

**Incare Handbook**  
of the  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma

for

**Candidates on the  
Journey Toward the Order of Ministry**

and

**Members of the  
Commission on Clergy**

Christian Church  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
IN OKLAHOMA



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## **The Requirement**

Candidates on the Journey Toward the Order of Ministry as a Commissioned or Ordained Minister who are under the care of the Commission on Clergy of the Christian Church in Oklahoma will participate in the Incare program. This will typically involve a minimum of one Incare interview annually, during preparation/candidacy. The candidate will meet with members of the Commission on Clergy. The process will typically culminate in a Commissioning or Ordination Council. This Handbook describes the purpose and procedures of the Incare program.

## **The Purpose**

The Incare program provides opportunities for both support and evaluation of those on the Journey Toward the Order of Ministry. The Commission on Clergy is charged with the responsibility of evaluating the candidate in relationship to the ten Personal Qualifications for Ministry, the last of which is “skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry”, that is the sixteen Areas of Ministerial Practice. The aim of the Commission is to be supportive of the candidate as the individual seeks to grow personally and professionally during the course of their preparation for Commissioning or Ordination.

For the “Personal Qualifications for the Order of Ministry and the Sixteen Areas of Ministerial Practice” see pp. [31-33](#) and pp. [34-37](#) or *Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* p. 16 and 19-21 (download at [disciples.org/gcom/](http://disciples.org/gcom/))

## **Basic Principles**

1. Evaluation and Assessment of “a candidate’s personal qualifications, skills and abilities” will be an ongoing process throughout candidacy.
2. Skills and abilities will be assessed as the candidate has sufficient education and/or experience to develop a level of competency in each area.
3. As much as possible assessment will be based on actual ministerial practice.
4. Information will be gathered both from the candidate and from other persons and communities who have knowledge of the candidate.
5. The candidate is expected to take the initiative and responsibility for providing all materials and information requested by the commission.
6. Each candidate is expected to have different profiles of strength and growing edges.
7. The aim of the Incare program is the promotion of growth. It will be helpful to ask “How consistently does this person display any particular characteristic?” rather than “Does this person display this or that characteristic?”

## **The Incare Committee**

Each Incare committee typically has three members. The members of each committee are persons presently serving on the Commission on Clergy and other

persons recruited by the chair of the Commission. The candidate may be accompanied in the interview by a person of his/her choice.

### **Typical Number of Incare Interviews**

The procedures outlined in this Handbook assume that a candidate will have four (4) Incare interviews and one (1) Commissioning or Ordination Council. This pattern may be amended by action of the Commission on Clergy to address the particular situation of any given candidate.

### **Variations from the Normal Procedures**

Each candidate will have a unique history, call to ministry, and life circumstance. Variations will need to be made from time to time to address the particular situation of any given candidate. When this occurs, the pattern set forth here may be amended by action of the Commission on Clergy. The following are four typical circumstances calling for adjustment to normal procedures.

1. Candidacy lasts more than four (4) years.
  - Possible adjustment: Repeat the procedure for Interview Two, then Interview Three, then Interview Four as needed.
2. Candidacy lasts less than four (4) years.
  - Possible adjustments:
    - If this seems likely from the beginning, Interviews Two and Three may be combined.
    - If this is known late in the process, the Interview Four essays can be added to the requirements for the Commissioning or Ordination Council, or an additional interview can be scheduled in the same year.
3. Candidate has been previously commissioned in another Region.
  - Possible adjustments: Interview Four and a Commissioning Council.
4. Candidate has been previously ordained by another denomination.
  - Possible adjustment: Interview Four to ensure grounding in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An Ordination Council as deemed appropriate.

## **The Journey Toward Ministry Plan**

Upon receipt and review of all application materials, an interview will be scheduled with a Regional Minister. During this interview a Journey Toward Ministry Plan will be completed, including a recommendation as to the appropriate education track for the candidate. This will be reported to the Commission on Clergy for action.

For information on the Oklahoma Commission on Clergy and its responsibilities in the Commissioning and Ordination process, see pages 9 and 10 in *The Journey Toward The Order of Ministry* booklet.

A sample of a Journey Toward Ministry Plan may be found on the following page. It is for illustration only. The form may be found in Appendix Three of this *Incare Handbook*.

