

**BYLAWS
COVENANT ASSOCIATION
MICHIGAN CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

The member local churches and authorized ministers of the Covenant Association hereby adopt these Bylaws for the purpose of implementing the Constitution of the Association and for declaring the will of the member local churches and authorized ministers for the government of the Association.

ARTICLE I - OFFICERS AND DUTIES

The officers of the Association shall be Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Registrar, Secretary and Treasurer. The candidates for officers shall be alternated between authorized ministers and laity, women and men, socio-economic and cultural diversities, maintaining a balance among them, and representing as many local congregations as possible. They shall be responsible for developing a process of setting goals for the Association to be reviewed each year.

- (A) Moderator. The Moderator shall perform those duties usually assigned to a presiding officer. The Moderator shall sign all legal and official documents on behalf of the Association.
- (B) Vice-Moderator. The Vice-Moderator shall act in the absence of the Moderator. He/she shall share in the responsibility in planning for the Association.
- (C) Secretary. The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of the proceedings of the Association and the Executive Team.
- (D) Treasurer. The Treasurer shall:
 - (1) receive all contributed monies;
 - (2) make timely payments as are authorized by the Association and/or the Executive Team;
 - (3) pay such Team expenditures as are budgeted and approved by the respective Teams;
 - (4) serve as a member of the Stewardship Education and Finance Team;
 - (5) give a financial report at each meeting of the Executive Team;
 - (6) give an annual financial report to the Association;
 - (7) prepare all financial records to be made available for an annual audit.
 - (8) Send quarterly statements to the churches.
- (E) Registrar. The Registrar shall:
 - (1) be a voting member of the Church and Ministry Team.
 - (2) maintain the official roll of the member local churches and authorized ministers of the Association holding standing, and apprise the Michigan Conference Registrar.
 - (3) report regularly to the Association, the Executive Team and the Church and Ministry Team of the Association all changes relative to the standing of authorized ministers and local churches;
 - (4) report the names of local churches and authorized ministers to the Michigan Conference Registrar;
 - (5) sign all certificates of authorized ministers' standing, and issue letters transferring the standing of ordained and commissioned ministers or local churches to another

- association;
- (6) issue certificates of ordination, installation, commissioning and recognition to the appropriate person;
 - (7) keep a record of students under the care of the Association (including advisors);
 - (8) act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, the Michigan Conference, and the Covenant Association;
 - (9) be responsible for sending notice to all churches inviting and encouraging them to attend installation and commissioning services, services of recognition, observances of the rite of ordination, and to participate in ecclesiastical councils.
- (F) Executive Team:
1. The Executive Team shall be made up of the officers, all team chairpersons and advocates of the Association.
 2. The Executive Officers shall meet as needed between meetings of the Executive Team, and shall meet in person or by electronic methods..
 3. The Executive Officers have the authority to act on behalf of the Executive Team and the Association; e.g. in approving recommendations from the Church and Ministry Team for installations and ordinations.
 4. All actions of the Executive Officers shall be recorded in minutes and reported to the Executive Team at its next meeting.

ARTICLE II - THE ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTER

In the calling of an Associate Conference Minister to be assigned to serve the Covenant Association, representatives from the Covenant Association shall be recommended to the Board of Directors of the Michigan Conference by the Executive Team to serve on the Search and Call Team, and when the Search and Call Team is prepared to make a final recommendation, the Association shall be given the opportunity to join in affirming the Search and Call Team's recommendation. The duties of the Associate Conference Minister are those assigned by the Conference Minister and the Board of Directors, and shall include signing certificates for ministerial ordinations and installations, and standing for local churches. The Associate Conference Minister shall report annually to the Association.

The Associate Conference Minister, as a representative of the Conference, is the administrative officer and minister, as well as the resident legal agent, of the Association.

ARTICLE III – MINISTRY TEAMS AND ADVOCATES

DEFINITIONS:

The Officers shall be defined as the aforementioned elected officers of the Association. The Executive Team shall consist of the elected officers, the chairperson of the elected Ministry Team(s) or their representative, and the elected Advocates, as well as representatives of such other Association organizations as may from time to time be determined by the Executive Team.

