



45 ministry affiliates of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that takes place outside the  
46 workplace or ministry context (including, but not limited to, online conduct or conduct  
47 utilizing the internet or other electronic media).  
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## 49 **II. Definitions**

- 51
- 52 A. Minister: An Ordained or Commissioned minister of the Christian Church  
53 (Disciples of Christ) with Standing certified by the General Commission  
54 on Ministry.  
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- 56 B. General Commission on Ministry: The commission appointed by the General  
57 Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that certifies  
58 Standing of all those not certified by Regional Committees on Ministry (namely,  
59 General ministry employees, missionaries, military chaplains, ecumenical  
60 ministers, and regional ministers as indicated in "Theological Foundations and  
61 Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry, section II, F, 1, e, line 964.)  
62
- 63 C. Ministerial Standing: Affirmation that an ordained or commissioned minister is  
64 currently engaged in the practice of ministry, whether on an occasional, part-  
65 time, or full-time basis, with continuous accountability maintained with a  
66 calling body.
- 67
- 68 D. Employer: The organization, related institution, General or Regional ministry that  
69 calls a minister to carry out a particular ministry. For chaplains, this could be the  
70 Endorsement officer.
- 71
- 72 E. Investigative File: That body of material used by the General Commission on  
73 Ministry to determine the merits of the case. Such file is secured with the Office  
74 of General Minister and President for a minimum of fifty years.
- 75
- 76 F. Investigative Team: Two members of the Response Team assigned to investigate  
77 allegations of misconduct.
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- 79 G. Response Team: 12 members appointed by the General Minister and President as  
80 outlined in V.A.i.
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- 83 H. Advisor: Person to help the complainant understand the process.
- 84
- 85 I. Clergy Misconduct – Any violation of the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian*  
86 *Church (Disciples of Christ) (e.g. sexual contact or sexualized behavior, fraud,*  
87 *embezzlement, misuse of power within the context of ministry, failure to lead and*  
88 *serve with integrity, breach of trust of those they are serving, etc.)*
- 89
- 90 J. Boundary Violation: Clergy need established boundaries with regard to multiple  
91 aspects of their life and ministry. Boundary violations occur when a minister

90 does not faithfully observe the law, the Ministerial Code of Ethics or other official  
91 policies. Boundaries include, but are not limited to work-life balance, collegial  
92 relationships, and relationships with other ministries, social media and online  
93 behavior, finances, gift-receiving, pastoral identity, and self-differentiation.  
94

95 K. Financial Misconduct: Financial misconduct is the unauthorized, unethical,  
96 fraudulent, or wasteful handling of financial matters or assets that results in loss  
97 or damage, often by violating laws, rules, or policies. It includes acts like  
98 embezzlement, fraudulent reporting, intentional misrepresentation of financial  
99 information, financial exploitation, or the misuse of funds and assets for personal  
100 gain.  
101

102 L. Appropriate Dating Relationship: A loving, caring, respectful relationship  
103 between two consenting adults where professional boundaries and power issues  
104 are clearly understood and maintained. Because of the subtlety of power abuse  
105 issues in clergy relationships, it is problematic for clergy to engage persons  
106 within their ministry setting or professional relationships in a dating relationship.  
107 After an acknowledged dating relationship has begun, it is problematic for the  
108 non-clergy person to join the church, congregation or ministry setting in which  
109 the minister serves. Therefore, care must be taken to recognize potential power  
110 dynamics and role conflicts that may impact the health of the relationship and  
111 the ministry as a whole. Acknowledged Dating Relationship: A loving, caring,  
112 respectful relationship between two consenting adults when the clergy person  
113 immediately informs their pastor, supervisor or moderator of their board of the  
114 beginning of a dating relationship.  
115

116 M. Clergy Sexual Misconduct: A range of behaviors defined as sexual harassment;  
117 sexual misconduct; adultery and promiscuity; and child sexual abuse between a  
118 minister and their parishioners, clients, and those the minister supervises or  
119 serves in a professional capacity within or outside the church or ministry setting.  
120 Such behavior crosses appropriate professional boundaries and is an abuse of  
121 the trust placed in and the responsibilities and privileges of the ministerial role.  
122 Such misconduct violates pastoral ethics. In all instances, the minister is  
123 responsible for maintaining professional boundaries, regardless of the behavior  
124 of other persons.  
125

