

Ordination Service and Guidelines for Ordination



For the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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The Ministry of the Whole People of God

God calls all persons to receive the good news of the Gospel and accept their call to be God's people. In a divided and unbelieving world, those who accept this good news are drawn into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of a new community, the church. In this body, the Holy Spirit unites those who follow Jesus Christ and sends them as witnesses into the world [ref: I Corinthians 12.12-13; Ephesians 4.4-5; Matthew 28:16-20]. The church's mission is to proclaim and prefigure the justice and joy of the Realm of God. In order to fulfill this mission faithfully, the members of the Body of Christ are given ministries of witness, service and reconciliation.

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

In Christ the individual becomes a member of “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession” (1Peter 2:9). Thus it has been common to speak of the “priesthood of all believers”¹ — the persons who live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in the church and in the world. This language highlights the sacramentality of the work of the laity through whose witness and service the grace of God is made manifest.

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

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

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

Ordained Ministry

A. The Meaning of Ordination

In ordination — through prayers invoking the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands — the Church confirms in women and men the call of God, acknowledges their gifts and graces, and authorizes this ministry in and for the Church. The act of Ordination by those who are appointed for this ministry attests the bond of the church with Jesus Christ and the apostolic witness, recalling that it is the risen Lord who is the true Ordainer and bestows the gift. In Ordaining, the church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, provides for the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and humble service in the name of Christ. The laying on of hands is the sign of the gift of the Spirit, rendering visible the fact that the ministry was instituted in the revelation accomplished in Christ, and reminding the church to look to him as the source of its commission. ("Ministry," *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*, WCC, para. 40.)

Disciples understand the meaning of Ordination as an action of God and the community during which the Ordained are strengthened by the Spirit for their task and are upheld by the acknowledgment and prayers of the congregation. Ordination sets one apart for leadership in the life and witness of the church. While the Ordained ministry cannot be reduced to any mere listing of tasks, it may be identified by leadership with regard to three fundamental aspects of the church's life and witness:

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

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

B. The Character of Ordained ministry

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

1) *Apostolic Ministry*: The Ordained enter the *apostolic ministry*. By this we mean they receive their authority and commission from the risen Christ. The first Christian ministers were the apostles in the New Testament, to whom the living Lord revealed himself and sent "to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Ministers in every generation preach, celebrate, witness, and gather disciples in continuity with those early apostles.

2) *Representative Ministry*: Ordination witnesses to a *representative ministry*. Those who accept the ministry of the Word, sacrament, and mission are responsible for re-presenting (showing forth) to the world and to all baptized Christians the character of Christ's ministry and witness. A central task of such representative ministry is personally and publicly to point the church to its dependence on Jesus Christ, who is the source of its faith, mission, and unity.

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

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

C. The Act of Ordination

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

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

Finally, Ordination is an acknowledgment by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit in the one Ordained, and a commitment by both the Church and the Ordinand to the new relationship. By receiving the new minister in the act of Ordination, the Church acknowledges the minister's gifts and commits itself to be open to these gifts. Likewise those Ordained offer their gifts to the Church and commit themselves to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility; at the same time, they enter into a collegial relationship with all ministers.

From the Preface and Ordained Ministry sections of Theological Foundations and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

A Service of Ordination to Christian Ministry

A Model Order of Service

The Preparation

Prelude

Hymn of Praise- *Leaders of the service may enter in procession during this hymn.*

Call to Worship

The Service of the Word

Statement about the Service

The host pastor states that the church has gathered to ordain (Full Name) to Christian Ministry. Representatives of the sponsoring congregation(s), the region(s) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the ecumenical Church may be acknowledged.

Scripture Readings (from both Testaments)

The Sermon

Hymn or Anthem

The Presentation of the Candidate

Statement

Leader: Ordination to Christian ministry is preceded by study, work, and prayer, guided by the Spirit of God. I now call on representatives of the sponsoring congregation(s), the seminary, NAPAD/National Convocation/Obra Hispana, and of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in *(region)* to present *(Full Name)* and to offer their witnesses to *his/her* readiness for ordination.

