

**Policies and Procedures**  
**For the Ordination and Commissioning of**  
**Ministers**  
**In the Florida Regional Christian Church**  
**(Disciples of Christ)**



For Ministerial Candidates  
Under Care  
Of the Commission on Ministry

**This policies and procedures manual is based on the**  
**Order of Ministry Policy**  
**Adopted by the General Assembly of the Christian Church**  
**(Disciples of Christ)**  
**August 2011**

Florida Disciples Regional Church

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## To: Ministerial Candidates Considering Commission and/or Ordination

On behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florida, we celebrate your ministry journey. This packet is designed for you to be in covenantal relationship with the Florida Disciples Regional Church through its Commission on Ministry (COM) while you are in discernment, preparation, active and/or retired engagement in either Commissioned Ministry or Ordained Ministry.



Our hope is this packet will offer you:

- **Guidelines and procedures** for your journey in ministry. Please read through this document and return all applicable material for consideration for “under-care” status.
- **Information** outlining tracks for ministry (Commission and Ordination), with requisite expectations for both. If you have any questions about the information presented, please contact either myself or one of the COM Team leaders, whose email addresses you will find listed in this packet.
- **Sequence.** Please take note and keep to the sequence in a timely manner. You will need to observe deadlines carefully, including, but not limited to background check, psychological evaluation, written paper deadlines, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) applications, and other aspects in preparation for meetings with the COM.
- **Expectation.** If your progress is inhibited in any way, please do not wait for us to call you. Please make your concerns known, so we can help you, for we take seriously our role in your care and nurture through this process.

Once you’ve discerned the possibility of a “call,” please follow the steps outlined and begin the application process. Our Commission members, as is our procedure, are your journey partners—here to help with your discernment. As you progress through the Commissioned and/or the Ordination ministry process, we pray that you will feel not only God’s “call” to this ministry but experience the covenant into which you enter. It will be a challenging journey. Please know that the Florida Disciples Regional Church and its COM, are committed to sharing and supporting this journey with you.

*From this very place, Lord, touch the nations; let us be a light to every race. Fill us with the fire of your sweet spirit, as we go from this very place.*

Chalice Praise, “From This Very Place,” by Stefan Youngblood

Grace and Peace,  
Donna Oberkreser  
Chair, Commission on Ministry

## INTRODUCTION

The ministry of Christ is entrusted to all God's people. Through baptism, we are called to servant ministry lived out in covenant community. Implicit in our confession of faith and the act of baptism is our acceptance of our vocation—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. Every baptized person is called to witness to Christ in whatever situation he or she lives—to express in his or her daily lives the ministry of Christ.

The ministry of God's people, taken as a whole, and in its diverse individual expressions, is to manifest and 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 God's people that **Commissioned** and **Ordained** ministries are understood.

Within the ministry of the whole people of God there is, and has been since the early church, representative ministry called by God, set apart by the Church, for distinctive functions. The Church recognizes and authorizes this Order of Ministry to equip the whole people to fulfill their corporate ministry. In the Order of Ministry, the Christian Church recognizes a **Commissioned** ministry and an **Ordained** ministry. **Commissioned** and **Ordained** ministries recognize, authorize, and bless God's call to particular individuals, and the Church designates these individuals "to re-present to the Church its own identity and calling in Jesus Christ."

The church expects the women and men it **commissions** and **ordains** to demonstrate educational qualifications and competencies in several areas of personal integrity and pastoral practice, as well as a clear call to and passion for ministry. The church gives grateful acknowledgment to God who grants these men and women the spiritual gifts necessary for such ministry. In making decisions about whom to **commission** and/or **ordain**, the church looks to candidates for:

- the personal inward call from God, which leads one to seek such ministry,
- the God-given gifts and graces,
- the personal characteristics and aptitudes,
- the preparation and promise that they have for effective ministry.

By these criteria, the church discerns whom it will **Commission** and/or **Ordain**.

The foregoing is based on *The Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* <http://disciples.org/our-identity/the-design/> and *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

<https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/06162557/TFPCOM-Final.pdf> , approved by the General Assembly of the Christian Church in 1971 and amended in 1977, 1981, 1985, 1987, 2009 and 2011. These documents are important conversation partners for you on this journey.

While Disciples celebrate congregational authority, congregations have covenanted with one another in regions to **ordain** and **commission** ministers and recognize standing under the guidance of regional Commissions on Ministry, constituted in accordance with regional structure and policy. In order to promote, develop, and maintain qualified and competent **commissioned** and **ordained** ministry, your Florida Disciples Regional Church has established a Commission on Ministry (COM), entrusted with your care and nurture—we are your journey partners.

The COM holds responsibility for establishing and interpreting guidelines and procedure for persons entering the Order of Ministry, for giving nurture to those preparing to enter the Order, as well as those already within it, and for covenanting with congregations to assure that the work of the Order of Ministry is faithfully and effectively fulfilled. The pages that follow are designed to help you be in covenant with The Florida Disciples Regional Commission on Ministry (COM). If you have any questions regarding this information, please do not hesitate to contact me, COM Chair, and/or one of the COM's team leaders:

Donna Oberkreiser  
comchair@fldisciples.org  
(727) 422-5886

**Meet the Florida Disciples Commission on Ministry**

**Rev. Donna Oberkreser, Chair**  
<mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org>  
727-422-5886

**COM Team Members**

<b>Rev. Dan Webster</b> <a href="mailto:Revweb1@gmail.com">mailto:Revweb1@gmail.com</a>	<b>Rev. Christine Bandy-Helderman</b> <a href="mailto:chrisbandyhhelderman@gmail.com">mailto:chrisbandyhhelderman@gmail.com</a>
<b>Jeff Harris</b> <a href="mailto:jharris@tampabay.rr.com">mailto:jharris@tampabay.rr.com</a>	<b>Mark Alexander</b> <a href="mailto:mark.alexander@adblegal.com">mailto:mark.alexander@adblegal.com</a>
<b>Rev. Dr. Mary Alice Mulligan</b> <a href="mailto:mamulligan@cts.edu">mailto:mamulligan@cts.edu</a>	<b>Rev. Waleska Alverado</b> <a href="mailto:w.alvarado72.yahoo.com">mailto:w.alvarado72.yahoo.com</a>

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Florida Disciples Regional Commission on Ministry (COM) has established required guidelines and procedures for recognition of ministerial standing which are highlighted in this packet.

With these guidelines and procedures, Florida Disciples Regional COM offers these general statements.

- **Persons** currently under care of the COM will be held in covenant under the guidelines active in the region when accepted into candidacy.
- This **welcome packet** supersedes all previous guidelines.
- In adherence with the **Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for The Ordering of Ministry for the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ (TFPCOM)**, the Florida Disciples Regional Commission on Ministry covenants to create an open door and an open Table, welcoming candidates from the breadth of the Region's diversity, celebrating their uniqueness of calling, gifts for ministry, and commitment to serving God through the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. As the COM welcomes all, it will endeavor to create a supportive environment for candidates, treating each fairly, prayerfully, and without discrimination.
- **Each person** residing in, or performing a recognized ministry in the Florida Region, who wishes to be commissioned or ordained, will covenant to come under care and nurture of the COM. Those under care of another Region will not be in covenant with the region, except by personal request. In the event a candidate from another Region seeks ordination or commission in Florida, the COM shall consult with the Region of candidacy regarding transfer of candidacy. If a candidate under care of the Florida Disciples COM seeks commission or ordination in another Region, the COM will cooperate with that Region.

The welcome packet presents the guidelines and procedures for three categories:

### Commissioned Ministers

- **Commissioned** Ministers are men and women authorized *annually* by the COM to offer their gifts to the Church in a particular place, entrusted to carry out the tasks of ministry, in relationship with that particular setting. Commissioned Ministers understand and affirm their vocation to respond to God's call to care for the church and offer gifts of body, mind, and spirit to that service.
- **Commissioned** Ministers commit themselves to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility, endeavoring continued growth and development (*in adherence with the policies and criteria for the ordering of ministry*) as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- **Commissioned** Ministers covenant to be in communion and collegial relationship with other ministers, specifically through the Florida Disciples Regional Church.

**Commissioned** Ministers will participate and support, beyond the congregation, meetings of Disciple-affiliated groups. Such meetings include, but are not limited to District, Regional and General Assemblies, training events, camp and conference, etc. **Commissioned** Ministers will be voting members of the Regional and General Assemblies of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, and are expected to exercise their voting rights.

- The institution with which the **Commissioned** Minister serves is stated on the commissioning certificate and must be renewed *annually* by the COM. **Commissioned** Ministers understand that their commission is valid only as long as they serve in the position for which the commission is granted. *When that particular call ends, for whatever reason, so does their commission.* **Commissioned** Ministers also recognize that commission is not necessarily a step toward ordination.
- The **Commissioned** Minister will follow the guidelines for candidates under care, *adhering to all stated requirements*. While the COM may grant a commission early on in a candidate's journey, the commissioned minister will maintain an intentional plan for gaining competency in areas of ministerial practice, approved and reviewed *annually* by the COM (see accompanying chart and appendices for guidance.).

As the “under care” journey can evolve over three to five years, following this process will give a commissioned pastor a strong foundation for his/her ministry. After completion of the “under care” process, a commissioned pastor will then live into the covenant for ongoing learning through the annual renewal of standing.

By following the guidelines in this packet, the COM believes that if a commissioned pastor's sense of call changes in the course of this covenant, he or she will have prepared him/herself to step onto the ordination track with a clear understanding of where he or she is on the journey and what remains to be addressed. Please note that the decision to move from one track to another is made in covenant and with approval from the COM.

