POLICY for CONGREGATIONS REQUESTING AFFILIATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN OREGON & SW IDAHO
November 6, 2004
Amended March 9, 2024

These guidelines are established by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon & SW Idaho to provide a process for congregations who wish to affiliate with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada through the Oregon/SW Idaho region. The congregation applying for affiliation may be one that is currently or formerly related to another denomination, a congregation previously unrelated to any denomination, or a newly formed congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The congregation must be confessing Jesus Christ as Savior, located within the boundaries of the Region, and willing to participate fully in a manner consistent with the operating principles and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These guidelines may be amended as needed at a future date by the regional board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon & SW Idaho or the Executive Committee thereof.

Step 1: Notification

a) An official "Letter of intent" is sent from the congregation's governing body to the Regional Minister. The Letter of intent expresses the congregation's desire to affiliate formally with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

b) The congregation receives an Application for Affiliation form and returns the completed form to the regional office within twelve weeks. The application will include estimates of the congregation's average worship attendance, membership and financial stewardship.

c) The congregation notifies its current denomination, if any, of its intention to pursue affiliation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Step 2: Consultation

a) An initial meeting between the Regional Minister and congregational leaders in which the region provides details about the affiliation process.

b) Sharing of mutual expectations between the congregation and the regional church.

c) A mutual assessment of theological compatibility between the congregation and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This will include congregational acceptance of the good confession (recognizing faith in Christ as Savior), the preamble to Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the theological diversity and ecumenism characteristic of Disciples witness.

d) Congregational study of Disciples of Christ practices and history.

e) Review of legal aspects for congregational ministry:
    1) Recording of Employee Identification Number

2) Insurance coverage related to property, liability, workers compensation and unemployment.
3) Filing of Articles of Incorporation with Secretary of State;
4) Constitution and Bylaws;
5) Requirements for non-profit organizations in the state of Oregon;
6) Verification or establishment of non-profit status;
7) Review of title if congregation owns property;
8) Congregation discloses any pertinent legal issues to the Regional Minister.

f) Review of financial practices:
1) Distinction between operating and designated funds;
2) Payroll and withholding issues;
3) Opening of checking and savings accounts;
4) Records and acknowledgment of contributions;
5) Regular review of finances by governing body of congregation;
6) Discussion regarding the ministries of Disciples Mission Fund, Special Day offerings, Church Finance Council, Disciples Church Extension Fund and Christian Church Foundation.
7) Congregation discloses its financial circumstances, including all contractual obligations, to Regional Minister.

g) A timetable for decision making is approved, including agreement upon the minimum percentages necessary for approval and approximate schedule for congregational and Regional Board votes.

Step 3: Nurturing

a) The Nurturing Phase shall last for at least one year, during which the congregation may request to be considered as a congregation in formation.

b) The Congregation agrees to participate with local, regional and general Disciples of Christ ministries and to work with the regional office in addressing pastoral transitions and other situations as needed.

c) The congregation learns about specific regional and general church ministries. This may include field trips to the regional office, National Benevolent Association facilities, Northwest Christian College, other Disciples congregations, and regional church events.

d) Members of the Regional Board or their designees will attend worship and fellowship events with the applicant congregation.

e) Disciples of Christ polity and financial support of Disciples mission causes are established as normal practices for the congregation.

f) The congregation approves any necessary revision to their congregational bylaws to achieve consistency with the Design of the Christian Church.

g) The congregation adopts a mission statement consistent with the Design of the Christian Church. An outreach plan is developed by the congregation in concert with the Regional Minister.

h) The question of ministerial standing is discussed between both parties, including the regional Commission on Ministry if appropriate.

Step 4: Reception and Chartering

a) Members of Congregation meet with the New Church Committee and/or Regional Board representatives to review the completion Steps 1, 2 and 3.
b) The Executive Committee of the Regional Board reviews the application and hears comments from the Regional Minister. The Executive Committee will then recommend to a) approve affiliation; b) give additional time for specific needs to be met; or 3) decline the application. The recommendation of the Executive Committee will be reported to the next meeting of the Regional Board.
c) If recommended by the Executive Committee, the Regional Board will then vote on receiving the congregation.
d) If approved for affiliation as a recognized congregation, the congregation is chartered and holds a service of Covenanting and Celebration with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
e) The newly affiliated congregation is officially recognized at the next Regional Assembly.
f) The newly affiliated congregation will be listed in the next Yearbook and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

Special Provision for Congregations in Formation

If a congregation in formation decides to end the affiliation process or to end its visible ministry, and if that congregation has received equipment & supplies or money to purchase equipment & supplies from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) during its formation period, the congregation is expected to return such equipment and supplies to the region.

Adopted by the Regional Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon & SW Idaho.

Date: _____

Signed: _____