

Sharing the Journey:

A Guide Towards Commissioning or Ordination For Congregations and Candidates of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest

Welcome to “*Sharing the Journey*.” The purpose of this document is to help you understand and participate in the commissioning or ordination process in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we are bound together through covenant. In our denominational structure, covenant is the foundational principle for the relationship between the congregational, regional, and general expressions of the church. This covenant, or promise, is in Christ Jesus and it is the covenant that we are called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in our part of the body of Christ, which makes us partners in faith. In our work together, we mutually respect one another, as well as respecting the authority and responsibilities that each holds. Moreover, our covenant binds us to hold one another accountable for the mission and ministry that we share.

In the commission or ordination process, each covenantal partner has specific responsibilities that this document identifies. It is presented in the following sections:

- **Preparing for the Journey:** An introduction to the Regional Committee on Ministry, definitions of commissioning and ordination, standing, covenantal partnership, and other important definitions.
- **The Candidate’s Journey:** An explanation of the process in the Journey toward commissioning and ordination as it is lived out in partnership between the sponsoring congregation, candidate, and region in each phase of the Journey and a Checklist of all required documents prior to the final interview.
- **The Congregational Journey:** An explanation of the role and expectations for congregations during this process including: Congregational Care Committee of the sponsoring congregation, guidelines for meetings with the candidate in each phase of the journey, and suggestions for ways to nurture and encourage the candidate along the way. This section concludes with ways to celebrate the journey through worship and continued acts of support and blessings for the candidate.
- **Appendix:** Resources, links, checklist, guides and other important information for both candidate and congregation.

As we embrace this process together, let us pray for God’s spirit to guide and empower us. May our journey with one another be enriching and relationally binding through Jesus the Christ, who calls us to partner in ministry.

The Regional Committee on Ministry
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest

Preparing for the Journey:

Terms and Definitions:

Regional Committee on Ministry: The Regional Committee on Ministry is made up of clergy and lay individuals from churches across the Upper Midwest Region. There are four Units that help the Regional Committee on Ministry carry out its ministry purpose of nurturing, walking with candidates who have experienced a call to ministry, and providing oversight and accountability for all clergy. These Units are:

- **Executive Unit:** This Unit is tasked with oversight and general care of clergy in the Upper Midwest including the granting of annual standing to clergy. This Unit also journeys with all apprentice track ordination candidates and those candidates wishing to have their ordination from other denominations recognized.
- **Care Unit:** This Unit is tasked with ongoing support and care of all candidates on the Journey through minimum quarterly check-in calls.
- **Commissioning Unit:** This Unit is tasked with journeying with all candidates pursuing commissioned ministry.
- **Ordination Unit:** This Unit is tasked with journeying with all candidates pursuing ordination ministry.

Regional Committee on Ministry



4 Units

Executive Unit

Care Unit

Ordination Unit

Commission Unit

Orders of Ministry - Commissioned/Ordained: There are two orders (groups) of ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):

- **Commissioned:** This order of ministry is for those serving in a particular context or location and candidates are limited to Search and Call within one region. Requirements include: three year Commissioned Ministry Education Program.
- **Ordained (Seminary or Apprentice Track):** This order of ministry is not limited to a particular context or location and is able to access Search and Call throughout the whole Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in US and Canada. Requirements for the seminary track include: Masters in Divinity from an Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accredited seminary. Requirements for the Apprentice track include course work or experience that meets the 16 areas of ministerial practice as defined further in the

TFPCOM document (Line 688). All ordination candidates are required to obtain 1 Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.

Standing: This credentialing is granted annually by the Executive Unit of Committee on Ministry to all clergy. Standing is required to enter Search and Call, to perform the legal functions of ministry (i.e. weddings), to claim housing on your tax forms and to participate in the Disciples Pension Fund. The Upper Midwest presently requires 16 hours of Continued Education annually and Boundary Training every 3 years for all clergy to qualify for standing. Standing forms are to be filled out every January for the following calendar year.

Commissioned Ready: This term is used for Commissioned Ministers who have completed the CMEP and have been approved by the Commission Unit for ministry but yet do not have a specific call or location for ministry. Candidates who are Commissioned Ready are able to access Search and Call through a Regional Minister Directive.

