] in the United States and Canada, as affirmed at the Indianapolis General Assembly of July 2009, the Commission on Ministry of the CC(DoC) in Ohio (henceforth abbreviated COM) presents these Policies and Criteria for the work of our Region through the Order of Ministry in this expression of Christ's church. Each Region has the responsibility to work out its particular procedures to implement effective and collegial policies for their Order of Ministry. Through the COM, this document expresses the judgment of, and acts on behalf of, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ohio (henceforth abbreviated CCiO) regarding matters of the care and nurture of ministerial candidates and certification for ordination, commissioning, and ministerial standing.
I. **Ministry in the CC(DoC)**

A. *The Order of Ministry.* The Order of Ministry in the CC(DoC) comprises Commissioned Ministers and Ordained Ministers and offers gracious oversight to candidates for ministry in their period of preparation for ministerial office.

B. *Personal Qualifications for the Order of Ministry.*

The church expects to find within the persons received into the Order of Ministry personal fitness sufficient to the demands of the office:

1. Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices;
2. A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church;
3. An understanding of pastoral identity;
4. Capacity to engage in theological reflection;
5. Strong moral character and personal integrity;
6. Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for healthy ministry;
7. Care and compassion for all people with appropriate relational skills;
8. Responsible personal financial management;
9. Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God’s gifts;
10. Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry.

C. **Preparation for Service in the Order of Ministry.** Persons to be inducted into the Order of Ministry are to prepare themselves for the work. That preparation shall include:

1. Participation in the life and work of a congregation of Christians;
2. Breadth of theological study so that the candidate shows an understanding of the Christian faith, the Bible, the church, the history and polity of the CC(DoC), the world in theological perspective, and the Christian mission;
3. Professional study and supervised experience in the work of ministry, with emphasis upon that form of ministry in which the candidate hopes to serve;
4. Formation of responsible relations with, and concern for, the church as both community of faith and institution;
5. Growth in personal character, Christian insight, spiritual formation, and disciplined commitment to ministry;
6. Formation of ethical principles to guide professional relationships and personal conduct.

D. **Church Membership for the Order of Ministry.** The Candidate must be a participating member in a CC(DoC) congregation. For candidacy,
this membership should be in an established congregation, as congregations in formation have other priorities which make support and oversight difficult.
II. **Membership of the COM**

A. Members of the COM will be members of a local Disciple congregation and may be either clergy or lay.

B. The Regional Moderator in consultation with the Regional Pastor and President shall appoint a Chair of the COM who shall be approved by the Regional Church Council. The Chair shall serve a two-year term and may be reappointed twice (for a total of six [6] years). Following six (6) years of service, the Chair must take at least a two (2) year sabbatical from service on the COM.

C. The Chair, in cooperation with the Regional Moderator and the Regional Pastor and President, shall nominate members for the COM to the Regional Church Council. The Council shall approve members of the COM. Members shall serve for two-year terms and may be reappointed twice (for a total of six [6] years). Following six (6) years of service, members must take at least a two (2) year sabbatical from service on the COM.

D. Meetings of the Commission on Ministry and its subcommittees are confidential and therefore are not open meetings.

E. Unexcused absences from three (3) consecutive meetings may be accepted as a resignation by the COM Chair.

F. The COM shall be composed of the following working groups:
1. Ordination Team

a. This team will work with those who are seeking ordination, as outlined in section IV of this document.

b. The team will be composed of no less than three (3) nor more than fifteen (15) members. Diversity in clergy and laity, gender, ethnicity, and locality is expected.

c. The COM Chair in consultation with the Regional Moderator and the Regional Pastor and President will appoint a member of the Team to serve as Team Leader.

2. Commissioning Team

a. This team will work with those who are seeking commissioned status, as outlined in section III of this document.

b. The team will be composed of no less than three (3) nor more than fifteen (15) members. Diversity in clergy and laity, gender, ethnicity, and locality is expected.

c. The COM Chair in consultation with the Regional Moderator and Regional Pastor and President will appoint a member of the Team to serve as Team Leader.

3. Standing Team

a. This team will work with those who are seeking Ministerial Partnership Standing or to have their Ordination in Another Denomination recognized by the CC(DoC) as outlined in sections V and VI of this document and shall recommend continued standing
based upon the criteria of this document.

b. The team will be composed of no less than three (3) nor more than five (5) members. Diversity in clergy and laity, gender, ethnicity, and locality is expected.

c. The COM Chair in consultation with the Regional Moderator and the Regional Pastor and President will appoint a member of the Team to serve as Team Leader.
III. The Commissioned Ministry

A. 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.

A Ministerial commission is limited to the particular task and particular place for which the commission is given. The commission terminates when the person no longer performs that particular ministry.

B. Categories of Ministerial Commissions

1. Annual Commission. Every Commission granted on initial application will be for a period not to exceed one year.

2. Extended Commission.
   a. The extended commission may be given in special cases. It is granted at the discretion of the COM, only after at least three annual commission renewals have been completed.
   b. To maintain the nurture and oversight of an extended commission, these ministers need annually to create a two/three page paper evaluating the previous year’s ministry and goals for the coming year.
c. Every five years schedule a personal interview with the COM.

C. **Steps to be Taken by the Candidate for Commissioning**

1. Must be willing to be under the supervision of the COM.

2. Must acquire ministerial skills through study and growth experiences.

   During the first four years these expectations annually include:

   a. Maintain a mentor relationship with an ordained or commissioned Disciple colleague in which there is contact of some kind on a quarterly basis; and, participate in regionally sponsored meetings for Commissioned Ministers and Mentors.

   b. Read and discuss with Mentor four books from a recommended reading list.

   c. Earn three academic credit hours or three continuing education units (CEUs) during each year with courses, seminars, and other experiences.

3. Will participate as feasible in District, Regional, and/or General CC(DoC) events, including the Anti-Racism and Ethical Boundaries training workshops required of all members of the Order of Ministry in Ohio.

4. The Candidate for initial commissioning shall submit the following documents to the COM at least 30 days prior to the interview:

   a. An Application for Commissioned Ministry form, including a description of the particular service for which one wishes to be
b. Spiritual Autobiography.

c. A letter of recommendation from the official board of the congregation or church unit where the commissioned minister will serve, and job description where appropriate.

d. Letters of recommendation from at least two ministers acquainted with the Candidate, at least one of whom is a member of the Disciples of Christ.

e. Students enrolled in college or seminary shall provide a letter of recommendation from the Dean or other appropriate representative of the school.

f. A background check approved by the COM. Cost for the background check is to be paid by the candidate.

g. Psychological/Vocational Assessment through a COM approved provider.

