

1

POLICIES AND CRITERIA

2

FOR THE ORDER OF MINISTRY

3

CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO

4

(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

5

Approved by Regional Church Council

6

28 October 2017

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

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

88

89 **I. Ministry in the CC(DoC)**

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

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

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

- 97 1. Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian
98 discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices;
- 99 2. A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church;
- 100 3. An understanding of pastoral identity;
- 101 4. Capacity to engage in theological reflection;
- 102 5. Strong moral character and personal integrity;
- 103 6. Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness
104 sufficient for healthy ministry;
- 105 7. Care and compassion for all people with appropriate relational
106 skills;
- 107 8. Responsible personal financial management;
- 108 9. Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God's gifts;
- 109

110 10. Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of
111 ministry.

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

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

129 **D. *Church Membership for the Order of Ministry.*** The Candidate must
130 be a participating member in a CC(DoC) congregation. For candidacy,

131 this membership should be in an established congregation, as
132 congregations in formation have other priorities which make support
133 and oversight difficult.

134

135 **II. *Membership of the COM***

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

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

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

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

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

155 F. The COM shall be composed of the following working groups:
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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

180 based upon the criteria of this document.

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

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

187

188 **III. The Commissioned Ministry**

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

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

199 **B. Categories of Ministerial Commissions**

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

202 2. **Extended Commission.**

203 a. The extended commission may be given in special cases. It is
204 granted at the discretion of the COM, only after at least three
205 annual commission renewals have been completed.

206 b. To maintain the nurture and oversight of an extended
207 commission, these ministers need annually to create a two/three
208 page paper evaluating the previous year's ministry and goals for
209 the coming year.

210 c. Every five years schedule a personal interview with the COM.

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

- 212 1. Must be willing to be under the supervision of the COM.
213 2. Must acquire ministerial skills through study and growth experiences.

214 During the first four years these expectations annually include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 232 commissioned.
- 233 b. Spiritual Autobiography.
- 234 c. A letter of recommendation from the official board of the
- 235 congregation or church unit where the commissioned minister
- 236 will serve, and job description where appropriate.
- 237 d. Letters of recommendation from at least two ministers acquainted
- 238 with the Candidate, at least one of whom is a member of the
- 239 Disciples of Christ.
- 240 e. Students enrolled in college or seminary shall provide a letter of
- 241 recommendation from the Dean or other appropriate
- 242 representative of the school.
- 243 f. A background check approved by the COM. Cost for the
- 244 background check is to be paid by the candidate.
- 245 g. Psychological/Vocational Assessment through a COM approved
- 246 provider.
- 247 5. A Candidate may be "in care" of the COM between the time of his/her
- 248 first meeting with the COM and completion of the steps in 4; if this
- 249 period extends beyond two years to assemble all the materials, the "in
- 250 care" status may lapse with notification to the Candidate of his/her
- 251 need to begin the process over again if the Candidate should wish to
- 252 pursue Commissioned status. "In care" denotes an official relationship
- 253 between the Candidate and the CCiO.

- 254 6. A representative from the Region may be included in a service of
255 recognition and presentation of the commission if requested.

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

- 257 1. The Commissioned Minister will meet with the COM annually and
258 shall request an interview for the renewal of the commission. Failure
259 to do so may result in a loss of the commission and standing.
- 260 2. The Commissioned Minister will provide an annual Renewal of
261 Standing Form (available through the Regional Church Office.)
- 262 3. The Commissioned Minister will provide a six to eight page, double-
263 spaced paper on the following:
- 264 a. Second visit with COM - Concept of Ministry paper
 - 265 b. Third visit with COM - Ecclesiology Paper
 - 266 c. Fourth visit with COM - Reflections on Christian Church History
267 and Polity
 - 268 d. Guidelines for these papers will be provided in a separate
269 document.
- 270 4. CC(DoC) Disclosure and Release Form (available through the Regional
271 Church Office.)
- 272 5. Three evaluation report forms to be completed at least 30 days prior to
273 the expiration of the Commission. These reports are to be completed
274 by the Commissioned Minister, the Mentor, and a representative of
275 the congregation or sponsoring body.
- 276

277 6. The COM shall review the report forms and papers, meet with the
278 Commissioned Minister at her/his scheduled time, and communicate
279 its action to the Commissioned Minister, the Mentor, and the
280 sponsoring body. If approval is given, a certificate shall be issued.

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

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

296 **E. Right of Appeal**

- 297 1. Candidates may appeal any decision of the COM concerning
298 themselves for re-hearing before the COM.

299

- 300 2. Further appeal of the decision of the COM can be made to the
301 Executive Committee of the CCiO for final decision.
- 302 3. No appeal will be considered if legal proceedings are pending or in
303 process.

304

305 **IV. The Ordained Ministry**

306 A. **Description:** By Ordination the church recognizes the work of the Holy
307 Spirit in calling particular persons to servanthood in Christ; accepts their
308 ministry in and for the CC(DoC) and for the whole body of Christ;
309 covenants to undergird the ministry; and grants authority to perform
310 that ministry as a representative of the church. Ordained ministers are
311 members of a Disciples congregation.

312 In accepting Ordination, the minister covenants to obey God by caring for
313 the church, offering gifts of mind, body and spirit to that service,
314 agreeing to fulfill the functions of a minister, and adhering to the most
315 current Ministerial Code of Ethics of the CC(DoC).

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

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

324

325 **B. *Educational Requirements.***

- 326 1. There are two educational tracks in preparation for Ordination: a
327 seminary track (ST) and, in special circumstances as approved by the
328 COM, an apprentice track (AT).
- 329 2. Those in the ST will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of
330 ministerial practice by securing a Master of Divinity degree or its
331 equivalent from a theological school accredited by the Association of
332 Theological Schools in the United States and Canada or its
333 equivalent.
- 334 3. Those in the AT will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of
335 ministerial practice by completing a program of study of at least 250
336 contact hours approved by the COM of the Region in which they are
337 in care.

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

- 345 1. ***Biblical Knowledge:*** Be rooted and grounded in scripture and able to
346 interpret and apply the scriptures in ways that are appropriate to

347 original and contemporary contexts.