Regional Minister Directive: An action on the part of the Regional Minister that allows an individual to access the Disciples Search and Call process.

Covenantal Partnership: In the Disciples we believe that the ministry journey is best served through the Biblical practice of Covenantal Partnership between congregations and region. The practices and processes laid out in this document are based on the belief that there are roles for both the congregation and the region.

Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (TFPCOM): This document lays out the policies and criteria for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada. This document serves as the base guide and requirements for ministry. Regions can add to the requirements but cannot require less than required by the TFPCOM. The Upper Midwest has added the following: one Unit of CPE for all ordination candidates and a Disciples History and Polity Course for all candidates.

Overview of Process: The rest of this document will provide further details with regards to the specific path a candidate and congregation might take on the journey toward ministry, but this section is designed to give you a basic overview.

It begins with a call from God that may occur at any time during a candidate's life. The candidate is encouraged to share this call to ministry with the local congregation/community of faith, including but not limited to the pastor.

With the help of the congregation/pastor, the next step is to engage in a process of nurture and education which begins with a connection with the Regional Committee on Ministry. During this process there are roles for both the local congregation and the Regional Committee on Ministry to play during the candidate's journey into ministry.

At the end of this journey with the approval of the Regional Committee on Ministry and the action of the local congregation, there will be a celebration in the form of a commissioning or ordination service.

The Candidate's Journey

The Process in the Journey

The process in the journey toward commissioning or ordination is lived out in partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest's Regional Committee on Ministry, sponsoring congregation, and the candidate. This partnership is experienced in three phases: *Initial*, *intermediate*, and *final*.

THE INITIAL PHASE:

After sensing a Call to Ministry, the candidate should meet with the minister(s), and/or elders, and/or board, and/or congregation, and/or other appropriate leaders in the church to share the story of the call and seek confirmation and sponsorship. The official governing body of the congregation must act upon this before the commission or ordination process can begin. (See application in the *Appendix*) After the forms have been completed, the candidate will submit the *Initial Application for Candidacy for the Order of Ministry* to the Regional Committee on Ministry. When all of the forms are completed, they are to be submitted to the Regional Office (see specific instructions on the application). The candidate will receive notification and invitation from the Regional Office to schedule an *Initial Interview* with the Regional Committee on Ministry.

During this *Initial* phase, a particular Unit of the Regional Committee on Ministry (Ordination, Commission, Executive) interviews the candidate. The purpose of this interview is to meet the candidate and explore her/his faith journey and explore her/his call to ministry and the gifts that the candidate possesses for ministry. If the candidate is accepted into the process, she/he will be scheduled for an *Intermediate Interview* with the Regional Committee on Ministry through the Regional office. Information and feedback from the *Initial Interview* will be provided to the candidate.

THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE:

The work of the candidate and requirements of the Regional Committee on Ministry intensify during the duration of the candidate's pursuit of commissioning/ordination. During the *Intermediate* phase, the candidate is required to submit an *Intermediate Paper* (3-4 double-spaced page) reflecting the following:

1. Describe your faith journey.
2. Demonstrate your theological understanding of the purpose of the church.
3. Describe how your theological studies have affected your understandings and apply these insights/understandings to practical ministry.

The candidate will meet with a particular Unit of the Regional Committee on Ministry. It is during this phase that the Unit determines whether to continue the candidate in the process and/or if additional requirements need to be made. It is not uncommon for a candidate to be required to have a second *Intermediate Interview*. If the candidate is continued without additional requirements, the candidate will be scheduled for a *Final Interview* with the

Regional Committee on Ministry through the Regional office. Information and feedback from the *Intermediate Interview* will be provided to the candidate.