5. A Candidate may be "in care" of the COM between the time of his/her first meeting with the COM and completion of the steps in 4; if this period extends beyond two years to assemble all the materials, the "in care" status may lapse with notification to the Candidate of his/her need to begin the process over again if the Candidate should wish to pursue Commissioned status. “In care” denotes an official relationship between the Candidate and the CCiO.
6. A representative from the Region may be included in a service of recognition and presentation of the commission if requested.

**Procedure for Annual Renewal of Ministerial Commission.**

1. The Commissioned Minister will meet with the COM annually and shall request an interview for the renewal of the commission. Failure to do so may result in a loss of the commission and standing.

2. The Commissioned Minister will provide an annual Renewal of Standing Form (available through the Regional Church Office.)

3. The Commissioned Minister will provide a six to eight page, double-spaced paper on the following:

   a. Second visit with COM - Concept of Ministry paper
   
   b. Third visit with COM - Ecclesiology Paper
   
   c. Fourth visit with COM - Reflections on Christian Church History and Polity
   
   d. Guidelines for these papers will be provided in a separate document.

4. CC(DoC) Disclosure and Release Form (available through the Regional Church Office.)

5. Three evaluation report forms to be completed at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the Commission. These reports are to be completed by the Commissioned Minister, the Mentor, and a representative of the congregation or sponsoring body.
6. The COM shall review the report forms and papers, meet with the
Commissioned Minister at her/his scheduled time, and communicate
its action to the Commissioned Minister, the Mentor, and the
sponsoring body. If approval is given, a certificate shall be issued.

D. **Procedure for Maintenance of Standing related to Extended
Commission.**

1. The Commissioned Minister will provide an annual Renewal of
   Standing form.
2. Every five years the Commissioned Minister will schedule a personal
   interview with the COM (at least 30 days prior to the meeting).
3. The Commissioned Minister will provide the COM, at least 30 days in
   advance of renewal appointment, the following documents:
   a. Updated Biographical Data form;
   b. Copy of current job description;
   c. Self-evaluation and an update on significant activities since last
      appointment;
   d. Congregational evaluation of the Commissioned Minister's
      Ministry; and,
   e. Current CC(DoC) Disclosure and Release Form.

E. **Right of Appeal**

1. Candidates may appeal any decision of the COM concerning
   themselves for re-hearing before the COM.
2. Further appeal of the decision of the COM can be made to the Executive Committee of the CCiO for final decision.

3. No appeal will be considered if legal proceedings are pending or in process.
IV. The Ordained Ministry

A. **Description:** By Ordination the church recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in calling particular persons to servanthood in Christ; accepts their ministry in and for the CC(DoC) 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 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 most current Ministerial Code of Ethics of the CC(DoC).

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

Ecumenically called a Ministry of Word and Sacrament, among others, this ministry may include pastors, educators, ecumenical leaders, recognized congregationally or non-congregationally based community ministers, chaplains, pastoral counselors, and ministers who serve in the General and Regional church.
B. **Educational Requirements.**

1. There are two educational tracks in preparation for Ordination: a seminary track (ST) and, in special circumstances as approved by the COM, an apprentice track (AT).

2. Those in the ST 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.

3. Those in the AT 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 COM of the Region in which they are in care.

C. **Candidates for Ordination** are expected to follow the ST, unless, in consultation with the COM, it is determined by the COM that their economic, linguistic, vocational, ethnic, or familial circumstances make the apprentice track more appropriate. Regardless of the educational track chosen, the COM expects those it recommends for ordination to demonstrate competency in the following areas of ministerial practice, listed alphabetically:

1. **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.

2. **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.

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

4. **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.

5. **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.

6. **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.

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

8. **Evangelism:** Be able to motivate congregational members to share their faith through word and action.
9. **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.

10. **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.

11. **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.

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

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

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

16. **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.

D. **Responsibilities Specifically Assigned to the Regions**

1. Establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Ordination.

2. Evaluate the educational experience of candidates for an Apprentice Track program which would include a high school diploma or its equivalent and some post-secondary educational experience.

3. Consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic communities (e.g., NAPAD, National Convocation, Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries) whenever considering a racial/ethnic applicant for the Apprentice Track.

4. Bring all applicants "in care" (see section IV.E.5).

5. Offer Commissioned Minister status if candidate’s ministry situation warrants.

6. Provide for their nurture.

7. Be in relationship with the sponsoring congregation and the candidate’s educational setting.

8. Authorize and supervise the act of Ordination.
9. Facilitate continuing education including training in Ethical Boundaries and Anti-Racism.

E. Candidacy for Ordination

1. **Definition:** Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual is in care with the COM and involved in a specified program of study and formation in preparation for Ordination. It is intended to be at a minimum a two- to three-year process that guides and discerns a candidate's preparation and readiness for ministry. This process preferably begins when a person declares the intention to seek Ordination through the CC(DoC) and her/his congregation affirms that intention.

2. **The Procedures During Candidacy.** The candidate shall seek Ordination through a discernment process established by the Region in which the candidate is "In Care." That preparation may include authorization as a Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination). The candidate may complete the educational requirements for either track without serving as a Commissioned Minister.

3. **Commissioned Minister Status.** Separate from candidacy, Commissioned Minister status authorizes one to perform ministry on behalf of the CC(DoC). The granting of candidacy may or may not meet all legal requirements for the performance of marriages.

4. **Preparation for Ordination.** Candidates for Ordination are to
prepare themselves spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically for their ministry. The following areas support and enhance the performance of an applicant’s chosen ministry:

a. Membership in a Disciples congregation;

b. Participation in the life and work of a congregation of Christians;

c. Breadth of theological study so that the candidate shows an understanding of the Christian faith, the Bible, the Church Universal, the history and polity of the CC(DoC), and the formation and function of Christian mission;

d. Professional and ecclesiological study plus supervised experience in the work of ministry, exhibiting competencies in that form of ministry in which the candidate hopes to serve;

e. Formation of responsible relations with and concern for the church, both as communities of faith and as institution;

f. Growth in personal character, Christian insight, spiritual formation, wellness and disciplined commitment to ministry; and,

g. Formation of and adherence to ethical principles to guide professional relationships and personal conduct as outlined in the most current edition of the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the CC(DoC).
5. **Requirements for Entering "In Care" Status**

The COM will take "In Care" as potential candidates for Ordained Ministry, persons who:

a. Have formally requested an interview with the COM by contact with the Regional Pastoral staff or the Chair of the COM;

b. Have submitted to the COM at least 30 days prior to the interview:
   i. COM Candidate Information (Appendix 5);
   ii. A letter of endorsement from the applicant’s church of membership stating its acceptance, approval, and support of the applicant, and the applicant’s personal qualifications for ministry (see section I. B. above); and, if appropriate, an expression of the congregation’s willingness to serve as the candidate’s sponsoring congregation.
   iii. A Letter of Support from the candidate’s home Regional Minister;
   iv. An Official Transcript from the baccalaureate degree granting college or university;
   v. A Spiritual Autobiography;
   vi. The Receipt of the Acknowledgement Card for Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ). (Appendix 6)
6. **Requirements for Maintaining "In Care" Status**

   a. Annual interviews with the COM.

   b. Submit to the COM at least 30 days prior to interview:

      i. A Concept of Ministry paper at the second meeting, a Concept of Church paper at the third meeting, and a paper on Disciples history, polity and ethos following conclusion of course work on history and polity;

      ii. A written report from the candidate's participation in a Vocational Discernment and Assessment Program approved by the COM, normally at the second interview.

   c. A biographical update.

   d. The Candidate shall keep the COM informed of her/his current residence as well as any changes in school or vocational plans.