126 i. Sexual Harassment:

127 a form of unlawful employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights  
128 Act of 1964 and is prohibited under GCOM's anti-harassment policy. According  
129 to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is  
130 defined as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other  
131 verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature...when...submission to or rejection  
132 of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions, or such conduct  
133 has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work  
134 environment." **Examples: inappropriate sexual comments, remarks about**

135 **someone's body, explicit emails and phone calls, sexually inappropriate**  
136 **images or videos, suggestive letters or notes, or inappropriate gestures.**  
137

138 Generally defined to include sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or  
139 other verbal, written, electronic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:  
140

- 141 • Submission to such is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of an  
142 individual's employment (in this case, paid or volunteer) or his or her  
143 continued status in an institution.
- 144 • Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a  
145 basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals.
- 146 • Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work  
147 performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work  
148 environment based on the declared judgment of the affected individual.
- 149 • Such conditions create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive  
150 environment for another individual regardless of the specific setting or  
151 circumstances or the relationship between the two individuals most  
152 directly involved.

153

154 ii. Sexual Misconduct includes any of the following:  
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- 156 • Sexual contact with a minor.<sup>1</sup>
- 157 • Sexual harassment.
- 158 • Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.
- 159 • Sexual malfeasance, which is defined as a breach of trust resulting from  
160 sexual contact (contact with genitalia, buttocks or breasts) within a  
161 ministerial or professional relationship.
- 162 • Unwelcome or offensive behaviors, including winks, leers, suggestive  
163 comments, crude language, pinching or tickling someone, or inappropriate  
164 hugs and kisses.

165

166 iii. Child Sexual Abuse includes, but is not limited to, any sexualized contact or  
167 interaction between a minor and an adult. The behavior may or may not  
168 involve touching. Sexual behavior between a minor and an adult is always  
169 considered forced.  
170

171

N. Other forms of harassment and discrimination:

- 172 • **Non-verbal harassment** includes distribution, display or discussion of any  
173 written or graphic material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles or  
174 shows hostility, aversion or disrespect toward an individual or group because  
175 of race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability status, gender, sexual

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<sup>1</sup> Minor is defined by law in the state or province where the alleged misconduct occurred

176 orientation, gender identity, genetic information or marital status. **Examples:**  
177 **pinching, patting, rubbing, purposefully brushing up against another person,**  
178 **sharing demeaning pictures, cartoons, jokes; demeaning gestures,**  
179 **unwanted hugs, hitting, pushing, groping, and other touching.**

180 • **Cyber Bullying** – the use of electronic communication to bully another  
181 individual, typically by sending communication of an intimidating or  
182 threatening nature.

183 • **Verbal harassment** includes comments that are offensive or unwelcome  
184 regarding a person’s race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability status,  
185 gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, marital  
186 status or political beliefs. **Examples: whistling, slurs, derogatory or**  
187 **threatening comments, racist slang or phrases, wearing clothing that could**  
188 **be offensive to an ethnic group, jokes, innuendos, name-calling, and insults.**

189 • **Discrimination** – it is a violation of GCOM’s policy to discriminate in the  
190 provision of employment opportunities, benefits or privileges; to create  
191 discriminatory work conditions; or to use discriminatory evaluative standards  
192 in employment if the basis of that discriminatory treatment is, in whole or in  
193 part, the person’s race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability status,  
194 gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, marital  
195 status, or political beliefs.

### 196 197 **III. General Policies**

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199 A. Clergy misconduct as defined above will not be tolerated by the General Commission  
200 on Ministry. GCOM encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination,  
201 harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender’s identity or position. Individuals  
202 who believe that they have been the victim of such conduct by ministers whose  
203 standing is with GCOM should communicate their concerns to the current chair of  
204 GCOM and/or the General Minister and President. See the complaint procedure  
205 described below. In addition, GCOM encourages individuals who believe they are  
206 being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that their behavior  
207 is unwelcome and to request that it be discontinued. Often this action alone will  
208 resolve the problem. GCOM recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to  
209 pursue the matter through complaint procedures. If the complaint is against the  
210 General Minister and President, the complaint should be addressed to the current  
211 Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

212  
213 B. It is the responsibility of the General Commission on Ministry to have specific  
214 procedures for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating misconduct charges of  
215 ministers with Standing through the General Commission on Ministry. It is within the  
216 purview of the General Commission on Ministry to adjudicate matters related to  
217 ministerial Standing. It is within the purview of the employer to exercise

218 employment supervisory responsibilities (which cannot be delegated or deferred to  
219 the General Commission on Ministry)

220  
221 C. All parties (minister, endorser/General ministry head) shall notify the General  
222 Commission on Ministry (including the Region where Standing is held in the  
223 case of a Regional Minister) of any circumstance or situation that may result in a  
224 challenge to a person's Standing.

