

1 **CONSTITUTION**

2 **Southeast Wisconsin Association**

3 **United Church of Christ**

4 (Revised May 25, 2017)
5

6 **PREAMBLE**

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8 The Southeast Wisconsin Association adopts and affirms these provisions of the Constitution of
9 The United Church of Christ:

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11 The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son
12 of God and the Savior of the world. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who
13 share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures and to the
14 presence and power of the Holy Spirit to prosper its creative and redemptive work
15 in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the
16 ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It
17 affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its
18 own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of
19 heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice
20 prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism
21 and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. (2)
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24 **PROVISIONS**

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26 A. The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given
27 responsibility for this Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church
28 of Christ has a God-given responsibility for the well being and needs and aspiration
29 of its Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ,
30 the Head of the Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience
31 and responsibility. (17)
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33 B. The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action.
34 Nothing in this Constitution shall destroy or limit the right of each Local Church to
35 continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as giving to the
36 Wisconsin Conference or to this Association the power to abridge or impair the
37 autonomy of any Local Church in the management of its own affairs, which include,
38 but are not limited to, the rights to retain or adopt its own methods of organization,
39 worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its own

40 constitution and by-laws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to
41 admit members in its own way and to provide for their discipline or dismissal; to call
42 or dismiss its pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire,
43 own, manage and dispose of property and funds; to control its own benevolences, to
44 withdraw by its own decision from the United Church of Christ at any time, without
45 forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or personal property owned by it. (18)
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- 47 C. Actions by, decisions and advice emanating from the General Synod, a Conference or
48 an Association should be held in the highest regard by every Local Church.
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51 **ARTICLE I – NAME**

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53 The name of this association is the Southeast Wisconsin Association of the United Church of Christ.
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56 **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

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58 A. The Southeast Association, as part of and in concert with the Wisconsin Conference
59 of the United Church of Christ, exists to bear witness to and share the love of God in
60 Jesus Christ for us and for the world by working to:
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62 1. Support and stretch our churches in their ministries and mission;
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64 2. Develop and support members in discernment, spiritual grounding, and
65 theological reflection;
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67 3. Confront, comfort and provide resources for churches in crisis or conflict;
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69 4. Support, establish and develop congregations that reflect the rich diversity of
70 God's people;
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72 5. Sustain and extend ecumenical partnerships in Wisconsin and abroad;
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74 6. Act together for justice, peace and healing in and beyond the church; and
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76 7. Support the mission of the United Church of Christ beyond Wisconsin with
77 human and financial resources and prayers.
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79 B. This Association, to embody and to promote mutual Christian living, giving and
80 caring among and beyond our churches and members, and efficiency at our common
81 tasks:
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83 1. Supports the welfare of all its churches and ministers. (159)

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2. Seeks to help those that are undergoing unusual difficulties. (160)
3. Receives, through its Associate Conference Minister, Church & Ministry Team, and/or Administrative Team, reviews and responds to requests of, or reports of, Local Churches in difficulty, and offers advice and assistance to address and resolve the issue.
4. Opens to overtures from members of Local Churches, and will refer such concerns to an appropriate team, officer or consultant for review and whatever advice and action it may offer.

C. Because this Association is affiliated with the General Synod of the United Church of Christ through the Wisconsin Conference, it:

1. Seeks, with divine guidance, to develop among Local Churches and ministers an understanding of and commitment to the mission of the United Church of Christ at home and abroad through our church's wider mission.
2. Receives and acts on business referred to it by its member Churches and ministers, by the Wisconsin Conference, by the General Synod, and by ecumenical bodies. (169)

D. This Association determines qualifications for, confers, certifies, and terminates ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ, (38, 163, 164) and accordingly:

1. Receives under its care students for ministry, extending them counsel and assistance during their academic preparation. (26, 101-4, 163)
2. Commissions ministers. (27, 28, 144-150)
3. Licenses ministers. (29, 105-108, 164)
4. Ordains ministers. (20-25, 109-115, 164)
5. Installs and recognizes ordained ministers. (164)

E. This Association determines qualifications for, confers, certifies, and terminates the standing of United Church of Christ congregations in its area, and:

1. Offers encouragement, guidance and assistance in the organization of new churches. (161)
2. Receives qualified Local Churches into the United Church of Christ.(162)