F. **Conclusion of Candidacy.**

1. Candidacy is concluded by Ordination, voluntary withdrawal by the candidate, or decision of the COM to terminate candidacy.

   Completion of candidacy within seven years is recommended, but may be extended at the discretion of the COM.

2. Completion of a prescribed program of study (Apprentice Track) or the receipt of a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an institution of higher education accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (Seminary Track) does not guarantee Ordination.
3. Ordination Interviews.

a. An ordination interview with the COM will be scheduled upon completion of educational requirements. The interview is approximately three hours in duration. Six weeks prior to the interview the following information must be received by the Regional Church Office for the COM to review:

i. A sermon manuscript personally prepared and delivered.

ii. A personal statement of faith or credo.

iii. For ST candidate, a final transcript. For AT candidate, a statement from the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) indicating candidate’s educational readiness for the ordination interview.

iv. For ST and AT candidates, a completed “Candidate Educational and Experiential History” regarding the sixteen (16) competencies.

b. Following the COM ordination interview, the candidate will have an additional interview with the Board of Elders from the candidate’s sponsoring church. A letter will be sent to the Regional Church Office indicating the results of this interview.

c. Successful completion of these interviews will be required before an ordination date is determined.

d. The act of Ordination will be under the authorization and
guidance of the sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Pastor or the Regional Pastor’s designee presiding.

Guidelines for this service are available from the Regional Church Office.

e. After the Ministerial Code of Ethics is signed, the signed Ordination document will be issued by the Region following the act of Ordination.

G. Maintenance of Standing

Those who have Ordained Minister Status with the CCiO shall be required to:

1. Annually complete a “Request for Standing” usually provided on the Region’s website;

2. Complete and maintain records of some form of continuing education;

3. Complete a regionally approved Ethical Boundaries and Anti-Racism training every five (5) years.

4. Retired clergy, both active and inactive, need to adhere to guidelines published in Theological Foundations and Policies for the Ordering of Ministry, as amended.

H. Lapsed Standing

Formal request for re-instatement of standing should be made to the Regional Pastor and/or the Chair of the COM. The Regional Pastor and the Chair will confer to see if standards are met. If policies are met re-instatement of standing when standing has lapsed without cause is
granted. Counsel with the COM may be requested if there is a question about policy requirement or other circumstances at the discretion of the Regional Pastor and/or Chair.

I. **Right of Appeal**

1. Ordination Candidates or Ordained Clergy may appeal any decision of the COM concerning themselves for re-hearing before the COM.

2. Further appeal of the decision of the COM can be made to the Executive Committee of the Regional Council of the CCiO for final decision.

3. No appeal will be considered if legal proceedings are pending or in process.
V. **Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with United Church of Christ** Partners

A. **Definition.** Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is the authorization conferred on an Ordained Ministerial Partner to exercise all the prerogatives of the ordained ministry of the CCiO. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is conferred by regions on Ordained Ministerial Partners serving within a region of the CC(DoC).

1. To be an ordained Ministerial Partner and to have Standing within a judicatory are not the same. All ordained ministers with standing in the United Church of Christ are at the same time Ordained Ministerial Partners in the CC(DoC); all ordained ministers with standing in the CC(DoC) are Ordained Ministerial Partners of the United Church of Christ. These affirmations are unique to the ecumenical partnership between the two denominations. The validity of the partner church’s ministry is affirmed. Ordained Ministerial Partners may be invited to fulfill occasional acts of ministry in the partner denomination without further authorization.

2. Those granted Standing by COM retain full standing as ordained ministers in the United Church of Christ. The Ordained Ministerial Partner will normally remain a participant in the pension and health care programs of the Pension Boards – United Church of Christ.
B. **Process for Granting Standing**

a. Two decisions are required of the COM in this authorization process:

i. To determine that the Ordained Ministerial Partner is qualified to seek a call in the CC (DoC) because s/he has demonstrated the prerequisite knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the CC (DoC);

ii. To grant Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing using the normal and customary procedures for granting ministerial standing to CC (DoC) ordained ministers. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is customarily granted upon:

   a. confirmation that the call received is to a ministry that the region recognizes as a valid ministry of the CC (DoC),
   
   b. a letter of call is received by all parties including the Regional Church Office,
   
   c. that the church membership has been or will be transferred to a local congregation of the CC (DoC). Standing is normally celebrated by the Installation of the Ordained Ministerial Partner by the Regional Church.

b. Although a region has the right to deny Ordained Ministerial Standing (with cause), it is normally predisposed with favor toward the prior decisions of the associations of the UCC. The examination of the
Partner, beyond knowledge of and appreciation for the CC (DoC), is therefore limited to questions about the call and its terms and about local church membership. Standing in the UCC is not relinquished in order to have standing in the CC (DoC).

C. **Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing**

1. The granting of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing recognizes that the associations of the UCC and the CC (DoC) make the ordination decisions on behalf of the whole church, using similar criteria. The important differences from transfer or Ordained Ministerial Standing are that knowledge of, and appreciation for, the CC (DoC) must be confirmed before the Partner seeks a call, and or prior standing in the UCC is continued along with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the CC (DoC).

2. Ordained Ministerial Partners with Standing have parity with ordained ministers of the CC (DoC). They enjoy the same rights, shoulder the same responsibilities, exercise the same prerogatives, and are to be treated with the same processes.

3. **Process Toward Seeking Ordained Partner Standing**

   a. **Inquiry and Exploration**

   Ordained Ministerial Partners (or UCC students in care approved for ordination pending call) who desire to seek a call in the CC

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*Adopted 28 October 2017*
(DoC) usually make initial contact with a regional staff person in the area in which they reside in order to explore policies and procedures for seeking call and obtaining Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the CC (DoC).

The staff person normally shares the relevant documents regarding candidates for ordination, including: The Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), documentation of completion of regionally approved training on Ethical Boundaries and Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation, and The Ministerial Code of Ethics (available at http://disciples.org/gcom/resources/)

The staff person facilitates referral to the appropriate team of the COM.

b. **Preparation and Documentation**

The Ordained Ministerial Partner may need preparation to demonstrate requisite knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the CC (DoC). The COM may appoint an advisor to assist in this preparation. Possibilities include a seminary course of study, tutorial, or independent study, attending district/cluster, regional, and General Assembly meetings, and written papers and/or oral presentations.

