

Commissioned Ministry Manual



**Christian Church in Indiana
(Disciples of Christ)**

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana
1100 West 42nd Street
Indianapolis, IN 46208
(317) 926-6051

COMMISSIONED MINISTRY: AN OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Introduction. Commissioned ministry is an office of ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The qualifications for the office are described in the *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry* and in the Commission on Ministry Manual. Generally speaking, it is an office recognized and endorsed for persons who have gifts and personal qualities for ministries, but have not attained a Master of Divinity degree in preparation for ministry.

Persons who meet the qualifications and who have been called to a position with a church, or a church-related agency, are issued a commission, usually on an annual basis. Commissioned ministers are required to participate in an annual review for the purpose of renewing the commission. Persons newly entering Commissioned ministry are strongly encouraged to enter into a mentor relationship with an ordained pastor for support, study, and spiritual and professional growth. All Commissioned ministers are strongly encouraged to engage in on-going programs of study and renewal.

The process of review for the recognition and endorsement of commissioned ministry is conducted by Nurture & Certification teams of the Commission on Ministry. They meet periodically to conduct the annual review and interview and review applicants.

Application Procedures. Persons interested in attaining recognition and endorsement for commissioned ministry are asked to complete the following:

1. Contact the Regional Office to (a) receive application materials; and (b) set up an interview with the associate regional minister who works with the Commission on Ministry.
2. Submit a letter of call or intent to call for a ministerial position from a church or church agency.
3. Complete all application materials and reference requirements
4. Meet with a Nurture and Certification team for a review of the application
5. Following completion of the application materials and interview with the associate regional minister and the Nurture and Certification team, the Commission on Ministry will receive the action of the team to grant or deny a commission.
6. If approved for commissioned ministry, participation in the annual review process is required to maintain standing.

COMMISSIONED MINISTRY CHECKLIST

Following are the items to be completed prior to your interview with the Commissioned Ministry Nurture and Certification Team. The items are to be in the Regional Office thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled interview.

1. Commissioned Ministry Application;
2. 4 Reference Forms;
3. Statement Concerning Ministerial Call - 500 words
4. Statement of Concept of Ministry – 500 words.
5. Recent picture
6. Academic Transcript (when requested);
7. Personal Information Schedule;
8. Have an interview with the associate regional minister who works with the Commission on Ministry, prior to meeting with a Nurture and Certification Team.
9. Letter from congregation/agency requesting commissioning including job title and a brief job description.

For your information and use, a copy of the Disciples reading/resource list is enclosed.

EXCERPTS FROM THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

1. Commissioned Ministry

- a. **Description.** Commissioned ministers are persons upon whom the church confers authority to minister in specific situations for a specific time, usually one year. These persons shall be called by God and the church shall confirm that these persons have the faith, abilities, qualities, and preparation needed for their specific ministry. Commissioned ministry is of three types: student ministry, congregational ministry, and specialized ministry.
 - 1) **Commissioned Student Minister.** Commissioned student ministers are persons who are enrolled in a seminary degree program and who have a covenantal relationship with a congregation or church agency. Ordinarily these persons are preparing for ordination.
 - 2) **Commissioned Congregational Minister.** Commissioned congregational ministers are persons who have a covenantal relationship with a congregation to provide general ministerial functions. These persons are not ordinarily seeking ordination.
 - 3) **Commissioned Specialized Minister.** Commissioned specialized ministers are persons who are not seeking ordination but are certified to perform a specialized function of ministry such as music ministry, counseling, and administration. These persons shall demonstrate that they have the proper training and skills to provide for the specialized ministry. These persons shall have a covenantal relationship with a congregation or agency.

