

Constitution and Bylaws

Catoctin Association

Central Atlantic Conference

The Constitution

I. Name

The name of this Association is the Catoctin Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ.

II. Membership

The membership of this Association shall be composed of the local churches in the geographical area constituting the Catoctin Association which are members of the United Church of Christ, as defined in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ as amended July 2001, (Article V, paragraphs 9-19) and the Bylaws of the Central Atlantic Conference (Article VIII, section 2b) as amended June 1999, and all ordained ministers who have standing in this Association.

III. Purposes

- A. To bring together in fellowship and counsel all the local churches in this Association for mutual concern, Christian witness, and Christian service.
- B. To carry on the work and exercise the functions of an Association of the United Church of Christ, as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- C. To determine, confer, and certify the standing of local churches of the United Church of Christ within its boundaries.
- D. To determine, confer, and certify the standing of ordained ministers of the United Church of Christ within its boundaries.
- E. To cooperate with the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ and, through the Conference, with the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, its Collegiums, Ministries, agencies and recognized bodies.
- F. To receive and act upon the business referred to it by its local churches, its Conference, the General Synod, and other bodies.
- G. To be concerned with the welfare of all local churches within its boundaries to the extent of seeking ways and means to assist local churches in their ministries in situations calling for help beyond their own resources.

- H. To support conference activities in new church development.
- I. To maintain a relationship with the institutions recognized by the Conference or the United Church of Christ which are located within the bounds of the Association or those others which may have a special mission relationship with the Association.
- J. To receive and act upon applications of Members in Discernment through their pastors and local churches and to supervise their preparation for these ministries in accordance with Article I, paragraphs 101-104 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
- K. To receive and act upon applications for Ordination made by persons in discernment through a local church of this Association in accordance with Article I, paragraphs 105-108 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
- L. To receive and act upon applications for Lay Ministerial Standing through a local church of the Association in accordance with Article I, paragraphs 148-152 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
- M. To issue upon the request of a pastor, moving from the bounds of this Association, a transfer of ministerial standing to another Association of the United Church of Christ.
- N. To be responsible for the discipline of ministers who hold standing in this Association. In the case of an allegation of pastoral misconduct requiring possible disciplinary action, the Church and Ministry Commission, in consultation with the Conference Ministry Team and the Association president, is authorized to take such action as is deemed appropriate on behalf of the Association. (Reference: "Oversight of Ministries Authorized by the United Church of Christ, Guidelines of Resourcing Committees on the Ministry.")
- O. To receive and act upon applications for installation and to arrange for services of the installation, or recognition, of a minister in accordance with Article I, paragraphs 160-161 of the United Church of Christ Bylaws.
- P. To take appropriate action in the termination of a pastoral relationship with a local church in accordance with Article I, paragraph 162 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
- Q. To receive and act upon applications for Privilege of Call, Partner in Ministry, or Dual Standing by ordained ministers of another denomination in accordance with Article I, paragraphs 116-140 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

IV. Officers

The officers of this Association shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer and other such officers as this Association may deem necessary.

V. Association Council

The Association Council of the Catoctin Association shall be composed of the following: The duly-elected President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Association, six (6) At Large members, a Conference Board of Directors member, Chair of Church and Ministry Commission, Chair of Association Services Commission, and a representative of the Central Atlantic Conference staff. The representative of the Conference staff assigned to the Association shall be a nonvoting member of the Council.

VI. Finance

A. This Association shall be supported by the contributions of its member churches.

B. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

VII. Meetings

A. The Annual Meeting of this Association shall be held at such time and place as provided in the Bylaws. Special meetings may be called as provided in the Bylaws.

B. When this Association meets, its voting membership shall be composed of the ordained ministers holding standing in this Association, and of lay delegates selected by and representing the local churches of the Association as provided in the Bylaws.