Documentation presented to the COM includes:
i. A formal letter requesting permission to seek a call in the CC (DoC);

ii. A letter of verification of Ordained Ministerial Standing and current status, including disciplinary history, from the association of the UCC where the Partner holds ordained ministerial standing;

iii. Documents that demonstrate or attest to knowledge of, appreciation for, the CC (DoC) may include transcript, certificate of study, written paper, or advisor’s report.

iv. Consistent with its customary practice of granting ordained ministerial standing, the COM requests the Ordained Ministerial Partner provide information regarding the individual’s background and history in ministry as well as written permission for the COM to consult with references and make further inquiry.

c. **Qualifying Interview**

The primary purposes of the interview with the COM are to:

i. develop relationships;

ii. celebrate partnership;

iii. insure adequate knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the CC (DoC); and,

iv. recommend to the region that the Ordained Ministerial Partner
be deemed qualified to seek recognition by the CC (DoC) unless there are reservations.

d. **Options before the COM** include:

i. **YES** – the COM believes the Ordained Ministry Partner is qualified to seek a call. The COM is disposed to support the granting of Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing when the Partner applies after securing an approved call.

ii. **YES, BUT** – The COM believes additional preparation is needed. The COM and the Ordained Ministry Partner together determine the steps to be taken to satisfy the COM concerns. When the COM is satisfied that these steps have been taken, the Partner may begin to seek a call in the CC (DoC).

iii. **NO, BUT** – The COM has serious reservations, but believes additional preparation is needed. A consultation is scheduled with the Ordained Ministerial Partner, the Ordained Ministry Partner’s Conference or Association Minister, and representatives from the COM to discuss these reservations and how to proceed.

iv. **NO** – The COM has serious reservations and does not believe the Ordained Ministry Partner is qualified to seek a call in the CC (DoC). The COM informs the Ordained Ministry Partner of
its decision.
e. **Securing a CC (DoC) Ministerial Profile**

Once qualified to seek a call, the Ordained Ministerial Partner is eligible to have a CC (DoC) Ministerial Profile on file and distributed by the Center for Leadership and Ministry of Disciples Home Missions.

f. **Seeking and Accepting a Call**

Procedures for an Ordained Ministerial Partner in seeking a call are the same as those used by ordained ministers of the CC (DoC). Once a call is secured, the Letter of Call is sent to the region where the call is located. If the call is to a local congregation of the CC (DoC), the Partner transfers membership to that local congregation.

g. **Maintaining, Transferring, and Ending Standing**

Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing has parity with Ordained Ministerial Standing and is subject to the same conditions for review and discipline, in addition that the association in which the Partner has ordained ministerial standing in the UCC is kept informed of and invited to participate. If a person who has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing accepts a call in another region, the person applies for transfer of standing to the new region.
If a person with Ordained Ministerial Standing resigns from a call in the CC (DoC) and does not have another valid call in the CC (DoC) Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing ends, but the Partner remains qualified to seek a call in the CC (DoC).

When a person no longer has Ordained Ministerial Standing in the UCC, that person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner and Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is nullified.
VI. **Persons Ordained in Another Tradition**

A. **General Premise.** Ordination to Ministry is a sacred act of the church to sustain the witness of the faith community by persons ‘set apart’ for this purpose. By faith, we affirm that God is in the process of every valid ordination. It is not our task to question the ordination of sisters and brothers of other denominational traditions. COM is to examine the credentials to determine the level of fitness of the individual for ministry in the particular faith community known as the CC (DoC). The issue being considered is STANDING not ORDINATION. A decision to affirm or deny standing to any individual must come after careful and prayerful consideration of the qualifications and motivations of the person for ministry in our tradition. It is not a judgment of the capacity for ministry as validated by other traditions. By the nature of this process, each individual will be evaluated using the standards reflected throughout this document.

B. **Ecclesiastical Premise**

For a clergy person to seek to move from one faith community to another is a major decision with life changing implications. It is more than a ‘career move’ or a matter of convenience in meeting personal needs. To hold standing as an ordained minister of the CC (DoC) is to incur mutual obligations on the part of the individual minister and
Standing is an ecclesiastical function to affirm and support the clergy in the ministry to which s/he is called, as well as the faith community which calls the individual to ministry. Maintaining a balanced support for both clergy and the church is the task which the CC (DoC) entrusts to the COM.

C. **Personal Premise**

1. Ordination and standing involve more than an individual perception of ‘call.’ A call to ministry includes at least these four elements:
   i. The call to be a Christian;
   ii. The ‘secret call’ ... whereby the person feels directly summoned by God to take up the work of ministry;
   iii. The providential call which comes through the equipment of a person with talents necessary for the exercise of the office;
   iv. The ecclesial call extended to a person by some community or institution of the church to engage in the work of ministry.

2. When there is a change in any one of these elements of being called to ministry, such as seeking an ecclesiastical call, it is incumbent on that person to examine all of the elements. Therefore, seeking standing in a denomination other than where the individual received and expressed his/her calling requires rigorous self-examination. The evaluation instituted by the COM
is intended to produce a responsible process to facilitate further growth in ministry for both the individual and the church.

3. Such a process requires time. It is neither wise nor appropriate for any person who is a minister in another denomination to expect to receive full standing immediately. Even if the qualifications and circumstances are such that the granting of standing is a ‘mere courtesy’ both the person and the profession benefit when the qualifications and circumstances are examined with care. To expect a minimum period of two years is a measure of the seriousness with which we take our responsibility.

4. The COM must work within the structures and procedures of the CCiO and *The Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. Within these limits, the COM seeks to be pastoral to the individual seeking standing, responsible to the CCiO, and faithful to the tradition of the community to which s/he may be called.

D. **Requirements and Procedures for Clergy Standing for those Ordained in Other Traditions**

1. **Requirements.** Ordained ministers from other denominations seeking standing must meet the same standards of preparation and fitness as any ordained minister who is a member of the CCiO. These standards are specified in this policy and normally include a
Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological seminary or institution of higher education; endorsement by the COM; and, sponsorship by a Disciple congregation.

2 Procedure

a. Ordained ministers of other denominations seeking standing need to:
   i. Read Policy and Criteria for the Order of Ministry to identify the procedures for seeking standing in the CC (DoC)
   ii. Schedule an interview with the Regional Pastor and President or an Associate Regional Pastor. The candidate must understand that issues of confidentiality are balanced with concerns of collegiality, and the Regional Pastor may share data learned in this interview process as s/he deems appropriate. The content of this interview will include an exploration of motive, need, realistic opportunities for placement with a Disciple congregation; relationships with judicatory officials of the present denomination; difference of theology, ecclesiology, and/or methodologies in ministry; and any other questions or recommendations deemed appropriate following the Regional Pastor’s interview.

