

BYLAWS of the Oxford-Union Association

Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

Amended October 19, 2008 by the O-U Association

1.0 Name: The name of this Association is Oxford-Union Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ (hereinafter called “The Association”).

2.0 Powers and Purposes: The purposes of the Association are:

2.1 To express the oneness of Christ in the Churches composing it and to make more effective their witness and service.

2.2 To determine, confer, and certify to the standing of local churches of the United Church of Christ within its boundaries.

2.3 To determine, confer, and certify to the standing of ministers of the United Church of Christ.

2.4 To stimulate the spiritual and missionary interests of its members and churches.

3.0 Faith: This Association 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, particularly as that faith is expressed in the Preamble of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ and the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ.

4.0 Membership: The membership of the Association shall include the following:

4.1 Churches

4.1.1 Any local church whose expression of faith is in essential agreement with that of the Association, and which, having covenanted with the Association to assume and fulfill faithfully the obligations of a member church as hereinafter set forth and has been recommended by the Church and Ministry Committee of the Association, is received into membership by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Association.

4.1.2 Each member church is entitled to be represented at meetings of the Association by two (2) delegates. Each delegate is entitled to one vote.

4.2 Ministers:

4.2.1 Ordained Ministers

4.2.1.1 An ordained minister holding ministerial standing in the Association is entitled to one vote.

4.2.1.2 An ordained minister holding standing both in another denomination and in the Association (Dual Standing) is entitled to one vote.

4.2.1.3 Commissioned Ministers. A commissioned minister of the United Church of Christ who holds church membership within the Association is entitled to one vote.

4.2.1.4 Licensed Ministers. A licensed minister of the Association is entitled to one vote.

4.3 **Executive Committee:** Each lay member of the Executive Committee of the Association, who is not a delegate from a member church pursuant to Section 4.1.2, is a member “ex-officio” and is entitled to one vote.

4.4 Associate Members

- 4.4.1 Ordained ministers, residents within the boundaries of the Association who prefer to retain their standing in a different Association of the United Church of Christ shall be considered Associate Members, providing their request or such Association membership has been recommended by the Church and Ministry Committee and approved by vote of the Association.
- 4.4.2 The Conference Minister (s), official representatives of the General Synod and National Boards, Agencies and Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ in attendance are Associate Members.
- 4.4.3 Associate members are with voice but without vote.
- 4.4.4 The standing of associate members shall not be reported by this Association to the United Church of Christ.

4.5 Affiliate Members

- 4.5.1 An ordained minister of whatever denomination who wishes to retain his/her present denominational standing, who does not hold Dual Standing, and who has become a pastor of a member church of this Association, or of a yoked charge or a federated church, one part of which is affiliated with this Association, shall be enrolled as an affiliate ministerial member of the Association for the duration of that pastorate and during that period may have the rights and privileges of such membership, except that he/she shall have no vote on matters that affect the standing of ministers or local churches, and may not serve on the Church and Ministry Committee.

5.0 Meetings

- 5.1 Regular meetings of the Association shall be held in the Spring and Fall at such time and place as the Association may designate or, lacking such designation, as may be determined by the Moderator and Scribe. Notice of any Association meetings shall be given by the Scribe to each church and each minister member prior to the second Sunday preceding the date of the meeting.
- 5.2 Special meetings may be called by the Scribe to each church and each minister member prior to the second Sunday preceding the date of that meeting.
- 5.3 Delegates from not less than one-fourth (1/4) of the churches which are members of the Association together with not less than one-fourth (1/4) of the resident ordained minister members of the Association shall constitute a quorum.

6.0 Officers

6.1 The officers of the Association shall be a Moderator, a Vice Moderator, a Scribe and a Treasurer, and such other officers as the Association may deem advisable. Only ordained ministers who hold membership in the Association and lay persons who hold membership in a member church shall be qualified to serve as officers.

6.1.1 The Moderator shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Association, and shall serve as chairperson of the Executive Committee. The office of Moderator, whenever possible, shall alternate between an ordained minister and a lay person. The term of office shall be a single two-year term, with the holder not eligible for re-election until one term has elapsed.

6.1.2 The Vice Moderator shall act in the absence of the Moderator, and shall fill a vacancy in the term of the Moderator. All of the restrictions and conditions of the Moderator shall apply to the Vice Moderator.

6.1.3 The Scribe shall keep the roll of the churches and ministers of the Association and the recorded minutes of its meetings and call meetings as provided in the Bylaws. The Scribe shall issue letters transferring the standing of ministers upon approval of the Church and Ministry Committee, and communicate all decisions of the Church and Ministry Committee or Association regarding ministers' standing to the Conference and the National Office of the United Church of Christ. The Scribe shall serve a two-year term with re-election permitted.

6.1.4 The Treasurer shall receive all monies from the member churches, disburse all expenditures approved by the Association and the Executive Committee, and report the same to the Association at its regularly called meetings. The Treasurer shall serve a two-year term with re-election permitted.

6.1.5 The terms of the Treasurer and the Scribe shall be staggered with terms of the Moderator, electing the Treasurer and Scribe in one year and the Moderator and Vice Moderator in the following year.