**— SAMPLE — Journey Toward the Order of Ministry Plan**

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

I will:

1. Enroll in an accredited seminary, preferably a Disciples related seminary, and work toward a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree. Or, enroll in an approved Ministry Training Program and work toward a Certificate for Commissioning.
2. Participate in the Incare program of the Christian Church in Oklahoma.
3. Maintain active membership in a congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma. Presently that congregation is First Christian Church, Anywhere, OK.
4. Actively participate in a ministry setting in a volunteer or paid position. In this position, the candidate works with the minister and the elders to schedule a teaching opportunity over a period of six to eight weeks and at least two preaching opportunities.
5. Complete a Healthy Boundaries seminar by (date).
6. Complete a Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism training by (date).
7. Meet other requirements that apply to all members of the Order of Ministry including:
  - a. Perform faithfully the duties of a minister.
  - b. Complete a Healthy Boundaries training seminar every three years, and complete a Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-racism training.
  - c. Adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church.
  - d. Meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry.
  - e. Seek annual certification of my ministerial standing.
  - f. Make Personal Disclosures required on the annual Request for Standing Form.
7. Upon acceptance by the Commission on Clergy into "Incare", the candidate will complete a Ministerial Profile as directed by the Regional Minister.

I am requesting admission to candidacy for: (please check either 1, 2 or 3 below)

1.  Commissioning
  - a.  via the Ministry Training Program (PTS)
  - b.  via being a current seminary student
2.  Ordination
  - a.  via Divinity School
  - b.  via Apprentice Track (see the criteria below. You must meet 1 of the following 4 criteria (check all that apply).
    - A. Economic: Must have a total annual income at the date of application below 150% of the current, applicable Federal poverty guideline;
    - B. Linguistic: English is not the first language;
    - C. Vocational: Must have served at least 10 years as a licensed or commissioned minister in a recognized ministry setting;
    - D. Familial: Must have an immediate family member for whom the candidate is providing primary care who has a debilitating, chronic medical condition.
3.  Transfer of Ministerial Credentials

Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Minister \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Procedures

### **First Incare Interview**

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#### Prior to the Interview

**At least 30 days prior** to the Interview **the Commission will** provide for the candidate:

1. A copy of “The Journey Toward the Order of Ministry” that outlines the process of ministerial formation for the Christian Church in Oklahoma.
2. A copy of the Incare Handbook describing the stages of the Incare program.

**At least 14 days prior** to the Interview **the candidate will** provide the Commission, through the Regional Minister, with:

1. A spiritual autobiography, emphasizing significant transitions and developments in the candidate’s spiritual life, and the persons, events and other factors that have shaped the candidate’s spiritually. (This would typically be 2-3 pages double spaced.)
2. A copy of the candidate’s Journey Toward the Order of Ministry Plan (see pp. 5-6).

**At least 7 days prior** to the Interview **the Regional office will** send members of the Incare Committee:

1. A copy of the candidate’s spiritual autobiography.
2. A copy of their Application for the Order of Ministry.
3. Copies of the following reference letters that were part of the Application for the Order of Ministry.
  - An elder of the congregation where the candidate holds membership.
  - A Disciples or UCC Minister.
  - A lay member of a Disciples or UCC congregation who can speak to the candidate’s gifts for ministry.
4. A copy of the candidate’s Journey Toward the Order of Ministry Plan.
5. A copy of Report Form One.

#### During the Interview

1. The focus will be on the Committee getting acquainted with the candidate and the candidate with the committee, making use of the spiritual autobiography as a beginning place for conversation.
2. The candidate will present the personal Journey Toward the Order of Ministry Plan.
3. The candidate will have an opportunity to identify his/her strengths and growth areas as the individual prepares for ministry.

4. There will be an opportunity to address questions the candidate has concerning the Journey Toward the Order of Ministry, the Incare Handbook or other concerns.
5. The candidate will be provided with the names and contact information for each of the members of the committee (Form A, see page 39).
6. Notations will be made by the committee that will become part of the candidate's permanent file (Report Form One, pp. 9-10).

## Following the Interview

1. The committee will bring to the Commission both an oral and written report of the interview. The written report will be on Report Form One. These reports will note any recommendations the committee has for the candidate.
2. Recommendations will be given to the candidate in writing either during the interview or communicated to them after the Commission meeting.