- 348 2. **Church Administration and Planning:** Be able to practice the
349 principles of good administration, planning and implementing short-
350 and long-range goals to enhance congregational life in collaboration
351 with teams and committees.
- 352 3. **Communication:** Be an effective communicator and be able to
353 facilitate effective communication within and on behalf of the church.
- 354 4. **Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience:** Be sensitive to the
355 different manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be
356 committed to confronting and overcoming them.
- 357 5. **Ecumenism:** Exhibit a commitment to working with other Christians
358 and denominations and with other faiths in programs of common
359 witness and service, and to articulating the vision of the ecumenical
360 and global church as a starting place for mission.
- 361 6. **Education and Leader Development:** Know the foundations of
362 Christian education and the principles of leader development. Show
363 competency in teaching children, youth, and adults, including lay
364 leaders and staff.
- 365 7. **Ethics:** Be able to help congregants think critically about the
366 relationship of their faith to issues of justice, ethics and morality.
- 367 8. **Evangelism:** Be able to motivate congregational members to share
368 their faith through word and action.
- 369

- 370 9. **Mission of the Church in the World:** Be able to understand and
371 articulate the centrality of the call to mission given by Jesus Christ
372 and the prophets. Be able to empower congregations to engage in
373 mission from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.
- 374 10. **Pastoral Care:** Be able to engage other persons with empathy and
375 assess situations and relationships with the compassion of Christ,
376 with sensitivity to culture and context. Be able to convey the healing
377 power of God to those who suffer.
- 378 11. **Proclamation of the Word:** Know the practice and theory of
379 Christian preaching. Be able to proclaim the Word of God, share the
380 Good News of Jesus Christ, and help congregational members apply
381 their faith to daily life.
- 382 12. **Spiritual Development:** Establish and maintain spiritual disciplines
383 that lead to personal growth and help others develop a rich spiritual
384 life.
- 385 13. **Stewardship:** Be able to develop and encourage healthy stewards
386 who recognize and share generously God's abundant gifts for all
387 creation.
- 388 14. **Theology:** Be able to articulate a coherent view of God's nature and
389 activity in relation to the Christian tradition, to engage critically
390 human situations from a perspective of faith, and to help persons
391 recognize theological issues in their daily lives.
- 392

393 15. **Understanding of Heritage:** Have knowledge of and appreciation for
394 the history and thought of Christianity and of the history, structure,
395 practices, and ethos of the CC(DoC).

396 16. **Worship:** Know the purpose and elements of Christian worship. Have
397 the ability to plan and lead meaningful worship by working with the
398 worship team, musicians, and congregational members.

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

- 400 1. Establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Ordination.
- 401 2. Evaluate the educational experience of candidates for an Apprentice
402 Track program which would include a high school diploma or its
403 equivalent and some post-secondary educational experience.
- 404 3. Consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic
405 communities (e.g., NAPAD, National Convocation, Central Pastoral
406 Office for Hispanic Ministries) whenever considering a racial/ethnic
407 applicant for the Apprentice Track.
- 408 4. Bring all applicants "in care" (see section IV.E.5).
- 409 5. Offer Commissioned Minister status if candidate's ministry situation
410 warrants.
- 411 6. Provide for their nurture.
- 412 7. Be in relationship with the sponsoring congregation and the
413 candidate's educational setting.
- 414 8. Authorize and supervise the act of Ordination.

415

- 416 9. Facilitate continuing education including training in Ethical
417 Boundaries and Anti-Racism.

418 E. **Candidacy for Ordination**

- 419 1. **Definition:** Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual is
420 in care with the COM and involved in a specified program of study and
421 formation in preparation for Ordination. It is intended to be at a
422 minimum a two- to three-year process that guides and discerns a
423 candidate's preparation and readiness for ministry. This process
424 preferably begins when a person declares the intention to seek
425 Ordination through the CC(DoC) and her/his congregation affirms
426 that intention.
- 427 2. **The Procedures During Candidacy.** The candidate shall seek
428 Ordination through a discernment process established by the Region
429 in which the candidate is "In Care." That preparation may include
430 authorization as a Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination). The
431 candidate may complete the educational requirements for either track
432 without serving as a Commissioned Minister.
- 433 3. **Commissioned Minister Status.** Separate from candidacy,
434 Commissioned Minister status authorizes one to perform ministry on
435 behalf of the CC(DoC). The granting of candidacy may or may not
436 meet all legal requirements for the performance of marriages.
- 437 4. **Preparation for Ordination.** Candidates for Ordination are to

438 prepare themselves spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and
439 physically for their ministry. The following areas support and enhance
440 the performance of an applicant's chosen ministry:

- 441 a. Membership in a Disciples congregation;
- 442 b. Participation in the life and work of a congregation of Christians;
- 443 c. Breadth of theological study so that the candidate shows an
444 understanding of the Christian faith, the Bible, the Church
445 Universal, the history and polity of the CC(DoC), and the
446 formation and function of Christian mission;
- 447 d. Professional and ecclesiological study plus supervised experience
448 in the work of ministry, exhibiting competencies in that form of
449 ministry in which the candidate hopes to serve;
- 450 e. Formation of responsible relations with and concern for the
451 church, both as communities of faith and as institution;
- 452 f. Growth in personal character, Christian insight, spiritual
453 formation, wellness and disciplined commitment to ministry; and,
- 454 g. Formation of and adherence to ethical principles to guide
455 professional relationships and personal conduct as outlined in the
456 most current edition of the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the
457 CC(DoC).

458

459 5. ***Requirements for Entering "In Care" Status***

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

- 462 a. Have formally requested an interview with the COM by contact
463 with the Regional Pastoral staff or the Chair of the COM;
- 464 b. Have submitted to the COM at least 30 days prior to the interview:
- 465 i. COM Candidate Information (Appendix 5);
- 466 ii. A letter of endorsement from the applicant's church of
467 membership stating its acceptance, approval, and support of
468 the applicant, and the applicant's personal qualifications for
469 ministry (see section I. B. above); and, if appropriate, an
470 expression of the congregation's willingness to serve as the
471 candidate's sponsoring congregation.
- 472 iii. A Letter of Support from the candidate's home Regional
473 Minister;
- 474 iv. An Official Transcript from the baccalaureate degree granting
475 college or university;
- 476 v. A Spiritual Autobiography;
- 477 vi. The Receipt of the Acknowledgement Card for Policies and
478 Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church
479 in Ohio (Disciples of Christ). (Appendix 6)
- 480

- 481 6. **Requirements for Maintaining "In Care" Status**
- 482 a. Annual interviews with the COM.
- 483 b. Submit to the COM at least 30 days prior to interview:
- 484 i. A Concept of Ministry paper at the second meeting, a Concept
- 485 of Church paper at the third meeting, and a paper on
- 486 Disciples history, polity and ethos following conclusion of
- 487 course work on history and polity;
- 488 ii. A written report from the candidate's participation in a
- 489 Vocational Discernment and Assessment Program approved
- 490 by the COM, normally at the second interview.
- 491 c. A biographical update.
- 492 d. The Candidate shall keep the COM informed of her/his current
- 493 residence as well as any changes in school or vocational plans.

