

Overview and Application Process of the BBA/LRGVD Commission Ministry Education Program

The Commission Ministry Education Program within the Bluebonnet Area/Lower Rio Grande Valley District of the Christian Church in the Southwest region is guided by the General Church's document, ***Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*** which can be found online at <http://disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/TFPCOM-Final.pdf>.

Our Commission Ministry Education Program in the Christian Church in the Southwest is essentially uniform in all of the areas of the Region, but is administered by each of the Area Committees on Ministry. In other words, although a commission is considered valid anywhere in the Region, we primarily administer it locally.

The education program consists of:

1. A defined five-year group process that includes readings, written responses, group attendance and participation. This program is offered on a continually rotating curriculum. It is possible to enter at any point and continue until the five-year program is completed. 16 Areas of Ministerial Practice (AMP) will be covered sequentially with the 16 areas being addressed in workshops provided by the Texas Bible Chair Foundation in the Clergy Leadership Institute series. All workshops will be held in San Antonio. Mentor groups in Austin, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and the Valley at this time will prepare for and debrief from these workshops in their mentor groups which will meet 5 times per year.

One educational event per year may be an alternative study (such as an online workshop or another non-Disciple denominational workshop) method that would need preapproval by our BBA/LRGVD Committee on Ministry.

In addition to the material related to the 16 Areas and Ministerial Practice it is hoped that mentor groups will also have opportunity to share insights regarding typical ministerial leadership needs such as: how to baptize, how to pastor a family through bereavement, weddings, new member classes, stewardship programs, etc. Mentor groups will meet for at least 12 contact hours per year.

Upon completion of the 5 year training program, the Commissioned Minister will participate in at least 2 continuing education events each year in order to maintain his/her commission.

To summarize some elements of the program for those beginning the Commissioned Minister training program, those currently in the program, and those who have graduated in years past:

	Beginning 2014 & later	Currently in Program	Those Already Graduated
Mentor Group	required initial 5 years	required initial 4 years	not required
Educational Events	3 per year for initial 5 years, then 2 per year thereafter	3 per year for initial 4 years then 2 events thereafter	2 events per year
Mentor Assigned	Ongoing after initial 5 years	none required, but highly encouraged	none required, but highly encouraged

2. In the case of a seminary student who is also under care of the home Region and in the ordination process, or one who has completed a M.Div. program of study at an ATS accredited seminary and now in an ordination process, the candidate will not be a Commissioned Minister, but will be a Commissioned Theological Student. The Commissioned Theological Student will be exempt from the educational process defined above, but will be strongly encouraged to participate on a volunteer basis. Note: the designation Commissioned Theological Student is not used in conversation, but as an internal distinction used for our own administrative purposes. There is no difference between a Commissioned Minister and a Commissioned Theological Student in authority or ministry.

Term and Scope of Commissioning:

1. A commission cannot be granted prior to the completion of one academic year in our Commission Minister training program. A theological student must be under the care of our CCSW Committee on the Ministry for at least one academic year prior to eligibility for commissioning.
2. All commissions are granted for a period of one year. Commissions are granted by the BBA/LRGVD Committee on the Ministry after these annual interviews which will be done at several places around the Area during each year.
3. The commission is for a specific ministry, in a specific setting, for a specific period of time. A change of congregations will terminate a commission. A change of position within a congregation will terminate a commission. In either case, a Commissioned Minister may be granted a new commission immediately for the new ministry at the time of his/her interview with the BBA/LRGVD Committee on the Ministry.

4. A Commissioned Minister does have access to the Disciples relocation system with in this CCSW. Commissioned Ministers do **not** have access to the relocation system outside of this Region.
5. A Commissioned Minister moving from one area to another within this Region will be considered by the receiving Area to be a continuing participant in the Commissioned ministry process and will not have to begin commissioning, nor the educational process, over again.

Authority

A Commissioned Minister within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shares the same authority will within the church as ordained clergy. This shall include listing in the *Yearbook and Directory of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ*, voting privileges as clergy and assemblies and boards, and recognition as persons engaged in legitimate ministry to the State of Texas as necessary.

To enter the Commissioned Ministry Education Program you must:

1. Be an active member of a Disciples congregation in the Bluebonnet Area
2. Have a position of ministry with accountability to a senior minister, board, or agency of the church.
3. **You must read the following documentation:**
 - a. Theological Foundations and Policies & Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry: [English](#) [Spanish](#) [French](#) [Korean](#)
 - b. Ministerial Code of Ethics: [English](#) [Spanish](#) [Korean](#)
4. **You must submit the following documentation to the BBA/LRGVD Office:**
 - a. Personal Data Form
 - b. CCSW Personal Disclosure Form
 - c. Release for Background Check and Disclosure
 - d. Copy of Certificate of Completion for *Healthy Boundaries for Clergy*
 - e. Your paper (typed, double-spaced) that describes:
 - Your Faith Journey
 - Your Understanding of Ministry
 - Your Understanding of Commissioned Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

5. **Your congregation must submit the following documentation to the BBA/LRGVD Office:**
 - a. Congregational Support Form
 - b. Job description for ministry position that includes time expectations, clear line of accountability, job title and specific work areas

6. You must complete an interview with the BBA/LRGVD Commission on Ministry (at this point an “applicant” becomes a “candidate”). Contact the BBA/LRGVD Office at (210) 822-4345 to schedule your interview.