- b. **Application for Commissioned Ministry.** Persons may apply for commissioned ministry status through the Commission. Applications for licensing are available through the regional office. Applicants shall meet the following criteria:
 - 1) The person shall demonstrate a definite and informed decision, in response to God, to serve in the order of ministry;
 - 2) The person shall be a participating member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
 - 3) The person shall provide a written endorsement of his or her candidacy for commissioned ministry through official action of the congregation or agency with whom the person seeks to do ministry.
 - 4) The person shall have at least a high school diploma or equivalent.
 - 5) The person shall demonstrate maturity and leadership potential.
 - 6) The person shall meet with the Regional Ministry Staff for a personal interview prior to meeting with a Nurture and Certification Team.
 - 7) The person shall complete the information schedules, supply references and provide other information required by the Commission.

- 8) The person shall meet with a Nurture and Certification Team for review of his or her application for commissioned ministry.
 - 9) The person shall be assigned to and meet with a mentor and peer group at least three (3) times per year.
- c. **General Qualifications.** The following qualifications are expected of persons who seek to serve as commissioned ministries:
- 1) Faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
 - 2) Commitment to a life of Christian discipleship, and show potential for leadership in the Christian community;
 - 3) Personal fitness sufficient to the demands of the office, including mental and physical capacities, emotional stability and maturity, and sound ethical and moral character.
- d. **Response to Persons Seeking to be Commissioned Ministers.** The Nurture and Certification Team shall take one of the following actions and report to the Commission concerning each application for commissioned ministry:
- 1) Recommend the person be granted commissioning and standing.
 - 2) Recommend the person be taken under care either with or without privilege of call.
 - 3) Recommend the person not be taken under care, but continue the application process. Ask the applicant for more information and additional interview time.
 - 4) Recommend the application not be approved when, in the team's judgment, it appears the person cannot, in the foreseeable future, fulfill the requirements for commissioned ministry.
- e. **Authorization for Commissioned Ministry.** The authorization for commissioned ministry is through the Commission and the specific congregation or church-related organization with which the person has a covenantal relationship.
- f. **Periodic Review.** All commissioned ministers shall engage in periodic review of their ministry. Ordinarily this shall be done annually. The Commission shall ordinarily conduct the review through its Nurture and Certification Teams. The review will entail both written reports and a personal interview. Persons failing to engage in a periodic review may lose their commission and standing.
- g. **Educational Requirements.** Persons entering commissioned ministry are expected to engage in educational preparation and participate in continuing education programs to facilitate the integration of the theological awareness and the functions of ministry. These programs shall ordinarily include, but not be limited to: Biblical studies, church history [including the history and polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)], personal and social ethics, clergy ethics [including Sexual Misconduct Prevention Seminar], theology, and practical ministry

[e.g. preaching, teaching, pastoral care, worship, church organizational management, stewardship, and evangelism].

h. **Professional and Personal Development.** The person shall be able to demonstrate sufficient development for the practice of ministry in the following areas:

- 1) Skills in human relations, such as getting along with people, ability to accept criticism, and ability to manage conflict constructively.
- 2) Strength of character, such as self-esteem, integrity, security, poise, confidence, self-motivation, and spiritual depth.
- 3) The ability to manage personal finances effectively.
- 4) The ability to manage time effectively.
- 5) The ability to lead an organization effectively.

APPLICATION FOR COMMISSIONED MINISTRY

To the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana Region:

On the basis of the facts given below, I request to be commissioned to serve as a minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana. **PLEASE NOTE: The licensing process also requires that the church you are serving make written request that you be commissioned.**

Personal Information

Name (please print) _____ Date _____

Home Address _____
street city zip

Phone (_____) _____ Birth date _____ Married: ___ YES ___ NO

Email Address: _____

If yes, give name of spouse: _____

Name and ages of children: _____

Local Congregation of which you are a member: _____

Name and Address of Minister (please print) _____

_____ (_____) _____
street city zip phone

Name of position you will (*or now*) hold (*pastor, director of religious education, assistant, etc.*).
Provide a description of the duties and responsibilities if available.

Name and Address of Chairperson of the Board of the Congregation you will serve as a commissioned minister:

Name _____ Address _____
street city zip

Name and Address of Minister of the Congregation you will serve as a commissioned minister (*unless you will be serving as the minister, in which case skip this line*):

Name _____ Address _____
street city zip

-over-

Type of Commission requested (*check one*):

Commissioned Student Minister

Commissioned Specialized Minister

Commissioned Congregation Minister

Experience in local congregations (*record offices or positions held; give dates; use separate sheet if necessary*).