Following the interview, the Regional Pastor will schedule an initial interview with the COM.
b. At the time of the interview, the candidate will submit a statement concerning his/her understanding of ministry within the CC (DoC). This statement should include a description of the pilgrimage of faith that has resulted in the request for standing among Disciples, the meaning of ‘Church,’ the meaning of ‘Ministry,’ and the role and authority of ministers. It should also reveal the candidate’s understanding of Disciples polity, structure, and concepts of ministry.

c. The candidate shall prepare documentation of his/her ordination including a personal information form; references from clergy and laity who have observed the candidate’s ministry, and evidence that s/he is a minister in good standing with the present denomination. Contact with the judicatory official of the candidate’s present denomination may be delayed until after the initial interview with the Regional Pastor, but contact and references will be sought before standing is approved.

d. Normally before the second interview with the COM the candidate shall submit a recent psychological evaluation from a qualified provider approved by the COM. The candidate shall pay the cost of this service. The candidate is required to sign a
release form so a summary of information may be sent to the COM.

e. In a time frame of at least two years, the candidate will follow the course of action proposed by the COM, which should include:

i. Suggested reading materials;

ii. Interviews with established Disciple leaders; and,

iii. Participation in events, such as Regional or General Assemblies, workshops, leadership events, district/area/cluster meetings

f. Completing the process of standing does not, in itself, assure a position in ministry within the CC (DoC). The ‘call’ system of the CC (DoC) leaves the congregation the right to select its own pastor. The Regional Pastor provides consultation and assistance in every way possible, but the selection of a pastor is within the authority of the congregation. Nor does a congregation, in itself, assure recognition of standing, since this function is delegated to the Region.

g. Provisional standing may be granted for two years to allow the minister to complete the process for standing.

h. Following a time of discernment, an interview with the COM, and a period of directed study, there will be a second interview with the COM. The progress of the candidate will be evaluated.
i. At the conclusion of two years of provisional standing, a third interview with the COM will be held. Upon recommendation by the COM, standing may be granted.
VII. Clergy Ethics Policy and Procedures

A. **Premise:** These policies and procedures are intended to set forth the Region's understanding of the ethical behavioral standards expected of our clergy with standing, and to implement the standards of the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry, as adopted for CCiO.

The whole church receives the call of God to embody and carry forth Christ's ministry in the world. For the sake of the mission of Christ Jesus and the most effective witness of the Gospel, and in consideration of their influence as representatives of Christ, ministers should be willing to dedicate themselves completely to the highest ideals of Christian life. Furthermore, they are called to exercise responsible self-control in personal habits, and to be persons in whom the community can place trust and confidence. Violation of the ministerial relationship by unethical behavior is a sin against God and an offense to the Church.

B. **Definitions**

1. **Clergy**

   a. The term clergy refers to all ministers, ordained or commissioned, who have standing in the CC(DoC) order of ministry, and for this policy, who minister within CCiO.

   b. Standing is defined in the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry...
Ministry as a recognition and affirmation of a minister's engagement in a recognized ministry and accountability therein. Such endorsement is a privilege, not a right, and is dependent on fulfillment of criteria outlined in this document.

c. One's personal fitness for maintaining standing in ministry involves sufficiency for the demands of the office including mental and physical capacities, emotional stability and maturity, and standards of morality. Fitness for ministry is characterized by:

i. Capacity to make informed and faithful articulation of Christian faith;

ii. Openness to personal spiritual formation and growth;

iii. Affirming, flexible, relational style; ability to cultivate and maintain strong relations;

iv. Ability to handle conflict well, accept differences and admit weaknesses;

v. Ability to care for individuals and the wider community;

vi. Responsibility in task fulfillment;

vii. Willingness to serve without claiming the deference or appreciation of others;

viii. Visible commitment to accepted standards of honesty, fidelity in relationships, and the refusal to exploit or be
ix. Commitment to a non-addictive, healthy lifestyle.

2. **Ethical Misconduct**

   a. Clergy misconduct is inappropriate behavior by clergy that includes but is not limited to: fiscal malfeasance, violation of confidentiality, destructive misuse of substances or other addictive behaviors, abuse of power, or continuous flagrant violation of the Ministerial Code of Ethics.

   b. Of a sexual nature - Clergy misconduct involving sexual contact and/or sexual harassment in which the minister takes advantage of the vulnerability of others, particularly those directly served by the minister, including employees and colleagues, by causing, encouraging, manipulating or participating in sexual contact or sexual harassment. Sexual contact is not limited to sexual intercourse. Generally, sexual harassment is understood as inappropriate attention, touching, kissing, hugging, or verbal harassment of a sexual nature, or creating an environment where such conduct is condoned or ignored.

   c. Clergy should act in a responsible manner in their sexual conduct - within the realms of a clergy person’s personal life, adultery and gross promiscuity can be construed as clergy...
misconduct as defined in the Ministerial Code of Ethics.

d. Questions about clergy performance that are related to a congregation's personnel policies are not considered subjects of ethical misconduct.

3. **Allegation**

A complaint of professional clergy ethical misconduct will be documented and submitted to the Working Group on Ministerial Ethics (*hereafter abbreviated* WGME) using the Allegation of Ethical Misconduct Form (Appendix #1)

4. **Official Disciplinary Review**

"Official Disciplinary Review" is defined as any allegation that involves a review with the WGME. If resulting actions are censure, suspension, or termination of standing, a minister
must mark "yes" on question 1 on the "Search and Call" disclosure form.

5. **Complainant**

A complainant is the person who brings the complaint or allegation of ethical misconduct to the attention of the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) and/or Chair of the WGME. In this document, complainant is understood to include the victim if that is a different person than the one bringing the complaint. If more than one person brings the same accusation, it includes all persons sharing in bringing such allegation. If there are multiple allegations, which are substantially the same, they may be handled under this policy in one proceeding. An adult next-of-kin may bring an allegation on behalf of a minor child.

6. **Working Group on Ministerial Ethics (WGME)**

WGME consists of three to five (3-5) members appointed by the Regional Moderator in consultation with the Regional Pastor with recommendation by COM. Diversity in clergy/laity, gender, ethnicity, and locality is expected. Term of service is four years. Renewal is permissible, but rotation of members is expected. The WGME is a specifically trained committee of COM, whose task is to address any allegation of clergy ethical misconduct, which is
brought to the region. The committee will maintain specialized skills as well as awareness of the law through annual training.