C. A quorum at meetings of the Association shall be constituted as defined in the Bylaws.

VIII. Relation to Central Atlantic Conference

This Association shall be related to the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

The Bylaws

I. Membership

- A. Voting membership of the Association shall be composed of delegates of all local churches in this Association and the ordained ministers who have standing in this Association.
- B. Upon request, this Association, in its Annual Meeting, may admit as an “associate member” of this Association, a church which wishes to participate in its activities but does not wish to become a member of the United Church of Christ, as provided in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ (Article V, paragraph 16). The names and statistics of such churches shall be kept separately. Members of such churches may not be delegates to the Central Atlantic Conference or to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. No direct or indirect participation by any such church in the work of the Association shall be construed as making it a part of the United Church of Christ.
- C. An ordained minister of another denomination who has been granted Privilege of Call in the Association shall be granted the rights and privileges of such membership, except that he/she shall have no vote on matters affecting the standing of ministers of local churches, nor shall he/she be elected an officer of the Association until he/she has received a call to a local church, receiving full standing in the United Church of Christ.
- D. An ordained minister of another denomination, called to serve as pastor of a church in this Association, may request dual standing, and at his/her request, be enrolled as a member of this Association for the duration of that pastorate, with all rights and privileges of such membership, except that he/she shall not be elected an officer of this Association.
- E. The United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) each recognize the ordained ministries of the other church and therefore all ordained partners have the full rights and privileges of members ordained in the UCC.
- F. Any person upon whom full ministerial standing is conferred through Rite of Ordination by this Association in cooperation with a local church shall be a member of this Association until standing is transferred to another Association, or until such standing is suspended or revoked according to due process.
- G. Any ordained minister who presents a letter of transfer from an Association of the United Church of Christ, or a Conference of that Church exercising the function of an Association, may be received as a member of this Association.

II. Member Churches

- A. A local church holding membership in this Association shall have the responsibilities and privileges as set forth in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, Article V.
- B. A local church shall have a concern for the health, ministry and witness of all local churches in this Association.
- C. A local church shall be faithful in sending officially designated lay and clergy delegates to all meetings of the Association.
- D. A local church shall hold in highest regard all actions, decisions, and advice emanating from this Association.
- E. A local church shall submit such congregational information and reports as requested by this Association or the Central Atlantic Conference.
- F. A local church shall not be removed from the rolls of this Association except upon the recommendation of the Church and Ministry Commission and by a two-thirds vote of the voting membership at a duly called meeting of the Association, due notice of the proposed action having been given at least four (4) weeks in advance to all churches and ministers holding standing in this Association.

III. Member Ministers

- A. A minister holding ministerial standing and membership in this Association shall have the responsibilities and privileges as set forth in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, Article I.
- B. Ministers shall be faithful in attendance at all meetings of this Association and in participation in its work.
- C. Ministers shall hold church membership in a local church of the UCC. A pastor must hold membership in one or more of the local churches that the pastor serves.
- D. If a minister desires to withdraw from the active service in the ministry before reaching the age of sixty-five (65) years, the minister shall apply to this Association through the Church and Ministry Commission for leave of absence. Such leave of absence may be granted by the Association for one (1) year at a time, and, except in special cases, shall not be granted for more than five (5) successive years. On recommendation of the Church and Ministry Commission a minister may be restored to membership and ministerial standing by a majority vote of the Association Council.

- E. A minister holding membership in this Association, who retires from the active ministry by reason of age or sickness, shall not forfeit ministerial standing in this Association.
- F. Any ordained minister who is in good and regular standing in this Association may receive a transfer to the ecclesiastical body of his/her choice upon written request to the Church and Ministry Commission provided that said request does not violate the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
- G. A minister can be removed from the ministerial rolls of this Association by vote of the Church and Ministry Commission acting on behalf of the Association. (See Guidelines for Resourcing Committees on the Ministry, Oversight of Ministries Authorized by the United Church of Christ.)
- H. A minister holding ministerial standing and membership in this Association may counsel with members of the United Church of Christ and others in his/her professional capacity. Any and all communications of any person with a member minister in his/her professional capacity, made in the course of a church-authorized discipline (i.e. a confession which is penitential in nature) shall be kept by the minister in the strictest confidence.

