

**Constitution of the
SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

PREAMBLE

This Association adopts and affirms as its own the Preamble of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ:

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

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of the Association shall be the Southwest Wisconsin Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, hereinafter referred to as the Association.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of the Association is:

- A. To promote fellowship among Association congregations, clergy, and members as a witness to our unity in Jesus Christ.
- B. To provide support and assistance to Association congregations and their members.
- C. To provide support and assistance to the clergy (ordained, licensed, commissioned, and retired) of the Association.
- D. To develop and sustain partnerships that advance our shared mission.
- E. To maintain and oversee the standing of Association congregations and clergy.

1 **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

2
3 A. Members of the Association, in covenant with each other, shall include:

4
5 1. All United Church of Christ congregations within the boundaries of the Association;

6
7 2. All clergy (ordained, commissioned, licensed, and retired) with standing in the Association.

8
9 B. A local church is composed of persons who, believing in the triune God, accepting Jesus Christ
10 as Lord and Savior, and depending on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are organized for
11 Christian worship, for the furtherance of Christian fellowship, and for the ongoing work of
12 Christian witness.

13
14 C. The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing
15 in this Constitution shall destroy or limit the right of each local church to continue to operate
16 in the way customary to it.

17
18 D. If a local church wishes to join the Association (and, by extension, the denomination), it will
19 make its application for membership to the Division on Church and Ministry. If the application
20 is affirmed by the Division, membership will be confirmed by a vote of the Executive
21 Committee. The UCC Manual on Church will guide this process.

22
23 E. If a local church wishes to withdraw from the Association (and, by extension, the
24 denomination), it will notify the Division on Church and Ministry. Membership will be
25 terminated by a vote of the Executive Committee. The UCC Manual on Church will guide this
26 process.

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29 **ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS**

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31 A. There shall be an annual meeting of the Association, with special meetings at such other times
32 as may be necessary for the discharge of its responsibilities.

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34 B. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee of this Association, or at the
35 request of five churches or five ministers of this Association, for consideration of the items
36 specified in the call.

37
38 C. The time and place of all meetings shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Meetings
39 may be held by electronic means which enable all participants to be heard and to hear each
40 other.

41
42 D. With the exception of an overture addressed to the General Synod which requires a two-thirds
43 affirmative vote of those present and voting, all motions, resolutions, petitions and overtures
44 shall be adopted by a majority affirmative vote of those present and voting. ~~(152)~~

45
46 E. Voting members of the Association shall consist of:

- 1
2 1. All authorized clergy (ordained, commissioned, licensed, and retired) with standing in the
3 Association.
4
5 2. Two lay delegates from each local church and one for each 500 members or fraction
6 thereof beyond the first 500 members.
7
8 F. The Association shall adhere to Robert's Rules of Order.
9
10 G. A Quorum for an Association meeting shall be one-quarter (1/4) of the ministerial members
11 and one-third (1/3) of churches as represented by lay delegates.
12
13 H. A Quorum for an Ecclesiastical Council shall consist of ministers and delegates responding to
14 an official call.
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17 **ARTICLE V—ORGANIZATION**

18 **A. Officers**

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21 1. The officers of this Association are:
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23 a. A Moderator, who shall be elected for a term of two years, expiring in even-numbered
24 years. The office of the Moderator shall alternate between minister and lay member.
25
26 b. A Vice-Moderator, who shall be elected for a term of two years, expiring in even-
27 numbered years. The office of Vice-Moderator shall alternate between lay member
28 and minister, opposite to the office of Moderator.
29
30 c. A Secretary, who shall be elected for a term of two years, expiring in odd-numbered
31 years.
32
33 d. A Treasurer, who shall be elected for a term of two years, expiring in odd-numbered
34 years.
35
36 2. The duties of these officers are as follows:
37
38 a. The Moderator shall preside at the meetings of the Association and shall be chairperson
39 of the Executive Committee.
40
41 b. The Vice-Moderator shall assist the Moderator in administration, and when requested
42 by the Moderator, shall represent the Moderator. Should a vacancy occur in the office
43 of Moderator, the Vice-Moderator shall assume all rights and duties of the Moderator
44 until the next regular meeting of the Association, when the Association shall elect a
45 Moderator to fill the unexpired term.
46

- 1 c. The Secretary shall keep accurate and permanent record of the Minutes of this
2 Association, and shall have other such duties as assigned by the Executive Committee.
3
- 4 d. The Treasurer shall oversee the receipt and disbursement of Association funds in
5 coordination with the Conference financial staff and the management of financial
6 assets. The Treasurer (or an alternate designated by the Executive Committee) shall
7 authorize any disbursement of Association funds by the Conference financial staff, as
8 approved in the adopted budget or directed by the Executive Committee. The Treasurer
9 shall provide annual reports to the Association and monthly updates to the Executive
10 Committee on the Association's financial status. Continuous service of a treasurer is
11 limited to two full terms, exclusive of any partial term filled by the individual.
12