## **Ordained Ministers**

Women and men are **ordained** into the Order of Ministry, rather than a particular office, set apart for leadership in the life and witness of the church. Such leadership is identified by three fundamental aspects:

- **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;
- **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)
- **overseeing** the life of the community in its worship, education, witness, mission, fellowship and pastoral nurture through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

As the Church accepts **Ordination** as a gift of the Holy Spirit, **ordained** ministers commit themselves to the burdens and opportunities of new authority and responsibility, entering into communion and collegial relationship with all ministers. In selecting men and women for



**Ordination**, the church seeks to ensure that its ministry of service, proclamation, and oversight shall be constantly upheld by its members, thus the ordained minister agrees to a regular review of standing by the COM.

In the Florida Region, two tracks are available for **Ordination**. Candidates for Ordination are encouraged to follow the Seminary Track, unless it is determined, in consultation with and approval by the COM, that their economic, vocational, or familial circumstances make the Apprentice Track more appropriate.

### **Seminary Track (ST)**

Preparation for **ordained** ministry through the seminary track includes securing a baccalaureate degree and the completion of a seminary program of study (typically the Master of Divinity) at a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (*for a list of accredited schools, go to [www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu)*), and demonstrating competency in the 16 areas of ministerial practice. The COM strongly encourages all candidates to pursue, if possible, their theological education through a Disciples affiliated seminary.

*Candidates attending a non-Disciples seminary will, in consultation with the COM, demonstrate knowledge of Disciples polity and history. This may be done through coursework or an independent study approved by the COM.*

ST candidates will complete **1 unit of CPE** by an accredited ACPE (Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.) program, if not already required for graduation by the seminary the candidate attends.

### **Apprentice Track (AT)**

As noted, the COM may approve the Apprentice Track (AT) toward Ordination for specific candidates because of economic, vocational, or familial circumstances.

Those considering application for the Apprentice Track (AT) will have secured a baccalaureate degree before pursuing the AT. Additionally, AT candidates will also complete **1 unit of CPE** by an accredited ACPE (Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.) program.

AT candidates will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of ministerial practice through the completion of the Certificate Program at Lexington Theological Seminary (or its equivalent from another Disciple related seminary) which meets the 250 contact hour requirement of the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ (TFPCOM)). FL Disciples Regional COM adheres to the same definition as is used by most traditional academic settings which presupposes 15 contact hours per credit hour.

Below please find LTS' Certificate Program for gaining competency in areas of ministerial practice:

<b>Course Requirement</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
Interpreting the Scripture For the Church	3.0
Interpreting the Past For the Church	1.5
Interpreting the Faith For the Church	3.0
Interpreting the Behavior of the Church	1.5
Leading the Church Through Care	1.5
Leading the Church Through Worship	2.5
Leading the Church in Formation	1.5
Leading the Church Into Mission: Administration	2.5
Leading the Church into Mission	2.5
Free Electives	2.5

TOTAL HOURS 24

AT candidates will complete **1 unit of CPE** by an accredited ACPE (Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.) program.

### **Ministerial Standing**

Standing affirms that the ordained or commissioned minister is presently engaged in an approved practice of ministry in Florida, whether on an occasional, part-time or full-time basis, with continuous accountability maintained with a congregation, organization, related institution or Regional or General Unit of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). All commissioned and ordained ministers are required to renew standing on a yearly basis, (appendix #15).

Such ministers are listed in the Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and may call upon the church for services and support such as relocation assistance, ecclesiastical endorsed, scholarship aid, and have voting privileges in the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

More information concerning standing may be found in the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ Section F. <https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/06162557/TFPCOM-Final.pdf>)

Standing may be terminated at any time by the COM for reasons such as those described in the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Section F, #4. <https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/06162557/TFPCOM-Final.pdf>,

### **Granting of Standing to those ordained in other Communion**

Recognition of ordination and granting of standing may occur for those persons who have been ordained in another communion but who wish to be recognized by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have a partnership of full communion. Consequently, the two denominations mutually recognize ministerial standing. Persons coming from denominations other than the UCC will need to undergo a process of review by the Commission. *Standing will be granted to such persons upon fulfillment of the requirements indicated by the COM*, in accord with the general Theological Foundations, Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Section F.

<https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/06162557/TFPCOM-Final.pdf>

### **Online Resources and Documents**

#### **Disciples Identity Statement and Principles**

<http://disciples.org/our-identity/identity-statement-and-principles/>

#### **Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

<https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/06162557/TFPCOM-Final.pdf>

#### **Ministerial Code of Ethics**

[https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/06162227/Ministerial\\_Code\\_of\\_Ethics-english-1.pdf](https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/06162227/Ministerial_Code_of_Ethics-english-1.pdf)

#### **Building a Portfolio**

<https://www.pdfFiller.com/5736146-BuildingAPortfolio-Building-a-Portfolio---Christian-Church--Disciples-of-Christ-Other-forms-disciples>

#### **Best Practices and Etiquette for Seeking a Call**

<https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/06162623/BestPractices-SearchAndCall.pdf>

## Useful Terms and Information

### **(COM) Commission on Ministry**

The COM discerns issues regarding ministerial commission, ordination and standing for the Florida Disciples Regional Church. The COM serves in complementary functions of **Training and Care** and **Recognition and Standing**.

The journey of **training and care** is with candidates who move toward ministry either through the commissioned ministry or ordination.

Our ministry of Recognition and Standing reviews transference of ordination to Disciples and the yearly review of “standing” (maintenance of active ordination and commissioning). Please refer to standing form, appendix #15. Recognition and Standing also responds to any issues regarding ministerial “standing.”

### **(GCOM) General Commission on Ministry**

The General Commission on Ministry (GCOM) defines for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the “Order of Ministry” and sets the standards by which a candidate becomes ordained within this order. <http://disciples.org/gcom/>

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### **Florida Disciples Regional Church**

The Florida Disciple Regional Church is the judicatory coordinating all the Christian Churches in Florida. <http://www.fldisciples.org>

### **For Ordination Candidates: Home Church, Sponsoring Church, and Field Education Church**

A “**Home Church**” is the church from which a candidate for ordination comes. This is the church in which a candidate is established when applying for “under care” status with the Commission on Ministry (COM).

A “**Sponsoring Church**” is the church sponsoring a candidate for ordination or commission, while the candidate is completing or has completed the basic requirements. This church will be familiar with the candidate’s journey toward commission/ordination and in some ways will have shepherded the candidate.

Although the COM explores important aspects of a candidate’s call, character, and preparation for ministry, cooperation between the COM and a sponsoring congregation is essential. A sponsoring congregation has knowledge of a candidate and his/her everyday life of faith. The candidacy process depends on the insight and good assessment of congregations in sponsoring and recommending candidates to the COM.

A “**Field Education Church**” is the church with which an ordination candidate gains supervised experience in ministry. This is typically required by seminaries.

A Home Church can be the Sponsoring Church, but not necessarily so. A candidate needs to establish experience with both a Home Church and Sponsoring Church, including a review process as determined by the church, the candidate and the COM. While the Field Education Church can be the Sponsoring Church, a Home Church cannot be the Field Education Church.

**Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)**

Clinical Pastoral Education is a formal chaplaincy program. It affords opportunity for a candidate for ministry to receive supervised clinical experience with peer review. Believing in the importance of CPE, the Florida Disciple Regional Church requires at least one unit of CPE training for ordination. (See information offered in [appendix #13](#).)

## **Scholarship Assistance**

Candidates must inquire and secure application forms from the funding source. Take care to know and follow application deadlines when applying. Please note that this may not be a complete list of available scholarships.

### **1. Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) Scholarships**

Most HELM funds are designated for undergraduate Disciples students. There are two scholarships that are designated for post graduates: the Anne Dickerson Scholarship for women seeking a PhD in Religion and the Jones Scholarship for PhD Students; for more information, go to <http://helmdisciples.org>

Higher Education and Leadership Ministries [www.helmdisciples.org](http://www.helmdisciples.org)  
11477 Old Cabin Rd., #310  
St. Louis, MO 63141  
(314) 991-3000 Fax: (314) 991-2957

### **2. Disciples Home Missions Scholarship Program**

Disciples Home Missions administers several scholarship funds for Disciples of Christ seminary students. Go online at [www.discipleshomemissions.org](http://www.discipleshomemissions.org). On the DHM Home page at the bottom under Resources, click on Scholarships. On the Scholarships page, you will find information about a variety of scholarships.

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/clergy/scholarships/>

Disciples Home Missions P.O. Box 1986  
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986 (317) 635-3100  
Fax: (317) 635-4426 [discipleshomemissions.org](http://discipleshomemissions.org)

Call Warren Linn, Office of Christian Vocations for additional information:  
(317) 713-2652.

### **3. Florida Disciples Regional Church**

6455 E Silver Springs Blvd.  
Silver Springs, FL 34488  
Phone: (352) 438-0340

Contact the Regional Minister for information on regional scholarships.

## Overview Chart

This chart highlights requirements for the journey toward Ordination and Commissioning. Following the overview is a more detailed explanation of steps, along with requisite forms included in the appendices.