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

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- A. Ministers in Full Standing
 - 1. All Ordained Ministers registered with the United Church of Christ through this Association have full standing as members of this Association.
 - a. An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ engaged in a church vocation other than parish ministry may hold standing in this Association only while residing within its area. (110)
 - b. An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ engaged in a ministry requiring prolonged absence from the United States, or one that does not permit a fixed residence, may hold standing in this Association. (111)
 - c. An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ who withdraws from active service in ordained ministry prior to retirement may apply to this Association for a leave of absence for one year. Except in special cases, such leaves of absence shall not be granted for more than five years in succession. (112)
 - d. An ordained minister of the United Church of Christ who retires from active service by reason of age or disability may retain standing in this Association. (113)
 - 2. An ordained minister of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, as an Ordained Ministerial Partner, shall have full standing in this Association while serving as a pastor of a Local Church in the Association. (36)
 - 3. The transfer of ministerial standing from this Association to another into which the minister has moved shall not require undue formality or delay, so that in normal instances it will be routine procedure. (109)
 - 4. A minister's standing shall be terminated at that person's own request, or by action of the Church and Ministry Team with the right of appeal to the Administrative Team, after the minister has:
 - a. Moved and resides beyond the bounds of this Association for three or more years, without having good reason for continuing standing or requesting transfer to another Association.
 - b. Entered into the service of another denomination before retirement by reason of age or disability.
 - c. Become inactive in ministry.

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- d. Had standing terminated by disciplinary action as the result of a fitness for ministry review. (155)
- e. A minister whose standing is censured, suspended, or terminated as a result of a fitness review has fifteen days following imposition of the discipline to submit a written appeal to the Administrative Team. The process to be followed at such appeal shall be guided by the recommendations contained in the UCC Manual on Ministry. During the deliberation phase of such an appeal, members of the Church and Ministry Team and the person filing the appeal shall be dismissed and shall not participate in the determination of the appeal by the Administrative Team.

B. Ministers with Dual Standing

- 1. An ordained minister of another denomination who wishes to retain present denominational standing while serving as pastor of a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, or a yoked charge or a federated church, one part of which is affiliated with the United Church of Christ, within the area of this Association, may apply to this Association and become a ministerial member with limited standing for the duration of that pastorate, (143) during which time that minister:
 - a. Has the privileges of full ministerial membership, except shall have no vote on matters affecting the standing of ministers or Local Churches;
 - b. May not be an officer of this Association or a delegate to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, but may be a member of an Association Team.

C. Other Types of Ministerial Standing

1. Commissioned Ministers

On recommendation of the Church & Ministry Team, following affirmation of an Ecclesiastical Council, the Association may grant the status of Commissioned Minister to an unordained person for a specific, church related service. (144-150)

- a. A certificate designating the Commissioned Minister is issued, bearing the signatures of the Associate Conference Minister and the President of the United Church of Christ. (146)
- b. A Commissioned Minister is listed separately on the rolls of the Association and is not an Ordained Ministerial member. (147)
- c. A Commissioned Minister who takes up some other employment must resign the commission or apply to the Association for a leave of absence. Such leave of absence is granted for one year at a time, but not for more than three consecutive years. (150)

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2. Licensed Ministers

On approval of the Church & Ministry Team, the Association may grant a license to preach, teach, administer the Sacraments, and/or conduct pastoral and administrative duties for service in a designated church, or for service in the Association, for a period of one year, subject to annual renewal. A Licensed Minister is listed separately on the rolls of the Association, and is not an Ordained Ministerial member. (151-154)

D. Churches in Full Standing

1. All Local Churches registered with the United Church of Christ through this Association are members of this Association in full standing.
2. When a Local Church seeks standing in this Association, the Church & Ministry Team will receive, review and recommend approval or disapproval of that application to the Administrative Team, which will then recommend action on that application by an Ecclesiastical Council of Association clergy and delegates from member Churches; if approved by the Ecclesiastical Council, the application will be approved or disapproved by an Association meeting.
3. The standing of a Local Church of this Association may be terminated by action of this Association at the request of that Local Church, or by the Church & Ministry Team, when that Local Church gives evidence that it is no longer in sympathy with the purposes and does not support the mission of the Association, the Wisconsin Conference, and the United Church of Christ.

E. Voting Members of the Association

1. Ordained ministers, licensed ministers, and commissioned ministers holding standing.
2. Ordained ministers holding limited standing.
3. Directors of Christian Education who have been certified as specialists in church education, both by the United Church of Christ through its appropriate agency and by the Association through the Church & Ministry Team.
4. Two lay delegates from each Local Church of the Association, plus one additional delegate for each 250 members beyond the first 500 members.
5. Elected officers and members of Association Teams.