13 B. Committees

14 1. Nominating Committee

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- 17 a. The Nominating Committee is selected annually by the Moderator with the approval of
18 the Executive Committee. Vacancies on the Nominating Committee are filled in like
19 manner.
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- 21 b. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person as candidate for each
22 office and division position to be filled, and for members-at-large to the Executive
23 Committee. Additional nominations to the Committee's slate may be made from the
24 floor of the Annual Meeting.
25
- 26 c. The Nominating Committee shall nominate persons as delegates and alternates to the
27 General Synod in accordance with the constitution of the Wisconsin Conference. No
28 person may serve as a delegate to more than three successive General Synods.
29

30 2. Executive Committee

- 31
- 32 a. The Executive Committee shall meet regularly to coordinate the present work of the
33 divisions, to engage in long-term planning for the total work of the Association, and to
34 make recommendations to the Association.
35
- 36 b. The Executive Committee consists of: the officers of this Association; one
37 representative from each of the Divisions of this Association; one representative from
38 the four representatives on the Conference Board of Directors; and four (minimum) to
39 six (maximum) members-at-large, each elected for a two-year terms so arranged that
40 the term of office for approximately one-half of the total members-at-large expires each
41 year. A member-at-large may not serve more than three consecutive terms.
42
- 43 c. The Executive Committee represents the Association when the Association is not in
44 session.
45

- 1 d. The Executive Committee appoints individuals to fill vacancies occurring in offices,
2 divisions, and committees between meetings of the Association, until those vacancies
3 are filled by election at the Annual Meeting.
4
5 e. The Executive Committee is subject to call by the Moderator.
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7 f. The Executive Committee prepares the annual budget for presentation to the
8 Association.
9
10 g. Whenever the Conference has any entity to which this Association is entitled to elect
11 or appoint members, the Executive Committee may appoint those members when no
12 other mechanism is in place.
13

14 C. Divisions of the Association 15

16 The program of the Association is in large measure entrusted to the Divisions. Each Division
17 shall make an annual report of its work to the Association.
18

19 1. The Division on Church and Ministry

20 In both practice and polity, the Division on Church and Ministry (DCM) is a vital
21 embodiment of our covenantal relationships across the United Church of Christ. On behalf
22 of the association, the DCM lives in relationship with Local Churches, Members in
23 Discernment, all those who seek or hold ministerial standing, every other Committee on
24 Ministry, the United Church of Christ, and the Church Universal. Their overarching
25 ministry is the mindfulness of the Church's well-being and the discernment of the
26 movement of the Holy Spirit in authorizing ministers on behalf of the United Church of
27 Christ.
28

29 The DCM has the role of support and accountability for those seeking or holding standing.
30 On a regular basis, the Committee attends to the operative covenantal relationships among
31 those with standing, the Association, the Local Church, and the ministry setting, in order
32 to nurture faithfulness and to ensure ongoing growth in ministry according to the Marks of
33 Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.
34

35 Serving on DCM is a ministry in itself. For this reason, the Division's membership should
36 be intentionally diverse, include lay and ordained persons, and be trained and resourced to
37 work for the empowerment of excellent authorized ministry. To the best of their faithful
38 ability, the Division on Church and Ministry works within the guidelines of the United
39 Church of Christ Manual on Ministry published by MESA and with the other Committees
40 on Ministry within the Wisconsin Conference.
41

42 2. The Division on Social Concerns

43 The Division on Social Concerns supports local congregations and the justice and mission
44 work they do by providing Social Concerns grants to support their efforts. The Division
45 meets as needed to consider grant proposals from congregations and their community
46 partners and decide whether and how much to fund these proposals.

1 **ARTICLE VI**

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3 All of the operating details to carry out the provisions of this Constitution shall be contained in by-
4 laws adopted by the Executive Committee and amended as needed by the Executive Committee.
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7 **ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS**

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9 A. The Constitution of this Association may be amended at a duly called meeting by a two-thirds
10 (2/3) vote of those present and voting, providing that such amendments shall have been:

- 11
12 1. Presented by the Association at the last previous regularly called meeting of the
13 Association, signed by not less than five (5) local churches composing the Association; or
14
15 2. Recommended to the Association by the Executive Committee, and a copy thereof
16 transmitted to each local church and minister of this Association not less than thirty (30)
17 days prior to the meeting at which action on the proposed amendment is to be taken.