

CONSTITUTION
COVENANT ASSOCIATION
MICHIGAN CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

PREAMBLE

In the United Church of Christ the local churches, the associations, and the conferences are autonomous bodies, modifiable only by their own actions; nevertheless, each body has a God-given responsibility to be in covenantal relationship with all the local churches, authorized ministers, and members of the United Church of Christ. The Covenant Association is comprised of those local churches and authorized ministers within the established boundaries of the Association. Associations and conferences are organized on a territorial basis to perform functions in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

WE, THE LOCAL CHURCHES AND AUTHORIZED MINISTERS OF THE COVENANT ASSOCIATION, FORM A COVENANT AMONG OURSELVES, FOR MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS AND TO COLLABORATE IN MINISTRY TOGETHER. WE ADOPT THIS CONSTITUTION OF THE COVENANT ASSOCIATION OF THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Association shall be the Covenant Association of the Michigan Conference, United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II - COVENANT

We covenant to acknowledge God's claim upon our lives and the life and work of the Covenant Association. We seek through this covenantal relationship to share common ministry, vision and support with authorized ministers and local churches. We affirm our faith in the living God, Eternal Spirit, Creator and Sustainer, who is revealed in the teachings, the person, and the work of Jesus as the Christ. We covenant to strengthen the ties of faith and community that bind the local churches together as we engage in our common ministry.

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

We acknowledge that God has called all of us to ministry. Therefore, the purposes and functions of the Covenant Association include, but are not confined to, prayerfully considering the following:

- (A) to enable God's people to serve in God's work through the various communities of faith so that we may witness to our faith; thereby more fully becoming the body of Christ's community at work in the world;
- (B) to do mission work through propagating the faith, growing spiritually, encouraging one

another to address prophetically the social and ethical issues of the time and to respond to human need wherever it is encountered;

- (C) to foster among local churches and authorized ministers a spirit of unity so that we may more effectively witness to our faith and serve God;
- (D) to concern ourselves with the welfare of all our local churches, promoting community among local churches and authorized ministers and seeking to contribute to the effectiveness of our common tasks;
- (E) to seek to be of assistance to local churches and authorized ministers of the Association;
- (F) to share inspiration, vision, leadership and assistance with all local churches in or entering transition;
- (G) to share encouragement, guidance, and support for local churches being organized;
- (H) to receive and act upon business and opportunities for doing ministry that are referred by local churches and authorized ministers, initiating such action as is essential to our own life and well-being;
- (I) to determine, authorize and certify the standing of authorized ministers and local churches of the United Church of Christ within the established boundaries of the Association;
- (J) to receive under care, students whose intent is to be authorized ministers, extending them friendship, counsel, and assistance during their preparation for authorization;
- (K) to make provision for installation of ordained clergy, commissioning of commissioned ministers, and recognition of licensed ministers in cooperation with the calling body to which the authorized minister has been called;
- (L) to provide support, and take appropriate action for those who make application for Dual Standing, Privilege of Call, and Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing;
- (M) to become co-laborers with other associations, the Michigan Conference, and the Covenanted, Associated, and Affiliated Ministries, of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

- (A) The membership of the Covenant Association includes all local churches and authorized ministers affiliated with the United Church of Christ within the established boundaries of the Association.

- (B) We accept in fellowship those Congregational churches, commonly referred to as Schedule I Churches, who actively participate in the life and work of the Association.
- (C) We will welcome into membership those local churches and authorized ministers who are recommended by the Church and Ministry Team and are approved by vote of the Association in an Ecclesiastical Council.
- (D) Established boundaries of the Association may be changed and the local churches' standing may be transferred to another association through consultation of the local church and the approval of both associations and the conference.

ARTICLE V - PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBER LOCAL CHURCHES

- (A) Member local churches have a responsibility not only to participate through their elected or appointed delegates but also to provide financial support to do mission with the Covenant Association.
- (B) Member local churches have a responsibility to work through procedures recommended by the United Church of Christ in the process of calling and dismissing a pastor and notifying the registrar of any changes in pastoral relationships.
- (C) Member local churches have a responsibility to give not only moral and spiritual support to their pastoral leadership but also to provide adequate salary, housing, and benefits with reference to the guidelines provided by the Michigan Conference.
- (D) Member local churches have a responsibility to enter into dialogue with the Associate Conference Minister and/or the Church and Ministry Team on issues that arise that threaten the relationship between the local church and authorized ministers and/or Association.
- (E) Member local churches are encouraged to take seriously actions, decisions and advice emanating from the General Synod, the Michigan Conference and the Covenant Association, and if it is deemed essential, to enter into conversations relative to specific issues.