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ARTICLE IV- MEETINGS

- A. An Annual Meeting of the Association shall be held within the first five months of the calendar year. Officers will be elected at the Annual Meeting.
- B. Special meetings may be called by the Administrative Team or at the request of five churches or five ordained ministers of the Association, for consideration of the items specified in the call to the meeting.
- C. The meeting place of the Annual Meeting and any special meeting shall be determined by the Association or the Administrative Team.
- D. All motions, resolutions, petitions and overtures shall be adopted by a majority affirmative vote of those present and voting, with the exception of an overture addressed to the General Synod, which requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting.
- E. The Association will follow the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.
- F. A Quorum for an Association Meeting is one-third of the active ministerial members and one-third of the constituent churches represented by delegates. A Quorum for an Ecclesiastical Council is the ministerial members and lay delegates of the Association who are present at that Council.
- G. The Association may divide into districts for more effective implementation of its mission.
- H. The Fiscal Year of this Association shall be the calendar year.

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ARTICLE V- ORGANIZATION

- A. Officers
 - 1. The officers of this Association are:
 - a. Moderator, elected in even numbered years for one term of two years. The office of Moderator shall alternate between clergy and lay member.
 - b. Vice-Moderator, elected in even numbered years for one term of two years. The office of Vice-Moderator shall alternate between lay member and clergy, opposite to the office of Moderator.
 - c. Secretary, elected in odd numbered years for a term of two years.

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d. Financial Secretary, elected in odd numbered years for a term of two years.

2. The duties of these officers are as follows:

- a. The Moderator presides at the meetings of the Association and chairs the Administrative Team.
- b. The Vice-Moderator assists the Moderator in administration, represents the Moderator when requested, and chairs the Annual Meeting Planning Team.
- c. If a vacancy occurs in the office of Moderator, the Vice-Moderator assumes all the rights and duties of the Moderator until the next meeting of the Association, when the Association shall elect a Moderator to fill the unexpired term.
- d. The Secretary keeps accurate and permanent record of the Minutes of the Association and the Administrative Team, and performs other duties assigned by the Administrative Team.
- e. The Financial Secretary requests disbursement of the Southeast Wisconsin Association United Church of Christ monies by the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ per the direction of the Administrative Team Moderator, Administrative Team action, Administrative Team Chairs, Designated Team Chairs, or approved budgeted line items including but not limited to ecumenical line items. Works with the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ business office staff regarding all financial matters and financial reporting for the Southeast WI Association UCC. Regularly presents financial reports to the Administrative Team. Prepares the annual budget along with input for the Administrative Team, Association Teams and budget committee. At the annual Association Meeting presents the Association's financial reports and proposed budget. Performs other duties as assigned by the Administrative Team.

B. Associate Conference Minister

- 1. The Associate Conference Minister shall have a voice without vote at all meetings of the Association.
- 2. The Associate Conference Minister will perform duties assigned by the Conference relating to the Association.

C. Association Teams

- 1. Covenanted Teamwork

357 The Officers and Teams of the Association, in covenant and in concert, will seek
358 to address the concerns of its churches and members, and to connect our
359 members, churches, Conference, national, and international partners in service
360 and mission.

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362 2. Team Members & Functions

- 363 a. The membership of the Administrative Team is defined in Section C3 below.
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365 b. The membership of the Nominating Team is defined in Section C4 below.
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367 c. The Church and Ministry Team (Sections C5 below) may have 12 elected
368 members, with representative numbers of women and men, clergy and lay, elected
369 to 3-year terms, 4 terms expiring each year, with each member eligible for a
370 maximum of 2 terms or 6 years on the Team.
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372 d. The Education and Mission Teams (Section C-6 and C-7) each have 9 elected
373 members, with representative numbers of women and men, clergy and lay, elected
374 for 3-year terms, 3 terms expiring each year with each member eligible for a
375 maximum of 2 terms or 6 years on each Team. Other Teams, formed and
376 recognized by the Administrative Team and the Association, must have at least 3
377 active members.
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379 e. A Team that is inactive for a year or more may be disbanded by the
380 Administrative Team or by the Association.
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382 f. Each active Team will elect its own officers.
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384 g. The Administrative Team may appoint the convener or chairperson of a team
385 it forms.
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387 h. Each Team will prepare a written annual report to the Association.
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389 3. Administrative Team

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391 a. The Administrative Team consists of the officers of this Association, the
392 Associate Conference Minister, the Chairperson or Representative of each
393 Team of the Association, an Association Representative of the Conference
394 Board of Directors, and four members-at-large elected for two-year terms, the
395 terms for two expiring each year. Continuous service for the members-at-large
396 shall be limited to three full terms.
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398 b. Represents the Association when the Association is not in session
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400 c. Fills vacancies occurring in offices and on teams between meetings of the
401 Association. Any such appointee shall serve only until the next meeting of the
402 Association, unless at that meeting the appointee is duly elected to that office.
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- d. Is called to meet by the Moderator.
- e. Prepares and publishes the agenda, determines the dates and places of meetings, and may engage additional appropriate persons to attend meetings, present proposals or reports, and carry out decisions and actions.
- f. Prepares the annual budget for presentation to the Association, unless the Association elects a separate team for this purpose.
- g. Elects or appoints members of the Association to serve on commissions and committees, and in other positions in the Conference.
- h. Coordinates the work of teams, does long-term planning for the Association, and makes recommendations to the Association.

4. Nominating Team

- a. The Nominating Team has six members nominated by the Administrative Team and elected by the Association for three-year terms, the terms of two members ending each year.
- b. If a vacancy occurs on the Nominating Team, the Administrative Team will appoint someone to complete the unexpired term.
- c. The Nominating Team presents at least one candidate for each office and position to be filled, except its own members.
- d. The Team nominates delegates and alternates from this Association to the General Synod in accord with the Constitution of the Wisconsin Conference. No one will be a delegate to more than two successive Synods.
- e. Additional nominations to the Team's slate may be made from the floor at the Association Meeting.

5. Church & Ministry Team

The Church & Ministry Team is entrusted by the Association to:

- a. Grant, maintain, review, transfer, and, when in accord with adopted Association policy, suspend or terminate ordained ministerial standing.
- b. Grant, maintain, review, and, when necessary, repeal commissioning for ministry.
- c. Grant, maintain, annually review, and, when necessary, revoke licenses for ministry.

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- d. Grant status to and aid students in care of the Association in preparation for ordained ministry.
 - e. Grant, when requested by and appropriate for clergy from other denominations, dual standing or privilege of call in the United Church of Christ.
 - f. Receive, assess, assist and guide candidates for ordination, commissioning, licensing, and privilege of call.
 - g. Call and conduct Ecclesiastical Councils of clergy and church delegates to consider, examine and approve, on behalf of the Association, candidates for ordination, commissioning and privilege of call.
 - h. Prepare, call and conduct the rites of ordination and installation.
 - i. Support, counsel, discipline and assist clergy in standing in and authorized by, and students in care of, the Association.
 - J. Provide oversight of authorized ministries and conduct consultations and reviews in accord with the current guidelines and the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ.
 - k. Review and respond to allegations of misconduct by clergy, officers or congregations in the Association.
 - l. Support, counsel, discipline and assist congregations in standing in the Association.
 - m. Support, counsel and assist congregations seeking standing in the Association.
 - n. Foster positive relations between pastors and their parishes.
 - o. Offer and provide resources for mediation, communication, resolution and healing.
 - p. Provide for registrar duties, such duties including but not limited to maintaining an accurate list of all Local Churches and Authorized Ministers (Ordained, Partner, Commissioned, Licensed) enjoying standing, maintaining a separate list of all persons granted Dual Standing, Privilege of Call, or Member in Discernment status, maintaining a third list of others called or contracted to serve Local Churches, and communicating any changes in these lists in a timely manner with the Wisconsin Conference office.

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6. Education Team

The Education Team will:

- a. Support and guide the teaching ministry of the church and the training and resourcing of leaders in our congregations and association.
- b. Support pastors and educators as teachers of teachers.
- c. Assist and resource church officers, councils and committees engaged in Education and leadership.
- d. Help church leaders and teachers bear Christian witness in all of life.
- e. Empower all our members to claim and share their spiritual gifts.

7. Mission Team

The Mission Team will:

- a. Interpret, reflect and connect the Biblical, theological and spiritual bases of mission.
- b. Identify and help our Association understand and cultivate our mission field.
- c. Help our congregations to identify, understand and cultivate their mission fields, and to develop and implement their mission strategies.
- d. Nurture stewards in our church's wider mission.
- e. Connect and support congregations, association, conference, denomination, and other religious bodies and resources to carry out our common mission and work for justice and peace in the world.