Experience in Denomination and/or Interdenominational work (*record offices held and services given, if any; use separate sheet if necessary*).

Summer camps and conferences (*record any experience of this kind, giving dates, names and places*).

Your special interest or skill (*please state the area(s) of church work in which you believe you have special interest, skills, or competence*).

Miscellaneous (*record any other experience or training you have had which you believe qualifies you to have a Commission for service in the church on a professional basis*).

CHURCH RELATIONSHIP

Baptized: _____
 date congregation city state

Current membership: _____
 congregation city state

Pastor: _____

Describe your relationship with this congregation in the last ten years and how you have participated in it.

What contact do you still maintain? _____

List other congregations you have participated in, with approximate years and description of participation.

What minister or other religious leader has influenced you most? _____

How? _____

On a separate sheet list and describe volunteer experiences you have had in church leadership. Include following:

- | | | | | |
|------------|---------|----------------|------------------|-------------|
| Worship | Board | Committees | Sunday School | Social life |
| Committees | Camping | Rel. Education | Regional/General | Other |

What experiences in paid leadership have you had in churches? _____

EDUCATION

Summarize your schooling thus far. Include high schools, colleges, special schools, and graduate schools.

Name	City	Dates attended	Date of graduation	Degree or # hours completed
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Majors: _____

Minors: _____

Was your course of study interrupted while in high school or college? _____ For how long? _____

For what reason? _____

What education are you currently pursuing? _____

How do you intend to use it? _____

What forms of ministry have you considered seriously? List in order of preference.

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

RECENT GRADUATES: (During the last one – four years)

While in your last year of college, did you grades: ___improve ___remain the same ___drop

Please indicate some of your school activities: _____

SECOND CAREERS:

List your work experiences since graduation: _____

FINANCES

What is your financial situation; that is, what is your expected source of income, primary obligations, major debts, and how will you pay for your schooling?

FUTURE PLANNING

As you look ahead, are there any questions, problems, etc., that you have in preparing for a church vocation which you wish to bring to the attention of Nurture and Certification personnel?

COMMISSIONED MINISTER'S REFERENCE FORM

DATE _____

TO THE APPLICANT: Give one of these forms to each of the persons you have selected, but including at least your local pastor, another pastor or lay leader, present employer and someone who knows you well and is familiar with your skills.

TO THE REFERENCE: Please complete this form and return it to:

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana
1100 W. 42nd Street
Indianapolis, IN 46208

APPLICANT'S NAME _____

REFERENCE'S NAME _____

REFERENCE'S ADDRESS _____

_____ (_____) _____
City State Zip Phone

	Above Average		Average		Below Average		Do not know
Pastoral qualities (<i>genuine interest and concern for people, accessible, gives consistent care to all</i>)							
Knowledge of the program of the Christian Church and commitment to it							
Maturity (<i>Spiritual, ethical, intellectual, emotional</i>)							
Resourcefulness and creativity							
Willingness to work hard							
Skill in administration							
Skill in Christian Education							
Skill in leadership development							
Preaching ability							
Ability to develop and lead public worship							
Commitment to stewardship							
Commitment to social justice							
Commitment to personal, professional and spiritual growth							
Professional interest and concern (<i>use of newsletters, media, etc.</i>) to communicate church program							
Demonstrates an understanding of, and a capacity to articulate the Christian faith							

How long have you known the applicant? _____

In what relationship? _____

Please indicate in a manner of your own choosing your estimate of her/him in the following categories:

1. Character (*moral integrity, general behavior*): _____

2. Emotional stability and flexibility: _____

3. Personality: _____

4. Appearance and presence: _____

5. Family: _____

Please give any comments which would assist a personnel committee in making an employment decision regarding this person.

Signature _____ Date completed _____

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Signature _____ Date completed _____

A Bibliography for Commissioned Ministers and Others Learning of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

March, 2005

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