* Optional presentations based on individual desire/circumstances

* Presentation by a Member of the Ordinand's Family

Presentation by Representative(s) of the Congregation(s)

****There may be more than one sponsoring congregation***

The person to be ordained is presented by name to the presiding minister and a few sentences testifying to the candidate's life in the church may be offered.

* Presentation by Representative(s) of the Seminary or Educational Entity
A representative of the Theological Seminary or Educational institution witnesses to the candidate's study, and commitment to the preparation for ministry through biblical, theological, and pastoral learning.

* Presentation by a Representative of the Racial/Ethnic Ministry
A representative of the candidate's racial/ethnic ministry witnesses to the support provided to the candidate and his/her contribution to the Church.

Presentation by Representative(s) of the Region(s)
A representative of the region states that the person to be ordained has been nurtured through a process of preparation for public leadership in the church, has been examined concerning the Christian faith and manner of life, and has been approved for ordination.

A Calling Forth of the Candidate

Regional Minister: Name, if you are ready to make your covenant with God before this congregation, please join me before the congregation.

The Ordination Covenant

The Promises of the Candidate for Ordination

Regional Minister: My sister/brother in faith, do you believe that you are truly called by God and the Church to the life and work of ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.

Candidate: **I do.**

Regional Minister: Paul the apostle testified, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." Will you, Name, endeavor to be diligent in your practice of the Christian life: reading the Bible, continuing steadfastly in prayer, deepening in spiritual disciplines, and taking up your cross daily to follow Christ?

Candidate: **I will, with the help of God.**

Regional Minister: Scripture teaches that the Church was devoted to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Will you endeavor faithfully to fulfill your calling among the people committed to your care: by preaching the word of God and the apostolic faith; and by celebrating baptism and the Lord's Supper?

Candidate: **I will, with the help of God.**

Regional Minister: In scripture, ministers are challenged to tend the flock of God committed to their care, not by constraint but willingly, not for selfish gain but eagerly, not by domineering over those in their charge but by example. Will you endeavor to care for the people of God: nourishing, teaching, and encouraging them; giving direction to the life of the congregation; counseling the troubled; declaring God's forgiveness of sin; and proclaiming the new life that we find in Christ Jesus?

Candidate: **I will, with the help of God.**

Regional Minister: The Spirit of God led Jesus to preach good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, set at liberty the oppressed, and proclaim the time of God's good favor. Will you, Name, endeavor to lead the people of God in their commitment to the global mission of the Church: guiding their concern for justice, freedom, and peace for all people; and taking a place of responsible leadership and service in the Church and in the world?

Candidate: **I will, with the help, of God.**

Regional Minister: The apostle Paul proclaims the Church to be one body with many members. Will you, Name, endeavor to live and work in unity with all Christians: witnessing to the visible unity of the Church; cooperating with Disciples colleagues in the ministry of the congregation, area/district, region, general and ecumenical church; and leading the Church in fulfilling its ministry of reconciliation?

Candidate: **I will, with the help of God.**

Regional Minister: With Jesus as your example, will you, Name, endeavor to conduct yourself so that your life is shaped by Jesus Christ, who took the form of a servant for our sake; and will you, with the help of the Holy Spirit, continually rekindle the gift of God that is in you, to make known to all people the gospel of the grace of God?

Candidate: **I will, with the help of God.**

Regional Minister: May God who has given you the will to do these things give you grace to perform them. Name, God who called you is faithful and will not fail you.

The Promises of the People

Regional Minister: You have heard the promises of our *brother/sister*. Do you, who also are called by God to serve, affirm Name's call and accept him/her to the life and work of ordained ministry?

***People:* Name, we accept you as one called to leadership in the Church and celebrate that today you are ordained. We pledge our love and offer our prayers that together we may glorify God and make Christ known in the world.**

** Ministerial Code of Ethics may be signed here or later at the time of the Presentation of the Signs of the Office. (See that location for more information.)