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226 D. All negotiated settlements, formal decisions, and actions by the General  
227 Commission on Ministry are final. They will be reported to the Division of  
228 Homeland Ministries, Inc., hereafter referred to as Disciples Home Missions, and  
229 may be available to congregations, Regions and General ministries upon request  
230 and signed appropriate release form.

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232 E. In emergency situations of alleged misconduct, ministerial standing maybe  
233 temporarily suspended by the General Commission on Ministry. An  
234 emergency situation would include, but not be limited to, accusations  
235 involving a minor, when there is threat of immediate harm, or when a  
236 major crime has been alleged or committed.

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238 **IV. Care for Victims**

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240 A. The victim(s) of the alleged misconduct shall be offered professional pastoral care  
241 and counseling as necessary and as negotiated and authorized by the Chair of the  
242 General Commission on Ministry.

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244 B. The Chair of the General Commission on Ministry will negotiate professional  
245 pastoral care and counseling to the ministry site, as necessary.

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247 **V. Procedures**

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249 A. Structure of the General Commission Process:

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251 i. The General Commission on Ministry shall appoint and prepare a Standing  
252 Response Team of various identities. These are to be appointed to four-year  
253 staggered terms. The Response Team shall be composed of at least twelve  
254 persons including both men and women. Ideally, the members of the Response  
255 Team shall be composed of both lay and clergy, representative of the  
256 constituent groups within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and  
257 designated representatives of General ministries. The chairperson of General  
258 Commission on Ministry or designee shall be an ex-officio member of the team  
259 and kept regularly informed of the  
260 team's work but will not chair the team. The General Minister and President will  
261 appoint the Chair of the Response Team. Members of GCOM will not be appointed  
262 to the Response Team.

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- ii. As necessary, the General Commission on Ministry will cooperate with Regions following *Guidelines for Inter-Regional Cooperation on Matters of Fitness for Ministry* attached as an appendix to this policy.
- iii. The investigation of a complaint is the sole responsibility of the Response Team, and it is the team’s purpose to attempt to determine an objective record of the facts in the case. A written record will be kept of all proceedings, interviews, and conversations, as well as a log of phone calls and meetings. The Chair of the Response Team will be responsible for keeping the written record, in cooperation with the chair of GCOM. All documents are stored in the Office of the General Minister and President.
- iv. The investigation may, but not necessarily, be undertaken in cooperation with the region in the case of an allegation filed against an Executive Regional Minister. In all cases, authority for the investigation remains with the General Commission on Ministry.

B. Receipt of Complaint:

- i. Any person may submit a signed, written complaint charging misconduct by a minister. The initial complaint must be specific as to the alleged behavior. There may be instances when an oral complaint is all that is received. In such cases, the receiving party must produce the complaint in writing.
- ii. The complaint must be submitted to the General Minister and President or the chair of the General Commission on Ministry.
- iii. In the case of sexual misconduct, upon receipt of the complaint, if the victim is a minor, the Chair of the General Commission on Ministry or the General Minister and President is mandated to immediately report to the appropriate secular authorities (i.e. Child Protective Services, local law enforcement, etc.).
- iv. If appropriate, the Chair of the General Commission on Ministry or General Minister and President will report illegal activities to the proper secular authorities.
- v. Upon receiving the complaint, the GCOM Chair and GMP will review the complaint to consider whether the allegations, if true, would rise to the level of misconduct as defined by this policy. If the GCOM chair and GMP agree that the allegation, even if true, does not rise to the level of misconduct, the complaint would be dismissed and the GCOM chair would inform the complainant and the accused of the decision. If the GCOM chair and GMP do not agree to dismiss the complaint or they agree that the allegations, if true, would rise to the level of misconduct, then the process would continue.

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vi. Should the complainant decide not to pursue the formal complaint process, the General Commission on Ministry may continue its investigation and action if it has discovered sufficient information to suggest misconduct has occurred. In that case, additional interviews may be required and shall be conducted by members of the Response Team.

C. Investigation of Complaint:

- i. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Chair of the Response Team will assign two of its members, a man and a woman, to act as the Investigative Team.
- ii. The Chair of the Response Team will contact the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the complaint, provide information about the interview process and provide a copy of the Policy and Procedures.
- iii. The Chair of the Response Team will notify the accused that a complaint has been received and provide general details about the complaint including the name of the complainant. The accused will be instructed not to communicate with the complainant about the complaint. The Chair of the Response Team will also provide a copy of the Policy and Procedures to the accused.
- iv. The Investigative Team will meet with the complainant (and victim if the complainant is not the victim) within 30 days of receiving the complaint. In the case of a minor, the investigation will proceed immediately. In addition to gathering information about the complaint, the purpose of this meeting is to let the complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the victim) know that the complaint is being taken seriously. Information about the process to be followed will be shared with the complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the victim) at this meeting.
- v. The Chair of the Response Team, in consultation with the complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the victim), will appoint an advisor from the Response Team whose task will be to help the complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the victim) understand the process.
- vi. After the Investigative Team meets with the complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the victim), they will provide a written summary of the meeting to the interviewee within 7 days of the interview. The interviewee will have 7 days to review the interview and offer additional comments or clarifications. The summary of the interview as well as the comments from the interviewee will become a part of the record of the investigation.
- vii. The Investigative Team will meet with the accused to share the details of the complaint, explain the process, and receive a written or verbal response to the allegations. A summary of the interview will be provided to the accused within 7 days, and the accused will have 7 days to respond with additional comments or clarifications. The summary of the interview as well as the comments from the

353 interviewee will become a part of the record of the investigation.

354 viii. Other persons may also be interviewed if it is deemed necessary to the  
355 investigation. Summaries of those interviews should also be provided to the  
356 interviewees. Interviewees would then have 7 days to respond with additional  
357 comments or clarifications. The summary of the interview as well as the comments  
358 from the interviewees will become a part of the record of the investigation.  
359

360 ix. The Investigative Team will demonstrate sensitivity to all interviewees in selecting a  
361 meeting place. Interviews may be held virtually.

362 x. At the completion of all interviews, the Investigative Team will prepare a written  
363 statement for the Response Team outlining the steps taken in the investigation. The  
364 Response Team will meet to determine if, based on the evidence gathered, the alleged  
365 behavior occurred and if so, if it rose to the level of misconduct. They will also recommend  
366 appropriate remedies ranging from exoneration (if the behavior was not deemed to have  
367 occurred or did not meet the definition of misconduct) to temporary or permanent  
368 removal of standing.

369 xi. The Response Team Chair will prepare a report that includes both the determination of the  
370 Response Team and the recommended response to the General Minister and President and  
371 the Chair of the General Commission on Ministry. The Chair of GCOM and GMP will meet  
372 to review the report. If they agree with the outcome and recommendations, the process  
373 will continue to D. Pre-hearing Process. If they are divided on their judgment about the  
374 outcome or recommendations, or if they disagree with the outcome or recommendations,  
375 they will schedule a meeting with the Response Team to discuss further.

376 xii. Once an outcome is agreed upon, the GCOM chair will notify the complainant and accused  
377 (in the case of exoneration) that they are moving on to the next step, and notify the full  
378 Commission that an investigation is underway but need not include the details of the  
379 investigation.

380 xiii. If it is decided that misconduct has occurred, the Chair of GCOM will notify the  
381 appropriate leadership of the employing or calling body that this matter is under  
382 investigation.

383 xiv. Emergency Suspension of Ministerial Standing. In the event of an unusually grave or  
384 emergency situation, the General Commission on Ministry may temporarily suspend  
385 ministerial Standing. Acting on behalf of the General Commission, the Chair of the General  
386 Commission on Ministry in consultation with the General Minister and President may  
387 temporarily suspend Standing. If a Regional Minister's Standing is removed as an  
388 emergency suspension of ministerial Standing, this suspension would automatically  
389 suspend the Regional Minister's Standing in the Region in which they serve. The Chair of  
390 GCOM has the responsibility to be certain that both the General Minister and President  
391 and the Chair of the Regional Commission/Committee on Ministry of the Region, where  
392 the Regional Minister serves, has been contacted. This emergency suspension is intended  
393 to interrupt the ministry and ministerial search and call process while severe allegations  
394 are being explored. During this period of emergency suspension, the investigation and  
395 decision-making process continue. Full written notice of this decision for emergency  
396 suspension shall be given to the minister against whom allegations have been made and to  
397 the Office of Christian Vocation, the ministry site being served, and any other bodies which  
398 have relied on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Standing for endorsement,  
399 approval, or recognition.  
400