THE FINAL PHASE:

During the *Final Phase*, the candidate will be asked to submit the following items:

1. Completed Ministerial Profile for Search and Call.
2. A Continuing Sponsorship Form from the sponsoring congregation stating its continued willingness to sponsor the candidate.
3. One of the following indicators of completed education or program:
 - a. Transcript from an ATS accredited seminary demonstrating the candidate's achievement of a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent, or,
 - b. Letter from the ATS accredited seminary the candidate is attending stating the anticipated date of graduation with a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent.
 - c. Official documentation that other education approved by the Executive Committee on Ministry is (or is about to be) completed.
 - d. Official documentation of completion of the Commissioned Ministry Education Program or other approved equivalent.
4. Documentation of completion of approved course in Disciples History and Polity.
5. Documentation of completion of an approved Boundaries Course.
6. Documentation of completion of one Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (for Ordination, not required for Commissioning).
7. Theological reflection paper (5 to 7 double-spaced pages) demonstrating the candidate's understanding of:
 - a. The Christian faith (Historical and Theological)
 - b. The nature and work of the church
 - c. The representative ministry of Jesus Christ as applied to a ministry location served by the candidate.
 - d. The office of commissioned/ordained ministry (How does the candidate understand authority/responsibility and a minister's role in the life of the church?)

The preceding are the general requirements. The Regional Committee on Ministry may require other training, evaluations, experiences or activities as needed.

During this phase, the candidate will meet with the Unit for an hour-long interview. During previous interviews Units may choose to divide up into smaller groups for the purpose of interviewing more candidates. However during the *Final Interview*, it is the practice to include all members of the Unit and therefore the group size may be larger than previous meetings with the Unit. After the interview, the Unit will determine if the candidate is now prepared for commissioning/ordination within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ensure that all requirements have been met (or are in process of completion).

However, at this juncture, the Unit can also make the decision to identify additional requirements for the candidate and invite them to a second interview or cease the process entirely. It is not uncommon for a candidate to be required to have a second interview.

Memory Page

(Use this section to help remember Unit/Committee members)

Initial Meeting

Unit Members Present:

Notes:

Intermediate Meeting(s)

Unit Members Present:

Notes:

Final Interview

Unit Members Present:

Notes:

Congregational Journey

As We Journey Together

As the candidate begins her/his journey, the sponsoring congregation is responsible to develop a **Congregational Care Committee** to join the candidate in this journey. This committee should be between five to seven members who have a genuine interest in the candidate. The selection of the committee can be created in whatever manner works best in the sponsoring congregation; however, it is important to remember that this committee is a reflection and representation of the congregation.

It is recommended that the Regional Minister or other Regional staff meet with the committee and candidate in an orientation to this process. The nature of the meeting is to discuss the steps of the journey, answer questions, and offer prayers of blessing. Moreover, the congregation may wish to have a commissioning service of this committee in a worship service.

During the process, the Congregational Care Committee is encouraged to meet with the candidate on an **annual** basis for:

- Theological and Faith Journey reflection.
- Updates on the candidate's program/educational process.
- Support of the candidate's ministry.
- Assist candidate in prearranging the details for commissioning/ordination service.
- Offer ongoing and continuous encouragement.

It is also recommended, when possible, that a representative from the Congregational Care Committee be present during the times when the candidate meets with the Regional Committee on Ministry. The purpose is to offer the ministry of presence, to give encouragement, and, with permission by the candidate, report to the sponsoring congregation the candidate's experience and Regional Committee on Ministry's action.

It is encouraged that the candidate preach or facilitate worship in the sponsoring congregation when possible. It is also encouraged that the congregation provide help with travel expenses when the candidate meets with her/his sponsoring congregation. This allows the congregation, as a whole, to experience growth from the candidate and be reminded of the church's commitment and relationship.

Encouraging the Journey

During this journey to Commissioned/Ordained ministry, encouragement is a welcomed gift. We suggest the Congregational Care Committee be creative in finding ways for the sponsoring congregation to share the gifts of affirmation, encouragement, and hospitality. The following are suggestions:

- Shower the candidate with cards of love and prayer.
- Send the candidate a prayer with the signatures from members of the sponsoring congregation.
- Occasionally include the candidate in the pastoral prayer during worship.
- Celebrate the journey in the church's newsletter and other means of communication
- Send an occasional gift certificate to a restaurant or movie.
- Celebrate the candidate's birthday, anniversary, etc. (Don't forget other family members who are on this journey as well).
- Invite ministry groups in the sponsoring congregation to share encouragement in creative ways.
- Share financial assistance, if possible.