The Affirmation of Faith

Regional Minister: Together, let us renew our covenant with Christ.

People:

**We confess that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of the Living God,
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.
In Christ's name and by his grace,**

**we accept our mission of witness
and service to all people.
We rejoice in God,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and in the covenant of love
which binds us to God and one another.
Through baptism into Christ
we enter into newness of life
and are made one with the whole people of God.
In the communion of the Holy Spirit
we are joined together in discipleship
and in obedience to Christ.
At the table of the Lord
we celebrate with thanksgiving
the saving acts and presence of Christ.
Within the universal Church
we receive the gift of ministry
and the light of Scripture.
In the bonds of Christian faith
we yield ourselves to God,
that we may serve the One
whose Kingdom has no end.
Blessing, glory and honor
be to God forever.
Amen.**

-The Preamble from the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**Hymn - A hymn invoking the Holy Spirit is sung.*

The Laying On of Hands

Invitation – The Regional Minister explains to the congregation the logistics of the laying on of hands, including who is invited to participate and how. He or she then extends the invitation for the ordinand to kneel, and invites those who are to participate in the laying on of hands to come forward. For instance, this could include the elders of the sponsoring congregation(s), ordained clergy, commissioned ministers, ecumenical representatives, and laypersons. It might include the whole congregation, whether touching someone near them in a chain extending to the candidate, or raising and extending their hands in blessing as a smaller group lays hand on the ordinand. In some churches this includes the pouring of or anointing with oil.

Statement

Regional Minister: The laying on of hands with prayer is witnessed in scripture as a sign of reconciliation, empowering, and sending forth. The church uses this prayerful act as a visible sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit, affirming *Name's* vocation and entrusting *her/him* with the power and authority to do the work of God in our midst.

The Ordaining Action

The candidate kneels, preferably facing the cross or the altar. The regional minister places a hand on the candidate's head. Other ministers, elders, and ecumenical and interfaith representatives may also place hands on the head or shoulders of the candidate. The regional minister or another significant spiritual mentor offers the ordination prayer.

This is a place to be sensitive to the cultural norms of the congregation, as there are so many rich and meaningful practices across the Church.

The Ordination Prayer

Greeting and Blessings

Regional Minister: Rise, *Name*, to the ministry which God gives you and receive the acclamation of the people.

***People:* By the Spirit of God you are worthy of the ministry of Christ.
As the newly ordained stands, the congregation may welcome her/him with applause.**

Presentation of the Signs of the Office

A Bible is given to the newly ordained with this charge:

“So live that the Word is near you, on your lips, and in your heart.”

A robe or alb may be given, with this charge:

“Rejoice in God; and may you be clothed in the garments of salvation and covered with the robe of integrity.”

A stole may be given with this charge:

“Receive this stole as a sign of your being yoked with Christ, remembering his words, ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.’”

A chalice and paten may be given with this charge:

“I (we) present you with this chalice and paten. May they serve as a sign of the savings acts and presence of Christ.”

**other gifts possible – chaplain stole, portable communion set,*

***The Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may be presented with this charge:*

“Receive this copy of the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), by which you affirm your commitment to be a faithful and responsible minister of the gospel performing your ministry in obedience to Christ and the Church. (If the Code of Ethics is signed in the service, ‘by which’ can be read as, ‘by signing this Code.’)”

The certificate of ordination may be presented with this charge:

“I present you with this certificate of ordination. May it be a sign of your apostolic authority, your collegial ties with all ministers, and your promise to uphold the sacred calling of the office of ministry. Remember that Jesus said, ‘Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.’”

Response of the Newly Ordained

The newly ordained may say a brief word of thanksgiving to the congregation and to those who have challenged and sustained her/him in her/his faith journey.

****This is not an “academy-awards” type of thank you!****

The Peace

Newly ordained to congregation: The peace of God be with you.

People: And also with you.

The people greet the newly ordained and members of the family and one another.