401 xv. In the event that the accused minister resigns or retires but does not voluntarily forfeit  
402 Standing before the investigation process is complete, the investigation will continue until  
403 a determination is reached.<sup>2</sup> The final determination will become a part of the minister's  
404 permanent file and be communicated to the appropriate parties. If the minister voluntarily  
405 forfeits Standing before the completion of the investigation, the investigation will cease  
406 and be noted in their permanent file. If at any time the minister seeks reinstatement, the  
407 investigation will resume.

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409 D. Pre-Hearing Process – In the event that allegations are upheld.

410 i. The Chair of the Response Team, the Chair of GCOM, and the GMP will meet to  
411 determine proposed remedies in the event the minister admits culpability in ii.

412 ii. The Chair of the Response Team and the Investigative Team will meet with the  
413 accused. If the minister admits culpability for the substance of the charge in the  
414 complaint and accepts the proposed outcome, an agreement may be reached  
415 at this stage.

416  
417 iii. Such an agreement will include one or more of the following: (1) resignation of  
418 their position;<sup>2</sup> (2) treatment by a therapist specializing in pastoral  
419 sexual/ethical misconduct; (3) supervised probation; (4) removal of Standing  
420 with cause (either permanent or temporary with requirements for  
421 reinstatement); (5) reimbursement of all costs associated with counseling or  
422 therapy of the victim; (6) restitution

423

424 iv. The agreement will be put in writing, signed by all parties, and will be  
425 forwarded to the Chair of the General Commission on Ministry. The  
426 agreement will be reported in writing to the Office of Christian Vocations in  
427 Disciples Home Missions, and the appropriate executive if previously notified.  
428 The chair of GCOM will notify the full GCOM that an adjudicated complaint  
429 has been concluded, but not report the details of the complaint or outcome.

430

431 v. If the minister does not admit culpability or if negotiation fails to reach a  
432 mutually satisfactory resolution, then the General Commission on Ministry  
433 will proceed to conduct a formal hearing.

434

435 E. Formal Hearing:

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437 i. A formal hearing may be required by the General Commission on  
438 Ministry or requested by the minister against whom the complaint  
439 has been filed.

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441 ii. The Hearing Board shall be comprised of five members of the General  
442 Commission on Ministry appointed by the GCOM chair.

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<sup>2</sup> Resignation of a position by a commissioned minister automatically results in loss of Standing

- 444           iii. The hearing will seek to be fair to all concerned, but is not held to strict legal  
445           procedures. The General Commission on Ministry will establish particular rules  
446           for the hearing. The Hearing Board will demonstrate sensitivity in selecting the  
447           hearing meeting time and place.  
448
- 449           iv. Since this is an ecclesial and not a legal proceeding, neither the minister who is  
450           charged nor the complainant (nor the victim if the complainant is not the  
451           victim) may be represented by legal counsel. Attorneys and officers of the  
452           secular court have no role within an ecclesial proceeding. However, both the  
453           minister and the complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the  
454           victim) may select an advocate to provide support, care and procedural  
455           guidance, but may not speak on behalf of the complainant or the accused.  
456
- 457           v. At least thirty (30) days prior to the formal hearing, a written statement of  
458           charges will be provided to the minister and written notice given to all parties  
459           of the time and place of the hearing.  
460
- 461           vi. At the hearing, the Response Team Chair or designee is responsible for  
462           presenting the case against the minister. The minister may request others to  
463           appear before the Formal Hearing Board if relevance is determined by the  
464           Board. Once the hearing is requested, all materials and requests for witnesses  
465           must be submitted to the Chair of the Formal Hearing Board within two  
466           weeks. Only the Formal Hearing Board may ask questions of those who  
467           appear before the Board  
468
- 469           vii. In a situation where the complainant is also a victim of the alleged misconduct, the  
470           minister who is charged has a right to have access to the complainant’s testimony.  
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- 472           viii. The Hearing Board will make a recommendation to General Commission on  
473           Ministry.  
474
- 475           ix. The General Commission on Ministry will decide regarding the charges and  
476           recommend actions. Among the possible actions the General Commission may take  
477           are:
- 478           • Dismissal of all charges against the minister.
  - 479           • Requiring the minister to 1) pay for, receive treatment by a therapist specializing  
480           in pastoral sexual/ethical misconduct, and sign a release to allow the therapist to  
481           report to General Commission on Ministry; 2) confess wrongdoing and seek  
482           forgiveness from the victim and all those affected by the misconduct; 3) if  
483           appropriate, make restitution
  - 484           • Requiring the minister to pay for counseling for the victim.
  - 485           • Removal of the minister’s Standing with possibility of reinstatement (see section  
486           VII)
  - 487           • Permanent removal of Standing.