**FIRST INCARE INTERVIEW NOTES**

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

Names of Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Highlights from the discussion of the Spiritual Autobiography that offer insights beyond the content of the autobiography.

Discussion related to the Journey Toward the Order of Ministry Plan.

Questions asked by the candidate and responses offered (for example: “reviewed ‘The Journey Toward the Order of Ministry’ document with the candidate”; or “referred the candidate to a particular person or resource”).

Recommendations made by the committee to the candidate.

Areas of Strength (skills, experiences, attitudes that support the tasks of ministry).

Areas for Growth (skills, experiences, attitudes that may be helpful to the candidate's growth in preparation for ministry).

## Procedures

### Second Incare Interview

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#### Prior to the Interview

**At least 30 days prior** to the Interview **the Commission will** provide the candidate with:

A copy of Appendix 1: “Personal Qualifications for Ministry: Assessment of Candidate’s Growth.” The candidate will be instructed to do a self-assessment using this form and ask one minister and one lay person to fill out copies of the form and return to the candidate.

**At least 14 days prior** to the Interview **the candidate will** provide the Commission, through the Regional Minister, with:

The completed copies of the “Personal Qualifications for Ministry: Assessment of Candidate’s Growth.”

**At least 7 days prior** to the Interview **the Regional office will** send to members of the Incare Committee:

1. Copies of the “Personal Qualifications for Ministry: Assessment of Candidate’s Growth” forms from the candidate.
2. A copy of Report Form One from the previous Incare for this candidate.
3. A copy of Report Form Two.
4. Dropbox access to the candidate’s file.

#### During the Interview

1. The focus will be on the Personal Qualifications for Ministry, making use of the completed assessment forms. Discussion may center on areas of strength and areas the candidate desires to make progress on during the coming year.
2. The candidate will be asked to report on progress on any recommendations made during the previous Incare interview and any changes in their Journey Toward the Order of Ministry Plan.
3. There will be an opportunity for the candidate to report on any classes, and other educational activities or experiences since the last interview with a focus on how these have or have not impacted their theology and practice of ministry.
4. There will be an opportunity to address questions the candidate has concerning the Journey Toward the Order of Ministry, the Incare Handbook or other concerns.

5. The candidate will be provided with the names and contact information for each of the members of the committee (Form A, see p. 39).
6. Notations will be made by the committee that will become part of the candidate's permanent file (Report Form Two, pp. 13-14).

### Following the Interview

1. The committee will bring to the Commission both an oral and written report of the interview. The written report will be on Report Form Two. These reports will note any recommendations the committee has for the candidate.
2. Recommendations will be given to the candidate in writing either during the interview or communicated to them after the Commission meeting.

**SECOND INCARE INTERVIEW NOTES**

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

Names of Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Strength in Personal Qualifications for Ministry.

Areas for Growth in Personal Qualifications for Ministry.

Progress report on recommendations made by the committee in Incare Interview One and changes in the Ministry Plan.

Classes, other educational activities or experiences reported by the candidate, and their impact (helpful or not helpful).

Questions asked by the candidate and responses offered (for example: “reviewed ‘The Journey Toward the Order of Ministry’ document with the candidate”; or “referred the candidate to a particular person or resource”).

Recommendations made by the committee to the candidate.

## Procedures

### Third Incare Interview

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#### Prior to the Interview

**At least 30 days prior** to the Interview **the Commission will** provide the candidate with:

A copy of Appendix 2: “Areas of Competency for the Practice of Ministry.” The candidate will be instructed to do a self-assessment using this form and ask one minister and one lay person to fill out copies of the form and return them to the candidate.

**At least 14 days prior** to the Interview **the candidate will** provide the Commission, through the Regional Minister, with:

The completed copies of the “Areas of Competency for the Practice of Ministry.”

**At least 7 days prior** to the Interview **the Regional office will** send members of the Incare Committee:

1. Copies of the “Areas of Competency for the Practice of Ministry” forms from the candidate.
2. A copy of Interview Forms One and Two from the previous Incare interviews for this candidate.
3. A copy of Report Form Three.
4. Dropbox access to the candidate’s file.