494 F. **Conclusion of Candidacy.**

- 495 1. Candidacy is concluded by Ordination, voluntary withdrawal by the
- 496 candidate, or decision of the COM to terminate candidacy.
- 497 Completion of candidacy within seven years is recommended, but
- 498 may be extended at the discretion of the COM.
- 499 2. Completion of a prescribed program of study (Apprentice Track) or
- 500 the receipt of a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an
- 501 institution of higher education accredited by the Association of
- 502 Theological Schools (Seminary Track) does not guarantee Ordination.

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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

525 guidance of the sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the
526 Regional Pastor or the Regional Pastor's designee presiding.
527 Guidelines for this service are available from the Regional Church
528 Office.

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

532 G. **Maintenance of Standing**

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

- 535 1. Annually complete a "Request for Standing" usually provided on the
536 Region's website;
- 537 2. Complete and maintain records of some form of continuing education;
- 538 3. Complete a regionally approved Ethical Boundaries and Anti- Racism
539 training every five (5) years.
- 540 4. Retired clergy, both active and inactive, need to adhere to guidelines
541 published in *Theological Foundations and Policies for the Ordering of*
542 *Ministry*, as amended.

543 H. **Lapsed Standing**

544 Formal request for re-instatement of standing should be made to the
545 Regional Pastor and/or the Chair of the COM. The Regional Pastor and
546 the Chair will confer to see if standards are met. If policies are met re-
547 instatement of standing when standing has lapsed without cause is

548 granted. Counsel with the COM may be requested if there is a question
549 about policy requirement or other circumstances at the discretion of the
550 Regional Pastor and/or Chair.

551 I. ***Right of Appeal***

- 552 1. Ordination Candidates or Ordained Clergy may appeal any decision of
553 the COM concerning themselves for re-hearing before the COM.
- 554 2. Further appeal of the decision of the COM can be made to the
555 Executive Committee of the Regional Council of the CCiO for final
556 decision.
- 557 3. No appeal will be considered if legal proceedings are pending or in
558 process.

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560 V. **Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with United Church of Christ**
561 **Partners**

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

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

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

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583 **B. *Process for Granting Standing***

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

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

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

593 a. confirmation that the call received is to a ministry that the
594 region recognizes as a valid ministry of the CC (DoC),

595 b. a letter of call is received by all parties including the Regional
596 Church Office,

597 c. that the church membership has been or will be transferred to a
598 local congregation of the CC (DoC). Standing is normally
599 celebrated by the Installation of the Ordained Ministerial
600 Partner by the Regional Church.

601 b. Although a region has the right to deny Ordained Ministerial Standing
602 (with cause), it is normally predisposed with favor toward the prior
603 decisions of the associations of the UCC. The examination of the

604 Partner, beyond knowledge of and appreciation for the CC (DoC), is
605 therefore limited to questions about the call and its terms and about
606 local church membership. Standing in the UCC is not relinquished in
607 order to have standing in the CC (DoC).

608 **C. *Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing***

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

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

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

622 **a. *Inquiry and Exploration***

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

625 (DoC) usually make initial contact with a regional staff person in
626 the area in which they reside in order to explore policies and
627 procedures for seeking call and obtaining Ordained Ministerial
628 Partner Standing in the CC (DoC).

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

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

638 b. ***Preparation and Documentation***

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

646 Documentation presented to the COM includes:

- 647 i. A formal letter requesting permission to seek a call in the CC
648 (DoC);
- 649 ii. A letter of verification of Ordained Ministerial Standing and
650 current status, including disciplinary history, from the
651 association of the UCC where the Partner holds ordained
652 ministerial standing;
- 653 iii. Documents that demonstrate or attest to knowledge of,
654 appreciation for, the CC (DoC) may include transcript,
655 certificate of study, written paper, or advisor's report.
- 656 iv. Consistent with its customary practice of granting ordained
657 ministerial standing, the COM requests the Ordained
658 Ministerial Partner provide information regarding the
659 individual's background and history in ministry as well as
660 written permission for the COM to consult with references and
661 make further inquiry.

662 c. ***Qualifying Interview***

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

- 664 i. develop relationships;
- 665 ii. celebrate partnership;
- 666 iii. insure adequate knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history,
667 polity, and practices of the CC (DoC); and,
- 668 iv. recommend to the region that the Ordained Ministerial Partner

669 be deemed qualified to seek recognition by the CC (DoC) unless
670 there are reservations.

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

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

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

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

687 iv. **NO** – The COM has serious reservations and does not believe
688 the Ordained Ministry Partner is qualified to seek a call in the
689 CC (DoC). The COM informs the Ordained Ministry Partner of

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its decision.

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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.

714 If a person with Ordained Ministerial Standing resigns from a call
715 in the CC (DoC) and does not have another valid call in the CC
716 (DoC) Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing ends, but the Partner
717 remains qualified to seek a call in the CC (DoC).

718 When a person no longer has Ordained Ministerial Standing in the
719 UCC, that person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner and
720 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is nullified.

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722 VI. ***Persons Ordained in Another Tradition***

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

738 B. ***Ecclesiastical Premise***

739 For a clergy person to seek to move from one faith community to
740 another is a major decision with life changing implications. It is more
741 than a ‘career move’ or a matter of convenience in meeting personal
742 needs. To hold standing as an ordained minister of the CC (DoC) is to
743 incur mutual obligations on the part of the individual minister and

744 the CC (DoC). Standing is an ecclesiastical function to affirm and
745 support the clergy in the ministry to which s/he is called, as well as
746 the faith community which calls the individual to ministry.