488 x. All decisions and rationale of the General Commission will be recorded in the  
489 minister’s investigative file. This file will be secured in the Office of the General  
490 Minister and President for a minimum of fifty years. The General Minister and  
491 President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Office of Christian  
492 Vocation, the appropriate employer, and all regional ministers will be notified in  
493 writing of the action taken.

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495 xi. All decisions and rationale of the General Commission on Ministry will be reported  
496 in writing to the complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the victim).

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498 xii. If Standing is not removed but the charges are not dismissed, and other action is  
499 taken, this action must be disclosed in all future Search and Call Profiles of the  
500 minister.

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502 xiii. If the allegations prove false, all records will be sealed, only to be opened for  
503 civil or criminal proceedings. The General Commission on Ministry chairperson  
504 or designee will negotiate professional pastoral care and counseling for the  
505 minister.

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507 **VI. Right of Appeal**

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509 A. All decisions with respect to Standing may be appealed to the General  
510 Commission on Ministry within a year from the date on which decisions are  
511 final.

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513 B. The acceptable grounds for appeal are:

- 514 • The appellant believes that they did not receive a fair hearing
- 515 • The appellant believes the General Commission on Ministry violated its own  
516 written ministerial policies and procedures.
- 517 • The appellant believes the General Commission on Ministry violated the  
518 *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of*  
519 *the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).*

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521 **VII. Restoration of Standing**

522  
523 A. Persons whose Standing has been removed with possibility of reinstatement may  
524 apply in writing to the General Commission on Ministry after a period of no less  
525 than thirty-six months, requesting restoration of Standing. The General Commission  
526 on Ministry will consider the request at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

527  
528 i. The applicant will provide all available necessary documents and  
529 information pertaining to the Standing request.

530  
531 ii. The General Commission on Ministry will gather further information from the  
532 files of the process that resulted in removal of Standing about the

533 circumstances that resulted in the removal of Standing and the basis for the  
534 decision for removal of Standing. When possible, a member of the General  
535 Commission on Ministry involved in the original decision will be consulted.

536  
537 iii. The complainant (and the victim if the complainant is not the victim) must be  
538 notified in writing that they may make a written statement to the  
539 Commission about the applicant's request for reinstatement of Standing.

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541 B. The General Commission on Ministry will determine if restitution, rehabilitation, and  
542 preparation for return to ministry have occurred in the intervening time since the  
543 loss of Standing.

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545 i. The General Commission on Ministry may require documentation of  
546 professional assessment.

547 ii. The General Commission on Ministry may require the minister to  
548 demonstrate strategies for long-term treatment, monitoring of  
549 behavior, and supervision.

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551 C. If Standing is restored, this will be communicated to the Office of Christian Vocation.  
552 Records of any disciplinary action and restoration, if applicable, remain in the minister's  
553 investigative file and, upon written request to the General Commission on Ministry, may  
554 be available to future employers.

555  
556 D. Any minister whose Standing has been restored after removal must disclose that  
557 Standing was removed for cause and restored in all Search and Call disclosure forms  
558 from that time forward. Failure to disclose will be cause for termination of Standing  
559 *[Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the*  
560 *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), F. 4. d.]*

561  
562 **VIII. Appeal to GCOM from a Region**

563 Most regions provide for complainants or the accused to appeal adverse rulings from Regional  
564 Commission on Ministry to the General Commission on Ministry. GCOM will only consider  
565 whether the region followed its policy related to the allegation of misconduct. GCOM will not  
566 offer a ruling on the validity of a decision or the assigned consequences of the decision.