7. **Response Team**

The Regional Moderator in consultation with the Regional Pastor shall appoint eight (8) people as a pool of individuals trained to serve on a Response Team. Diversity in clergy/laity, gender, ethnicity, and locality is expected. Term of service is four years. Renewal is permissible but rotation of members is expected. The functions of the Response Team are two-fold:

a. **Investigative** - to gather all information pertinent to the case from all relevant sources related to the allegation. An Investigative Team of three shall be appointed by the WGME Chair in consultation with the Regional Pastor (or designated staff). One member will be appointed by the Chair to serve as leader. The Investigative Team will be comprised of females and males, clergy and laity. The assigned Investigative Team will report its findings to the Chair of the WGME and be a resource throughout adjudication.

b. **Supportive** - the remaining members of the Response Team are eligible to be support persons for the complainant and the accused clergy.
Those selected as support persons shall thereafter not communicate with the assigned Investigative Team.

i. Support Persons are people who provide support and assist the complainant and the accused minister through the investigative process.

ii. The role of a Support Person is not to speak for the complainant or the accused minister, but to help them understand their rights within the investigative process and to be a supportive presence in any meetings.

iii. CCiO maintains a pool of Support Persons knowledgeable in the investigative process and ethics policies.

iv. The complainant and accused minister may each choose a Support Person from this pool. If the right to a Support Person is declined, a waiver of this right shall be signed (Appendix # 3).

v. Support Persons cannot be members of the WGME, the Executive Committee of the Regional Council, or the Investigative Team for that allegation.

Adopted 28 October 2017
8. **Regional Pastor and President**

The Regional Pastor and President (or designated staff) has important roles in maintaining the integrity of the review process and providing pastoral oversight whenever an allegation of misconduct is filed. It is the responsibility of the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) to:

a. uphold the highest standards of the office of Christian minister;

b. under extraordinary circumstances the Regional Pastor and President (and or her/his designee) may temporarily suspend a minister's standing;

c. offer to arrange for pastoral care for the complainant and the accused minister; a pastoral care document of agreement or waiver shall be signed (Appendix #2);

d. meet, as soon as practical, with the leadership of the affected congregation and serve as the interpreter of the process;

e. forward any further written information to the WGME and the accused minister in a timely fashion;

f. maintain the procedural file of each proceeding under this policy;
g. communicate decisions of the WGME to appropriate parties;

h. arrange regular training for the WGME and the pool of Response Team persons;

i. be an ex-officio participant in the proceedings, with voice and without vote.

9. **Permanent File**

A permanent file on each clergy who has, or has had, standing with the CC(DoC) is kept by the Office of Christian Vocations of the Christian Church, in its offices in Indianapolis, Indiana. It is available to the Regional Ministers, who use discretion in deciding what materials from this file are made available to search committees and other responsible bodies.

10. **Procedural File**

The procedural file is a separate file that is the property of the WGME. It includes the initial allegation, the response of the accused minister, a written log of the proceedings, all documentation that is generated or collected in the course of the process, a list of the actions of the committee, and the agreements with the involved parties. It is the responsibility of the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) to maintain the file in
a limited access area of the Regional Office. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff) will determine who has access to it.

11. **Confidentiality**

The purpose of confidentiality is to ensure that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access to that information. It asks what needs to be known, who needs to know it, when does it need to be known? Honoring confidences is important, but the church is not about keeping secrets; therefore, there may come a time to share some information for the well-being of others.

C. **Types of Clergy Misconduct and Evidence of Lack of Fitness for Ministry**

1. Flagrant, repeated, or serious violations of the Ministerial Code of Ethics, and/or failure to embody the criteria for maintaining standing in the Order of Ministry as specified in this document.

2. Violation of confidentiality except as required by law

3. Failure to be truthful in information provided to the Region, congregation, or employer

4. Unauthorized use of church/employer funds or pastoral relationships for personal purposes

5. Continuation of an addictive behavior in the face of dire consequences; such addictions could include but are not limited to alcohol, drugs, gambling and pornography
6. Clergy misconduct of a sexual nature, as defined in this document.

D. **Guidelines and Principles**

1. All clergy are expected to meet the criteria for the Order of Ministry as specified in this document and to abide by the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the CC(DoC).

2. All allegations will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

3. We affirm human sexuality as a gift from God. The roots of sexual harassment and abuse lie not in sexuality but in the abuse of power. In the case of clergy, that power is a sacred trust consciously and unconsciously granted to clergy by congregants and the church, and must not be used to violate, harass, or intimidate. Although offenders may believe their behavior is innocent or unintended, harassment is defined by the perception and the experience of the victim.

4. Sexual contact and/or sexual harassment between a minister and a congregant, client, employee of the congregation, student, intern, child or anyone with whom the minister has a professional or pastoral relationship is sinful, unethical, and unprofessional behavior.
5. While the church is called to offer forgiveness to all persons, it is also called to be intentional in responding to accusations of misconduct by any person. Justice calls for corrective action when misconduct is found.

6. Clergy dating those directly served by their ministry is strongly discouraged.

7. Ministers accused of unethical conduct will be considered innocent until a preponderance of evidence substantiates the allegation.

8. Ministers are responsible for knowing the impact of their words and actions in caring for the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority.

9. Because ministers often deal with individuals who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or personally vulnerable, it is imperative that:
   a. Ministers be healthy psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually, so that they are less likely to be at risk of unethical conduct;
   b. Ministers have adequate preparation and education for helping those under their care;
c. Ministers participate, at least once every five (5) years, in training provided by the Region which provides guidance in establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries in pastoral relationships;

d. Ministers understand that it is their professional responsibility to set appropriate boundaries and preserve the sacred trust of their office.

10. The Christian care of those involved including the complainant, the victim if other than the complainant, the accused minister, his/her family, and the congregation or institution will be maintained. If the complainant is an employee of the church, job security will be encouraged. Bringing an allegation should not jeopardize church membership of the complainant.

11. The confidentiality of the complainant is to be maintained. The complainant’s identity will not be shared beyond what is outlined in this document without an additional signed release. Written records will be safeguarded.

12. The complainant will have the right to be accompanied by a support person who will support him/her in the process. A resource list of victim support people will be made available to the alleged victim of clergy misconduct. The complainant may
choose a support person from the Regional list or may choose one
not on the Regional resource list.

13. These guidelines are not intended to avoid civil and/or criminal
charges that may be made by the complainant. If civil and/or
criminal charges are made, the Response Team will still conduct
their investigation.

14. While this policy is intended to be specific, not every contingency
can be anticipated. Regional Staff or WGME members acting
under this policy will have to make decisions based on available
information. It is strongly recommended that more than one
person make such decisions.

15. If the complaint alleges clergy misconduct of a sexual nature
involving a minor, those receiving the initial complaint will notify
the legal agencies immediately.

16. All matters brought before WGME are ecclesial and not legal in
nature, therefore our primary concern is to determine a clergy
person’s fitness for ministry. The objective is to determine
whether there was a breach of ministerial ethics. The presence of
attorneys on behalf of the accused minister is inappropriate.