747 Maintaining a balanced support for both clergy and the church is the
748 task which the CC (DoC) entrusts to the COM.

749 C. ***Personal Premise***

750 1. Ordination and standing involve more than an individual
751 perception of 'call.' A call to ministry includes at least these four
752 elements:

753 i. The call to be a Christian;

754 ii. The 'secret call' ... whereby the person feels directly
755 summoned by God to take up the work of ministry;

756 iii. The providential call which comes through the equipment of a
757 person with talents necessary for the exercise of the office;

758 iv. The ecclesial call extended to a person by some community or
759 institution of the church to engage in the work of ministry.

760 2. When there is a change in any one of these elements of being
761 called to ministry, such as seeking an ecclesiastical call, it is
762 incumbent on that person to examine all of the elements.

763 Therefore, seeking standing in a denomination other than where
764 the individual received and expressed his/her calling requires
765 rigorous self-examination. The evaluation instituted by the COM

767 is intended to produce a responsible process to facilitate further
768 growth in ministry for both the individual and the church.

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

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

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

785 1 ***Requirements.*** Ordained ministers from other denominations
786 seeking standing must meet the same standards of preparation
787 and fitness as any ordained minister who is a member of the CCiO.
788 These standards are specified in this policy and normally include a

789 Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological seminary
790 or institution of higher education; endorsement by the COM; and,
791 sponsorship by a Disciple congregation.

792 **2 Procedure**

793 a. Ordained ministers of other denominations seeking standing
794 need to:

795 i Read *Policy and Criteria for the Order of Ministry* to identify
796 the procedures for seeking standing in the CC (DoC)

797 ii Schedule an interview with the Regional Pastor and
798 President or an Associate Regional Pastor. The candidate
799 must understand that issues of confidentiality are balanced
800 with concerns of collegiality, and the Regional Pastor may
801 share data learned in this interview process as s/he deems
802 appropriate. The content of this interview will include an
803 exploration of motive, need, realistic opportunities for
804 placement with a Disciple congregation; relationships with
805 judicatory officials of the present denomination; difference of
806 theology, ecclesiology, and/or methodologies in ministry; and
807 any other questions or recommendations deemed
808 appropriate following the Regional Pastor's interview.

809 Following the interview, the Regional Pastor will schedule an
810 initial interview with the COM.

- 811 b. At the time of the interview, the candidate will submit a
812 statement concerning his/her understanding of ministry within
813 the CC (DoC). This statement should include a description of
814 the pilgrimage of faith that has resulted in the request for
815 standing among Disciples, the meaning of 'Church,' the
816 meaning of 'Ministry,' and the role and authority of ministers.
817 It should also reveal the candidate's understanding of Disciples
818 polity, structure, and concepts of ministry.
- 819 c. The candidate shall prepare documentation of his/her
820 ordination including a personal information form; references
821 from clergy and laity who have observed the candidate's
822 ministry, and evidence that s/he is a minister in good standing
823 with the present denomination. Contact with the judicatory
824 official of the candidate's present denomination may be delayed
825 until after the initial interview with the Regional Pastor, but
826 contact and references will be sought before standing is
827 approved.
- 828 d. Normally before the second interview with the COM the
829 candidate shall submit a recent psychological evaluation from a
830 qualified provider approved by the COM. The candidate shall
831 pay the cost of this service. The candidate is required to sign a

832 release form so a summary of information may be sent to the
833 COM.

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

837 i Suggested reading materials;

838 ii Interviews with established Disciple leaders; and,

839 iii Participation in events, such as Regional or General

840 Assemblies, workshops, leadership events, district/ area/
841 cluster meetings

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

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

852 h. Following a time of discernment, an interview with the COM,
853 and a period of directed study, there will be a second interview
854 with the COM. The progress of the candidate will be evaluated.

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i. At the conclusion of two years of provisional standing, a third

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interview with the COM will be held. Upon recommendation by

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the COM, standing may be granted.

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859 VII. **Clergy Ethics Policy and Procedures**

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

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

874 B. **Definitions**

875 1. **Clergy**

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

879 b. Standing is defined in the Policies and Criteria for the Order of

880 Ministry as a recognition and affirmation of a minister's
881 engagement in a recognized ministry and accountability
882 therein. Such endorsement is a privilege, not a right, and is
883 dependent on fulfillment of criteria outlined in this document.

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

- 889 i. Capacity to make informed and faithful articulation of
890 Christian faith;
- 891 ii. Openness to personal spiritual formation and growth;
- 892 iii. Affirming, flexible, relational style; ability to cultivate and
893 maintain strong relations;
- 894 iv. Ability to handle conflict well, accept differences and admit
895 weaknesses;
- 896 v. Ability to care for individuals and the wider community;
- 897 vi. Responsibility in task fulfillment;
- 898 vii. Willingness to serve without claiming the deference or
899 appreciation of others;
- 900 viii. Visible commitment to accepted standards of honesty,
901 fidelity in relationships, and the refusal to exploit or be

902 exploited; and,

903 ix. Commitment to a non-addictive, healthy lifestyle.

904 2. ***Ethical Misconduct***

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

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

921 c. Clergy should act in a responsible manner in their sexual
922 conduct - within the realms of a clergy person's personal life,
923 adultery and gross promiscuity can be construed as clergy

924 misconduct as defined in the Ministerial Code of Ethics.
925 d. Questions about clergy performance that are related to a
926 congregation's personnel policies are not considered subjects of
927 ethical misconduct.

928 **3. Allegation**

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

933 **4. Official Disciplinary Review**

934 "Official Disciplinary Review" is defined as any allegation that
935 involves a review with the WGME. If resulting actions are
936 censure, suspension, or termination of standing, a minister

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938 must mark "yes" on question 1 on the "Search and Call"
939 disclosure form.

940 **5. *Complainant***

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

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

953 WGME consists of three to five (3-5) members appointed by the
954 Regional Moderator in consultation with the Regional Pastor with
955 recommendation by COM. Diversity in clergy/laity, gender,
956 ethnicity, and locality is expected. Term of service is four years.
957 Renewal is permissible, but rotation of members is expected. The
958 WGME is a specifically trained committee of COM, whose task is to
959 address any allegation of clergy ethical misconduct, which is

960 brought to the region. The committee will maintain specialized
961 skills as well as awareness of the law through annual training.

962 **7. Response Team**

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

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

979 b. **Supportive** - the remaining members of the Response Team
980 are eligible to be support persons for the complainant and
981 the accused clergy.

982 Those selected as support persons shall thereafter not
983 communicate with the assigned Investigative Team.

- 984 i. Support Persons are people who provide support and
985 assist the complainant and the accused minister
986 through the investigative process.
- 987 ii. The role of a Support Person is not to speak for the
988 complainant or the accused minister, but to help them
989 understand their rights within the investigative process
990 and to be a supportive presence in any meetings.
- 991 iii. CCiO maintains a pool of Support Persons
992 knowledgeable in the investigative process and ethics
993 policies.
- 994 iv. The complainant and accused minister may each choose
995 a Support Person from this pool. If the right to a
996 Support Person is declined, a waiver of this right shall
997 be signed (Appendix # 3).
- 998 v. Support Persons cannot be members of the WGME, the
999 Executive Committee of the Regional Council, or the
1000 Investigative Team for that allegation.
1001

1002 **8. *Regional Pastor and President***

1003 The Regional Pastor and President (or designated staff) has
1004 important roles in maintaining the integrity of the review
1005 process and providing pastoral oversight whenever an allegation
1006 of misconduct is filed. It is the responsibility of the Regional
1007 Pastor (or designated staff) to:

- 1008 a. uphold the highest standards of the office of Christian
1009 minister;
- 1010 b. under extraordinary circumstances the Regional Pastor and
1011 President (and or her/his designee) may temporarily
1012 suspend a minister's standing;
- 1013 c. offer to arrange for pastoral care for the complainant and
1014 the accused minister; a pastoral care document of
1015 agreement or waiver shall be signed (Appendix #2);
- 1016 d. meet, as soon as practical, with the leadership of the
1017 affected congregation and serve as the interpreter of the
1018 process;
- 1019 e. forward any further written information to the WGME and
1020 the accused minister in a timely fashion;
- 1021 f. maintain the procedural file of each proceeding under this
1022 policy;

- 1023 g. communicate decisions of the WGME to appropriate parties;
- 1024 h. arrange regular training for the WGME and the pool of
- 1025 Response Team persons;
- 1026 i. be an ex-officio participant in the proceedings, with voice
- 1027 and without vote.

1028 9. ***Permanent File***

1029 A permanent file on each clergy who has, or has had, standing

1030 with the CC(DoC) is kept by the Office of Christian Vocations

1031 of the Christian Church, in its offices in Indianapolis, Indiana.

1032 It is available to the Regional Ministers, who use discretion in

1033 deciding what materials from this file are made available to

1034 search committees and other responsible bodies.

1035 10. ***Procedural File***

1036 The procedural file is a separate file that is the property of the

1037 WGME. It includes the initial allegation, the response of the

1038 accused minister, a written log of the proceedings, all

1039 documentation that is generated or collected in the course of

1040 the process, a list of the actions of the committee, and the

1041 agreements with the involved parties. It is the responsibility of

1042 the Regional Pastor (or designated staff) to maintain the file in

1043

1044 a limited access area of the Regional Office. The Regional
1045 Pastor (or designated staff) will determine who has access to it.

1046 11. **Confidentiality**

1047 The purpose of confidentiality is to ensure that information is
1048 accessible only to those authorized to have access to that
1049 information. It asks what needs to be known, who needs to
1050 know it, when does it need to be known? Honoring
1051 confidences is important, but the church is not about keeping
1052 secrets; therefore, there may come a time to share some
1053 information for the well-being of others.

1054 C. **Types of Clergy Misconduct and Evidence of Lack of Fitness for**
1055 **Ministry**

- 1056 1. Flagrant, repeated, or serious violations of the Ministerial Code of
1057 Ethics, and/or failure to embody the criteria for maintaining
1058 standing in the Order of Ministry as specified in this document.
- 1059 2. Violation of confidentiality except as required by law
- 1060 3. Failure to be truthful in information provided to the Region,
1061 congregation, or employer
- 1062 4. Unauthorized use of church/employer funds or pastoral
1063 relationships for personal purposes
- 1064 5. Continuation of an addictive behavior in the face of dire
1065 consequences; such addictions could include but are not limited to
1066 alcohol, drugs, gambling and pornography

1067 6. Clergy misconduct of a sexual nature, as defined in this document.

1068 D. ***Guidelines and Principles***

1069 1. All clergy are expected to meet the criteria for the Order of Ministry
1070 as specified in this document and to abide by the Ministerial Code
1071 of Ethics of the CC(DoC).

1072 2. All allegations will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

1073 3. We affirm human sexuality as a gift from God. The roots of sexual
1074 harassment and abuse lie not in sexuality but in the abuse of
1075 power. In the case of clergy, that power is a sacred trust
1076 consciously and unconsciously granted to clergy by congregants
1077 and the church, and must not be used to violate, harass, or
1078 intimidate. Although offenders may believe their behavior is
1079 innocent or unintended, harassment is defined by the perception
1080 and the experience of the victim.

1081 4. Sexual contact and/or sexual harassment between a minister and
1082 a congregant, client, employee of the congregation, student, intern,
1083 child or anyone with whom the minister has a professional or
1084 pastoral relationship is sinful, unethical, and unprofessional
1085 behavior.

1086

- 1087 5. While the church is called to offer forgiveness to all persons, it is
1088 also called to be intentional in responding to accusations of
1089 misconduct by any person. Justice calls for corrective action when
1090 misconduct is found.
- 1091 6. Clergy dating those directly served by their ministry is strongly
1092 discouraged.
- 1093 7. Ministers accused of unethical conduct will be considered innocent
1094 until a preponderance of evidence substantiates the allegation.
- 1095 8. Ministers are responsible for knowing the impact of their words
1096 and actions in caring for the emotional, mental, and spiritual
1097 needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they
1098 have any kind of authority.
- 1099 9. Because ministers often deal with individuals who are emotionally
1100 and psychologically fragile or personally vulnerable, it is imperative
1101 that:
- 1102 a. Ministers be healthy psychologically, emotionally, and
1103 spiritually, so that they are less likely to be at risk of unethical
1104 conduct;
- 1105 b. Ministers have adequate preparation and education for helping
1106 those under their care;
- 1107

- 1108 c. Ministers participate, at least once every five (5) years, in
1109 training provided by the Region which provides guidance in
1110 establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries in
1111 pastoral relationships;
- 1112 d. Ministers understand that it is their professional responsibility
1113 to set appropriate boundaries and preserve the sacred trust of
1114 their office.
- 1115 10. The Christian care of those involved including the complainant,
1116 the victim if other than the complainant, the accused minister,
1117 his/her family, and the congregation or institution will be
1118 maintained. If the complainant is an employee of the church, job
1119 security will be encouraged. Bringing an allegation should not
1120 jeopardize church membership of the complainant.
- 1121 11. The confidentiality of the complainant is to be maintained. The
1122 complainant's identity will not be shared beyond what is outlined
1123 in this document without an additional signed release. Written
1124 records will be safeguarded.
- 1125 12. The complainant will have the right to be accompanied by a
1126 support person who will support him/her in the process. A
1127 resource list of victim support people will be made available to
1128 the alleged victim of clergy misconduct. The complainant may
1129

1130 choose a support person from the Regional list or may choose one
1131 not on the Regional resource list.

1132 13. These guidelines are not intended to avoid civil and/or criminal
1133 charges that may be made by the complainant. If civil and/or
1134 criminal charges are made, the Response Team will still conduct
1135 their investigation.

1136 14. While this policy is intended to be specific, not every contingency
1137 can be anticipated. Regional Staff or WGME members acting
1138 under this policy will have to make decisions based on available
1139 information. It is strongly recommended that more than one
1140 person make such decisions.

1141 15. If the complaint alleges clergy misconduct of a sexual nature
1142 involving a minor, those receiving the initial complaint will notify
1143 the legal agencies immediately.

1144 16. All matters brought before WGME are ecclesial and not legal in
1145 nature, therefore our primary concern is to determine a clergy
1146 person's fitness for ministry. The objective is to determine
1147 whether there was a breach of ministerial ethics. The presence of
1148 attorneys on behalf of the accused minister is inappropriate.

1149 **E. Procedure**

1150 Any claims of clergy ethical misconduct will be forwarded as quickly
1151 as possible to the Regional Pastor or designated staff or Chair of the

1152 WGME. When received, all such claims will be taken seriously,
1153 documented on form Appendix 1 and shared as quickly as possible
1154 with the WGME. The WGME will determine whether the alleged
1155 conduct raises a question of fitness for ministry: if it does, a formal
1156 process will be initiated; if it does not, the complaint and decision
1157 will nevertheless be documented and filed. It is recognized that in
1158 some cases the complainant may not be the victim of the alleged
1159 misconduct. It is the right of anyone affected by the misconduct and
1160 who may therefore be a secondary victim, including congregational
1161 or regional church officials, to bring forth an allegation.

1162 **1. Responses to Participants in the Adjudication Process**

1163 a. **Response to the complainant:** Upon the receipt of an
1164 allegation of misconduct, the Regional Pastor or designated staff
1165 will notify the complainant in writing that the allegation has
1166 been received and forwarded to the WGME for review. If the
1167 victim is a minor child, parents or guardians will be notified,
1168 and receive a copy of this policy. Appropriate law enforcement
1169 and Children’s Protective Services will also be notified.

1170 b. **Response to the accused clergy:**

1171 i. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff) and WGME Chair
1172 (or designees) will advise the accused minister of the
1173 allegation verbally and provide a copy of the allegation form,
1174 the Ministerial Code of Ethics, and any related CCiO

1175 documents, including this policy. While the WGME reviews
1176 the allegation, the minister will be cautioned to have no
1177 personal contact with the complainant, and with the victim if
1178 other than the complainant, during this process. If the
1179 allegation warrants a fitness review, the accused minister
1180 will also be offered the appointment of a Support Person
1181 from the Response Team Pool by the Regional Pastor (or
1182 designated staff). Appropriate documentation (Appendix #2)
1183 regarding support shall be signed by the clergy. The
1184 innocence of the accused minister in regard to the
1185 allegations will be presumed until unethical conduct is
1186 admitted or sustained.

1187 ii. The assigned Investigative Response Team Member(s) will
1188 meet with the complainant as soon as possible, usually
1189 within 60 days, to hear further the nature of the allegation
1190 and gather materials concerning the allegation. The
1191 Investigative Response Team may seek to meet with any
1192 persons whom they deem helpful in discerning truth in this
1193 matter. The confidential written results of interview(s) will be
1194 forwarded by the Investigative Response Team leader to the
1195 WGME Chair and Regional Pastor (or designated staff).

1196

1197 iii. If the WGME Chair (or designee) can resolve allegations with
1198 satisfaction to all parties involved, and if there is
1199 concurrence by the Regional Pastor (or designated staff),
1200 then the matter will be closed, and a report of the process
1201 and its disposition will be retained by the Regional Pastor or
1202 designated staff for the protection of all parties. If no
1203 censure, suspension or termination of standing occurs, the
1204 clergy person will be understood not to have been subject to
1205 an "Official Disciplinary Review" as the term is used in the
1206 Search and Call process (commonly known as "Relocation
1207 Papers").

1208 c. ***Response to the Congregation or Employer***

1209 i. The interest of the accused minister's employing
1210 congregation/agency in the matter is affirmed. The Regional
1211 Pastor (or designated staff) will seek appropriate ways to
1212 involve the congregation's or employer's leadership in the
1213 matter, recognizing the complexity and sensitivity of the
1214 issues involved. A Support Person from the Response Team
1215 will be offered and appropriate documentation (Appendix #3)
1216 will be signed.