Another version of the Passing of the Peace may be used.

The Service of the Lord's Supper

The newly ordained minister joins with the elders and the congregation in celebrating communion.

*The Benediction

The Benediction and the Recessional Hymn may be reversed.

*Recessional Hymn

Postlude

PREPARATION FOR THE SERVICE

A. Spiritual Preparation

The tradition of preparation for ordination may include engaging in prayer, fasting, or retreat just prior to the service of ordination. Congregations and candidates are encouraged to find time in the midst of the many details of planning the service to focus spiritually through reflection and prayer. Be mindful that this is holy time, a sacramental moment in the life of the Church.

Ordination is a time of transition and new experience in the life of the candidate's family. We encourage the family to center themselves spiritually as they enter into this new life together. This is an important time for the family to find communities of spiritual support.

B. Procedures

This document presumes that the ordination candidate has fulfilled, or soon will fulfill, the requirements for ordination by the region. (This document does not consider matters pertaining to authorization for ordination.)

1. The candidate must consult with the region and the host congregation four to six months in advance to set the tentative date for the ordination service. This will enable the region and the proposed host congregation to begin to make preparations and schedule the ordination service. However, **no public announcement of the ordination service should be made prior to ordination council and regional authorization for ordination.** This protocol protects and preserves the integrity of the nurture and certification process.
2. The ordination service requires careful planning and preparation. There are participants to invite and schedule. There are numerous details to be arranged with the region, the host congregation and pastor. The process cannot be rushed.
3. Although the candidate is expected to take initiative in making arrangements, the process of preparation and planning will entail close cooperation and will call for a spirit of mutuality among many persons. While the candidate has considerable discretion in selecting participants in the service, the region, the host pastor and congregation are to be included as well.
4. The host pastor confirms with all participants their leadership in the service of ordination.

C. Regional Participation

The regional minister, by the nature of the office, represents the region that authorizes ordination and represents the whole church. **Therefore, the regional minister or the regional minister's designated alternate presides over the act of ordination.** The ordination candidate contacts the regional minister 4 to 6 months ahead concerning the tentative date and time for the ordination

service. The regional minister or designated alternate ordinarily provides leadership in the following parts of the ordination service:

1. Leads the “Ordination Covenant.”
2. Presides at the service of the laying on of hands including the ordination prayer and presenting of the Certificate of Ordination.

D. Selecting a Date and Time

Considerations in selecting an appropriate date and time for the ordination service include:

1. The regional minister's (or a designated alternate's) availability.
2. The availability of the host church.
3. The availability of guest participants and family.

With the procedures of the region clearly in mind and working with the host pastor(s), the candidate is advised to begin selecting a date 4 to 6 months in advance with the permission of the regional ministry committee. The regular Sunday worship service may serve as an occasion for the ordination.

ARRANGING THE SERVICE

A. Participants

There are a variety of liturgical roles in the ordination service. The candidate and host pastor together are advised to study the service and enumerate the various liturgical roles and functions as a basis for determining the participants needed. The candidate is to work in close cooperation with the host pastor in selecting and inviting persons to participate. Be clear as to who extends each invitation.

1. The host pastor ordinarily conducts the opening and the closing of the service and other portions as agreed upon. The host pastor brings greetings during the time of preparation and states the purposes of the service. The purpose might be stated as follows:

“The purpose of this worship service is to ordain (*Name*) into Christian ministry. It is a service of thanksgiving and praise in response to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It includes the covenant of ordination and the laying on of hands. This service expresses the unity of the Church and celebrates God's continuing care for the Church and the world, through the anointing of God's servants.”

2. The candidate may invite someone who has been influential in the candidate's life to preach the sermon. Since the host pastor has responsibility for preaching in the congregation, the candidate consults the host pastor about whom she or he wishes to invite to preach. The host pastor extends an invitation to the selected preacher.

3. A representative from the Regional Commission on Ministry is to be invited to state that the candidate has been nurtured through a process of preparation for leadership in the church, and has been examined concerning the Christian faith and manner of life, and has been approved for ordination.