E. Procedure

Any claims of clergy ethical misconduct will be forwarded as quickly
as possible to the Regional Pastor or designated staff or Chair of the
WGME. When received, all such claims will be taken seriously, documented on form Appendix 1 and shared as quickly as possible with the WGME. The WGME will determine whether the alleged conduct raises a question of fitness for ministry: if it does, a formal process will be initiated; if it does not, the complaint and decision will nevertheless be documented and filed. It is recognized that in some cases the complainant may not be the victim of the alleged misconduct. It is the right of anyone affected by the misconduct and who may therefore be a secondary victim, including congregational or regional church officials, to bring forth an allegation.

1. **Responses to Participants in the Adjudication Process**
   
a. **Response to the complainant:** Upon the receipt of an allegation of misconduct, the Regional Pastor or designated staff will notify the complainant in writing that the allegation has been received and forwarded to the WGME for review. If the victim is a minor child, parents or guardians will be notified, and receive a copy of this policy. Appropriate law enforcement and Children’s Protective Services will also be notified.

b. **Response to the accused clergy:**

   i. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff) and WGME Chair (or designees) will advise the accused minister of the allegation verbally and provide a copy of the allegation form, the Ministerial Code of Ethics, and any related CCiO
documents, including this policy. While the WGME reviews the allegation, the minister will be cautioned to have no personal contact with the complainant, and with the victim if other than the complainant, during this process. If the allegation warrants a fitness review, the accused minister will also be offered the appointment of a Support Person from the Response Team Pool by the Regional Pastor (or designated staff). Appropriate documentation (Appendix #2) regarding support shall be signed by the clergy. The innocence of the accused minister in regard to the allegations will be presumed until unethical conduct is admitted or sustained.

ii. The assigned Investigative Response Team Member(s) will meet with the complainant as soon as possible, usually within 60 days, to hear further the nature of the allegation and gather materials concerning the allegation. The Investigative Response Team may seek to meet with any persons whom they deem helpful in discerning truth in this matter. The confidential written results of interview(s) will be forwarded by the Investigative Response Team leader to the WGME Chair and Regional Pastor (or designated staff).
iii. If the WGME Chair (or designee) can resolve allegations with satisfaction to all parties involved, and if there is concurrence by the Regional Pastor (or designated staff), then the matter will be closed, and a report of the process and its disposition will be retained by the Regional Pastor or designated staff for the protection of all parties. If no censure, suspension or termination of standing occurs, the clergy person will be understood not to have been subject to an "Official Disciplinary Review" as the term is used in the Search and Call process (commonly known as "Relocation Papers").

c. **Response to the Congregation or Employer**

i. The interest of the accused minister's employing congregation/agency in the matter is affirmed. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff) will seek appropriate ways to involve the congregation's or employer's leadership in the matter, recognizing the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved. A Support Person from the Response Team will be offered and appropriate documentation (Appendix #3) will be signed.
ii. If the allegation results in a formal review, the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) or the Support Person will make further contact with the board of the affected congregation, in order to orient them to the process which will be followed, and possible outcomes. If the accused minister's employer is an institution other than a congregation, the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) is instructed to contact the accused minister's supervisor with the same information. This contact may be made on receipt of the allegation if warranted by the circumstances.

F. **Formal Review**

1. **Process.**

a. If, after the investigative phase is completed, the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, a Formal Review shall be held as soon as reasonably possible (usually within 60 days) by the WGME concerning the matter. Upon the request by the WGME Chair, the accused minister becomes the subject of a Formal Review. That minister shall be understood to be the subject of an "Official Disciplinary Review."

b. At the Formal Review, the accused minister and the complainant will be invited to appear, although not necessarily at the same time. In addition to their previously accepted
Support Person from the Response Team Pool, the accused and the complainant may bring a second support person of their choosing. While the accused minister and complainant may bring Support Persons to the hearing, it is understood the Formal Review is not a legal proceeding. This is an ecclesial matter; attorneys for the complainant and the clergy are not to be present as legal counsel for this review.

2. **If the Complaint Is Sustained**

At the conclusion of the Formal Review, should the WGME sustain the complaint, it may take a variety of actions including, but not limited to:

a. Continuing the Formal Review until a later date;

b. Reprimanding the accused minister;

c. Suspending ministerial standing for a stated period, with the understanding that re-application may be considered after further meeting with the WGME;

d. Revoking ministerial standing with no intention of entertaining a reapplication;

e. Mandating counseling with the option of requiring a waiver from the accused minister allowing the WGME communication to and from the counselor;
f. Other appropriate restitutions, sanctions, and growth programs;

g. Mandatory counseling and/or sanctions may be combined with a reprimand or with suspension of standing;

h. Any and all actions are to be recommended by the WGME to the Executive Committee of the CCiO. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff) will communicate the actions of the Executive Committee of the CCiO to the Office of Christian Vocations for the minister's permanent file. In addition, the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) will communicate the actions of the Executive Committee of the CCiO to the complainant, the accused minister, and the congregation/employer, in a formal letter sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.

3. **If the Allegation is NOT Sustained**

a. At the conclusion of a Formal Review, if the WGME does not sustain the allegation, it will offer some assistance to the minister for limited counseling.

b. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff) will communicate the actions of the WGME to the complainant, the accused minister, and the congregation/employer, in a formal letter sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.

c. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff), the WGME Chair, and
the accused clergy shall determine appropriate responses, public statements to make, and materials to be included in the regional file of the accused.

d. If the allegation was not sustained, in response to the question on Search and Call forms asking if he or she has ever been subject of an "Official Disciplinary Review", the minister may answer "No."

G. Procedures for Ministerial Partners, Regional Staff, and Violations Occurring in Another Region

1. A Disciples of Christ clergy serving in a United Church of Christ Ministerial Position. If an allegation of clergy misconduct is submitted against a minister of the Disciples of Christ while that minister is serving a United Church of Christ congregation or agency as an Ordained Ministerial Partner, WGME will take no action until the appropriate UCC processes for handling allegations have been completed.

a. If asked, the WGME will provide an observer for any formal hearings that may take place.

b. If the minister is exonerated, no further action will be taken by the WGME.

c. If the allegation is sustained, the WGME will receive the UCC report and determine appropriate action.

d. The WGME will invite an observer from the UCC to be present
at the deliberation of appropriate action; this observer will have voice but no vote.

e. The WGME will report its decision to all appropriate individuals.

2. **A United Church of Christ clergy serving in a Disciples of Christ Ministerial Position**

   a. If an allegation of clergy misconduct is submitted against a minister of the United Church of Christ while that minister is serving a Disciples congregation or agency as an Ordained Ministerial Partner, that allegation will be processed according to the procedures set forth above with the following exception:

   i. If the process leads to a Formal Review, a representative of the UCC will be invited to participate in that hearing.

   ii. The UCC representative will have a voice but not a vote in the hearing.

   iii. If the allegation is sustained, all appropriate individuals including the appropriate UCC Association and Conference ministers will be notified.