A Ministry Team shall be defined as a group of persons, all of whom are elected by the association for specific terms of office.

An Advocate shall be an individual elected by the Association for a specific term of office who shall have responsibility for the oversight of the work of a specific portfolio in ministry, such as Christian Education, Justice Ministries, Higher Education, Stewardship Education and Nominating. The Advocate may co-opt as many persons as necessary or as show interest to carry out the work of this Advocacy Task Group.

STANDING MINISTRY TEAMS

There shall be the following standing ministry team: Church and Ministry. The Executive Team may appoint such other teams as it may deem essential to the life of the Association.

The Church and Ministry Team shall elect its chairperson from among its members, alternating between laity and authorized ministers, when possible. The team shall consist of a minimum of eleven persons. A term shall be for two years, with the possibility of three consecutive terms. Persons serving on Church and Ministry shall reflect an equitable distribution between authorized ministers and laity, women and men, socio-economic and cultural diversities, and representing as many local churches as possible. Persons who find they cannot serve shall submit their resignation to the chairperson of their Team, who shall report the resignation to the Council.

ADVOCATES

There shall be the following Advocates: Christian Education and Youth Ministries; Justice Ministries; Higher Education; Stewardship Education and Nominating. The Executive Team may appoint such other Advocates, as it may deem essential to the life of the Association.

The Advocates sit on the Executive Team and each shall represent the interests of his/her area.

When necessary, additional persons may be appointed by the Executive Team to serve with an Advocate to form a ministry team. These teams may be disbanded after particular projects or efforts have been completed.

ARTICLE IV - RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY TEAM AND ADVOCATES

(A) **CHURCH AND MINISTRY**. The Church and Ministry Team shall:

- (1) Oversee all matters pertaining to the authorization of ministry, including both ministers and churches;

- (2) develop procedures as guided by the current edition of the UCC MANUAL ON THE MINISTRY¹, hereinafter referred to as MOM, and the Ministry Issues Pronouncement and suggested operational procedures, hereinafter referred to as MIP.
- (3) receive and examine the credentials of local churches applying for membership in the Association and of persons seeking Ordained Minister Standing, Ordained Minister Partner Standing, Privilege of Call or Dual Standing using the criteria set forth in MOM and MIP, and recommend to the Executive Team those deemed qualified;
- (4) receive the request of a local church on behalf of a person who desires status as a Student in Care, Licensed Minister or Commissioned Minister and recommend to the Executive Team that such status be granted to those who qualify using the criteria set forth in MOM and MIP;
- (5) receive the request of a local church for the ordination of one of its members following the procedures outlined in MOM and MIP, and recommend to the Executive Team the calling of an Ecclesiastical Council for those deemed qualified. If the candidate is approved by the Ecclesiastical Council, the Team will assist in setting the time, place and Order of Service of Ordination. A quorum at the Ecclesiastical Council shall be 20% of constituent local churches as represented by lay delegates and 10% of authorized ministerial delegates;
- (6) receive the request of a local church of the Association to share in an Installation Service for an Ordained Minister or a Recognition Service for a Licensed Minister at a time and in a manner mutually agreed upon by the Team and the local church following the procedures outlined in MOM and MIP. Should an institution which has called an ordained or commissioned minister to a recognized specialized ministry request such a service, the Team will help provide for such an Installation;
- (7) receive the requests for Leave of Absence from Ordained or Commissioned Ministers who intend to leave the ministry for which they were authorized and who desire to maintain standing. The Team shall present such requests to the Executive Team with the Team's recommendation;
- (8) provide for an annual review of the status of Students in Care and all persons holding ministerial standing in the Association and shall recommend any appropriate change in status to the Executive Team;
- (9) relate to retired ordained ministers who maintain standing in this Association and others who reside in the Association area but have their standing elsewhere;
- (10) be available upon request to counsel and advise local churches and persons holding standing in the Association concerning conflict situations among laity and relationships between local congregations and authorized ministers. If the matter involves a Church and Ministry Team member or a local church in which a Team member holds membership, the Team member of the church involved will be excused from the Team while the discussion of this particular issue is investigated, deliberated or action is taken. If deemed advisable, the Team shall recommend appropriate action as recommended by the MOM and MIP to the Executive Team;
- (11) be responsible for distribution of the Scholarship/Emergency/Assessment Fund of

¹. THE MANUAL ON THE MINISTRY, is published by the United Church of Christ for the guidance of committees on Church and Ministry in the various Associations and Conferences of the United Church of Christ.. It is the recognized document for procedures regarding standing in the denomination.

the Association.