7.0 Committees

7.1 The work of the Association shall be conducted by the following committees:

The Executive Committee

The Church and Ministry Committee

The Nominating Committee

Association Representatives to Conference Commissions

And Coordinating Council representatives

And any other committees deemed necessary and created by the Association.

7.2 **The Executive Committee** shall consist of all officers of the Association, the immediate past moderator, the chairpersons of each Association committee, the representatives from the Association to the Maine Conference bodies (the Coordinating Council, the Commissions for Community Life, Spiritual Life and Witness Life), the delegate from the Association to General Synod. This committee shall have general oversight and care for the affairs of the Association which are not cared for by other committees, serve as a business committee during and between meetings, and fill vacancies in offices and committees until the next Association meeting.

7.3 **The Church and Ministry Committee** shall consist of six (6) members – four (4) ministers and two (2) laypersons – each elected for a term of three years, so arranged that two shall be elected each year. The Scribe and the Moderator of the Association may sit as ex-officio members.

7.3.1 A quorum of the committee shall consist of at least three (3) clergy and one (1) lay member present. Action of the committee shall be by the majority of votes cast by those present and voting.

7.3.2 The Church and Ministry Committee shall fulfill the responsibilities of the “Association Committee on Ministry” as described in the current United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry (the “Manual”).

7.3.3 The Church and Ministry Committee shall receive applications of local churches applying for membership in the Association, as described in Article 4.1 above, and make recommendations to the Association regarding the membership of these churches.

7.3.4 The Church and Ministry Committee will act on behalf of the Association in matters pertaining to in-care standing of candidates for ministry, licensure, and transfer of ministerial standing, and shall report such actions to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Association. Following a decision of the Church and Ministry Committee, an appeal may be made within thirty (30) days following the date of the decision to the Executive Committee of the Association, which will then bring the appeal to the Association called together in an Ecclesiastical Council.

7.3.5 The Church and Ministry Committee will make recommendations to the Association in matters regarding privilege of call, ordination, and commissioning, giving final responsibility for these decisions to the Association called together in an Ecclesiastical Council.

7.3.6 The Church and Ministry Committee will engage in regular Periodic Review of those authorized for ministry within the Association.

7.3.7 The Church and Ministry Committee will conduct a Disciplinary Review in the event that an individual’s fitness for ministry is called into question through a written, signed complaint and/or upon advisement of the

Conference Minister. Disciplinary Reviews will be conducted in cooperation with the Conference Minister or another representative from the Conference. Decisions of the committee will be final subject to appeal to the Association, which will then bring the appeal to the full Association called together in an Ecclesiastical Council.

7.3.8 When hearing an appeal of a decision of the Church and Ministry Committee regarding Disciplinary Review, the Ecclesiastical Council shall consider whether the disciplinary process was carried out consistent with adopted Association policies and procedures and shall not repeat the deliberative process of the Committee. The outcomes of an appeal will include the following:

7.3.8.1 To accept the decision of the Church and Ministry Committee, upon finding that the Committee acted consistently with the policies of the Association.

7.3.8.2 To deny the decision of the Church and Ministry Committee, after finding that it did not follow the adopted policy, and (a) ask the Committee to reconsider its action, following the adopted policies and procedures of the Association, or (b) appoint a separate review committee to rehear the entire case and bring a recommendation to the Ecclesiastical Council.

7.3.9 The Church and Ministry Committee will communicate all decisions regarding the above matters to the Maine Conference UCC, and the national office of the UCC through the Scribe.

7.3.10 The Church and Ministry Committee shall encourage and promote fellowship and study among the ministers.

7.3.11 The Church and Ministry Committee shall encourage and promote healthy and mutually faithful relationships between ministers and the churches or other bodies to which they are called.

7.4 **The Nominating Committee** shall consist of three (3) persons elected by the Association and so arranged that they shall each serve a three year term, with one member leaving office each year. The Past Moderator may serve on the nominating committee.

7.4.1 The Nominating Committee shall prepare the necessary slate of officers, Conference representatives, a General Synod delegate nominee and committee members to be elected at Association meetings, including the designation of chairpersons of each committee.

8.0 Representatives and Delegates

8.1 The Association shall elect persons to represent the Association on the Maine Conference Coordinating Council and Commissions for Community Life, Spiritual Life and Witness Life. These representatives shall carry the concerns of the

Association to the respective Conference bodies and the concern of the Conference bodies to the Association. They shall serve on the Association's Executive Committee. They shall serve three (3) year terms.

8.2 The Association shall nominate a person to the Conference for consideration as a Conference Delegate to General Synod. If elected by the Conference, the Delegate shall serve a four-year term, which includes two (2) General Synods.

9.0 **Amendments:** These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any regular meeting of the Association or at a special meeting called for that purpose, provided that an announcement of the proposed amendment is made in writing at a previous regular meeting and provided further that the notice hereof is sent in writing to the churches and ministers at least two weeks before the proposed amendment is acted upon.

10.0 **Rules of Order:** Business shall be transacted by a majority of those present and voting at any duly called meeting, a quorum being present, except as otherwise provided by these Bylaws. The order of business shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of order unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws.