



**CONCERNING THE COMMISSIONING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) OF MID-AMERICA**

The Regional Commission on the Order of Ministry shall be responsible for establishing policies and procedures for both commissioned ministers and those preparing for commissioned ministry. Commissioning will be granted to persons engaged in the work of a specified ministry as stated on the Certificate of Commissioning.

I. Rationale for Commissioning in the Mid-America Region.

A. These best practices for Commissioning and renewal define what is expected of persons who seek to provide ministry to the church as a Commissioned Minister. It is expected that those who seek to become Commissioned and to maintain a Commission will want to be as capable as possible for their work and will want to subscribe to these practices.

These practices reflect the Region’s understanding of the Ministerial Code of Ethics, which bind in covenant all ministers- both seeking commissioning and those receiving their commission.

B. Inquirers seeking to be (or in the process of becoming) Commissioned are expected to commit to the following:

- Have a discernable faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices.
- Have received Christian baptism and be an active member in good standing of a Disciples of Christ congregation.
- Possess a sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the Disciples of Christ congregation where the Inquirer is currently serving.
- Be able to articulate an understanding of pastoral identity.
- Show capacity to engage in theological reflection.
- Strive to have strong moral character and personal integrity.
- Practice spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for healthy ministry.
- Have care and compassion for all people, while maintaining appropriate relational boundaries.
- Practice responsible personal financial management.
- Be a wise and generous steward in the use of God’s gifts.
- Possess skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry (as defined in TFP COM 2009:II.).
- Have a specific place to practice ministry when the commission is granted.
- Honor a commitment to clergy best practices by seeking continuing education, and participating in Boundary training and Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation training as outlined in accordance with the Region’s standards.

C. A candidate for renewal of a Commission will be expected to comply with these additional practices:

- Participate in ongoing evaluation of the ministry being performed, which will involve the congregation/institution being served.



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- 43 • Complete, or demonstrate work towards completing, the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry
- 44 program (Philips Theological Seminary or other approved institutions)
- 45 • Comply with the requirement of the Continuing Education Policy (COM 9)
- 46 — Complete and submit the annual Standing Renewal form (required annually)
- 47 — Complete 15 hours of Continuing Education (required annually)
- 48 — Complete and submit the annual Continuing Education Report (required annually)
- 49 — Complete an approved Boundaries Training (required every 3 years)
- 50 — Complete an approved Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Training (required every 3
- 51 years)
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53 II. Procedures for Commissioning with the Ministry Discernment Team (MDT):

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55 The MDT “shall assess the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and educational capacities
56 of the applicant for the practice of ministry. This assessment will be accomplished through such
57 avenues as personal interviews, letters of reference, background checks, psychological and
58 vocational testing, consultation with congregations, and as appropriate, coordination between
59 Regions in reciprocal relationships, and communications with educational institutions.” TFPC,
60 B.4.d

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62 Tools to help in the assessment process are found in the *Guide for Ordination and Commissioning*
63 *in the Mid-America Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, Appendices 5 and 6.
64 During this time, a psychological evaluation must be completed and submitted to the Ministry
65 Associate in the Springfield Office to be included in the Candidate’s file. Information for
66 possible locations for the evaluation can be obtained by contacting the Ministry Associate in the
67 Springfield Office (jeni.ccma@gmail.com) the Springfield Office is located at 500 South Avenue
68 Springfield Missouri, 65806.

69 70 A. Process for Commissioning

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- 72 1. New inquirers seeking to become a commissioned minister will begin by requesting an
- 73 interview with their Regional Minister. If recommended by the Regional Minister, Inquirers
- 74 would come under the guidance of the MDT.
- 75 2. An **Inquirers Meeting** will be scheduled with the MDT. For this meeting, the Inquirer will
- 76 submit:
 - 77 • Application [appendix 2]
 - 78 • Letter from Sponsoring (DOC) congregation requesting the Inquirer begin the process of
 - 79 commissioning.
 - 80 • Faith Statement – written statement of 500-1,000 words concerning Inquirer’s faith
 - 81 journey
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83 Following this meeting, the Inquirer will take time (recommended 1 year) to discern a call to
84 ministry. After the time of discernment, the Inquirer may request a meeting with the MDT for their
85 Candidacy Interview.