4. Ministers from other Disciples congregations and ministers from other communions are ordinarily invited to participate in the service. Their presence signifies the ecumenical fellowship of the church. Ministers wear their usual liturgical attire.

B. Participants' Dress and Rehearsal

1. **Leader's Attire**--If the clergy participants in the service are to be robed, the clergy participants are to be advised. Stoles are appropriate. The appropriate color is **RED**.

2. **Candidate's Attire**--The candidate would not wear any liturgical vestments until the presentation of the signs of the office.

3. **Rehearsal**--The host pastor or the regional minister is in charge of the rehearsal for the service. All participants are to be advised of the time and place for the rehearsal, scheduled for at least one hour before the service. Special directions for the arrangements for the laying on of hands are given by the regional minister.

C. Music

1. Music is an integral and enriching part of the ordination service. The candidate should discuss music with the host pastor(s) and, where appropriate, with the local music director and/or minister of music. Ample time should be allowed for the choir and/or other musicians to prepare for this occasion. The host congregation's musicians may not be able to perform all the music that is desired. Other musicians may be invited, in consultation with the local music director.

2. Hymns, choir anthems, musical selections, and solos are to be used as an integral part of the service. However, they should not interrupt the ordination rite itself. Sung responses may be used where appropriate.

3. Criteria for selection of music include faithfulness to the theme of ordination, particularly hymns and songs invoking the Holy Spirit, personal significance to the candidate as well as the congregation, and showing inclusiveness in language and ethnic cultural diversity. The Chalice Hymnal (Chalice Press, St. Louis, 1995) contains a section dealing specifically with the ministry on pages 451-457. Congregations are to write to publishers or use a copyright license to secure permission to publish copyrighted material.

D. Scripture Readings and The Sermon

1. **Scripture Readings**--The scripture readings used in the ordination service should be texts that are important to the candidate's call and journey in faith. The candidate should consult with the preacher and host pastor about which texts will be used.

2. **The Sermon**--The sermon focuses on the church, the nature of the ministry, the meaning of discipleship, and the role of the Holy Spirit. This is not the time to become sentimental about the ministry or eulogize the candidate and his or her family. It is appropriate for the sermon to be brief, as the service is a lengthy one.

E. Procedures for Presenting the Candidate

1. Congregational representatives may give brief descriptions of the candidate's personal characteristics, and a statement of the congregation's support.
2. The region's representative will present the credentials: this statement is less than one page in length and includes a brief background on the person to be ordained; how he or she received a call to ministry; a short survey of preparation, education, experience; and a very brief statement on the region's nurture and certification processes and the region's recommendation.

F. Covenant of Ordination and Laying on of Hands

The regional minister leads in the "Covenant of Ordination" and the laying on of hands, including the ordination prayer.

1. The regional minister moves to a position to speak directly to the candidate. Provision should be made for all persons to hear the words that are spoken. It is not necessary to print the promises of the candidate or the ordination prayer in the worship bulletin, but copies are to be given to the regional minister and the candidate.
2. At the laying on of hands, the regional minister will very briefly relate the significance and meaning of this rite. (See the text in the sample service.)
 - a. The ceremony should take place where it can be observed by the congregation and without undue crowding. If the architecture permits, the laying on of hands occurs in the chancel in front of the communion table. A cushion or kneeling pad may be provided.
 - b. The inclusion of elders and ministers from other churches is a witness to the wholeness of the church. It is also acceptable to include the whole congregation in the laying on of hands. The regional minister may be consulted in the process.
 - c. The weight of the hands directly on the candidate should be firm but gentle, and the candidate should be helped to rise after the prayer.

G. Presentation of the Signs of the Office

The presentations recognize significant dimensions of the office of ministry. The host church, the family, other congregations, etc. may make these presentations.