1217

1218 ii. If the allegation results in a formal review, the Regional
1219 Pastor (or designated staff) or the Support Person will make
1220 further contact with the board of the affected congregation,
1221 in order to orient them to the process which will be followed,
1222 and possible outcomes. If the accused minister's employer is
1223 an institution other than a congregation, the Regional Pastor
1224 (or designated staff) is instructed to contact the accused
1225 minister's supervisor with the same information. This
1226 contact may be made on receipt of the allegation if warranted
1227 by the circumstances

1228 **F. *Formal Review***

1229 **1. *Process.***

1230 a. If, after the investigative phase is completed, the complaint
1231 cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, a Formal
1232 Review shall be held as soon as reasonably possible (usually
1233 within 60 days) by the WGME concerning the matter. Upon the
1234 request by the WGME Chair, the accused minister becomes the
1235 subject of a Formal Review. That minister shall be understood
1236 to be the subject of an "Official Disciplinary Review."
1237 b. At the Formal Review, the accused minister and the
1238 complainant will be invited to appear, although not necessarily
1239 at the same time. In addition to their previously accepted

1240 Support Person from the Response Team Pool, the accused and
1241 the complainant may bring a second support person of their
1242 choosing. While the accused minister and complainant may
1243 bring Support Persons to the hearing, it is understood the
1244 Formal Review is not a legal proceeding. This is an ecclesial
1245 matter; attorneys for the complainant and the clergy are not to
1246 be present as legal counsel for this review.

1247 **2. *If the Complaint Is Sustained***

1248 At the conclusion of the Formal Review, should the WGME sustain
1249 the complaint, it may take a variety of actions including, but not
1250 limited to:

- 1251 a. Continuing the Formal Review until a later date;
- 1252 b. Reprimanding the accused minister;
- 1253 c. Suspending ministerial standing for a stated period, with the
1254 understanding that re-application may be considered after
1255 further meeting with the WGME;
- 1256 d. Revoking ministerial standing with no intention of entertaining
1257 a reapplication;
- 1258 e. Mandating counseling with the option of requiring a waiver from
1259 the accused minister allowing the WGME communication to
1260 and from the counselor;

1261

- 1262 f. Other appropriate restitutions, sanctions, and growth
1263 programs;
- 1264 g. Mandatory counseling and/or sanctions may be combined with
1265 a reprimand or with suspension of standing;
- 1266 h. Any and all actions are to be recommended by the WGME to the
1267 Executive Committee of the CCiO. The Regional Pastor (or
1268 designated staff) will communicate the actions of the Executive
1269 Committee of the CCiO to the Office of Christian Vocations for
1270 the minister's permanent file. In addition, the Regional Pastor
1271 (or designated staff) will communicate the actions of the
1272 Executive Committee of the CCiO to the complainant, the
1273 accused minister, and the congregation/employer, in a formal
1274 letter sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.

1275 **3. *If the Allegation is NOT Sustained***

- 1276 a. At the conclusion of a Formal Review, if the WGME does not
1277 sustain the allegation, it will offer some assistance to the
1278 minister for limited counseling.
- 1279 b. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff) will communicate the
1280 actions of the WGME to the complainant, the accused minister,
1281 and the congregation/employer, in a formal letter sent by
1282 certified mail, return receipt requested.
- 1283 c. The Regional Pastor (or designated staff), the WGME Chair, and

1284 the accused clergy shall determine appropriate responses,
1285 public statements to make, and materials to be included in the
1286 regional file of the accused.

1287 d. If the allegation was not sustained, in response to the question
1288 on Search and Call forms asking if he or she has ever been
1289 subject of an "Official Disciplinary Review", the minister may
1290 answer "No."

1291 **G. *Procedures for Ministerial Partners, Regional Staff, and***
1292 ***Violations Occurring in Another Region***

1293 1. ***A Disciples of Christ clergy serving in a United Church of***
1294 ***Christ Ministerial Position.*** If an allegation of clergy misconduct
1295 is submitted against a minister of the Disciples of Christ while that
1296 minister is serving a United Church of Christ congregation or
1297 agency as an Ordained Ministerial Partner, WGME will take no
1298 action until the appropriate UCC processes for handling allegations
1299 have been completed.

1300 a. If asked, the WGME will provide an observer for any formal
1301 hearings that may take place.

1302 b. If the minister is exonerated, no further action will be taken by
1303 the WGME.

1304 c. If the allegation is sustained, the WGME will receive the UCC
1305 report and determine appropriate action.

1306 d. The WGME will invite an observer from the UCC to be present

1307 at the deliberation of appropriate action; this observer will have
1308 voice but no vote.

1309 e. The WGME will report its decision to all appropriate individuals.

1310 2. ***A United Church of Christ clergy serving in a Disciples of***
1311 ***Christ Ministerial Position***

1312 a. If an allegation of clergy misconduct is submitted against a
1313 minister of the United Church of Christ while that minister is
1314 serving a Disciples congregation or agency as an Ordained
1315 Ministerial Partner, that allegation will be processed according
1316 to the procedures set forth above with the following exception:

1317 i. If the process leads to a Formal Review, a representative of
1318 the UCC will be invited to participate in that hearing.

1319 ii. The UCC representative will have a voice but not a vote in
1320 the hearing.

1321 iii. If the allegation is sustained, all appropriate individuals
1322 including the appropriate UCC Association and Conference
1323 ministers will be notified.

1324 3. ***Procedures if a complaint is lodged against Minister***
1325 ***currently serving in CCiO but the misconduct occurred in***
1326 ***another region.***

1327 a. The Regional Pastor and President of CCiO will ask the Regional
1328 Minister of the region in which the alleged misconduct occurred

1329

1330 to investigate the matter according to that Region's Policies and
1331 Procedures.

1332 b. Upon the completion of that investigation the results will be
1333 sent to the Regional Pastor and President of the CCiO who will
1334 share them with the WGME.

1335 c. If appropriate, the WGME will recommend action to the
1336 Executive Committee of the CCiO.

1337 4. ***Special Procedures if the Accused Minister is a Member of the***
1338 ***Regional Staff***

1339 The procedures described above will be followed, with the following
1340 specific changes:

1341 a. Upon receipt of an allegation of clergy misconduct, the WGME
1342 Chair shall contact the Regional Moderator and together consult
1343 with the Office of General Minister and President. Thereafter a
1344 person shall be named by them to be Consultant Staff to the
1345 WGME.

1346 b. The Consultant Staff will carry the responsibilities and duties
1347 outlined above that would ordinarily be carried out by the
1348 Regional Pastor or designated staff. The Consultant Staff will
1349 ordinarily be a minister with standing in the CC(DoC) with no
1350 staff relationship to CCiO.