#### During the Interview

1. The focus will be on the “Areas of Competency for the Practice of Ministry,” making use of the completed assessment forms. Discussion may center on areas of strength and areas the candidate desires to make progress on during the coming year.
2. The candidate will be asked to report on progress made on any recommendations made during previous Incare interviews, and any changes in their Ministry Plan.
3. There will be an opportunity for the candidate to report on any classes or other educational activities since the last interview with a focus on how these have or have not impacted their theology and practice of ministry.
4. There will be an opportunity to address questions the candidate has concerning the Journey Toward the Order of Ministry, the Incare Handbook or other concerns.

5. The candidate will be provided with the names and contact information for each of the members of the committee (Form A, see p. 39).
6. Notations will be made by the committee that will become part of the candidate's permanent file (Report Form Three, pp. 17-18).

### Following the Interview

1. The committee will bring to the Commission both an oral and written report of the interview. The written report will be on Report Form Three. These reports will note any recommendations the committee has for the candidate.
2. Recommendations will be given to the candidate in writing either during the interview or communicated to them after the Commission meeting.

**THIRD INCARE INTERVIEW NOTES**

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

Names of Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Strength in Areas of Ministerial Competency.

Areas for Growth in Areas of Ministerial Competency.

Progress report on recommendations made by the committee in Incare Interviews One or Two.

Classes, other educational activities or experiences reported by the candidate, and their impact (helpful or not helpful).

Questions asked by the candidate and responses offered (for example: “reviewed ‘The Journey Toward the Order of Ministry’ document with the candidate”; or “referred the candidate to a particular person or resource”).

Recommendations made by the committee to the candidate.

## Procedures

### Fourth Incare Interview

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#### Prior to the Interview

**At least 30 days prior** to the Interview **the Commission will** provide the candidate with:

1. A copy of “Disciples of Christ Identity Statement and Principles.”
2. A copy of “Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)”, pp. 4-15.

**At least 14 days prior** to the Interview **the candidate will** provide the Commission, through the Regional Minister, with:

1. A one and one-half to two-page essay, double spaced, answering the question: “What is the nature and character of ministry?” This essay should be a personal reflection on pp. 4-15 of the “Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).” Give special attention to the question: What is the meaning of Commissioning or Ordination (whichever you are requesting) for you and for the Christian Church?
2. A two- to three-page essay, double spaced, describing: “Why I choose to be a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).” This essay should be a personal reflection on the “Disciples of Christ Identity Statement and Principles” (pp. 28-29).

**At least 7 days prior** to the Interview **the Regional office will** send members of the Incare Committee:

1. A copy of “Disciples of Christ Identity Statement and Principles” (pp. 28-29).
2. A copy of “Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), pp. 4-15. For this document see: [disciples.org/Portals/0/PDF/TFPCOM/TFPCOM-Final.pdf](https://disciples.org/Portals/0/PDF/TFPCOM/TFPCOM-Final.pdf) .
3. The two essays written by the candidate (see above).
4. A copy of Interview Forms One, Two and Three from the previous Incare interviews for this candidate.
5. A copy of Report Form Four.
6. Dropbox access to the candidate’s file.

## During the Interview

1. The focus will be on the candidate's understanding of the theology, polity and practice of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and their personal concept of ministry.
2. The candidate will be asked to report on progress on any recommendations made or goals set during previous Incare interviews, and any changes to their Ministry Plan.
3. There will be an opportunity for the candidate to report on any classes or other educational activities since the last interview, with a focus on how these have or have not impacted their theology and practice of ministry.
4. There will be an opportunity to address questions the candidate has concerning the Journey Toward the Order of Ministry, the Incare Handbook or other concerns.
5. The candidate will be provided with the names and contact information for each of the members of the committee (Form A, see p. 39).
6. Notations will be made by the committee that will become part of the candidate's permanent file (Report Form Four, pp. 21-22).

## Following the Interview

1. The committee will bring to the Commission both an oral and written report of the interview. The written report will be on Report Form Four. These reports will note any recommendations the committee has for the candidate.
2. Recommendations will be given to the candidate in writing either during the interview or communicated to them after the Commission meeting.

**FOURTH INCARE INTERVIEW NOTES**

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

Names of Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Key items in the candidate’s understanding of the theology, polity and practice of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Key items in the candidate’s personal concept of ministry.

Progress report on recommendations made by the committee in Incare Interviews One, Two or Three and any changes in their Ministry Plan.

Classes, other educational activities or experiences reported by the candidate, and their impact (helpful or not helpful).