3. **Procedures if a complaint is lodged against Minister currently serving in CCiO but the misconduct occurred in another region.**

   a. The Regional Pastor and President of CCiO will ask the Regional Minister of the region in which the alleged misconduct occurred
to investigate the matter according to that Region’s Policies and Procedures.

b. Upon the completion of that investigation the results will be sent to the Regional Pastor and President of the CCiO who will share them with the WGME.

c. If appropriate, the WGME will recommend action to the Executive Committee of the CCiO.

4. **Special Procedures if the Accused Minister is a Member of the Regional Staff**

The procedures described above will be followed, with the following specific changes:

a. Upon receipt of an allegation of clergy misconduct, the WGME Chair shall contact the Regional Moderator and together consult with the Office of General Minister and President. Thereafter a person shall be named by them to be Consultant Staff to the WGME.

b. The Consultant Staff will carry the responsibilities and duties outlined above that would ordinarily be carried out by the Regional Pastor or designated staff. The Consultant Staff will ordinarily be a minister with standing in the CC(DoC) with no staff relationship to CCiO.
c. The Moderator and WGME Chair shall insure that the Consultant Staff has access to all persons and documents that are needed to carry out their work for the Investigative Team, and all Regional staff shall cooperate fully as requested. The Moderator may, at her/his discretion, grant a stipend to the Consultant Staff for this work and for support services if needed.

d. The Moderator, WGME Chair, and Consultant Staff will consult with the General Minister and President, the Chair of the General Commission on Ministry, and other regional ministers as necessary and desired. The Moderator will ordinarily serve as spokesperson for public communication regarding this matter.

i. If a Formal Review is held and the complaint is sustained, the WGME chair or designees shall make a report and recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Regional Council. This recommendation shall be in addition to any actions taken by the WGME which shall affect ministerial standing.
ii. If the allegation is not sustained, the Moderator, the Regional Minister, the WGME Chair, the General Minister and President, and the accused staff person shall determine appropriate responses, public statements to be made, and materials to be included in the regional file of the accused.

H. Rights of Appeal

Any minister against whom an allegation of clergy misconduct is sustained may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee of the CCiO to the full Regional Church Council.

I. Lack of Cooperation by Accused Minister

In the event an accused minister resigns his/her ministerial standing or refuses to be available to the WGME or its Response Teams at any stage of the processes outlined in this policy, the WGME may recommend to the Executive Committee of the CCiO any action it deems appropriate, including revocation of standing, after reasonable effort to secure the accused minister's participation. It will be the usual procedure to continue the process of resolution, even if the accused minister should resign standing or leave the ministerial position before completion of the process. The Executive Committee of the CCiO shall report to the Office of Christian Vocations and to the minister's congregation or employer about its action(s) in such a situation.
VIII. **Review of Procedures**

A. From time to time the Moderator, Regional Pastor, designated staff, or WGME Chair may appoint a team to review and update this document as she/he sees fit.

B. CCiO reserves the right to update and change this policy at any time.

C. All changes must be approved by the Regional Church Council.

D. This document shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Regional Church Council.
Allegation of Ethical Misconduct Form (Appendix 1)

Name of person submitting complaint______________________________

Address ______________________________________________________

Phone # s ______________________________________________________

Email _________________________________________________________

Name of accused clergy _________________________________________

Church Address ________________________________________________

Phone # s ______________________________________________________

Board Chair Name ______________________________________________

Board Chair Phone ______________________________________________

Type of clergy misconduct as defined in Policy ______________________

Briefly state your reason for filing report (150 words or less)

Signature_______________________________________________________
Pastoral Care Agreement/ Waiver Form (Appendix 2)

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Phone # s ____________________________________________

Email ____________________________________________

Name of assigned Pastoral Care Provider __________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Phone # s ____________________________________________

Email ____________________________________________

I accept/ do not accept the above named person as my pastoral care advisor.

I do / do not hereby waive my right to a pastoral care provider in this misconduct investigation.

Signed_____________________________________  Date signed______________

Witnessed by______________________________  Date signed______________
Response Team Support Agreement/ Waiver Form (Appendix 3)

Name __________________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________

Phone # s_______________________________________________________

Email __________________________________________________________

Name of assigned Support Person _________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________

Phone # s_______________________________________________________

Email __________________________________________________________

I do / do not accept the above named person as my designated Response Team support person.

I do / do not hereby waive my right to a designated Response Team support person.

Signed____________________________________ Date signed__________

Witnessed by____________________________________ Date signed ________
1. _______ Complaint is received by the Regional Minister or designated staff or WGME Chair.

2. _______ Appendix 1 is completed.

3. _______ WGME determines if a fitness review of the clergy is warranted using no names.

4. _______ Regional Pastor notifies CCiO attorney or legal advisor of allegation.

5. _______ Regional Pastor notifies the applicable insurance carrier of complaint and potential claim.

6. _______ Regional Pastor notifies complainant in writing of WGME’s decision regarding this allegation.

7. _______ Regional Pastor notifies accused clergy of allegation and shares documents outlined in policy.

8. _______ If allegation warrants an Investigative Team is appointed and a support person is offered/assigned to accused.

9. _______ Appendix 2 is completed.
10. _______ Investigative Response Team meets with complainant and others to discern truth in matter.

11. _______ Regional Pastor appropriately shares with clergy’s congregation and offers support person.

12. _______ Appendix 3 is completed.

13. _______ If the complaint cannot be resolved to satisfaction of all parties, a Formal Review is called.

14. _______ WGME receives Investigative Team’s report and meets with the accused.

15. _______ If complaint is sustained, the Executive Committee of the CCiO is notified.

16. _______ If complaint is not sustained, procedures of the policy are followed.

17. _______ Procedure for appeal is outlined in policy.
# Appendix 5

**OHIO COMMISSION ON THE MINISTRY**

## Candidate Information

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## Ministry Call Information

I am (circle one)

- Seeking Ordination
- Seeking to be Commissioned
- UCC Ordained
- Ordained Another Tradition

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## Church Information

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## Signature

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Appendix 6 – Confirmation of Receipt

I hereby certify that I have received an electronic copy or hard copy *(circle one)* of the *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ)* dated ________________.

___________________________________________________________
Printed Name

___________________________________________________________
Signature

___________________________
Date

*This half to be retained by minister or candidate*

I hereby certify that I have received an electronic copy or hard copy *(circle one)* of the *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ)* dated ________________.

___________________________________________________________
Printed Name

___________________________________________________________
Signature

___________________________
Date

*This half to be returned to the Regional Church Office*

1347 Worthington Woods Blvd, Suite A
Columbus, OH  43085-6701