1. **The Bible**—The Bible is a sign of apostolic faith that is to guide the person in ministry. The presenter may say, “So live that the word is near you, on your lips and on your heart.”
2. **The Certificate of Ordination**—The certificate of ordination is a sign of the person's authority for ministry, a sign of one's collegial ties with other ministers and of the obligation to uphold the ethics of ministry. The regional minister or designated representative is to present the certificate. The presenter may say, “I present you with this certificate of ordination. May it be a sign of your apostolic authority, your collegial ties with all ministers, and your promise to uphold the sacred calling of the office of ministry. Remember that Jesus said, ‘Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.’ ”
3. **Ministerial Code of Ethics**—The Ministerial Code of Ethics describes the standard of behavior to which the church calls its ministers in their personal and professional conduct and relationships. The presenter may say, “Receive this copy of the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). By signing this Code you affirm your commitment to be a faithful and responsible minister of the gospel performing your ministry in obedience to Christ and the Church.” (At this point the candidate signs the code.)
4. **Liturgical Vestments**—The robe/alb is a sign of the liturgical and sacramental dimension of ministry. The stole is a sign of the yoke of Christ, and thus signifies ordination to vocational ministry. The colors - red, green, purple and white - represent the different seasons of the church year. The presenter may say, in presenting a robe or alb, “Rejoice in God; and may you be clothed in the garments of salvation and covered with the robe of integrity.”

If a robe/alb is given as a sign of office, the giver should prepare in advance to select one that is an appropriate liturgical style, color, size, etc. Robes usually have to be ordered some considerable time in advance. If the candidate already has a liturgical robe, it may be used in the service to symbolize the ministerial function of the celebrant in conjunction with the stole.

5. **Other Gifts**—Since Communion is integral to weekly worship in the Christian Church, the presentation of a chalice and paten is also appropriate as a sign of office. The presenter may say, “I (we) present you with this chalice and paten. May they serve as a sign of the savings acts and presence of Christ.” Other gifts, such as books, plaques, and photographs, are presented at the reception following the service.

H. Communion Service

It is appropriate for the newly ordained person to serve as the celebrant at the Lord's Supper.

I. Worship Bulletin

Before the worship bulletin is printed, it should be sent to the Regional Minister for final approval.

1. Complete, accurate information regarding the service is to be submitted to the host pastor two weeks prior to the service. The candidate and host pastor will work closely together.
2. The use of titles of participants should follow a uniform pattern.
3. It is appropriate to include a brief biographical paragraph about the candidate.
4. Not all of the liturgy needs to be printed in the bulletin.
5. The candidate and host pastor are to select the worship bulletin cover in consultation with one another.
6. The names of the sponsoring congregations are to be listed in the worship bulletin.

J. Seating

The candidate and the host pastor plan the seating arrangements for the participants, family, and special guests in advance of the service.

K. Signing the Ordination Certificate

The regional minister will have the responsibility for securing the signatures of all service participants.

ADDITIONAL MATTERS

Additional matters surrounding the ordination service also need thoughtful attention. This section contains guidelines on invitations, the reception and expenses. A “Host Congregation Check list” follows.

A. Invitations

Below is a sample of a suggested invitation. The congregation extends the invitation to its members and ordinarily the candidate extends invitations beyond the congregation. The congregation shares in the cost of the invitations and mailing. The candidate and the host pastor(s) consult in advance of the preparation of the invitations to arrive at a mutually satisfactory arrangement on costs.

The [*name of region(s)*] and the [*name of congregation(s)*] of the
 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
 Cordially invite your presence and prayers
 For the Ordination to Christian Ministry
 of [*candidate's full name*]
 on
 [*day, date, time*]
 at
 [*name of host congregation*] Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
 of
 [*name of town, address*]
 Reception at the church following the service

B. Reception

It is appropriate for the host congregation to provide a reception in honor of the newly ordained. The host pastor(s) initiates contact within the congregation to make arrangements for the reception.

The host pastor(s) also consults with the candidate concerning arrangements for this event. If there are to be special provisions, the candidate is to obtain the consent of the host pastor(s) and congregation before proceeding and shall be prepared to cover any extra costs.