Application for Bluebonnet Area Commission Ministry Education Program



PERSONAL DATA

Area: Bluebonnet Area/LRGVD

(PLEASE USE DARK BLUE OR BLACK INK)

DATE

Last Name First Name MI/Maiden

Date of Birth E-mail

Local Address Phone

City, State

Zip

Cell Phone

Current Congregational Affiliation Phone

Current Church Address

City, State, Zip

Home Congregation Phone

Current Church Address

City, State, Zip

I am/have: (Check appropriate box)

An Ordained Minister Denomination Year Ordained

Entering Seminary Enrolled in Seminary: Permanent Address

(Seminary Name) Expected completion (mo./yr)

Completed Seminary: (Year) M Div Th. M MRE Min Other

Have been a Licensed/Commissioned Minister in another region: Region

I am: (Check appropriate box)

A Commissioned Minister in CCSW

Applying through the Bluebonnet Area/LRGVD for Admission into the Commission Ministry Education Program.

A United Church of Christ Minister seeking Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing.

Seeking Recognition of Ordination and Transfer of Standing from Denomination

(Please provide materials listed on Application for Recognition of Ordination and Transfer of Standing Checklist)

Seeking Ordination

Seeking Reinstatement of Standing: Unrelated to Misconduct As a result of misconduct



CCSW PERSONAL DISCLOSURE FORM

Please note: This form will become part of your permanent record in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest

Name [print legibly or type]: _____
Last Name First Name Middle/Maiden Name

Other names by which I have been known: _____

Check One

- Yes No Have you ever had your standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) *terminated* or *suspended*?
- Yes No Have you ever *resigned* or *voluntarily relinquished* your standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?
- Yes No Have you ever had your standing *reinstated* in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?
- Yes No Are you currently the subject of disciplinary proceedings in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?
- Yes No Have you ever been subject to disciplinary proceedings of another denomination or church body in which you were accused of personal misbehavior or misconduct?
- Yes No At any time in the last ten years has your driver's license been suspended or revoked?
- Yes No Have you ever been convicted or pled *nolo contendere* to a criminal charge involving sexual conduct?
- Yes No Have you ever been convicted of or pled *nolo contendere* to a felony?
- Yes No Have you ever been accused of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation) in any previous employment, as a volunteer, by criminal authorities or in any other context?

For any "YES" response above, please describe the facts and circumstances. Use additional paper and staple to this form.

Date: _____
Signature

RELEASE FOR BACKGROUND CHECK AND DISCLOSURE

I certify that the above is true and accurate and that in my judgment there are no other facts or circumstances involving me or any background related to my being entrusted with the responsibilities of ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

I further acknowledge that the information contained in this Disclosure and Release Form is true and complete and that any misrepresentation and/or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for a ministry position or for termination of a ministry position or of my standing as a minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Because I am seeking standing as a minister of the gospel in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), I authorize the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest or its agents, successors, and assigns, including any congregation who may be considering me for employment (hereafter whether jointly or severally "the Church"), to receive from any prior employer, public agency, or agency in which I was a volunteer, any information, opinion, evaluation or appraisal about me that might otherwise be confidential or private. In addition, I authorize those persons who receive my Disclosure and Release Form, and their agents, to make any inquiries to any person or entity regarding me and all statements contained in these forms; this authorization includes, but is not limited to, permission for such persons/agents to review any and all social media/Internet sites and sources of information (e.g., Facebook, Blogs, Twitter postings, MySpace, etc.) regarding me and my background/experience.

I also authorize all persons, entities, former employers, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the information provided in this form, and to comment and state opinions regarding my background and character. I authorize all persons who receive this Disclosure and Release Form and my Criminal Background Check, and their agents, to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information collected in connection with these forms with others as they in their sole discretion see fit. I hereby release all entities and individuals to whom I have provided these authorizations (including but not limited to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from any and all liability arising from their actions that I have authorized in this document and from any omissions, including liability arising from their own negligence in connection with any action authorized herein.

Further more, I recognize my responsibility to update this personal disclosure form in a timely manner should there be a change in status in or related to any of the issues named above.

Date: _____

Signature

Social Security Number: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Area Minister Certification

To the best of my knowledge, the information provided by the signatory of the Personal Disclosure Form, above, is true and correct.

Date:

Area Minister

Bluebonnet Area/LRGVD

Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest