

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
OF THE
CUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES AND MINISTERS
OF THE
MAINE CONFERENCE
OF THE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



ADOPTED MAY 21, 2000
REVISED MAY 4, 2003, MAY 23, 2004, OCTOBER 17, 2004, OCTOBER 15, 2006
OCTOBER 25, 2009, APRIL 25, 2010, SEPTEMBER 28, 2014

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Association shall be the Cumberland Association of Churches and Ministers of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Association shall be to: 1) promote fellowship, cooperation and service among its ministers, laity, all Christians, and persons of other faith traditions. 2) Determine, confer and certify the standing of member churches and affiliate clergy. 3) Advise candidates for the ordained, commissioned and licensed ministries. 4) Stimulate the spiritual and missionary interests of its member churches and ministers. 5) Consider itself a partner in the common ministry with the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Association shall comprise the following:

- 1) Each local church, as defined in Article IV of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ,
 - a. whose expression of faith is essentially in agreement with that of this Association,
 - b. and which having covenanted with the Association to assume and fulfill faithfully the obligations of a member church as herein set forth,
 - c. and which, having been recommended by the Church and Ministry Committee, is received by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and constituting a quorum at a duly called meeting of the Association.
- 2) All ordained ministers who hold ministerial standing in the Association, in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
- 3) All commissioned ministers of the United Church of Christ who hold church membership within the Association.
- 4) All licensed ministers and persons in care of the Association.

ARTICLE IV- VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Voting members of the Association shall consist of: 1) three (3) lay delegates from each local church. In addition, each church shall be entitled to one (1) youth delegate. 2) all ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers who hold standing in the Association; 3) all members of the Executive Council, and all members of Standing Committees of the Association.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS

- 1) **Two Regular Meetings** of the Cumberland Association shall be held each year, **one in the Fall and one in the Spring**. The date, hour and place of these meetings shall be determined by the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall cause notice thereof to be given to each Member Church at least four (4) weeks prior to the date.
- 2) **The Annual Meeting**. The fiscal year of the Association shall end September 30. The Fall meeting shall be the Annual Meeting of the Association. 3) The Executive Council will meet a minimum of ten (10) times per year, with special meetings as necessary. 4) The Church and Ministry Committee will meet a minimum of ten (10) times per year, with special meetings as necessary.
- 5) **Special Meetings**. The Executive Council is empowered to call Special Meetings of the Association when necessary for purposes deemed essential, providing a four (4) weeks notice of such meeting be given, and provided the purpose of the Special Meeting is expressly stated by the Clerk in the call.
- 6) **Quorum**. Lay delegates from twelve (12) of the member churches and twelve (12) ordained ministers whose standing is in this association shall constitute a quorum at any duly called meeting of this Association.
- 7) **Parliamentary Procedure**. All meetings shall be conducted in a congenial manner and in Christian fellowship. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the parliamentary procedures of the Association.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

The Officers of this Association shall be:

- 1) **Moderator**: The Moderator shall be elected for a single three year (3). The Moderator shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of three (3) years after serving a full three-year term. In the event that the Moderator is unable to complete a term, the Vice Moderator shall assume the remainder of that term. The Vice Moderator shall be alternately a lay member and an ordained member.
- 2) **Vice-Moderator**: The Vice Moderator shall be elected for a single three (3) year term. The Vice Moderator shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of three (3) years after serving a full three-year term. The Vice Moderator shall be alternately a lay member and an ordained minister. At the end of the term, the Vice Moderator may be nominated as Moderator unless he/she declines.
- 3) **Treasurer**: The Treasurer shall be elected for a three (3) year term with an additional three (3) year term possible. The Treasurer shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of one (1) year after serving two (2) full consecutive three (3) year terms.

4) Clerk: The Clerk shall be elected for a three (3) year term with an additional three (3) year term possible. The Clerk shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of one (1) year after serving two (2) full consecutive three (3) year terms.