Celebrating the Journey

Once the candidate has received approval for commissioning or ordination, the date may be set for the commissioning or ordination service. The setting of the date should be done in conversation with the Regional Minister (or other designated Regional staff) along with the local congregation and pastor. The guidelines for planning an ordination or a commissioning service are available in the links section and/or in the Appendix section.

Appendix

Congregational Care Committee Meeting Guidelines

First Meeting with Candidate

This is a time to begin preparing your candidate for her/his journey with the Regional Committee on Ministry. During your time together, it is recommended that you:

1. Open with prayer
2. Establish a covenant of confidentiality, integrity, and intercessory prayer.

Leader: As we begin our journey together, let us affirm one another.

All: We believe that in the church, all are called to share in Christ's ministry. We believe that through our baptism, we have become commissioned to carry out God's work in Christ in a manner that is true to the Gospel.

We believe that some people are called to lead the church as pastors, teachers, prophets, preachers, visionaries, and leaders, and it is the church that is called to ordain and commission women and men who have heard God's call into the order of representative ministry.

We believe in forming and nurturing (name of candidate) as he/she journeys toward ordination, and together form a covenant that will maintain integrity of the gospel witness and confidentiality, providing a safe place to share and be.

We believe in the power of intercessory prayer and covenant with each other to lift up (name of candidate) and our congregation, area, and region as we partner in this journey.

Amen

3. Ask the candidate to share her/his faith story. Questions to ask (or what to listen for) can include:
 - a. When did you first begin to experience God's call to commissioned/ordained ministry?
 - b. How do you believe the church has shaped your call?
 - c. Who in your faith journey has been most influential and why?
 - d. What excites you about entering into this calling?
 - e. What creates anxiety?
 - f. What gifts do you feel you have for commissioned/ordained ministry?
 - g. As you begin this journey, how can we, your sponsoring congregation, help you?
4. Give honest and loving feedback to the candidate
 - a. Was the candidate able to articulate her/his faith journey?
 - b. Was the candidate able to articulate his/her call to ministry?
 - c. Did your candidate openly share her/his gifts for ministry?

d. Are there gifts that you perceive in him/her that were not addressed?

5. Share together *My Ministerial Code of Ethics* (Located in Appendix or on Link page)

- Are there any areas that could be an issue with your candidate?
- Do you find the candidate able to conduct her/himself by this Code of Ethics?
- Share from the lay perspective how the church views the candidate and his/her conduct in the church and community.

6. Schedule your next time for meeting. Keep in mind that it needs to be prior, if possible, to the *Intermediate Interview* with the RCOM as the candidate needs to present her/his *Intermediate Paper* to the Congregational Care Committee prior to this interview.

7. Close with prayer.

Intermediate Meeting:

1. Open with prayer

2. Ask the candidate to update you on his/her journey.

- a. How is your educational process preparing you for ministry?
- b. What courses/seminars/workshops have you enjoyed the most and why?
- c. What have been some difficulties that you have encountered?

3. Have the candidate share her/his *Intermediate Paper* (three to five double-spaced pages) that will be submitted to RCOM, reflecting the following:

- a. Describe your faith journey.
- b. Demonstrate your theological understanding of the purpose of the church.
- c. Describe how your theological studies have affected your understandings and apply these insights/understandings to practical ministry.

4. Give honest and constructive feedback on his/her paper. If there are areas that are unclear to the Congregational Care Committee, it will likely be unclear to RCOM. Remind the candidate that many times people return for another Intermediate Interview. It is important for the candidate to remember that the *Intermediate Interview* does not automatically lead to the *Final Interview*.

5. Discuss if ministry is still the direction that your candidate feels called to go. Sometimes it happens that, through this process, persons become clear that their call is to some other work.

6. Go over the Checklist that will be needed for the ordination interview or commissioning interview. Help the candidate know that it is crucial that he/she begin working on this Checklist so that all paperwork will be complete for the interview.

7. Set up the next meeting time. Remember the candidate will need to present her/his paper, so the meeting needs to be before the *Final Interview*.
8. Close with prayer.