8. Teams

The Association or the Administrative Team may establish, or recognize and authorize, or dissolve as needed teams to effect or extend the Association's mission.

ARTICLE VI- AMENDMENTS

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This Constitution may be amended at a duly called meeting of the Association by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, if a quorum is present and the amendments have been:

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- A. Presented to the Association at the previous regularly called meeting of the Association, signed by not less than five churches of the Association; or
- B. Recommended to the Association by the Administrative Team, and a copy of the amendments mailed to each Local Church and minister of the Association not less than thirty days prior to the meeting at which action on the proposed amendments is to be taken

APPENDIX: Associate Conference Minister Position Description

NOTE: At the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Southeast Association, action was taken to have the position description of the assigned Associate Conference Minister appended to its Constitution. The position description is attached for information, is not subject to amendment by the Southeast Association itself, and should be replaced with the most current version as future changes are made.

April 2011

- Responsibility for clergy and churches in a region of the Conference (initial proposal is to divide the Conference north and south)
 - o Be first contact point for pastoral issues in clergy and churches
 - o Coordinate response to issues in congregations by involving all ministerial staff in developing strategy and plan for response
 - Provide direct pastoral care/support or engage pastoral support "associates"
 - Recruit and train/resource "associates" who live in geographic areas of the Conference and who might provide essential pastoral care (proposal is to utilize a team of recently retired pastors who will be recruited and brought together to be resourced as early responders when there is a request for assistance by a pastor or church)
 - o Have skills in coaching, mediation/conflict resolution, organizational development and planning and engage in regular continuing education to continue to develop skills
 - Develop a team of pastors and/or lay persons as well as consultants who may be called upon for specialized mediation or consulting tasks (coordinate the development of these resources with the entire staff)

- Coordinate Search and Call in a region of the Conference
 - o Will serve as initial contact point for churches seeking
 - o Consult with ministerial staff to determine strategy for staffing search and call in specific churches
 - o Regularly meet with all staff who work with search and call to coordinate work and share possible candidates
 - With the Conference Minister and the Minister for Church Development, serve as the core team for search and call, working to match clergy and their gifts to church opportunities
 - o Work with colleagues on the ministerial staff, especially the Minister for Church Development, to do intentional work to develop candidates and possible covenants with churches seeking to call a pastor
 - Assist in recruiting and training "search and call associates" (teams of two persons to provide assistance in search and call process with churches)
 - Supervise and coordinate work with support staff in the Trost Center who will maintain database and offer assistance in communicating with search committees and candidates
 - Develop pool of candidates for specific church openings and communicate with potential candidates, sending them information on churches and encouraging their consideration

- Assist search committees in setting up "neutral pulpits" with candidates, utilizing the support services of the staff at Trost Center
 - Communicate starting dates to business office
- Request that the support staff to search and call send welcome letter and information on starting a new ministry in the Wisconsin Conference to chosen candidate
- Staff the work of two Association Church and Ministry Divisions/Teams
 - o Meet regularly with the Church and Ministry Divisions/Teams
 - o Provide training and leadership in issues of authorization, discipline, periodic review.
 - Resource the work of the C/M Divisions/Teams by engaging in education and training provided by the Office for Church Life and Leadership (example: "Search and Call")
 - Maintain a working knowledge of the Manual on Ministry and other ministry resources
 - Advise the C/M Divisions/Teams on questions of procedure
 - Meet regularly by phone with chairs of the Divisions/Teams to plan agenda and collaborate in scheduling meetings and the work of the Divisions/Teams
 - Help to plan the annual C/M Joint Division/Team and Commission retreats and provide leadership for the event
 - Assist in developing consistent boundary training
- Be a member of the Church Development and Renewal Team
- As a member of the Wisconsin Conference Staff, attend regular and special staff meetings and the meetings of the Wisconsin Conference Board of Directors
 - o Help to plan, host, and resource events for clergy like:
 - New Clergy Day
 - Clergy Education Days
 - Clergy retreats
- Preach regularly in local churches (conference ministerial staff is asked to be present in local churches on the average of two times per month)
- Hold Association Office Days at least once per month
 - o Attend district or cluster meetings periodically
 - o Meet with Association Executive Committees when requested
- One of the Associate Conference Ministers will be designated as a specialist in urban ministries and one in rural ministries
 - o If the knowledge and skills are not present in the person as they are called to the position, it would be expected that they would acquire specialized knowledge and skills in these respective areas over the first two years of their ministry.