Elections: All officers shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee. Nominations may also be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting, but no nomination shall be in order until consent of the nominated person has been obtained. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote at the Annual Meeting; begin service when elected; and serve until their successors are elected.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1) The *Moderator* shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Association, and shall serve as chairperson of the Executive Council. The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

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

3) The *Treasurer* shall bill and collect Maine Conference UCC and Association fellowship dues; receive all monies from the Member Churches, keeping proper account books and accounts of the monies received and disbursed as approved by the Association and Executive Council. The Treasurer shall report to the Executive Council monthly and to the Association at its regularly called meetings. The Treasurer shall create a budget which will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association. These written reports shall be filed with the Clerk. The Treasurer of the Cumberland Association shall be bonded for faithful discharge of the duties of the office.

4) The *Clerk* shall keep the roll of the Churches and ministers of the Association, and keep full and accurate minutes of the proceedings of the Association, which records shall be carefully preserved as the permanent property of the Association. The Clerk shall call meetings as provided in the Bylaws. The Clerk shall issue letters transferring the standing of ministers upon approval of the Church and Ministry Committee, and shall file an annual report with the registrar of the Maine Conference. The Clerk shall receive reports from the Conference, Conference Commissions and Special Task Forces, reporting to the Executive Council in a timely manner. The Clerk shall communicate to Member Churches as defined by the Executive Council.

ARTICLE VII EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1) The Executive Council shall consist of the Officers; the Chairperson of the Church and Ministry Committee; the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee; the Association representative on the Maine Conference Coordinating Council; the Association representatives to the three Conference Commissions; two at-large members; and the assigned Conference staff person (voice but no vote). The Executive Council shall meet a minimum of ten (10) times a year; and Council members, as directed by the Moderator, shall submit reports describing the actions of their committees.

2) The Executive Council shall annually submit the financial records of the Cumberland Association to an outside auditor for review and written findings for presentation to the Association's Annual Meeting.

3) The two at-large members shall attend the Executive Council meetings to represent the general membership of the Association. The at-large members shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of one (1) year after serving three (3) consecutive two (2) year terms. Each at-large member will be elected at the Association's Annual Meeting.

4) The Executive Council shall have general oversight of the affairs of the Association, propose a program and budget to the Annual Meeting, and see that the decisions of said assembly are implemented. It shall serve as a business committee during meetings. The Executive Council shall nominate persons to serve on the Nominating Committee. Between meetings of the Association, the Executive Council shall fill Association vacancies as they occur. The Executive Council may, with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present, declare an office or a position on a committee to be vacant due to misconduct or incompetence on the part of the person holding it, and may appoint a replacement. The Executive Council may appoint ad hoc committees and task forces.

5) A quorum shall consist of a majority of its members and is required to conduct the business of the Executive Council.

ARTICLE VIII MINISTERIAL STANDING

The Cumberland Association confers, reviews, and may remove the Ministerial Standing of its clergy. The Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ is the guide for all such decisions, supplemented by guidelines provided by the Office of Parish Life and Leadership of the United Church of Christ and the faith and order of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE IX BOUNDARY TRAINING

Every three years clergy with standing in this Association, or who are engaged in authorized ministry within this Association, shall complete a course in ethical boundary training approved by the Church and Ministry Committee. While the Committee will assure that appropriate training is available, it is the responsibility of each person with authorized standing to complete the training as required. The Committee will review the ministerial standing of those who have not fulfilled the intent of this provision. Retired clergy who currently are not, and do not reasonably expect to be, actively engaged in authorized ministry may be excused from this requirement after conversation with the Committee.

ARTICLE X COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES

At each Annual Meeting, the Association shall elect two Standing Committees:

1. A Church and Ministry Committee, numbering between fifteen (15) and twenty one (21) members, to be comprised equally of clergy and laity: a requisite number will be communicated

to the Nominating Committee by the Church and Ministry Committee on an annual basis. The Church and Ministry Committee Chairperson is an additional Committee member and shall be elected by the Association to serve a three (3) year term of office.

2. A three (3) member **Nominating Committee**, which shall elect its own chairperson.
Term of Office. Members of Standing Committees shall be elected for a three (3) year term in such a way that the term of office of one-third (1/3) of the committee shall terminate annually. No one shall serve more than two (2) full consecutive terms.
A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Committee's members, and is required to conduct the business of the Committee.

Duties of Standing Committees, Task forces, and Auditor

1. Church and Ministry Committee

A. The Church and Ministry Committee shall deal with all matters of ministerial standing within the Cumberland Association, as defined by the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ, other guidelines of the Office of Parish Life and Leadership of the United Church of Christ and the faith and order of the United Church of Christ. This Committee is empowered to act in behalf of the Association to effect the following:

- 1) Grant, reject or withdraw Member in Discernment status (Formerly Student in Care)
- 2) Grant, reject or withdraw standing of Schedule One and Two churches.

- 3) Review the credentials of candidates seeking ordination, licensing, privilege of call, or commissioning by the Association, and request that an Ecclesiastical Council be called when required.

- 4) Grant *standing*, grant transfer of standing for ordained and Commissioned Ministers, and review such standing regularly.

- 5) Conduct review and discipline of ministers holding standing in the Cumberland Association as needed, and take such action as is deemed appropriate according to the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ, other guidelines of the Office of Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the faith and order of the United Church of Christ.

- 6) Support and nurture of member churches.

B. The work of the Church and Ministry Committee shall be done in accordance with a Policies and Procedure Manual developed by the Committee and approved by the Executive Council.

C. The work of the Committee shall be reported to the Cumberland Association at its semi-annual meetings and to the Executive Council monthly.

2. Nominating Committee

A. The Nominating Committee shall develop and maintain a list of prospective participants, both laypersons and ministers, in the Association program.

B. The Nominating Committee shall a) Prepare a slate of officers, representatives to Conference Committees, Association Committee chairpersons and members prior to each Annual Meeting of the Association with emphasis on securing new and qualified leadership for the several activities; b) Consult with the chairpersons of the Committees regarding their suggestions for new members on their Committees; c) Receive from each incumbent Committee a name for chairperson for coming vacancies; and d) secure the consent of the nominees prior to the meeting at which their names will be presented for election.

C. The Nominating Committee shall suggest to the Executive Council names of persons to fill any vacancies which may occur between Annual Meetings and secure the consent of said persons. It shall also suggest names of persons for task forces authorized by the Executive Council.

3. Task Forces

The Association, or its Standing Committees, may create task forces as may be necessary for the conduct of its work, and shall in each case provide for their composition and define their power and duties.

ARTICLE XI AN ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL

Membership of an Ecclesiastical Council shall be composed of:

- 1) One (1) lay delegate from each Member Church.
- 2) Each minister who has recognized standing in this Association.
- 3) Officers and Committee members of the Association.

Quorum: Lay delegates from twelve (12) of the member churches and twelve (12) ordained ministers whose standing is in this association shall constitute a quorum at any duly called meeting of this Association.

Method of Call:

When requested by the Chairperson of the Church and Ministry Committee, the Clerk shall call a Special Meeting of the Association to act as an Ecclesiastical Council, or the Clerk shall arrange

that priority be accorded at a Regular Meeting for the Association to act as an Ecclesiastical Council, provided in either procedure that the announcement of the meeting and its stated purpose shall be incorporated in the call for the meeting, and shall be sent to all Member Churches four (4) weeks before the meeting.

Functions:

1) The Association shall meet and act as an Ecclesiastical Council:
for the examination and ordination of candidates for the Christian ministry or for privilege of call; for the examination and commissioning of candidates for commissioned ministry;
or for the reception of a church into membership.

2) Following a three fourths (3/4) majority vote by the Church and Ministry Committee to terminate or suspend the ministerial standing of an ordained minister with standing in the Association, the minister may appeal the decision of the Church and Ministry Committee to the Executive Council of the Association, on procedural grounds. Such decisions of the Executive Council may be appealed, on procedural grounds, to an Ecclesiastical Council called for that purpose.

ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended or revised at any Regular Meeting of the Association by two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting, provided the amendment or revision shall have been presented in writing and filed with the Clerk, recommended by the Executive Council and shall have been included in the call to the meeting and distributed at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

AS AMENDED IN 2010