Questions asked by the candidate and responses offered (for example: “reviewed ‘The Journey Toward the Order of Ministry’ document with the candidate”; or “referred the candidate to a particular person or resource”).

Recommendations made by the committee to the candidate.

## **Commissioning Council or Ordination Council**

### **Purpose of the Council**

The Commissioning Council or Ordination Council, in its interview with the candidate, shall satisfy itself of the candidate's preparation and fitness for ministry by questioning the candidate or securing information satisfactory to them in the following areas:

- Personal Qualifications for Ministry
- Ministry Competency Areas

Given that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has no creedal statements, the intention of the Council is not to test the orthodoxy of the candidate's beliefs but rather to assess their ability to enter into an intelligent and informed discussion of their preparation and fitness for ministry.

### **Prior to the Council**

**At least 30 days prior** to the Interview **the Commission will** request that the candidate:

1. Prepare a three to four-page, double spaced, Credo essay (What I Believe) essay. Address each of the following subjects: God; Jesus; Sin/Salvation (the Human Condition); the Holy Spirit; and the authority of the Bible. This might take the form of a personal response to the "Preamble" to "The Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)." <https://disciples.org/our-identity/the-design/>
2. Do a self-assessment using Appendix 1 "Personal Qualifications for Ministry: Assessment of Candidate's Growth" (see pp. 30-32).
3. Receive from one minister and one lay person their assessment of the candidate using Appendix 1: "Personal Qualifications for Ministry: Assessment of Candidate's Growth."
4. Do a self-assessment using Appendix 2 "Areas of Competency for the Practice of Ministry" (see pp. 33-36).
5. Receive from one minister and one lay person (different than those assessing the candidate in #3) their assessment of the candidate using Appendix 2: "Areas of Competency for the Practice of Ministry."
6. Update any information that has changed on the candidate's Application for the Order of Ministry.

**At least 14 days prior** to the Interview **the candidate will** provide the Commission, through the Regional Minister, with:

1. Credo essay.
2. The three assessments using Appendix 1.
3. The three assessments using Appendix 2.
4. An updated Application for the Order of Ministry.

**At least 7 days prior** to the Interview **the Regional office will** send members of the Incare Committee:

1. The candidate's Credo essay.
2. The three assessments using Appendix 1.
3. The three assessments using Appendix 2.
4. The updated Application for the Order of Ministry.
5. A copy of Interview Forms One, Two, Three and Four from the previous Incare interviews for this candidate.
6. A copy of Report Form Five.
7. Dropbox access to the candidate's file.

### During the Interview

1. The focus will be on determining the candidate's preparation and fitness for ministry related particularly to commissioning or ordination.
2. The Candidate will highlight their Credo and respond to any questions or comments members of the Council may have.
3. The Candidate will comment on Strength and Growth Areas in Personal Qualifications for Ministry.
4. The Candidate will comment on Strength and Growth Areas in Areas of Ministerial Competency.
5. The Candidate will report progress on any recommendations made by Incare committees.
6. The candidate will be provided with the names and contact information for each of the members of the Council (Form B, p. 40).
7. Notations will be made by the committee (Report Form Five, pp. 26-27) that will become part of the candidate's permanent file.

### Following the Interview

1. The Council members will bring to the Commission both an oral and written report of the Council. The written report will be submitted on Report Form Five (see pp. 26-27). These reports will recommend either that the candidate be approved for Commissioning or Ordination, or that the candidate is not approved.
2. If the recommendation is for Commissioning or Ordination, the service location and a possible date will be presented to the Commission.
3. If the recommendation is not to commission or ordain the candidate, the Council will list the reasons for their decision and any steps they believe the candidate needs to take before the candidate may have another Incare interview or Commissioning or Ordination Council.
4. The decision(s) of the Council and Commission will be communicated to the candidate in writing within 7 days of the Commission meeting.

## **Suggested Questions for Commissioning or Ordination Council Interview**

### **Personal Commitment and Character**

1. How do you describe your sense of call to ministry, and has it changed or evolved in any way over time?
2. How do you understand the nature and purpose of your ministry?
3. Are there any factors, personal, familial, financial or theological that provide support or present challenges to your ability to engage in ministry?