Final Meeting

1. Open with prayer
2. Ask the candidate to update you on her/his journey.
3. Discuss with the candidate plans that he/she is making for vocational ministry.
4. Have the candidate share her/his *Final Paper* (three to five double-spaced pages) that will be submitted to RCOM, demonstrating the candidates understanding of:
 - a. The Christian faith (Historical and Theological)
 - b. The nature and work of the church
 - c. The representative ministry of Jesus Christ as applied to a ministry location served by the candidate.
 - d. The office of commissioned/ordained ministry (How does the candidate understand authority/responsibility and a minister's role in the life of the church?)
5. Give constructive feedback on her/his paper.
6. Have a mock "search committee" interview with the candidate. In this interview, ask questions that are appropriate and frequently asked by a search committee. It is recommended that you contact the Regional Minister or other Regional Staff for assistance and participation in this process.
7. Plan/communicate regarding the commissioning or ordination service realizing that all plans at this moment are tentative.
8. Close with prayer.

Links

Clergy Ethics:

<http://new.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Ministerial Code of Ethics-english.pdf>

Preparing an ordination service guidelines:

<http://disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Ordination Service Guidelines.pdf>

Preparing a commissioning service (Add Link)

Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry:

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

Link for Initial Application to come under care (Fillable form available online

<http://www.uppermidwestcc.org>)

Link for Commission Ministry Education Program (CMEP)

<http://www.uppermidwestcc.org/#!/upper-midwest-school-of-ministry/cyx>

Ordination (Seminary) Candidate Checklist

Call to Ministry

- ___ Sense or receive a call through prayer and discernment with oneself and close family and friends.
- ___ Share story of call with home or present congregational leaders (i.e. elders, pastor, or other appropriate group in the congregation).

Initial Phase (application and first meeting)

- ___ Submit the following documents to the Regional Office:
 - Initial Application for Candidacy for the Order of Ministry
 - Congregational Sponsorship Form (request this form from the Board or other governing group as a statement of their support and willingness to serve as your sponsoring congregation)
 - Two letters of reference (one from your pastor and one from your Board chair)
- ___ Attend *Initial Interview* with the Ordination Unit (see more details in Candidate Journey Section) **Pastor or another support person from the sponsoring congregation is encouraged to join the candidate.*

Intermediate Phase

- ___ Form Congregational Care Committee and begin meeting at least once per year.
- ___ Send Care Committee names and contact information for the chair to the Regional Office.
- ___ Enroll in School (college or seminary).
- ___ Complete and send *Intermediate Paper* one week prior to *Intermediate Interview*.
- ___ Attend *Intermediate Interview* with the Ordination Unit. **Members of the Congregational Care Committee are encouraged to join the candidate during all interviews.*
- ___ Complete a Disciples History and Polity Course.
- ___ Complete a Boundary Training.
- ___ Complete one Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).
- ___ Continue meeting with Ordination Unit as requested.
- ___ *Recommended:* Preach in sponsoring congregation at least once.

Final Phase

- ___ Submit the following documents to the Regional Office (at least one week prior to *Final Interview*):
 - Completed Ministerial Profile for Search and Call
 - Continuing Sponsorship Form (signed by Board Chair or other governing body as a statement of their willingness to continue in sponsorship)
 - Documentation of completed education (see more details in Candidate Journey Section)
 - Documentation of completed Disciples History and Polity Course
 - Documentation of completed Boundaries Course
 - Documentation of completed unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.
 - Theological reflection paper (see more details in Candidate Journey Section)
- ___ Attend *Final Interview* with Ordination Unit. **Member of the Congregational Care Committee are encouraged to join the candidate during all interviews.*
- ___ Schedule date for ordination with the Regional Minister and local pastor.
- ___ Plan the Ordination Service (see Ordination Service Guidelines)

Ordination (Apprentice Track)* Candidate Checklist

*Apprentice track is meant as an alternative path when other paths are not possible – Requested by the candidate but approved by the Executive Committee

Call to Ministry

___ Sense or receive a call through prayer and discernment with oneself and close family and friends.

___ Share story of call with home or present congregational leaders (i.e. elders, pastor, or other appropriate group in the congregation).