567  
568 Process:

569 An individual who wishes to appeal an adverse ruling from a RCOM related to a misconduct  
570 allegation will provide a written request for appeal to the chairperson of the General  
571 Commission on Ministry. The request should include a summary of the allegation and outcome  
572 and how the individual believes the RCOM violated its policies for investigation and  
573 adjudication. Upon receipt of the appeal, the chair of GCOM will notify the Regional Minister of  
574 the region that an appeal has been received and outline the process for adjudication. The chair  
575 of GCOM will also request contact information for the chair of the RCOM as well as any  
576 relevant documents related to the allegation, investigation and adjudication.

577 The chair of GCOM will notify the chair of the Response Team of the appeal. The Response  
578 Team chair will assign two members of the Response Team to act as the Investigation Team.

579 The investigation will include interviews with the person making the appeal, the chairperson of

580 the RCOM, and the Regional Minister. If deemed necessary, they may also interview others  
581 who have relevant knowledge of the process used in the original complaint. The investigation  
582 will also include a review of relevant documents from the region related to the allegation,  
583 investigation and adjudication of the original complaint.

584 After the investigation, the Investigation Team will prepare a report for the Response Team  
585 outlining their findings and determination regarding whether the RCOM followed its processes  
586 in investigating and adjudicating the complaint.

587 The Response Team will meet to receive the report and determine the appropriate response.  
588 Possible responses include:

- 589 • Confirmation that the RCOM followed its processes and policies.
- 590 • Confirmation that the RCOM followed its processes and policies but include recommendations  
591 for improving the policy.
- 592 • Determination that the RCOM did not follow its processes and recommendations for rectifying  
593 the errors or omissions.

594 The Chair of the Response Team will communicate the Response Team’s recommendations to  
595 the chair of GCOM and the GMP. If they agree, the chair of GCOM will communicate the  
596 decision in writing to the complainant, Regional Minister and chair of RCOM. If the Chair of  
597 GCOM and the GMP do not agree with the recommendations of the Response Team, a meeting  
598 will be held with the Response Team to come to an agreement.

599 **IX. The General Commission on Ministry shall review these policies and procedures**  
600 **annually.**

601  
602 **Adopted, August 2002; amended, August 2005, August 2007, August 2010, August 2011,**  
603 **and August 2012; reviewed, August 2013; amended, August 2014, August 2015, August**  
604 **2016, and August 2017, January 2019, January 2021, amended January 2023, February 2026**

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610 **ADDENDUM**

611 **Guidelines for Inter-Regional Cooperation**

612 **On Matters of Fitness for Ministry**

613  
614 In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) the authority to grant and remove ministerial  
615 standing rests with the Region or General Commission on Ministry that certifies the minister's  
616 standing. While other Regions and ecclesiastical bodies may have interest and influence, the  
617 final authority to remove standing rests solely with the body where standing is certified.

618  
619 However, at times, more than one Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), United  
620 Church of Christ Association, or other ecclesiastical body of another denomination may have an  
621 interest in or concern about the ministerial standing of a particular person. It is recommended  
622 that when more than one Region or ecclesiastical body is involved, the Region certifying the  
623 standing invite the other Region or ecclesiastical body to cooperate in appropriate ways. Such  
624 cooperation is often sought when a student in one Region is attending seminary located within  
625 a different Region. The authorizing Region may request the Region where the seminary is  
626 located to include the person in Regional events, offer support, and take under courtesy care.

627  
628 Cooperation is essential when a minister whose fitness is questioned currently has ministerial  
629 standing in a Region other than the Region where the misconduct or situation in question  
630 occurred. The Region certifying the ministerial standing may ask the Region where the situation  
631 in question occurred to gather information on its behalf and/or provide pastoral support for the  
632 person raising the question of fitness. Only the Region certifying ministerial standing can make  
633 decisions regarding the minister whose fitness is in question. This Region is also responsible for  
634 providing pastoral care of the accused. Similar types of cooperation also may occur between a  
635 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Region and a United Church of Christ Association when a  
636 situation involves a person with ordained ministerial partner standing.

637  
638 In all cases where Regions work together, all need to be aware of the policies operating in each.  
639 Before initiating a review of standing, it is helpful if the Regions reach an agreement on the way  
640 to proceed and clarify roles and procedures to be followed.