*\*red boxes signify requirements for ordination candidates only*

Phase One			
<u>Requirements</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1st COM Meeting— Introductory			Contact Regional Office to arrange first meeting
Receive and Review “Welcome Packet			Inquire with Regional Office
Review Online the “Order of Ministry” and all other pertinent documents			<a href="http://disciples.org">http://disciples.org</a>  <a href="https://disciples.org/general-commission-on-the-order-of-ministry/">https://disciples.org/general-commission-on-the-order-of-ministry/</a>
Sign and Submit Two Release forms			<a href="#">Appendix #3</a>
Receive Criminal Background Check			Check with Regional Office to ensure appropriate agency and to assure forwarding
Review and Sign “Ministerial Code of Ethics”			<a href="#">Appendix #4</a>
Sign “Under Care” Application			<a href="#">Appendix #5</a>
Home Church Sponsorship and 3 Reference Letters			Appendices <a href="#">#6</a> & <a href="#">#7</a>
Sign “Candidacy Agreement and Covenant			<a href="#">Appendix #8</a>
Candidates who identify with ethnic groups recognized in the Christian Church (DoC) will be referred to the appropriate ethnic leadership			Check with Chair of Commission on Ministry for referral as appropriate

Phase One			
Submit “10 Personal Qualifications” form			<a href="#">Appendix #1</a> - template form
Submit initial “16 Competency Areas” form			<a href="#">Appendix #2</a> -template form

Phase Two			
<u>Requirements</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Comments</u>
2nd COM Meeting			Submit Appendices 1, 2, 9, & 13 , most recent transcript, and an updated Contact Sheet by required date
*Secure/name a Sponsoring Church			Sponsoring Congregation will offer periodic reviews of your ministerial work and growth
* Evaluation (Middler or equivalent) Submitted			
Psychological Evaluation and Submission of Results			Contact regional office for recommended institutions and/or approval of candidate’s preferred practice.
Submit updated “16 Competency Areas”			make additions to Appendix #2
Phase Three			
3rd COM Meeting			Submit Appendices 1, 2, 9, and 13, Psych Evaluation, most recent transcript, Middler Evaluation (if available), and updated Contact Sheet
Submit Evaluation of Field Education and/or Church Experience			secure <b>from</b> Field Education Supervisor
Submit “10 Personal Qualifications” Reassessment			Reflect, reassess, note growth



Submit completed "16 Competency Areas" form			Make additions <a href="#">Appendix #1</a>
Submit Transcripts, CEUs, CPE and Certificates, etc.			
<b>Phase Four</b>			
Fourth COM Meeting			Submit Appendices 1, 2, 9, and 13, most recent transcript, CPE Evaluation, Field Education, and updated Contact Sheet
Confirm Certification of Boundary Training (within 5 years)			Forward Copy of Certificate to COM
<b>*Submit Personal Request for Ordination</b>			See <a href="#">Appendix #10</a>
<b>*Submit 3 Letters of Reference for Ordination</b>			See <a href="#">Appendix #11</a>
<b>*Submit Sponsoring Church Letter for Ordination</b>			See <a href="#">Appendix #12</a>
<b>*Submit Ordination Papers</b>			See <a href="#">Appendix #9</a> for guidelines
Fifth COM Meeting			
<b>COM Approval for Ordination</b>			Submit Appendices 1, 2, and 13, final transcript, and Ordination Papers Consider Candidate for Ordination
<b>*Ordination Plans with COM, Regional Minister and staff</b>			set date and place, plan event
<b>*Ordination Service and Certificate</b>			Thank you for sharing your journey with the COM

## **Under Care Chart Explanation**

*Please read the chart carefully as it outlines both the journey and the sequence of the journey for most candidates “Under Care”.*

The two most important items on this chart are [“The Ten Personal Qualifications”](#) and [“The 16 competency Areas.”](#)

The areas readily fall within studies for seminary students. Using Appendix 2 template, we ask that you fill the course/source as you complete the requirement and give a brief assessment for each, depending where you receive training. ***If the COM, along with the candidate, determines the candidate to be weak in one of the competency areas, online courses and/or additional readings may be recommended and/or required.***

For the “Ten Personal Qualifications,” (Appendix #1) we ask you to fill out your “personal assessment” in each of the first nine areas near the beginning of your journey and then again near the end, offering reflection on your growth and development throughout your journey “under care.”

Along the way, the COM will review with you your progress and assessments by means of several tools—references (personal, home church, sponsoring church), psych evaluation, Middler review or equivalent, field education experience, CPE evaluations, transcripts, ordination papers. The chart outlines the sequence in which these will be considered.

Please note the difference between your “Home Church” sponsorship at the beginning of your journey and the “Sponsoring Church” for ordination at your journey’s end, if applicable. These may be, but do not necessarily have to be the same church. Your “Field Education” church can be, but does not necessary have to be your ordination location. We encourage you to receive the broadest experience possible, believing that your pastoral experience will grow from it. We ask that you do not use your home church for your field education site, if at all possible.

We expect a thorough review of transcripts, CEUs (continuing education units), certificates (boundary training), etc. near completion of your journey. Should there be an issue with grades or course work along the way, it will be ***your*** responsibility to bring it to the COM’s attention.

All candidates under care, please be alert for Boundary Training (required every 5 years) as it occurs periodically in the region. If you attend seminary outside of the region, you will want to check with that region for the possibility of attending locally. Boundary Training is a necessary part of this journey and you will need to provide the COM with a copy of your certificate.

Candidate meetings with the COM are critical to a successful journey, as is adhering to the requirements for each session. It is incumbent upon a candidate to secure these meetings in a timely fashion and to submit all requisite material to the COM one month prior to the meeting date so as to ensure careful reflection of all documentation by COM members.

The COM strongly encourages candidate meetings to be in person, so as to live into the "care and nurture" of this relationship. However, if familial or work related challenges occur, on-line meetings might be secured upon the approval of the COM Chair.

### **Mentoring**

The COM believes an integral part of a candidate's journey is having a mentor. **Ordained** and **Commissioned** Ministers will be assigned mentors by the COM.

Most seminaries require students to seek a mentor to accompany them on their journeys. To not unduly burden candidates with having to manage multiple relationships, the COM will work with candidates and seminaries so there is only one mentor. As candidates typically invite an individual to be their mentor for seminary, it is incumbent upon candidates to explain to the mentor his/her covenantal relationship with the COM. The COM will seek reflection, observation, and assessment from the mentor as part of the candidate's portfolio.

The candidate and mentor will meet *at least four times a year* while under care. The mentor will submit a yearly evaluation of the candidate's growth, offering insight into the development of the 10 areas of personal qualifications and the 16 competencies.

## **The Ten Personal Qualifications**

Disciples General Commission on Ministry has determined that a candidate “under care” must manifest 10 personal qualities. Two times along your journey, the COM will want to review your perceptions, their experience with you, and other indicators of this manifestation. The first review seeks your self-assessment. The second asks you to reassess, based on your growing experiences. Please see Appendix #1 for a format for your self-assessments. You may download a template from (<https://www.pdfFiller.com/5736146-BuildingAPortfolio-Building-a-Portfolio---Christian-Church--Disciples-of-Christ-Other-forms-disciples>) for this purpose. The COM understands the highly subjective nature of this exercise and strives to be as non-judgmental as possible. The COM values honest, open, down-to-earth narratives as possible, as it will engage you likewise.

### **Ten Personal Qualifications**

1. Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practice.
2. A sense of call to ministry affirmed by the Church.
3. An understanding of ministerial identity.
4. Capacity to engage in theological reflection.
5. Strong moral character and personal integrity.
6. Commitment to spiritual, physical, and emotional wellness sufficient for a healthy ministry.
7. Care and compassion for all people with appropriate relational skills.
8. Responsible personal financial management
9. Wide and generous stewardship in the use of God’s gifts.
10. Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous pastoral tasks of ministry (as listed the 16 competency Areas)

## **The Sixteen Competency Areas**

Disciples General Commission on Ministry has determined that a candidate must demonstrate an understanding and skills in sixteen areas of competency. They are listed below. Three times along the various tracks, the COM will want to review your learning and skills in these sixteen areas. Please see Appendix #2 for an example of a chart to record your learning/training experiences (classroom, online, seminars and workshops, readings, writings, field experiences, etc.). We encourage you to recreate your own or download a template from (<https://www.pdfFiller.com/5736146-BuildingAPortfolio-Building-a-Portfolio---Christian-Church--Disciples-of-Christ-Other-forms-disciples>) to record your progress. We are making concerted effort to insure that the learning and skill development is comparable on all tracks.

### **1. Biblical Knowledge**

Be rooted and grounded in Scripture and able to interpret and apply the scriptures in ways that are appropriate to original and contemporary contexts.

### **2. Church Administration and Planning**

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

### **3. Communication**

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

### **4. Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience**

Be sensitive to the different manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be committed to confronting and overcoming them.

### **5. Ecumenism**

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

### **6. Education and Leadership Development**

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

### **7. Ethics**

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

### **8. Evangelism**

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

## **9. Mission of the Church in the World**

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

## **10. Pastoral Care**

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

## **11. Proclamation of the Word**

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

## **12. Spiritual Development**

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

## **13. Stewardship**

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

## **14. Theology**

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

## **15. Understanding of Heritage**

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

## **16. Worship**

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

# SUMMARY OF STEPS FOR “UNDER CARE” STATUS

## Phase One: References and Introductions

### **1. Introductory Meeting with COM**

If you have discerned a call to ministry and would like to consider **ordination** and/or **commission** with the Disciples of Christ, and if you wish to understand the ordination process, please call or email: **Reverend Donna Oberkreser**, Chair, Commission on Ministry, (727) 422-5886, [comchair@fldisciples.org](mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org).

### **2. Receive and Review the “Welcome Packet”**

The Welcome Packet is available for candidates for **ordination** and **commission** within the Disciples of Christ denomination. It will be available (given to candidate) at the first introductory meeting with the COM.

For entrance “under care,” candidates must apply by completing the forms found elsewhere in this packet. (See [Appendix #5](#).)

If you are “under care” in another region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and wish to transfer that status to the Florida Region, please contact Reverend Oberkreser and advise her of your situation. If you need assistance with your discernment as to being “under care,” in our region or another region from which you come, please contact Reverend Oberkreser.

### **3. Review Online the “Order of Ministry”**

You can find the "Order of Ministry" on the Disciples Website ([www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org)). On the home page, in the "Who We Are" dropdown menu select "For Leaders". Scroll down to "General Commission on the Order of Ministry" and click on the OCMP red button. Scroll down to the documents section and you will find a PDF file button on the Theology, Policies, and Criteria for the Order of Ministry (TFPCOM) document. If you have not already, please become familiar with this Website and its rich resources for ministry.

<https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/06162557/TFPCOM-Final.pdf>

Notable in this document is the emphasis on the “Ten Personal Qualifications” for Ministry and the “Sixteen Competency Areas” for ministry. While many denominations have several “Orders of Ministry,” (ordination for chaplaincy, education, mission work, etc.), Disciples of Christ have only one. Disciples look for both ordained and commissioned ministers to have a broad range of skills.