Initial Phase (application and first meeting)

___ Submit the following documents to the Regional Office:

- Initial Application for Candidacy for the Order of Ministry
- Congregational Sponsorship Form (request this form from the Board or other governing group as a statement of their support and willingness to serve as your sponsoring congregation)
- Two letters of reference (one from your pastor and one from your Board chair)

___ Attend *Initial Interview* with the Executive Unit (see more details in Candidate Journey Section) **Pastor or another support person from the sponsoring congregation is encouraged to join the candidate.*

Intermediate Phase

___ Form Congregational Care Committee and begin meeting at least once per year.

___ Send Care Committee names and contact information for the chair to the Regional Office.

___ Meet with Executive Unit-appointed mentor to develop educational plan.

___ Meet with Executive Unit to approve plan that meets the “16 Competencies.” (See TFPCOM Document lines 688-756)

___ Work with mentor to complete educational plan

___ Complete and send *Intermediate Paper* one week prior to *Intermediate Interview*.

___ Attend *Intermediate Interview* with the Executive Unit. **Members of the Congregational Care Committee are encouraged to join the candidate during all interviews.*

___ Complete a Disciples History and Polity Course.

___ Complete a Boundary Training.

___ Complete one Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).

___ Continue meeting with Executive Unit as requested.

___ *Recommended:* Preach in sponsoring congregation at least once.

Final Phase

___ Submit the following documents to the Regional Office (at least one week prior to *Final Interview*):

- Completed Ministerial Profile for Search and Call
- Continuing Sponsorship Form (signed by Board Chair or other governing body as a statement of their willingness to continue in sponsorship)
- Documentation of completed educational plan
- Documentation of completed Disciples History and Polity Course
- Documentation of completed Boundaries Course
- Documentation of completed unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.
- Theological reflection paper (see more details in Candidate Journey Section)

___ Attend *Final Interview* with Executive Unit. **Member of the Congregational Care Committee are encouraged to join the candidate during all interviews.*

___ Schedule date for ordination with the Regional Minister and local pastor.

___ Plan the Ordination Service

Commission Candidate Checklist

Call to Ministry

- ___ Sense or receive a call through prayer and discernment with oneself and close family and friends.
- ___ Share story of call with home or present congregational leaders (i.e. elders, pastor, or other appropriate group in the congregation).

Initial Phase (application and first meeting)

- ___ Submit the following documents to the Regional Office:
 - Initial Application for Candidacy for the Order of Ministry
 - Congregational Sponsorship Form (request this form from the Board or other governing group as a statement of their support and willingness to serve as your sponsoring congregation)
 - Two letters of reference (one from your pastor and one from your Board chair)
- ___ Attend *Initial Interview* with the Commissioning Unit (see more details in Candidate Journey Section) **Pastor or another support person from the sponsoring congregation is encouraged to join the candidate.*

Intermediate Phase

- ___ Form Congregational Care Committee and begin meeting at least once per year.
- ___ Send Care Committee names and contact information for the chair to the Regional Office.
- ___ Enroll in the Commission Ministry Education Program (CMEP) of the Upper Midwest.
- ___ Complete and send *Intermediate Paper* one week prior to *Intermediate Interview*.
- ___ Attend *Intermediate Interview* with the Commission Unit. **Members of the Congregational Care Committee are encouraged to join the candidate during all interviews.*
- ___ Complete a Disciples History and Polity Course.
- ___ Complete a Boundary Training.
- ___ Continue meeting with Commission Unit as requested.
- ___ *Recommended:* Preach in sponsoring congregation at least once.

Final Phase

- ___ Submit the following documents to the Regional Office (at least one week prior to *Final Interview*):
 - Completed Ministerial Profile for Search and Call
 - Continuing Sponsorship Form (signed by Board Chair or other governing body as a statement of their willingness to continue in sponsorship)
 - Documentation of completion of CMEP
 - Documentation of completed Disciples History and Polity Course
 - Documentation of completed Boundaries Course
 - Theological reflection paper (see more details in Candidate Journey Section)
- ___ Attend *Final Interview* with Commission Unit. **Member of the Congregational Care Committee are encouraged to join the candidate during all interviews.*
- ___ Schedule date for Commissioning with the Regional Minister and local pastor.
- ___ Plan the Commission Service (see Commissioning Service document).

Congregation Checklist

Meeting with a potential ministry candidate

- ___ Pastor and/or elders (or other appropriate group) meet with the candidate who has acknowledged a call to ministry.
- ___ Invite candidate to further share their story and desire to pursue a call to ministry with the wider congregation.

Assistance with Application

- ___ Complete Congregational Sponsorship Form after confirming and blessing the candidate's call to ministry. Candidate will submit this form with their application.
- ___ Appropriate leaders (pastor and Board chair or chair of other governing body) complete references for the candidate.
- ___ Pastor or other support person may attend candidate's Initial Interview with the Committee on Ministry.

After Candidate's Accepted Under Care

- ___ Appoint or form a Congregation Care Committee (see details in Congregational Journey section)
- ___ Begin meetings of Congregation Care Committee with the candidate at least once a year.
- ___ Provide support to the candidate and help the congregation engage the candidate as they journey through the process
- ___ Send a representative or two with the candidate to attend the *Intermediate Interview* with the Committee on Ministry.
- ___ Continue meeting with the candidate and the Committee on Ministry as requested.
- ___ *Recommended:* Invite candidate to preach at least once during the Journey.

As Candidate Enters into the Final Phase

- ___ Submit Continuing Sponsorship Form (signed by Board Chair or other governing body as a statement of your willingness to continue in sponsorship)
- ___ Send a representative or two with the candidate to attend *Final Interview* with Committee on Ministry.
- ___ Work with candidate, Regional Minister, and local pastor to plan the ordination/ commissioning service.
- ___ Continue to pray for and encourage the candidate for the first years of their ministry. This extra support can go a long way in sustaining a new minister for healthy life-long ministry.

Congregational Sponsorship Form

This document is a part of the process in the journey toward commissioning or ordination for candidates for ministry. This process is lived out in partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest's Regional Committee on Ministry, a sponsoring congregation, and the candidate.

As the candidate begins their first steps in the journey, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest requires that a sponsoring congregation affirm the candidate's call to ministry and agree to engage in the process as outlined under "Congregational Journey" in the Committee on Ministry's *"Sharing the Journey: A Guide Towards Commissioning or Ordination for Congregations and Candidates of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest."* This document can be found in full on the Region's website (<http://www.uppermidwestcc.org/solutions>).

Candidate Name _____
Sponsoring Congregation _____
Congregation Address _____
City, State, Zip Code _____

_____ The governing body of our congregation has met with this candidate for ministry and understands and affirms his/her call to ministry.

_____ The governing body has reviewed the role of the Sponsoring Congregation and is prepared to serve in that capacity on behalf of this candidate. This includes: forming a Congregational Care Committee, meeting at least once per year with the candidate, and supporting the candidate during their journey.

Representative Name _____
Representative Position _____
Representative Phone _____
Representative Email _____

Signature of Representative _____ *Date* _____ *Signature of Candidate* _____ *Date* _____

Continued Sponsorship Form

This document is a part of the process in the journey toward commissioning or ordination for candidates for ministry. This process is lived out in partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest's Regional Committee on Ministry, a sponsoring congregation, and the candidate.

As the candidate nears completion of their journey toward commissioning or ordination, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest requires that the sponsoring congregation confirm their continued support of the candidate's call to ministry and ordination. The sponsoring congregation's role in this journey are detailed in *"Sharing the Journey: A Guide Towards Commissioning or Ordination for Congregations and Candidates of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest."* This document can be found in full on the Region's website (<http://www.uppermidwestcc.org/solutions>).

Candidate Name _____
Sponsoring Congregation _____
Congregation Address _____
City, State, Zip Code _____

_____ The governing body confirms this candidate's call to ministry and agrees to sponsor the ordination/commissioning of this candidate should the Committee on Ministry approve him/her at the Final Interview.

Representative Name _____
Representative Position _____
Representative Phone _____
Representative Email _____

Signature of Representative

Date

Signature of Candidate

Date