

1 THE ORDER OF MINISTRY  
2 THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) OF MID-AMERICA

3 Adopted by RCOM: August 2006  
4 Adopted by Regional Assembly: August 2006  
5 Amended: August 2008  
6 Amended: August 2009  
7 Revised: August 2014  
8 Revised: August 2016  
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13 **Continuing Education Policy for Clergy of the Mid-America Region**

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15 *This policy applies to each minister (Commissioned and Ordained) with the exception of Inactive Retirees (R-i).  
16 Inactive Retirees are defined as: A Christian Church (DOC) Minister who no longer retains a covenantal relationship or  
17 received any financial income from a congregation or recognized ministerial entity. Any Clergy person who receives  
18 payment for ministerial services is considered "active."*

19 *This policy is in place to underscore the continuing need for all clergy persons to continue their development and  
20 understanding in pastoral ministry. Each congregation is dependent on an educated and competent minister to enrich its  
21 ministry and mission within its community and around the world.*

22 *We hope this policy also underscores the covenant that connects Clergy, Congregation and Region together in  
23 the ever-changing culture in which we live. To understand the changing nuances in ministry is an ongoing struggle that  
24 we join in together, in covenant.*

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27 **I. Continuing Education Policy**

28 Each minister (Ordained or Commissioned) in Mid-America is required to spend a minimum of 15 hours annually in  
29 continuing education, within that time allocation up to 6 hours (clock hours) of which may be spent in self-guided stud.  
30 in classroom or seminar settings, an hour shall be defined as a 50-minute contact period. Ministers may read as many  
31 books as they desire in any given year, but can only identify six (6) hours as continuing education, self-guided.

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34 **II. Boundaries Training Policy**

35 1. Each minister (Commissioned or Ordained) in the Christian Church of Mid-America is required to participate in  
36 and approved Boundaries Training. Each year the Commission, with the aid of Mid-America Center for Ministry,  
37 will offer course work to complete this requirement. Educational events sponsored by the United Church of  
38 Christ will be acceptable to the Mid-America Regional Commission on the Order of Ministry (RCOM).

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40 2. Participation in refresher training is required within each three-year period thereafter. All approved  
41 boundaries training hours may be counted as part of the annual 15-hour continuing education requirement in  
42 the year in which it is taken.

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45 **III. Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Training Policy (PR/AR)**

46 1. Each minister (Commissioned or Ordained) in the Christian Church of Mid-America is required to participate  
47 in an approved Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism training and receive the certificate for that event. Each year  
48 the Commission, with the aid of Regional Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Team, will offer course work to  
49 complete this requirement. Educational events sponsored by the United Church of Christ will be acceptable  
50 to the Mid-America Regional Commission on the Order of Ministry (RCOM).

- 51  
52 2. Participation in refresher training is required within each three-year period thereafter. All approved PR/AR  
53 training hours may be counted as part of the annual 15-hour continuing education requirement in the year  
54 in which it is taken.  
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57 **IV. Compliance**

58 1. A Continuing Education Report form will be available each year to be completed and returned by January 15  
59 of the following year to certify her/his completion of the requirements for Continuing Education . Continuing  
60 Education Unit (CEU) certificates can be submitted with the Report form when available, but ultimately  
61 compliance is on the honor system. **COMPLETING AND FILING THE CONTINUING EDUCATION REPORT FORM IS**  
62 **MANDATORY.**

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64 2. The completed Continuing Education Report forms will be reviewed each year. One email, reminding the  
65 Clergy person that the office has not received the report, will be sent to each clergy person of record following  
66 the due date. This record of receipt will be maintained in the office of "Ministry of Ministerial Support and  
67 Accountability." The completed form will also be shared with the Commission Ministry Team associated with  
68 the Regional Office of the clergy person.  
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70 When the clergy person submits their Minister's Profile for circulation through the Disciples' Search and Call  
71 process, the Regional Minister's Reference will note the annual completion of the Continuing Education process,  
72 or the lack of that activity within the reference. If the candidate is in non-compliance, the Reference form will  
73 note that lack, and suggest the candidate be engaged in a conversation by the Search Committee about the  
74 importance of education to the candidate and in the life and ministry of the congregation.  
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76 If Boundary Training and/or Pro-reconciliation/Anti-Racism Training is not up-to-date, a Regional Reference will  
77 not be written until these training units have been updated.  
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79 3. If a Minister is participating in an ambitious education program (e.g., a degree program or a certified program  
80 of Pastoral Ministry) and amasses more than 15 continuing education hours (contact hours, not academic credit  
81 hours) in a given year, he or she may carry those additional hours over into the succeeding year. Hours may only  
82 be extend over one following year.  
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84 4. In the event that personal hardship or other extenuating circumstances prevent a minister from meeting the  
85 continuing education requirements, she or he may contact the RCOM Coordinator to request an alternate plan  
86 or a waiver.  
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88 5. In most cases Continuing Education, Boundaries Training and Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism units required  
89 or accepted in other regions will be given full credit in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Mid-America.  
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91 6. Ways in which these requirements may be met include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:

- 92 -read one or more texts from a list of suggested works or use audio tapes on substantive topics
- 93 -complete a unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE)
- 94 -complete a college or graduate level course
- 95 -complete a Mid-America Center for Ministry course
- 96 -complete a seminary on-line course
- 97 -complete work in a Doctor of Ministry program
- 98 -attend a seminary-sponsored Minister's Week
- 99 -attend resource groups at a General or Regional assembly
- 100 -attend a lecture series (as offered at Drury, Culver-Stockton and elsewhere)
- 101 -attend a professional training seminar (as offered by Alban Institute, Youth Specialties and others)
- 102 -participate in spiritual discipline retreats

103 -prepare for and teach a higher education/continuing education course  
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105 7. In support of ministers and their efforts to meet these requirements the Christian Church of Mid-America will  
106 collaborate with educational institutions to:

107 -develop and publish reading lists suitable for helping ministers continue their professional and spiritual  
108 growth

109 -maintain and publish timely notices of continuing education opportunities

110 -advocate for ministers with congregations to allow time and money for ministers' continuing education

111 -develop continuing education/professional development opportunities within clergy clusters (this could  
112 be an especially good setting for enhancing practical skills and learning how others approach issues and  
113 solve problems in congregational life)

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115 8. The Commission on the Order of Ministry may find it necessary to maintain a standing Committee on  
116 Continuing Education to oversee such things as:

117 -developing and updating necessary procedures

118 -forming the necessary partnerships with Regions, their Regional Commissions and with MCM and  
119 Seminaries and other institutions within the Region and in adjacent Regions to assist ministers in  
120 meeting their continuing education needs

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123 This document goes into affect on January 1, 2017.