### **Understanding and Appreciation of Disciples of Christ History and Tradition**

1. How do you balance scripture, tradition, experience and reason as you consider your personal beliefs and practices?
2. What has been your personal experience of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?
3. What is your understanding of the beliefs of the Christian Church (DOC) about the Lord's Supper and Baptism?
4. What does it mean to you that the Christian Church (DOC) is an inclusive church?
5. How does your life and ministry reflect inclusion of persons of different racial/ethnic heritages?
6. For Commissioning: In the Christian Church (DOC) tradition, what is the meaning of commissioning and what does it mean to you?
7. For Ordination: in the Christian Church (DOC) tradition, what is the meaning of ordination and what does it mean to you?
8. How do you interpret the confessional statement, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, or Jesus Christ is Lord, from a Disciple of Christ perspective?
9. In Disciples polity, what is the role and authority of The Design of the Christian Church?
10. What is an issue of the day that challenges the church? How have you/do you plan to engage with this issue in your ministry?

### **Questions Related to the Practice of Ministry**

Considering the 16 Areas of Competency for Ministry:

1. What do you see as your areas of strength?
2. What do you see as your growth areas?
3. How do you plan to continue your education and growth in the skills of the practice of ministry?

COMMISSIONING OR ORDINATION COUNCIL

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

Names of Council Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Council: \_\_\_\_\_

Insights from the Credo that do not appear in the written document.

Strength and Growth Areas in Personal Qualifications for Ministry.

Strength and Growth Areas in Areas of Ministerial Competency.

Progress report on recommendations made by the committee in Incare Interviews One, Two, Three or Four.

Classes, other educational activities or experiences reported by the candidate, and their impact (helpful or not helpful).

Questions asked by the candidate and responses offered (for example: “reviewed ‘The Journey Toward the Order of Ministry’ document with the candidate”; or “referred the candidate to a particular person or resource”).

### **Commissioning or Ordination Council Recommendation(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Recommend for ordination

Tentative Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Recommend further preparation

List what is to be accomplished before returning for another Incare or Council or before ordination can be scheduled by the Commission on Clergy.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Recommend that the candidate not seek commissioning or ordination from the Commission on Clergy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Recommend reaffirmation of commissioning or ordination. (There are a few circumstances where a person has been ordained prior to the completion of seminary and they request to have standing as an ordained clergy person. This reaffirmation is a way to celebrate the change in status now granted at the completion of their Journey Toward Ministry Plan.)

# Disciples of Christ Identity Statement and Principles

## Introduction

Who do we say that we are? Identity is a vital concern for all parts of the church. Many long-time Disciples worry that we may be losing crucial characteristics of our common life. New Disciples want to know about the distinctive gifts of this community of faith. All of us need to have clarity about who we are in order to be faithful and effective witnesses to Jesus Christ.

A church's identity must be firmly rooted in scripture and yet flexible enough to adapt to changes in culture and the shifting demands of mission. Early Christians in Jerusalem had to learn what it meant to be faithful in Antioch and Rome. The forebears of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as they moved from the frontier to the city, had to rethink such matters as congregational autonomy and the goal of "restoring" the New Testament church. Today, we wrestle with what it means to be disciples of our Lord in a world that is increasingly pluralistic, globally connected, and yet so often violently divided.

And so, we offer a succinct statement of identity, under girded by twelve distinct principles of what it means to be Disciples of Christ.

## Statement of Identity

*We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.*

## Principles of Identity

1. We confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world, requiring nothing more - and nothing less - as a basis of our life together.
2. We hold the centrality of scripture, recognizing that each person has the freedom - and the responsibility - to study God's Word within the community of the church.
3. We practice the baptism of believers, which emphasizes that God's grace demands a response of faith and discipleship, while also recognizing the baptism performed in other churches.
4. We gather for the Lord's Supper, as often as possible, experiencing at this table the gracious, forgiving presence of Jesus Christ.

5. We structure our community around the biblical idea of covenant, emphasizing not obedience to human authority but accountability to one another because of our shared obedience to Christ.
6. We participate in God's mission for the world, working with partners to heal the brokenness of creation and bring justice and peace to the whole human family.
7. We hear a special calling to make visible the unity of all Christians, proclaiming that in our diversity we belong to one another because we commonly belong to Christ.
8. We witness to the Gospel of God's saving love for the world in Jesus Christ, while continuing to struggle with how God's love may be known to others in different ways.
9. We affirm the priesthood of all believers, rejoicing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit - which include the gift of leadership - that God has given for the common good.
10. We celebrate the diversity of our common life, affirming our different histories, styles of worship, and forms of service.
11. We give thanks that each congregation, where Christ is present through faith, is truly the church, affirming as well that God's church and God's mission stretch from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.
12. We anticipate God's coming reign, seeking to serve the God - Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer - whose loving dominion has no end.