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(B) CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRIES. This Advocacy Team,, in conjunction with the Executive Team shall:

- (1) assist local churches in planning, implementing and evaluating Christian Education for all ages;
- (2) seek to equip and support local churches in providing ministries with children, youth and adults through Association learning opportunities;
- (3) publicize and encourage participation in education opportunities provided by Partners in Education (PIE), the Conference and ecumenical organizations.

(C) JUSTICE MINISTRIES. This Advocacy Team, in conjunction with the Executive Team shall:

- (1) encourage local churches to address the ethical and justice issues of the time, suggesting ways in which churches can minister with the poor and oppressed of local and global communities in tangible ways;
- (2) seek to have each local church address the forms of racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia that exist within the church, seeking equality and justice within society;
- (3) encourage all Christians to be actively involved in the political process, lifting up ways in which church members can effectively witness to ethical and justice issues;
- (4) have the responsibility to keep before the Association the needs of the benevolent and welfare institutions within the bounds of the Association and Conference, encouraging the churches to adequately support these institutions;
- (5) provide financial grants to groups and ministries which reflect just and humanitarian objectives and goals.

(D) HIGHER EDUCATION. This Advocacy Team, in conjunction with the Executive Team shall:

- (1) interpret and further the work of campus ministry, encouraging churches to support campus ministry;
- (2) encourage support of the UCC college (Olivet) and seminaries (CUE - Chicago, United and Eden) to which the Michigan Conference is requested to respond;
- (3) annually recommend to the Association funding for campus ministry.

(E) STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION. This Advocacy Team in conjunction with the Executive Team shall:

- (1) design and implement a process of Stewardship Education and Finance interpretation;
- (2) prepare an annual spending plan for mission to be submitted to the Executive team for adoption at a designated Association meeting. The Association Treasurer will assist in preparing the annual spending plan;
- (3) encourage churches in their giving commitment to Our Church's Wider Mission (O.C.W.M.) for the support of the Michigan Conference and the national and world-wide church;
- (4) recommend to the Association a per capita amount for carrying out the work of the Association; and submit a request to each local church for per capita amount

based on the number of members reported the previous year;

- (F) NOMINATING. This Advocacy Team, in conjunction with the Executive Team shall:
- (1) prepare the slate for all Association officers, Ministry Teams, Advocates, and representative(s) to the Michigan Conference Board of Directors;
 - (2) obtain the consent of the nominee prior to placing that name in nomination for election at a designated Association meeting;

ARTICLE VII - APPOINTMENTS

- (A) An Association Meeting Planning Team shall be appointed by the Executive Team to plan any Association meetings. Ecclesiastical Councils need not require the Planning Team, but will follow procedures for a duly called Ecclesiastical Council.
- (B) The Executive Team shall appoint representatives to teams and task forces as the need arises or in response to a request for Association participation by the Conference Board of Directors, a Conference commission, committee or task force. The Association representatives shall report regularly to the Association and the Executive Team.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

A duly called meeting with a majority vote of those present and voting may amend these Bylaws of the Covenant Association. The proposed amendment shall:

be presented to the Association at the last previous regularly called meeting of the Association;
or,

be recommended to the Association by the Executive Team. Notification of said proposed amendment must be mailed to each local church and authorized minister of the Association not less than thirty days prior to the meeting at which action on the proposed amendment is to be taken.

ARTICLE IX - EFFECTIVE DATE

These By-laws shall be effective May 3, 1987. Revised effective November 5, 1995; second revision May 6, 2001; third revision November 15, 2006.

These By-laws shall be effective upon ratification at the Spring Meeting of the Association on April 28, 2007.