### **4. Sign the Release Form (Use of Name)**

From time to time, the COM will need to send to you or request from you important information. Our purpose would be to contact you for reasons that have a direct bearing on your preparation for ministry. Due to privacy laws and confidentiality requirements, the COM asks your permission to contact you at your residence and to share information with appropriate church-related parties. ([Appendix #3](#))

## **5. Confirm Reception of Criminal Background Check**

The Criminal Background Check must be completed before you can be accepted “under care” with the COM. You can obtain criminal background check through your local police department or DMV, among other options. Before you make arrangements for your second meeting with the COM, please confirm that the COM has received your Criminal Background Check. We will need this in hand before we can proceed.

## **6. Review and Sign the “Ministerial Code of Ethics”**

Please note in your review of the “Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)” the “Ministerial Code of Ethics.” This will be the most recent version.

[https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/06162227/Ministerial\\_Code\\_of\\_Ethics-english-1.pdf](https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/06162227/Ministerial_Code_of_Ethics-english-1.pdf)

A copy can be found in [Appendix #4](#). Please sign and submit, either prior to or at your second meeting with the COM.

## **\*7. Sign “Under Care” Application and “Candidacy Covenant and Agreement”**

Please review and sign the “Application for ‘In Care’ Status” ([Appendix #5](#)) and submit, either prior to or at you second meeting with the COM.

## **\*8. Have a Home Church Sponsorship Reference + Three References sent to: Florida Disciple Regional Church (appendices # 6 & #7).**

Forward this letter to the pastor of your home church to compose and submit a reference letter for your candidacy for ministry process. (See [Appendix #6](#))

Make three copies of this reference letterform and ask three people who can speak to your potential for faith formation, educational endeavor, and ministerial vocation to submit a reference for your candidacy for ordination. (See [Appendix #7](#))

***\*These items need to be submitted before the COM can initiate the “Under Care” status.***

## **9. Ethnic Identification**

Regional COM should consult with the appropriate General Pastor and Regional Leader of Racial Ethnic communities whenever considering a racial/ethnic applicant. The General Pastor and Leaders of Racial Ethnic communities may be included in the ethnic candidate’s initial meeting with the Commission as well as the ordination interview. If a candidate wishes to have her or his ethnic leader present for other meetings, the candidate may invite that leader. The General Pastor and Leaders of Racial Ethnic communities may also be included in the ordination services of our ethnic candidates.

## **10. Self-Assessment for First Nine of the “10 Personal Qualifications”**

[Appendix #1](#) is a document form on which you can complete short narrative statements for each of the Ten Personal Qualifications. This self-assessment form will be reviewed and discussed at your second meeting with the COM. Please submit it to Regional Office at least one month prior



to that meeting, in time for distribution to committee members. *\*Be ready to submit a second reassessment of this form before your third meeting.*

### **11. Submit Current Status of Your “16 Competency Areas”**

[Appendix #2](#) is a document form on which you can complete summaries of your current status. This “Competency for Ministry” form will be reviewed and discussed at your second meeting. Please submit it to the Regional Office one month prior to that meeting, in time for distribution to committee members. *\*Be ready to submit a second reassessment of this form before your third meeting.*

### **12. Once Required Documentation is Secured, Arrange Second COM Meeting**

Once all documentation as outlined above is secured, and the appropriate items forwarded in advance, please call the Regional Office to arrange your second meeting. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to review your 10 personal qualification areas and your 16 competency areas, as well as discuss your profile. Generally, but not necessarily, the COM will officially discern and invite you to join us under care.

### **13. Secure Mentoring**

The COM will work with candidates to secure a ministerial mentor for their journey “under care.” Many seminary programs also require a mentor for their students, therefore if a candidate has already secured a mentor through that process, the COM will honor that relationship by having the mentor serve for both process

### **14. Make Arrangement for Boundary Training**

Both Commissioned and Ordained Ministers need to complete Boundary Training every five years. The COM requires that your first training be while you are under care. Please contact the Regional Office and let them know you are required to complete Boundary Training at the first level and secure a schedule if possible. Plan to complete this as soon as possible, and submit the certificate of completion to the Regional Office, attention Chair, COM.

### **15. Look Ahead and Plan Your Engagement in Field Education and CPE**

Candidates, you need to be aware that Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and field education (for seminary students) are two different requirements and each needs to be completed separately. For all ordination candidates, CPE is a requirement and credited accordingly. See [Appendix # 13](#) for more information.

### **16. Participate in a Local Disciples Congregation (Sponsoring Congregation)**

The COM believes that it is imperative for you to be involved in the life and ministry of a congregation within our Region. A local community of faith can provide you with community, support, and encouragement as well as the opportunity to continue to discern your gifts and growing edges as you share in ministry in the local setting. For Commissioned Ministers and Apprentice Track candidates, the congregation in which you serve may be your sponsoring congregation. For seminary track, candidates whose home church may be in a different region, a local sponsoring church is a necessary part of your journey, and the COM encourages you to develop that relationship. The Region may, in certain instances, become your sponsoring or cosponsoring congregation, along with your home church and assist in the planning of your

ordination. It is possible that your Field Education church may become your worshipping community and your sponsoring congregation. Please keep the COM informed as to your participation in a local congregation.

### **17. Commissioning for Ministry While in Seminary**

During your time in seminary or in the Apprentice Track, a congregation that you are serving may request that you be commissioned to perform ministerial service. Commissioning may be recommended by the COM on a yearly basis, with options for renewal, and must be for a specific ministerial event or activity or project. The requesting congregation must submit a letter to the COM and include in the letter the specific responsibilities of the candidate.

### **18. Consultation, Counseling and Spiritual Direction**

The COM as a whole, members of the committee, and the Regional Ministers, are available to give counsel and support upon request at any time while you are “under care.” However, professional assistance with problems unrelated to your journey “under care” should be sought with the assistance of a psychologist/psychiatrist of your choice. Spiritual Direction resources are also available throughout the region.

### **19. Networking Among Disciples**

Key to a successful ministry is networking among colleagues and regional staff. Please take the time to meet with the Regional Minister and with others in leadership around the Region. The COM encourages you to participate in regional events and activities as part of your journey.

## **Phase Two: Psychological Assessment and Competency Development**

### **1. Establish a Sponsoring Church**

During your journey under care, secure a sponsoring congregation in which you will participate, exercise leadership capacity, and experience the dynamics of a local congregation. Develop a working relationship with the minister and other leaders. Ask the congregation to form a discernment committee (something like a Pastoral Relations Committee) to discuss with you at various times the various concerns and issues that may arise during your participation, and who will submit to the COM, with a letter of affirmation from the pastor, a recommendation for your ordination. Your sponsoring congregation is asked to share the expenses of your Psychological Evaluation.

### **2. Middler Review (or Equivalent), Submit Evaluation**

Many seminaries require a Review midway in the Seminary Experience. This process reviews a student's progress and goals with fellow students, professors, and a representative from our region. Members of the COM should be part of the Middler Review team. If your seminary does not have a Middler Review, please discuss with the COM possible alternatives at your second meeting with the COM. If your seminary does, please inform the chair of your Middler team of this requirement and make sure someone on the committee is included in your Middler Review.

The purpose of a review midway along the ordination journey is to secure feedback on your progress from peers and professionals. If you are not part of such a review, please think creatively how you might secure such feedback, and share your ideas with the COM so that an independent review can be developed (see example below).

*Write a narrative review of your seminary experience to date. Please include (1) your name and the date, (2) names of those on your review team or who offered you feedback, (3) a personal perspective on your journey thus far, (4) and a summary of the feedback reflecting both your personal and pastoral strengths and areas inviting further strength building, (5) areas of needed academic focus including suggested course work, and (6) your personal reflections on this midway review. Please secure the signature and date of either the chair of your Middler Team or someone instrumental in pulling together your midway review.*

### **3. Complete the Psychological Evaluation and Submit to the Chair of the COM**

A psychological assessment is a requirement of the Florida Disciples Regional Church for all persons under care. The Florida Region has developed a relationship with **Lutheran Counseling Services** for this evaluation:

1505 Orchid Avenue  
Winter Park, Florida 32789  
407-644-4692

**Lutheran Counseling Services** offer this evaluation for a number of denominations and is part of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. If you wish to procure another practice to do the evaluation, it is important that you confer with the COM before you make a decision to ensure all requirements are met.

**The cost of the psychological assessment is significant. Lutheran Counseling Services fee per candidate is \$780 (as of March 2023). The COM anticipates that the candidate will secure an equitable funding arrangement between a candidate's sponsoring congregation and the candidate.**

It is the student's responsibility to be in communication with his/her sponsoring congregation to solicit the funds needed as their share in this investment in your future ministry.

Upon completion of the psychological assessment, you will be responsible for authorizing, in writing, the release of the report to the COM. At the completion of the process and with your signature of release, the practice will forward their report to the committee and at that time, the committee will contact you regarding an appointment for the review of the findings. After this meeting and in respect for your privacy, all members of COM Team who have reviewed the report are instructed to destroy all copies. The Chair of COM will keep one copy in your files.

For Ordination Candidates, the psychological assessment should be completed at the beginning of Phase #2, before the middler review (or equivalent) and Clinical Pastoral Education (unless a written petition for exception is presented to COM for approval) to avail the candidate with potential issues to address during the course of ministerial training.

#### **4. Submit an updated version of the "16 Competency Areas" Form**

Review and update the "Sixteen Competency Areas" form, to date. Essentially, you will be adding to this form as you progress. Be prepared to discuss your experiences in the various areas of growing competency (strong points, challenges, questions, areas needing improvement, etc.)

#### **5. Third Meeting with the COM**

Contact the chair of the COM and review your completion of Phase #2. Make arrangement for your third meeting with the COM and be prepared to review your Psych Evaluation, Middler Review or Equivalent, and Sponsoring Congregation Review. If your program does not have a Middler Review, please discuss with the COM possible alternatives at your second meeting.

## **Phase Three: CPE, Field Education, and Competency Development**

### **1. CPE Completed: Submit Reports**

Make arrangements early. Complete your Clinical Pastoral Education experience (at least one unit) and forward your evaluations and those of your supervisor to the Regional Staff. Many candidates have found it beneficial to extend training in CPE beyond one unit. (See [Appendix 13](#) and [14](#) for information about the CPE experience.) If you feel called to chaplaincy ministry, you will typically need four units of CPE.

### **2. Submit Evaluation of Field Education Experience**

As a seminary student, either you or your supervisor of your Field Education Experience will forward an evaluation to the Regional Office, attn. Chair, COM. Be creative in shaping the form of such an evaluation. Please include contact information.

### **3. Submit Revised “10 Personal Qualifications” Reassessment**

Please review what you previously wrote on your “Ten Personal Qualifications” form. Without deletions, add your reassessment of each area, reflecting what your experiences along the ordination journey have contributed to your growth.

### **4. Submit Completed Update of “16 Competency Areas” Form**

Complete the “Sixteen Competency Areas” form, making sure that (1) your training in each area has been sufficient to develop confidence and competency in those areas, and (2) that they meet the expectations of the COM. Identify the areas of your strengths and weaknesses (if you sense such). Forward this completed assessment to the Regional Office, attn. Chair, COM.

### **5. Submit Transcripts, CEUs and Certificates, etc.**

Forward all transcripts, CEUs, Certificates and supporting documents to the Regional Office, attn. Chair, COM.

### **6. Fourth Meeting with the COM**

Contact the chair of the COM and review your completion of your Phase #3 material. When all is in order, make arrangement for your fourth meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to review your CPE evaluation, Field Education experience, your “Ten Personal Qualifications” form, and the completion of your training and experience in the “Sixteen Competency Areas.”

## **Phase Four: Ordination Process and Ordination Paper (Ordination candidates only)**

**At least three months prior to your ordination interview, complete the Psychological Evaluation and Submit to the Chair of the COM**

A psychological assessment is a requirement of the Florida Disciples Regional Church for all persons under care. The Florida Region has developed a relationship with **Lutheran Counseling Services** for this evaluation:

1505 Orchid Avenue  
Winter Park, Florida 32789  
407-644-4692

**Lutheran Counseling Services** offer this evaluation for a number of denominations and is part of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. If you wish to procure another practice to do the evaluation, it is important that you confer with the COM before you make a decision to ensure all requirements are met.

**The cost of the psychological assessment is significant. Lutheran Counseling Services fee per candidate is \$780 (March 2023). The COM anticipates that the candidate will secure an equitable funding arrangement between a candidate's sponsoring congregation and the candidate.**

It is the student's responsibility to be in communication with his/her sponsoring congregation to solicit the funds needed as their share in this investment in your future ministry.

Upon completion of the psychological assessment, you will be responsible for authorizing, in writing, the release of the report to the COM. At the completion of the process and with your signature of release, the practice will forward their report to the committee and at that time, the committee will contact you regarding an appointment for the review of the findings. After this meeting and in respect for your privacy, all members of COM Team who have reviewed the report are instructed to destroy all copies. The Chair of COM will keep one copy in your files.

For Ordination Candidates, the psychological assessment should be completed at the beginning of Phase #2, before the middler review (or equivalent) and Clinical Pastoral Education (unless a written petition for exception is presented to COM for approval) to avail the candidate with potential issues to address during the course of ministerial training.

### **1. Submit Certification of Boundary Training**

Make sure you have completed Boundary Training at least at the first level, and that you have submitted the certificate of completion to the Regional Office, attn. Chair, COM

### **2. Submit Personal Request for Ordination**

Write a short letter from you to the COM requesting Ordination, along with the Ordination Application ([Appendix # 10](#)) and submit these to the Regional Office, attn. Chair, COM.

### **3. Submit three Letters of Reference for Ordination**

Find in [Appendix # 11](#) a form letter of reference for Ordination Candidacy. Seek references from three individuals who can concretely speak to following aspects of your ministry: your faith formation; educational journey and pastoral ministry. Ask your referents to forward their references to the Regional Office, with copy to the Chair, COM as soon as possible. These should be sent by email.

### **4. Submit a Letter from Your Sponsoring Church**

The COM requires a letter of sponsorship written by the Senior Pastor for ordination. This could be the church where you hold membership, the church you have been attending during your seminary training, or the church where you have been doing your Field Education. (See [Appendix 12.](#))

### **5. Submit the completed Ten Personal Qualifications and 16 Competencies**

You have been working on these forms throughout your seminary experience and your journey with the Commission. For your ordination interview, you will submit your final review of the Ten Qualifications (please see page #20 and [Appendix 1](#)) and of the 16 Competencies (please see pages 21-22 and [Appendix 2](#)).

### **6. Mentor's Report**

Your mentor will submit a final report on your behalf. She/he may use the same reference form provided in [Appendix 11](#), *with the addition of a comment on the progress you have made in your journey with her/him*. This reference does *not* count as one of the three required references.

### **7. Submit "Ordination Papers"**

See [Appendix #9](#) for the guidelines for writing the Ordination Papers. Consider them carefully, write and review, then email your Ordination Paper to the Chair of the COM. They will be shared with members of the COM for review for our fifth official meeting.

### **8. Fifth Meeting with the COM**

Make arrangements for your fifth meeting with the COM to review your ordination papers. This meeting will be with the entire COM and will last at least 2 hours. After review of a candidate's ordination paper, educational experiences, a vote for recommendation for ordination by COM will be forwarded to the Regional Board for affirmation by the Regional Assembly of Florida. Once the COM has recommended you for ordination, you have permission to finalize the date, site, and program for the ordination service. You will need to make an appointment with the Regional Minister to discuss your service. Informal discussions including site and date for ordination are acceptable, but no formal or final discussion can be arrangements can be made until the COM has recommended ordination.

The selection of a sponsoring church(es) must be made no later than the completion of Phase 2. Inform the COM of your choice of a sponsoring church(es) at the third meeting. The selection of a sponsoring regional church assumes a candidate's active participation in that congregation, planning for ordination with the sponsoring church, and a previous agreement with them to assist in the cost of your psychological evaluation.

## **Ordination Service**

### **9. Confer with Regional Minister for Ordination Plans**

Make arrangements to meet with the Regional Minister to discuss your ordination plans. While you may initiate discussion with the Regional Minister at any time during this final phase, you should not set a date for your ordination or extend invitations to attend your ordination until the COM has officially recommended you for ordination to the region. Discuss with the Regional Minister how you prefer to set up your planning for ordination. We recommend a committee of a COM representative, a representative from your sponsoring congregation, and a member of the Regional Staff.

### **10. Ordination Service and Ordination Certification**

The COM feels it an honor to have shared this journey toward ordination with you. You have our sincere appreciation and blessings for your life as an ordained minister with the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ.

***CONGRATULATIONS!!!***



## APPENDICES

### **Appendix #1 – Template for Ten Personal Qualifications**

*The first review asks you for your self-assessment. Your final review of these questions will be completed as part of your ordination requirements. You may request a **digital copy of this template**.*

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

## Appendix #2 – Template for Sixteen Competency Areas

### Progression towards Completion

*This chart records your development through each of the sixteen competency areas. You may recreate your own chart or use this template to record your progress. Record your learning/training experiences (classroom, online, seminars and workshops, readings, writings, field experiences, etc.) and enter your comments, questions, growing edges for each, and submit prior to each time the Sixteen Competency Areas are reviewed by the COM. Please attach any supporting documents: syllabi, course descriptions, etc. Along with other ordination documents, upon completion of all requirements, you will submit your final form demonstrating your competency on each area.*

Competency Area	How did you Learn/Develop Skills in this Area? <i>(classroom, online, seminar, etc.)</i>	Your General Comments, Questions, Growing Edges	Credit Hours, CEUs, Contact Hours	Dates Completed
<b>Biblical Knowledge</b>				
<b>Church Administration and Planning</b>				
<b>Communication</b>				
<b>Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience</b>				

Competency Area	How did you Learn/Develop Skills in this Area? <i>(classroom, online, seminar, etc.)</i>	Your General Comments, Questions, Growing Edges	Credit Hours, CEUs, Contact Hours	Dates Completed
Ecumenism				
Education and Leadership Development				
Ethics				
Evangelism				
Mission of the Church in the World				
Pastoral Care				

Competency Area	How did you Learn/Develop Skills in this Area? <i>(classroom, online, seminar, etc.)</i>	Your General Comments, Questions, Growing Edges	Credit Hours, CEUs, Contact Hours	Dates Completed
Proclamation of the Word				
Spiritual Development				
Stewardship				
Theology				
Understanding of Heritage				
Worship				

**Appendix #3 – Rationale and Permission to Use Name and Address**

**Florida Disciples Regional Church**

**Confidential Document**

[Note: \*\* Indicates Required Field]

From time to time, the COM will need to send to you, or request from you, important information. Our purpose would be to contact you for reasons that have a direct bearing on your preparation for ministry.

Due to privacy laws and confidentiality requirements of seminaries and Region, the COM must ask your permission to contact you at your residence and to share this information with appropriate church-related parties. Please read and sign to agree or to decline to provide the following information:

\*\*Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Name (First, Middle [Use n/a if no middle name] and Last):

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*City: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*State: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If appropriate)*

Seminary Contact Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Seminary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*You must choose one of the options below:

I give my permission to be contacted. I understand that this information may be shared with regional congregations and organizations

I decline to give this information

**I understand that this information will be valid from the current school year until I have completed my relationship with the COM; and if there are changes, I will contact the Regional Office to update information.**

\*\*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your application packet

## **Appendix #4 – Ministerial Code of Ethics** **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

*A Document of the General Commission on Ministry, published by the Office of Search and Call,  
Disciples Home Missions; this revised version became official on August 1, 2011*

Believing that Jesus is the Christ, Son of the living God, and proclaiming him Lord and Savior of the world, I reaffirm my vows as a minister. Through dedication and discipline I will lead and serve with integrity. Relying on the grace of God, I commit myself to the following:

### **Personal Conduct**

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

## **Relationship to the Church that I Serve**

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

## **Relationship To Ministry Colleagues**

- Engaging in covenant relationships with colleagues, which involve nurture, discipline, family support, vigorous dialogue, mutual teaching and learning, and spiritual formation
- Supporting colleagues in ministry and their families while not exploiting their problems or crises
- Performing pastoral services within another congregation or for a member of another congregation only at the request of that congregation's elders and current pastor
  - Supporting, and at no time speaking maliciously of, the ministry of my predecessors or another minister in the congregation
  - Encouraging the ministry of my successor upon my retirement or departure from a ministerial position, without interfering or intruding, and by making it clear to former

parishioners that I am no longer their pastor, nor will I perform any pastoral services unless requested by the congregation's elders and current pastor.