ARTICLE VI - ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

- (A) The Covenant Association shall have two meetings annually for the purpose of education, spiritual growth, inspiration and the conducting of Association business. The meetings shall be convened at such a time and place as determined by the Association or the Executive Team. The spring meeting shall be designated as the Annual Meeting, at which time officers will be elected and installed. At the fall meeting of the Covenant Association, the spending plan for mission for the ensuing year shall be adopted. Ecclesiastical Council meetings of the Association are additional meetings called as needed by the Executive Team at the request of the Church and Ministry Team and may be held in conjunction with regularly called meetings of the Association.

- (B) Each local church shall be entitled to up to three lay delegates. If three delegates serve, one must be under the age of 21 years at the time of election; otherwise only two delegates are permitted.
- (C) All authorized ministers holding standing are delegates with voice and vote.
- (D) The Associate Conference Minister(s) designated to work with the Association shall have voice *in* all Association and Executive Team meetings.
- (E) Special meetings may be called by the Executive Team or at the request of 10 local churches or twenty-five (25) authorized ministers for consideration of items specified in the call.
- (F) A quorum for all Association meetings (including Ecclesiastical Council meetings) shall be 20% of local churches and 10% of authorized ministers.
- (G) The Association, in its meetings, shall be guided by the Robert's Rules of Order, current edition.
- (H) The fiscal year of the Association shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE VII - INCORPORATION AND POLITY

- (A) The Association shall be incorporated as the Covenant Association of the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ, Inc., a Michigan non-profit corporation. This Constitution shall be included in the Articles of Incorporation. The Association shall have all powers and authority granted by law to such corporations, unless modified or limited by this Constitution and the Constitution of the United Church of Christ. The officers of the Association shall file Articles of Incorporation and maintain the Association's non-profit corporate status. In the event of dissolution, all assets and records of the Association shall become the property of the Michigan Conference, UCC.
- (B) The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action; nevertheless, each local church has responsibility to and for all the member *local* churches, authorized ministers, and members within the Association.
- (C) The Association is autonomous and is modifiable only by its own action; nevertheless, the Association has a responsibility to and for all the member local churches and the Michigan Conference. Local churches and the Conference are entitled to make recommendations and requests of the Association, and the Association is entitled to make recommendations and requests of the local churches and the Conference and together by mutual consent enter into covenants.

ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS

- (A) The officers of the Association serve as the Executive Committee and shall be Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Registrar, Secretary and Treasurer who shall exercise such authority and duties as the Association's Bylaws may provide. The Associate Conference Minister serves the Executive Team and the Association in an ex officio capacity.
- (B) Officers shall not serve more than two consecutive terms of two years in the same office except the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, who shall serve one term of two years only. It is recommended that the Vice-Moderator be considered for Moderator.
- (C) Officers shall be elected and installed at the Spring Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE IX - EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Executive Team shall consist of all officers, all ministry team chairpersons and/or Advocates.—These persons shall have voice and vote at Association meetings. The Executive Team may, at its discretion and with authorization by the Association, include representatives of Association groups (i.e. UCC Women of Michigan Covenant North and Covenant South) as voting members of the Executive Team.

The Officers and Ministry Team Advocates, of the Association shall be elected for a period of two years in such a way that half are elected each year and represent an equitable distribution between authorized ministers and laity, women and men, socio-economic and cultural diversities, and representing as many local congregations as possible. The Executive Team shall:

- (A) meet regularly and have oversight of the work of the Association between stated meetings. It shall receive reports from officers, Advocacy Task Groups, Advocates and the Associate Conference Minister designated to work with the Association. A quorum shall consist of a majority of its elected members;
- (B) be responsible for implementing programs approved by the Association and Michigan Conference, and for insuring the initiation and development of new programs;
- (C) receive program and project suggestions from various task groups, teams, advocates, local churches, laity and authorized ministers and may refer them to the appropriate entity for consideration;
- (D) request that the Stewardship Education Advocacy Task Group, in conjunction with the Treasurer prepare an annual spending plan for mission to be adopted, and a per capita figure to be requested of each local church;
- (E) receive and act upon reports of the Nominating Task Group to make such appointments as necessary to fill vacancies on the Executive Team and Council Teams;

- (F) be the corporate Board of Directors of the Association and manage and administer its business and property, subject to this Constitution, the Bylaws, and the direction of the Association in meeting.

ARTICLE X - BYLAWS

Bylaws shall be established by the Association in meeting to implement this Constitution.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

A duly called meeting with a two-thirds vote of those present and voting may amend this Constitution of the Covenant Association. The proposed amendment shall:

- (A) be presented to the Association at the last previous regularly called meeting of the Association, or,
- (B) be recommended to the Association by the Executive Team. Notification of said proposed amendment shall be mailed to each local church and authorized minister of the Association not less than thirty days prior to the meeting at which time action on the proposed constitutional amendment is to be taken.

ARTICLE XII - EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitution shall be effective April 17, 1988

Revised on November 5, 1995; second revision May 6, 2001; third revision November 15, 2006

This Constitution shall be effective upon ratification at the Spring Meeting of the Association on April 28, 2007.