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3. For the **Candidacy Meeting**, the Inquirer will be required to submit:
- Written statement of 500-1,000 words reflecting on their understanding of commissioning in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and in light of their local ministry position
 - Ministerial Profile with references and background check
 - Letters of recommendation from a Sponsoring (DOC) congregation and a Supportive (DOC) congregation which speaks to the journey of the Inquirer with the congregation

95 The Ministry Discernment Team (MDT) will decide to:

- 96 1) Accept the Inquirer as a Candidate for Commissioning for at least one year.
97 2) Request the Inquirer take additional time to discern this journey
98 3) Decide to not accept the Inquirer as a Candidate
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100 4. Candidacy - Continuing the Process

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102 When accepted, the Inquirer will be a Candidate for Commissioning for at least one year.
103 If the Candidate is taken under care, several items will be sought:
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- With the assistance of the Regional Minister, a Ministry Support Team (MST) will be assigned. This will include a mentor, a member of the candidate's clergy cluster, and two members/elders from the candidate's sponsoring (DOC) congregation. They will meet monthly or, at the very least, no fewer than 6 times a year. The MST will submit a report (Appendix 3) of each meeting to be placed in the candidate's file.
- During the year of Candidacy, the MST will explore/review with the candidate each of the Sixteen Ministerial Practices (Appendix 16).
- At such time as the Ministry Support Team (MST) determines the Candidate is ready for commissioning, a Commissioning interview will be scheduled with the Ministry Discernment Team. The following will be need to be on file with the MDT one month in advance of the scheduled meeting.
 - All required documentation from prior meetings with Regional Minister, Ministry Discernment Team, Mentor & Ministry Support Team
 - Psychological Evaluation
 - Documentation of work towards completion of the Certification in Pastoral Ministry curricula at Phillips Theological Seminary, or other approved institutions' education programs focused on the 16 Ministerial Practices
 - A 500-1,000 word paper: reflecting on (1) how the process has affected the candidate and the individual's ministry, and (2) how the candidate understands 'covenantal ministry'
 - Disciples History and Polity class completion certificate
 - A certificate of completion from an approved Boundary Training



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- 129 — A certificate of completion from an approved Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation
130 Training
131 — 15 hours Continuing Education for the year prior to the interview
132 — Completion of any other requirements by MDT. These requirements will be noted in
133 the MDT Review Form (Appendix 4).
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135 At the Commissioning Interview, the MDT will:

- 136 1) Approve the candidate as Commissioned Minister [One-year commission granted]
137 2) Request the Candidate take additional time to discern this journey, including further work
138 with the MST and further study
139 3) Decline Candidate for commissioning.
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141 III. Maintaining the Commission

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143 Once the one-year Commission is granted, the work of the Ministry Discernment Team, and the
144 Minister's Support team, is concluded. The newly commissioned minister will be assigned to one of
145 four Commissioned Ministers' Teams (CMT) for ongoing support, accountability, and nurture.
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147 A. Continuing the Process for Commissioned Ministers

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- 149 1. The CMT will meet annually with the Commissioned minister for the first 4 years after the
150 initial commission is granted. In support of the minister, one member/elder from the
151 congregation is encouraged to attend the annual meeting.
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153 2. In preparation for that annual meeting, the Commissioned Minister will be required to submit:
154 • Evidence of continued work towards completion of Pastoral Ministry certificate
155 • Appendix 8 – Clergy's Application for Commission Renewal
156 • Evidence of compliance with Continuing Education Requirements and submit Continuing
157 Education Report
158 • Documentation of completed Boundary Training or Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation
159 workshops or courses, as required.
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161 At the conclusion of the annual meeting, the CMT will either

- 162 1) Renew the minister's Commission for 1 year; or,
163 2) Delay commission renewal until all necessary requirements are met.
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165 3. After the 4th year of the minister's commission, commission renewal can but does not have to
166 be extended to 3 years.
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168 When a 3-year Commission is granted by the CMT, it is for the benefit of the minister that we strongly
169 recommend the Commissioned Minister forms/maintains a Pastoral Support Team, which meets
170 regularly with the minister to provide support and nurture.