### **Relationship to the Community and the Wider Church**

- Participating responsibly in the life and work of my community, bearing prophetic witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and working toward a just and morally responsible society
- Participating faithfully in the life and work of all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Seeking to know, understand, and respect the diversity of opinions and people within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Being a responsible representative of the one Church of Jesus Christ and participating in activities which strengthen its unity, ministry, witness, and mission

**[Note: \*\* Indicates Required Field]**

I hereby affirm, accept, and agree the content of this document in the preparation of my Ministerial Call:

---

\*\*Printed Name

---

\*\*Signature

---

\*\*Date



## Appendix #5 – Application for “Under Care” Status

[Note: \*\* Indicates Required Field]

\*\*First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Middle Name: (Write n/a if none): \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Address (Include: Street, City, State and Zip Code):

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>**Gender</b> <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Non-Binary <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to answer	<b>**Ethnicity (Choose all that apply)</b> <input type="radio"/> African American <input type="radio"/> Asian <input type="radio"/> European descent <input type="radio"/> Haitian <input type="radio"/> Hispanic <input type="radio"/> Middle Eastern <input type="radio"/> Native American / First Nations <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> Pacific Islander	<b>**Marital Status</b> <input type="radio"/> Single <input type="radio"/> Married <input type="radio"/> Divorces <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Widowed	<b>**Spouses Name:</b> -----
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\*\*Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*I am a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Y \_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_

\*\*Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Name of Pastor:

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Schools, Colleges, Seminaries, Graduate Schools previously attended:** *(Please list the most recent first. Include present enrollment and degree program. Use space on back of application if necessary.)*

**\*\*Summary of Work Experience:**

**\*\*My Plans for Ministry:**

Three Persons whom I will ask to write Reference Letters regarding my candidacy:

\*\*Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Relationship to me: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Relationship to me: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Relationship to me: \_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that my obligation involves continuing communication with the COM and that the Under Care journey does not obligate me to enter the ministry nor does it guarantee that I will be approved for ordination.*

\*\*Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please email this application, along with the other required documents, to:  
Rev. Donna Oberkreser  
comchair@fldisciples.org

## **Appendix #6 – Reference from Pastor of HOME Church**

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

*In pursuit of ordination for ministry with the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, through the Florida Disciples Regional Church, the above candidate has applied for candidacy with the Commission on Ministry (COM). To have a background with Disciples, our entry requirements ask that a candidate come from a Disciples “Home Church” or become established in such before applying for “under-care” status with the COM. We ask for a reference letter from the pastor of a candidate’s Home Church as part of our entry requirements. This candidate has given you as reference. Please fill out the following and email as soon as possible to Rev. Oberkreiser at comchair@fldisciples.org.*

How long has the candidate been a member of the congregation?

What roles has the candidate fulfilled?

What are the gifts for ministry that you have witnessed in the Candidate?

How is the candidate received in the community?

Is the community willing to recommend the candidate for the ordination process?

Do you have any concerns about this person’s ethics or personal fitness for ministry?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No (if “yes”, please explain on the back)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix #7 – Reference Letter for “Under Care” Candidacy**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of Candidate)

*has applied for candidacy with the Commission on Ministry of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, through the Florida Disciples Regional Church. “Candidacy” is not approval for ordination but is an entrance requirement in a process of oversight, care, and certification leading to a consideration for approval for ordination. This candidate has given you as reference. Please fill out the following and email as soon as possible to Rev. Oberkreiser at [comchair@fldisciples.org](mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org). Thank you.*

1. How long have you know the candidate and in what capacity?
  
  
2. What do you understand are the candidate’s gifts/graces for ordained ministry? What would make him/her a strong minister?
  
  
  
3. What are the candidate’s challenges, road blocks, growing edges for becoming an ordained minister?
  
  
  
  
4. Describe the candidate’s spirituality.
  
  
  
  
5. What concerns do you have regarding this person’s potential to be a faithful and effective Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister? Where can he/she improve his/her potential for ministry?
  
  
  
  
6. Do you have any concerns about this person’s ethics or personal fitness for ministry?  
 No  Yes *(If you have concerns, please explain confidentially on the back of this sheet.)*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

You may share this letter with the candidate

This letter is not to be shared with the candidate

Additional Responses:

**Appendix #8 – Covenant for Candidates Under Care**  
**Candidacy Agreement and Covenant For**  
**Candidates with “Under Care” Status with**  
**The Florida Disciples Regional Church**

[Note: \*\* Indicates Required Field]

\*\*DATE RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this signed form to Chair, Commission on Ministry, Florida Disciples Regional Church.

*A signed copy will be returned to you and this form will be an addition to the files of the Commission on Ministry and the Florida Disciples Regional Church.*

In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) “authorization for commission and ordination” rests with the Regional Church, in partnership with a local congregation who is sponsoring and supporting a candidate for commission and/or ordination. Therefore, there are two aspects to a call to ministry: the candidate’s sense of call (to be strengthened and further discerned by prayer, studies, and supervised field education in ministry and other experiences) and the call of the church to support the candidate and at the same time to assess and make a judgment about the candidate’s gifts and graces for ministry. The Commission on Ministry, the Regional Church and Regional Ministerial Staff need suitable and adequate information to responsibly carry out this task on behalf of the whole church. Thus, the Florida Disciples Regional Church asks of candidates to agree and covenant with the Regional Church as follows:

1. \*\*I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby request to be admitted to candidacy, and I agree to submit to the Commission on Ministry and to the Regional Church, those documents required for “under-care” status as outlined in the Welcome Packet. I understand that these items shall be required before I can receive “under care” status and pursue commission and/or ordination. I further understand that a decision by the Commission on Ministry to approve my candidacy does not mean that I am thereby approved for commission/ordination itself.

2. I further grant the Commission on Ministry permission routinely to receive: a) reports from my Field Education and/or Sponsoring supervising pastor(s) and/or committee(s); b) reports and evaluations from faculty or staff of my educational institution(s) and/or other venues of academic pursuit; c) reports from the Lutheran Counseling Center (or similar institution) concerning my assessment process; d) reports from other Regions of the Christian Church (or other judicatories) in the event that I have been in a previous “in care” process; e) reports from my Clinical Pastoral Education supervisor. I understand that the Commission on Ministry, through Regional Ministerial staff may request other references or evaluations that the COM believes might be relevant concerning my candidacy, and I will give waivers if necessary in order to facilitate such references/evaluations. I understand that the Commission on Ministry will respect the wishes of any persons supplying reports mentioned in this paragraph with regard to confidentiality, but will also make no judgments about my candidacy based on anonymous information.

3. I will make available to the COM upon their request a copy of my transcripts, and if applicable, including a final official transcript when approved for graduation. *(I will also make available any transcripts reflecting any previous graduate education).*

4. I hereby assert that I have never been the subject of an official disciplinary review by an oversight body of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or any other church body that resulted in official censure or suspension of ministerial standing or other serious consequence. I further assert that I have never been the subject of an official disciplinary review by any other professional or trade organization or association that resulted in censure or sanction. I further assert that I have never been arrested or convicted on a felony charge, or on any charge that would call into question my fitness for ministry. *(NOTE: If you cannot affirm this paragraph, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ and give details on a separate signed page.)*

5. In light of the statement in the “Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)” that admission to the Order of Ministry includes “Personal fitness sufficient to the demands of the office, including mental and physical capacities, emotional stability and maturity, and standards of morality” (par. C.1.c.), I hereby assert that I believe I meet these criteria and that there is nothing in my past background or actions that would significantly call that assertion into question. *(NOTE: If you cannot affirm this paragraph, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ and give details on a separate signed page.)*

6. During the course of my relationship with the COM, I agree that should my circumstances change such that either of the previous two paragraphs would no longer be true, I will immediately disclose those circumstances to the COM. I understand that failure to do so may be treated as grounds for the revocation of candidacy.

7. I acknowledge receiving a copy of the Welcome Packet for new candidates under care, and a copy of the Region’s “Order of Ministry Policies,” and will read and seek to understand these documents. In this regard, I understand that the Regional Church’s requirements for ordination are not necessarily the same as the requirements for the M.Div. degree.

8. I understand that by prior request to the Regional Minister, I may examine my COM file in the Regional Office at a mutually agreeable time, with the exception of individual members’ notes or items otherwise denoted as “confidential” by the writer.

9. I agree to make myself available for regular meetings with the COM. I understand that the COM and Region warrant that any materials that are a part of my file and all dealings with the COM will be confidential unless I give explicit written permission otherwise *(with the exceptions of: [a] any matters that may be required by law to be reported to civil authorities, or [b] if I shall initiate a formal appeal of any COM decision. In the latter event, the materials upon which the COM based its decision will be forwarded to the body charged with dealing with my appeal request).*

10. I understand that should the COM at any point decline to approve my candidacy, withdraw my approval for candidacy, decline to approve me for ordination, decline to approve a request for commission by a congregation/agency where I am serving and which has made such a request, or any other serious action affecting my vocation, I may request formal appeal of such action(s) to



the Regional Assembly specified by Regional policy or to the General Commission on Ministry and that Regional ministerial staff will help to facilitate such a request.