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

## Appendix One

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

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

Name of Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Qualifications for Ministry Assessment of Candidate's Growth

**Directions:** For each of the following characteristics please indicate where you see the candidate at this time. Offer feedback only on the qualities for which you have personal knowledge. There is space for comments on each characteristic.

Indicating the degree to which you see this quality in the candidate, you have the following choices.

- 1 not at all
- 2 occasional or beginning
- 3 periodic or moderate
- 4 consistent or deep
- 5 not observed

a. Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

b. A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**c. An understanding of pastoral identity**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**d. Capacity to engage in theological reflection**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**e. Strong moral character and personal integrity**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**f. Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for healthy ministry**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**g. Care and compassion for all people, with appropriate relational skills**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**h. Responsible personal financial management**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**i. Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God's gifts**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**j. Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

## Appendix Two

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

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

Name of Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

### Ministry Competency Areas Assessment of Candidate's Growth

**Directions:** For each of the following competency areas please indicate where you see the candidate at this time. Offer feedback only on the areas for which you have personal knowledge. There is space for comments on each characteristic.

Indicating the degree to which you see this quality in the candidate, you have the following choices.

- 1 not at all
- 2 occasional or beginning
- 3 periodic or moderate
- 4 consistent or deep
- 5 not observed

#### 1. Biblical Knowledge

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

#### 2. Church Administration and Planning

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

3. Communication

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Comments:

4. Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Comments:

5. Ecumenism

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Comments:

6. Education and Leader Development

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Comments:

7. Ethics

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Comments:

8. Evangelism

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Comments:

9. Mission of the Church in the World

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

10. Pastoral Care

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

11. Proclamation of the Word

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

12. Spiritual Development

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

13. Stewardship

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

14. Theology

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

15. Understanding of Heritage Competency

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

16. Worship

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

**Appendix Three**

**“Journey Toward the Order of Ministry Plan”**

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

I will:

1. (Educational Plan) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Participate in the Incare program of the Christian Church in Oklahoma.

3. Maintain active membership in (name and city of congregation where I hold membership)  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Actively participate in ministry as a volunteer or in a paid capacity by: (describe title and responsibilities)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Complete a Healthy Boundaries seminar by (list the year and semester)  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Meet other requirements that apply to all members of the Order of Ministry including:
- a. Perform faithfully the duties of a minister.
  - b. Participate in regular study, growth and renewal by completing and reporting 16 hours of Continuing Education each year, completing a Healthy Boundaries training seminar every three years, and completing Pro-Reconciliation Anti-Racism training.
  - c. Adhere to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church.
  - d. Meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry.
  - e. Seek annual certification of my standing.
  - f. Make Personal Disclosures required on the annual Request for Standing Form.

I am requesting admission to candidacy for: (please check either 1, 2 or 3 below)

1. \_\_\_ Commissioning

a. \_\_\_ via the Ministry Training Program (PTS)

b. \_\_\_ via being a current seminary student

2. \_\_\_ Ordination

a. \_\_\_ via Divinity School

b. \_\_\_ via Apprentice Track (see the criteria below. You must meet 1 of the following 4 criteria (check all that apply)).

\_\_\_A. Economic: Must have a total annual income at the date of application below 150% of the current, applicable Federal poverty guideline;

\_\_\_B. Linguistic: English is not the first language;

\_\_\_C. Vocational: Must have served at least 10 years as a licensed or commissioned minister in a recognized ministry setting;

\_\_\_D. Familial: Must have an immediate family member for whom the candidate is providing primary care who has a debilitating, chronic medical condition.

3. \_\_\_ Transfer of Ministerial Credentials

Signature of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Minister: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Form A**

**Incare Committee Members Information  
For the Candidate's Records**

Date of Incare Interview \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Form B**

**Council Members Information  
For the Candidate's Records**

Date of Incare Interview\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\_\_\_\_\_