C. General Expenses

The host pastor(s) shall discuss the costs with the candidate. An ordination service is an extraordinary event for a congregation. It can be a time of renewal and significant witness. The host pastor(s) shall encourage the congregation to extend itself generously and fully in celebration of this event. If there are special funds available for such events, the host pastor(s) advises the candidate of such provisions. The following guidelines are intended to provide directions for the customary way in which the expenses are met.

1. Congregation's Expenses

- a. **Gifts and/or Signs of the Office of Ministry**--It is usual and customary for the host congregation and, where desirable, for other sponsoring congregations to pay the costs of such gifts.
- b. **Reception**--It is usual and customary for the congregation to pay for the expenses involved in the reception. However, other collaborative arrangements are appropriate. The host pastor(s) is to help facilitate discussion of these arrangements.
- c. **Invitations**--The congregation prepares and sends invitations to its members and invited guests. The cost may be shared by the congregation and the candidate.
- d. **Preacher**--If the congregation ordinarily gives guest preachers an honorarium, it is appropriate to give the guest preacher the usual amount. Travel expenses are ordinarily paid by the candidate.
- e. **Musicians**--Honoraria for the organist and paid choir members are paid by the congregation.

2. Candidate's Expenses

- a. **Preacher**--The candidate is expected to pay the travel costs of the guest preacher. If the congregation normally gives guest preachers an honorarium, the congregation shall give this to the guest preacher in addition to the travel expenses. College and seminary faculty members do not usually have travel allowances for attending ordination services.
- b. **Musicians**--The candidate may pay for any additional musicians. If the congregation has special provisions for this, or desires to help in this area, the host pastor(s) is to facilitate the congregation's contribution to this aspect of the celebration.

- c. **Other Participants**--It is usual and customary for the candidate to pay travel costs for other participants. Participants may not expect reimbursement, but the candidate should not presume this. It is appropriate to clarify financial matters with the participants. Further, the congregation may have resources to help in this area. The host pastor(s) shall take the lead in advising the candidate about any such provisions.

3. **Unspecified Expenses**--Costs not identified or anticipated in this document are to be talked about openly and fully. In general it is advised that thorough and thoughtful attention be given to these matters and that good stewardship be exercised in the use of all resources, personnel and material.

HOST CONGREGATION CHECK LIST

The following is a guide to the major responsibilities of the congregation.

(Note: the list may not identify every detail.)

A. Date and Time--After the candidate has consulted with the regional minister, the congregation is to establish a date and time for the ordination service in consultation with the candidate. All dates and invitations are to be confirmed in writing with the participants.

B. Ordination Service Consultation--As soon as it is feasible, the host pastor and other designated persons are to meet with the candidate and review the ordination service and procedures as outlined in this document. This manual is available from the regional office or from Disciples Home Missions at www.discipleshomemissions.org. At this consultation, the plans for the ordination should begin. Some of the items to be considered are: participants, music, scriptures, reception, worship bulletin, etc. The host pastor and candidate are to review together the persons who are to participate and who shall contact whom. The host pastor(s) should extend the invitations to participants.

C. Gifts and/or Signs of the Office of Ministry--The host pastor(s), in consultation with appropriate persons in the church, is to explore the presentation of signs of the office of ministry. If any gifts are to be presented, the presenters are to be selected. The host congregation may invite other sponsoring congregations to share in these acts.

D. Rehearsal--The host pastor(s) is to schedule and conduct the ordination service rehearsal.

E. Worship Bulletin--The congregation is to prepare the worship bulletin. Information is to be submitted two weeks prior to the service.

F. Seating--The host pastor(s) is to select ushers and arrange for appropriate seating arrangements.

G. Music--The host pastor(s) is to make sure that music arrangements are complete and fully understood.

H. Communion Service--The congregation is to make the arrangements for the communion Service.

I. Reception--The congregation plans and provides the reception. The host pastor(s) assists in setting up a reception line, if it is desired.