11. I agree that near the end of my Under Care candidacy, and on an Ordination Track, if I desire to be considered for ordination approval, I will submit to the COM in a timely way: a) a letter of request for ordination, b) an Ordination Paper, c) a letter of sponsorship for ordination, d) and three letters of reference. The COM must approve a date for ordination before arrangements are finalized and invitations are extended for the event.

12. I understand that any process(es) used by my sponsoring congregation(s) to help them make decisions concerning that sponsorship are distinct from the COM process, and that the congregation may specify what information it needs from me in order to make decisions about sponsorship.

**\*\*Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**[This section to be completed by the Commission on Ministry Chair]**

COM Chair Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this Agreement and Covenant to:  
Rev. Donna Oberkreser at  
[comchair@fldisciples.org](mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org)**

## **Appendix #9 – Guidelines for Writing the Ordination Papers**

*(Each paper between 2-3 pages, font 12, double spaced. Write tightly, and review!)*

The purpose of the ordination papers is to explore your bridge between theory and practice, theology and praxis, classroom and books to pulpit and community. It also seeks to explore your personal “call” to ministry.

Approach the organization of your papers in any way you choose. We recommend you NOT use footnotes. The focus of the ordination papers is you and your approach to ministry. In addition to the content of your papers, we want to experience your ability to express yourself—concisely and thoroughly. There are four papers total. Each one should be between 2-3 pages (no more!), using Times Roman font 12, and double spaced. In your papers, please cover the following:

### **1. Your Theological Basis for Ministry**

Explore your understanding and faith regarding your personal theology as it pertains to ministry, to the church, as well as your approach to Scripture.

### **2. Your Relationship with Disciples of Christ – “Why Disciples?”**

What do you find most attractive and least attractive about ministry in the tradition and heritage of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)? How does your answer help form your understanding of the nature of the Church? Explore your assumptions in the context of Disciples of Christ (its tradition, approach, and heritage). Address your assumptions regarding authority and freedom. How do you honor the “Priesthood of all Believers?”

### **3. Your Practice of Ministry**

Given your theological paradigm, discuss what ministry means to you and how you engage in it. Please be as specific as possible, relating your understandings to the practice of ministry, exploring how you might assess local situations, describing your leadership style, and how you might negotiate your ideals with the realities in your ministry setting and the global situation. In the practice of your ministry, what specifically do you view as your strengths and weakness? Reflect upon cross-cultural competency in relation to your ministry.

### **4. Personal Readiness**

Reflect on what ordination means to you and your commitment to it. Explore specifically what experiences/insights compels you to ministry and how the sixteen competencies shape your vocation. What renews your spirit and keeps your “calling” alive?

*Thank you for sharing your reflections.  
We look forward to reading your ordination paper.*

## Appendix #10 – Application for Ordination

[Note: \*\* Indicates Required Field]

\*\*Name [First name, middle (Use n/a if no middle name), last]):

---

\*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Address (Include: Street, City, State and Zip Code):

---

- |   |  |  |                                 |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>**Gender</b><br><input type="radio"/> Male<br><input type="radio"/> Female<br><input type="radio"/> Non-Binary<br><input type="radio"/> Prefer not to answer | <b>**Ethnicity (Choose all that apply)</b><br><input type="radio"/> African American<br><input type="radio"/> Asian<br><input type="radio"/> European descent<br><input type="radio"/> Haitian<br><input type="radio"/> Hispanic<br><input type="radio"/> Middle Eastern<br><input type="radio"/> Native American / First Nations<br><input type="radio"/> Other<br><input type="radio"/> Pacific Islander | <b>**Marital Status</b><br><input type="radio"/> Single<br><input type="radio"/> Married<br><input type="radio"/> Divorces<br><input type="radio"/> Separated<br><input type="radio"/> Widowed | <b>**Spouses Name:</b><br>----- |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------|

\*\*I am a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Address (Include: Street, City, State and Zip Code):

---

\*\*Name of Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby duly request from the Commission on Ministry of the Florida Disciples Regional Church the acceptance of my Ordination into Christian Ministry within the General Church.

\*\*Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Three Persons whom I will ask to write Ordination Reference Letters:

**\*\*Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\*\*Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Relationship to me:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\*\*Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Relationship to me:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\*\*Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Relationship to me:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this Application for Ordination to:  
Rev. Donna Oberkreser at  
[comchair@fldisciples.org](mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org)**

## **Appendix #11 – Reference Letter for Ordination**

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Please, respond to the following questions and **email the completed document** to the Florida Disciples Regional Church ([regionaloffice@fldisciples.org](mailto:regionaloffice@fldisciples.org)) with copy to the Chair of the COM ([comchair@fldisciples.org](mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org)). Thank you!

How long have you known the candidate?

In what way have you known the candidate?

What particular “gifts and graces” will he/she bring to the ministry?

Where can he or she improve his/her potential for ministry?

What concerns do you have regarding this person’s potential to be a faithful and effective Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister?

*Do you have any concerns about this person’s ethics or personal fitness for ministry?*

*\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No (if “yes”, please explain on the back)*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix #12 – Reference from Pastor of SPONSORING Church**

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

The above candidate has completed the basic requirements for ordination with the Florida Disciple Regional Church, with the Commission on Ministry. To complete our recommendation for ordination, we ask for a letter of reference from the pastor of a church who is familiar with the candidate's journey toward ordination and who will sponsor this candidate for ordination. This candidate has given your name as a reference. Please respond to the questions and *email the completed document* to the Florida Disciples Regional Church ([regionaloffice@fldisciples.org](mailto:regionaloffice@fldisciples.org)) with copy to the Chair of the COM ([comchair@fldisciples.org](mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org)). Thank you!

How long has the candidate been a member of the congregation?

What roles has the candidate fulfilled?

What are the gifts for ministry that you have witnessed in the Candidate?

How is the candidate received in the community?

Is the community willing to recommend the candidate for the ordination process?

*Do you have any concerns about this person's ethics or personal fitness for ministry?*  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No (If "yes", please explain on the back)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix #13 – Information about Clinical Pastoral Education**

### **Frequently Asked Questions About ACPE Clinical Pastoral Education**

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.

<http://www.acpe.edu/faq.htm>

#### INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

1. What is Clinical Pastoral Education?
2. What do the essential elements of CPE include?
3. What kind of things might be included in the Individual Learning Contract?
4. What are the different types of CPE?
5. What does CPE prepare a person to do?
6. I want to be a chaplain or a pastoral counselor. Do I need CPE?
7. What are some Vocations in Pastoral Care?
8. Who is eligible to enroll in CPE?
9. Do I have to be ordained to do CPE?
10. Where can one enroll in CPE?
11. How may I enroll in CPE?
12. Can I apply to more than one ACPE center?
13. What are the dates for CPE and deadlines for application?
14. What does CPE cost and are scholarships available?
15. I am an international student. How do I enroll in CPE?
16. Can I get academic credit for CPE?
17. Can I do CPE on-line or through some other distance learning process?
18. Can I get CPE credit for previous work/ministry experience?
19. A complaint about an ACPE center or an ACPE supervisor. What to do?
20. How do I become a member of ACPE?
21. Additional Information for Prospective Students
22. Where will you be ministering?
23. A Typical Day in CPE
24. The CPE Learning Environment

## **1. What is Clinical Pastoral Education?**

Clinical Pastoral Education is interfaith professional education for ministry. It brings theological students and ministers of all faiths (pastors, priests, rabbis, imams and others) into supervised encounter with persons in crisis. Out of an intense involvement with persons in need, and the feedback from peers and teachers, students develop new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister. From theological reflection on specific human situations, they gain a new understanding of ministry. Within the interdisciplinary team process of helping persons, they develop skills in interpersonal and inter-professional relationships.

## **2. What do the essential elements of CPE include?**

- The actual practice of ministry to persons
- Detailed reporting and evaluation of that practice
- Pastoral Supervision
- A process conception of learning
- A theoretical perspective on all elements of the program
- A small group of peers in a common learning experience
- A specific time period
- An individual contract for learning consistent with the objectives of CPE
- The CPE program must be conducted under the auspices of an ACPE certified supervisor (faculty) attached to an ACPE accredited CPE center.

## **3. What kind of things might be included in the Individual Learning Contract?**

The CPE participant's contract is developed around the learning goals of:

- Pastoral Reflection - reflection on one's self as person and pastor in relationship to persons in crisis, the supervisor, and peer group members, as well as the curriculum and institutional setting.
- Pastoral Formation - focus on personal and pastoral identity issues in learning and ministry.
- Pastoral Competence -deepening and unfolding of competence in pastoral function, pastoral skills and knowledge of theology and the behavioral sciences.

Some centers also offer Pastoral Specialization, focusing on the student's desire to become competent and knowledgeable in a particular area of ministry, e.g. oncology, urban ministry, parish ministry, hospice ministry, etc.



#### **4. What are the different types of CPE?**

ACPE offers Level I and Level II CPE, as well as Supervisory CPE, in sequence. The outcomes for each level must be completed before moving to the next level. CPE is usually offered in single units (10-12 weeks) or in a year-long program (3-4 consecutive units). Some centers have other part-time options. The center of your choice can explain the options available at their location.

#### **5. What does CPE prepare a person to do?**

- CPE serves as a part of one's preparation for parish ministry, chaplaincy, lay ministry, teaching, and counseling. A student's learning contract may be focused toward integration of theological, psychological, and pastoral insights into pastoral functioning for parish work. Or the contract may be designed with a career goal of chaplaincy or pastoral counseling.
- Some students, after completing several units of CPE, choose to enroll in Supervisory CPE working toward certification as a CPE supervisor. In Supervisory CPE the student learns the theory and practice of supervision and has an experience of supervising CPE students under the guidance and with the consultation of a CPE supervisor.
- CPE develops the capacity for the pastoral and spiritual care of individuals, families, and systems.
- Many theological schools require one unit of CPE as a part of a theological degree program.
- Other schools accept a year of CPE as the required intern year of ministry for a theological degree program.
- A number of theological schools which are members of the ACPE have graduate degree programs which combine academic study and CPE Supervisory CPE.

#### **6. I want to be a chaplain or a pastoral counselor. Do I need CPE?**

The Association of Professional Chaplains ([www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org)), the National Association of Catholic Chaplains ([www.nacc.org](http://www.nacc.org)) and the National Association of Jewish Chaplains ([www.najc.org](http://www.najc.org)) and/ other organizations certify chaplains. The American Association of Pastoral Counselors ([www.aapc.org](http://www.aapc.org)) trains and certifies pastoral counselors. Some CPE is required as a pre-requisite. You should contact these organizations directly about their requirements.

## 7. What are some Vocations in Pastoral Care?

	<b>Areas of Service</b>	<b>Training Recommended or Required</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Pastoral Care	Pastor, Church Staff, Social Services	Clinical Pastoral Education (minimum 1 unit)	Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE)
Professional Chaplaincy	Hospital, hospice, military, or other institutional chaplaincy	Clinical Pastoral Education (4 units required for Board certification)	ACPE for training and Association of Professional Chaplains (APC or NACC or NAJC for certification)
Pastoral Education (CPE Supervisor)	Supervisor of CPE programs in a variety of settings	CPE (Level I, Level II and Supervisory) Successful completion of certification process	Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE)
Pastoral Counselor	Counselor on church staff, counseling center or agency	CPE (at least 1 unit) Plus Pastoral counseling training program	ACPE for introductory unit <i>and</i> American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
Licensed Professional Counselor		varies from state to state Can often be done in conjunction with pastoral counseling training	AAPC or state credentialing agency

## **8. Who is eligible to enroll in CPE?**

For Units of CPE:

- An individual who, through a written application and an admissions interview, has demonstrated the ability to participate in CPE, usually one who has successfully completed at least one year of theological school.
- Such other requirements or education and experience as a specific CPE center may require.

For Supervisory CPE programs:

An individual who has successfully completed several units of CPE and has demonstrated a readiness to utilize Supervisory CPE, usually one who has a theological degree and several years of pastoral experience.

## **9. Do I have to be ordained to do CPE?**

Specific requirements regarding ordination as a prerequisite are determined by each CPE center.

## **10. Where can one enroll in CPE?**

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education has accredited over three hundred and fifty clinical pastoral education centers and clusters throughout the United States. These CPE centers are located in health care institutions, hospitals of all kinds (e.g. general, university, children's, psychiatric, military, VA), geriatric centers, hospices, parishes, mental health facilities, correctional institutions, and a variety of other settings. Click here: <https://acpe.edu/programs/accreditation/accredited-program-directory> for our online directory.

## **11. How may I enroll in CPE?**

Click here: <https://acpe.edu/education/cpe-students/cpe-application> to access the CPE Application form as a Microsoft Word document: CPE Application Form or in a PDF format.

- Complete the application and send it directly to the center where you wish to enroll.
- The center will then contact you for an interview.

## **12. Can I apply to more than one ACPE center?**

Yes, you may apply to as many centers as you chose. Many centers have an application fee. The ACPE online Directory will provide this information.

**13. What are the dates for CPE and deadlines for application?**

Each individual center establishes its own dates for their programs and application deadlines. Contact the center for this information.

**14. What does CPE cost and are scholarships available?**

Tuition is determined by each CPE center. Some centers have scholarship programs. There is not a scholarship program at the national level. Questions should be directed to the specific ACPE center.

**15. I am an international student. How do I enroll in CPE?**

International students should make application at the center of their choice. Once accepted, the student should contact the ACPE national office (email: [tobey@acpe.edu](mailto:tobey@acpe.edu)) to apply for a visa. The visa process can take from six to nine months to complete. The visa must be obtained before you can begin CPE. Additional considerations are discussed on the International Student Information page.

**16. Can I get academic credit for CPE?**

Many theological schools and seminaries grant academic credit for CPE. You should contact them directly for this information.

**17. Can I get CPE credit for previous work/ministry experience?**

No, ACPE credit is not granted for previous work experience. However, your previous work/ministry experience will be considered during the interview/acceptance process.

**18. Can I do CPE on-line or through some other distance learning process?**

ACPE currently does not have any distance learning programs.

**19. I have a complaint about an ACPE center or an ACPE supervisor. What should I do?**

ACPE encourages complaints be resolved at the local center level. Mediation is often an option. If the complaint does not get resolved at this level, a formal complaint can then be filed with the ACPE Regional Director in which the center or supervisor resides. A list of Regional Directors and their contact information can be obtained here: <https://acpe.edu/detail-pages/resource/complaints>

**20. How can I become a member of ACPE?**

There is a Student Affiliate level of membership with ACPE. Membership with ACPE allows you the opportunity to participate in the National and Regional conferences, a subscription to The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling, and the ACPE News, our bi-monthly newsletter. For an ACPE membership form, click here: <https://acpe.edu/membership/join-renew>

## **21. Additional Information for Prospective Students:**

CPE is an experience in process education which has been shaped by history and yet remains responsive to the present-day cultural developments which will affect your pastoral formation. The heart of CPE is your ministry with people and learning from that ministry through reflection, discussion, and evaluation with other students and your supervisor. In your CPE experience, you will utilize verbatim (in the form of Pastoral Care Reports), case studies, and other ministry descriptions to present your ministry to supervision. The focus in some seminars will be on what is happening to you, the care giver, as much as on what is happening to the people receiving your ministry. There will be discussions which assist you in understanding theological issues arising from experience. There will be opportunities to learn from behavioral sciences while also reflecting theologically, so you can draw from both in understanding the human condition. You will be challenged to think about groups and social structures as well as individuals in defining your ministry. You also will be part of a dynamic learning group with other students and your supervisor, which will provide opportunities for mutual supervision, care giving, challenge and appreciation.

## **22. Where will you be ministering?**

CPE is offered in a number of different kinds of settings. In many of the settings, such as general hospitals, mental health facilities, correctional institutions, children's hospitals, and nursing homes, you will minister to individuals, families, and small groups of people as a chaplain. CPE may, however, be done in any setting where ministry happens. There are a growing number of centers with innovative approaches to ministry. Many centers are being established as Congregational or Community based models in connection with a local church or churches. You may want to clarify with a center the types of ministries which occur there.

## **23. A Typical Day in CPE**

CPE units may be either full time or part time. Either schedule will include an equivalent number of ministry and education hours. Some extended CPE units meet one day per week for structured educational sessions, and ministry is performed at other times. A more common day, however, is one in which time is provided for ministry and for several education events. Since the heart of CPE is ministering and learning from the experience, a day's schedule frequently includes a clinical seminar in which a student presents a pastoral encounter to other students and the supervisor for discussion and feedback. Other typical sessions are: didactic seminars in which discussion follows a lecture; discussion of

a book or article; exploration of theological concerns; peer group meetings or interpersonal group sessions for mutual sharing, caring, support and relationship concerns are explored; and worship or sharing occasions which provide opportunity for spiritual nurture. Field trips, workshops, and clinical observations may be periodically included. Evaluation experiences with the other students and your supervisor are also part of a CPE program and may be scheduled at the end of a unit to sum up the experience, midway to assess your learning objectives, and, at other times, such as with the other care providers in your ministry area. You will discover that a CPE schedule asks for active investment but also provides time for sharing, reflection, preparation, and relaxation.

#### **24. The CPE Learning Environment**

If you have never participated in a dynamic, interpersonal, process educational experience, you may be concerned about what it will be like. A foundational task will be for the other students, your supervisor and you to share with each other in such a way that all are cared for, supported, and challenged without being belittled. Furthermore, since an individual best knows his or her own limits, everyone will need to respect other's boundaries and work to negotiate appropriate learning relationships. Developing a learning environment that is supportive, stimulating, and safe will make the risks of interpersonal learning and growth work taking. Any CPE supervisor, regional director, or ACPE seminary liaison professor is available for consultation concerning opportunities for students in CPE.

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Staff Directory: <https://acpe.edu/about-acpe/acpe-staff>

## Appendix #14 – Report by Mentor

*Please complete and email this form on behalf of your mentee directly to Rev. Donna Oberkreser @ [comchair@fldisciples.org](mailto:comchair@fldisciples.org)*

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How often did you meet with the candidate during the past year? \_\_\_\_\_ Were meetings held in person or as virtual meetings or both? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What do you see as the candidate's gifts/graces for ordained or commissioned ministry? What would make him/her a strong minister?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are the candidate's challenges, road blocks, "growing edges" in ministry?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How is the candidate growing spiritually?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What concerns do you have regarding this person's potential to be a faithful and effective Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister? Where can he/she improve his/her potential for ministry?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Do you have any concerns about this person's ethics or personal fitness for ministry?  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes *(If you have concerns, please explain confidentially on the back of this sheet.)*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix #15 – Online Access to Appendices**

**Online Forms: Click on individual Appendix below to access and fill out the form(s)online. For information on Appendices go to the Weblink below to access and fill out these forms online:**  
<https://fldisciples.org/com-policies-and-procedure-appendices/>

[Appendix #1](#) – Template for Ten Personal Qualifications

[Appendix #2](#) – Template for Sixteen Competency Areas

[Appendix #3](#) – Rationale and Permission to Use Name and Address

[Appendix #4](#) – Ministerial Code of Ethics

[Appendix #5](#) – Application for “Under Care” Status

[Appendix #6](#) – Reference from Pastor of HOME Church

[Appendix #7](#) – Reference Letter for “Under Care” Candidacy

[Appendix #8](#) – Covenant for Candidates Under Care

[Appendix #9](#) – Guidelines for Writing the Ordination Papers

[Appendix #10](#) – Application for Ordination

[Appendix #11](#) – Reference Letter for Ordination

[Appendix #12](#) – Reference from Pastor of SPONSORING Church

[Appendix #13](#) – Information about Clinical Pastoral Education

[Appendix #14](#) – Report by Mentor