1351

- 1352 c. The Moderator and WGME Chair shall insure that the
1353 Consultant Staff has access to all persons and documents that
1354 are needed to carry out their work for the Investigative Team,
1355 and all Regional staff shall cooperate fully as requested. The
1356 Moderator may, at her/his discretion, grant a stipend to the
1357 Consultant Staff for this work and for support services if
1358 needed.
- 1359 d. The Moderator, WGME Chair, and Consultant Staff will consult
1360 with the General Minister and President, the Chair of the
1361 General Commission on Ministry, and other regional ministers
1362 as necessary and desired. The Moderator will ordinarily serve as
1363 spokesperson for public communication regarding this matter.
- 1364 i. If a Formal Review is held and the complaint is sustained,
1365 the WGME chair or designees shall make a report and
1366 recommendation to the Executive Committee of the
1367 Regional Council. This recommendation shall be in
1368 addition to any actions taken by the WGME which shall
1369 affect ministerial standing.

1370

1371 ii. If the allegation is not sustained, the Moderator, the
1372 Regional Minister, the WGME Chair, the General Minister
1373 and President, and the accused staff person shall
1374 determine appropriate responses, public statements to be
1375 made, and materials to be included in the regional file of
1376 the accused.

1377 H. ***Rights of Appeal***

1378 Any minister against whom an allegation of clergy misconduct is
1379 sustained may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee of the
1380 CCiO to the full Regional Church Council.

1381 I. ***Lack of Cooperation by Accused Minister***

1382 In the event an accused minister resigns his/her ministerial standing or
1383 refuses to be available to the WGME or its Response Teams at any stage
1384 of the processes outlined in this policy, the WGME may recommend to
1385 the Executive Committee of the CCiO any action it deems appropriate,
1386 including revocation of standing, after reasonable effort to secure the
1387 accused minister's participation. It will be the usual procedure to
1388 continue the process of resolution, even if the accused minister should
1389 resign standing or leave the ministerial position before completion of the
1390 process. The Executive Committee of the CCiO shall report to the Office
1391 of Christian Vocations and to the minister's congregation or employer
1392 about its action(s) in such a situation.

1393

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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.

1404

Allegation of Ethical Misconduct Form (Appendix 1)

1405

Name of person submitting complaint _____

1406

Address _____

1407

Phone # s _____

1408

Email _____

1409

Name of accused clergy _____

1410

Church Address _____

1411

Phone # s _____

1412

Board Chair Name _____

1413

Board Chair Phone _____

1414

Type of clergy misconduct as defined in Policy _____

1415

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

1416

Signature _____

1417

1418

Pastoral Care Agreement/ Waiver Form (Appendix 2)

1419

Name _____

1420

Address _____

1421

Phone # s _____

1422

Email _____

1423

Name of assigned Pastoral Care Provider _____

1424

Address _____

1425

Phone # s _____

1426

Email _____

1427

I **accept/ do not** accept the above named person as my

1428

pastoral care advisor.

1429

I **do / do not** hereby waive my right to a pastoral care provider in

1430

this misconduct investigation.

1431

Signed _____ Date signed _____

1432

Witnessed by _____ Date signed _____

1433

1434 **Response Team Support Agreement/ Waiver Form (Appendix 3)**

1435 Name _____

1436 Address _____

1437 Phone # s _____

1438 Email _____

1439 Name of assigned Support Person _____

1440 Address _____

1441 Phone # s _____

1442 Email _____

1443 I **do / do not** accept the above named person as my
1444 designated Response Team support person.

1445 I **do / do not** hereby waive my right to a designated
1446 Response Team support person.

1447 Signed _____ Date signed _____

1448 Witnessed by _____ Date signed _____

1449

1450

WGME Check List for Clergy Misconduct (Appendix 4)

1451

1. _____ Complaint is received by the Regional Minister or designated staff or
1452 WGME Chair.

1453

2. _____ Appendix 1 is completed.

1454

3. _____ WGME determines if a fitness review of the clergy is warranted using no
1455 names.

1456

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

1457

5. _____ Regional Pastor notifies the applicable insurance carrier of complaint
1458 and potential claim.

1459

6. _____ Regional Pastor notifies complainant in writing of WGME's decision
1460 regarding this allegation.

1461

7. _____ Regional Pastor notifies accused clergy of allegation and shares
1462 documents outlined in policy.

1463

8. _____ If allegation warrants an Investigative Team is appointed and a support
1464 person is offered/assigned to accused.

1465

9. _____ Appendix 2 is completed.

1466

- 1467 10. _____ Investigative Response Team meets with complainant and others to
1468 discern truth in matter.
- 1469 11. _____ Regional Pastor appropriately shares with clergy's congregation and
1470 offers support person.
- 1471 12. _____ Appendix 3 is completed.
- 1472 13. _____ If the complaint cannot be resolved to satisfaction of all parties, a
1473 Formal Review is called.
- 1474 14. _____ WGME receives Investigative Team's report and meets with the accused.
- 1475 15. _____ If complaint is sustained, the Executive Committee of the CCiO is
1476 notified.
- 1477 16. _____ If complaint is not sustained, procedures of the policy are followed.
- 1478 17. _____ Procedure for appeal is outlined in policy.

1479

1480

Appendix 5

1481

OHIO COMMISSION ON THE MINISTRY

1482

Candidate Information

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Last Name: | First Name: | Middle: |
| Preferred Name: | Marital Status: | Spouse Name: |
| Date of Birth: | Gender: | Ethnicity: |
| Cell Phone: | Home Phone: | |
| Email: | | |
| Address: | | |
| City: | State: | Zip: |

1483

Ministry Call Information

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| I am (circle one) | | | |
| Seeking Ordination | Seeking to be Commissioned | UCC Ordained | Ordained Another Tradition |
| If Ordained What Denomination: | | Ordination Date: | |
| Seminary: | | | |
| City: | State: | Zip Code: | |
| Years Completed: | Projected Graduation Date: | Date MDiv Received: | |

1484

Church Information

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Church Name: | | |
| Address: | | Phone: |
| City: | State: | Zip Code: |
| Supporting Pastor's Name: | | |

1485

Signature

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Signature of Candidate: | Date: |
|-------------------------|-------|

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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*