IV. Officers

- A. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Association and the Association Council. He/She shall perform all duties assigned by the Association Council.

The President or his/her designate shall act on behalf of the Association at Ordinations and Installations. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Commissions. The President should also act as the coordinator of the activities of the Association, designating responsibilities, meeting dates, appointing committees and task forces as they are needed.

- B. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President at the request of, or in the absence of, the President.
- C. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all Association and Association Council meetings.
- D. The Treasurer shall have custody of Association funds and shall make such disposition of them as the Association or Association Council authorizes. The Treasurer shall maintain detailed records of all transactions and submit such records to the Association at any Association Meeting and the Association Council as it requires. The Treasurer shall be bonded. The accounts shall be audited annually.

E. Association Officers shall be elected for three-year terms, with President and Vice President elected in one class, and the Secretary and Treasurer in a following year's class. The President and Vice President shall be elected for one (1) three year term only- All other officers, after serving two (2) consecutive terms, shall be ineligible for reelection to the same office for a period of one (1) year.

V. The Association Council

A. Association Council At Large members shall be elected for three-year terms. At-large members shall be elected in three (3) classes, two (2) being elected each year. After serving two (2) consecutive terms, At Large members shall be ineligible for reelection to the Council as an At Large member for a period of one (1) year. Persons who are on the Association Council by virtue of their position (Association officers, Chairs of Commissions, Board of Directors representative, and the Conference staff member) shall serve during the term of their office.

B. The Association Council shall:

1. Act for the Association in all matters whenever the Association is not in meetings. Such action shall be reported to the Association at its stated meetings.
2. Plan and administer the operations of all meetings of the Association and publish an accurate account of these meetings.
3. Coordinate the implementation of Association-wide programs.
4. Be responsible for the planning, budgeting, and evaluation of the use of Association resources.
5. Be responsible for the evaluation of Conference resources and programs which occur within the Catoctin Association.
6. Be responsible for carrying out the constitution and legal requirements of this Constitution and Bylaws.
7. Establish ad hoc groups and make appointments as deemed necessary. When appropriate, such action shall be subject to confirmation by the Association in meeting.
8. Review requests from Churches developing programs and ministries which respond to needs at the local level for financial resources, association-wide communication, publicity, etc.

C. The Association Council shall meet at least six (6) times a year. Notice of meetings shall be given to each member at least one week prior to the meeting.

The Council may participate in meetings of the Council, or any committee, by means of telephone conference or similar communications equipment that allows all Persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and such participation in a meeting shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. If all the participants are participating by telephone conference or similar communications equipment, the meeting shall be deemed to be held at the principal place of business of the Association President's church.

The Council may conduct official business, including the making and passing of motions, via e-mail. There shall be a written motion, a written second, and a written record of all votes in order to pass. These decisions shall be included in the minutes presented at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

- D. A quorum shall be fifty (50) percent of the Association Council members.
- E. The Officers of the Association Council shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Catoctin Association.
- F. The Association Council, empowered by the Association in meeting, may hire personnel on a contract basis for special ministries or specific projects.

VI. Commissions, Committees, Task Forces

- A. Definitions of program units are the following:
 - 1. Commissions are permanent program units of the Association charged with coordinating responsibilities within their stated areas.
 - 2. Committees are program units set up by the president or commissions for a particular function.
 - 3. Task Forces are responsible for a specified task and period of time.
- B. The Commissions and their duties are the following:
 - 1. Association Services Commission is charged with coordinating communication, nomination, and all other procedures necessary to promote the effective internal functioning of the Association.
 - 2. Church and Ministry Commission is charged with
 - a. Determining, certifying and conferring the standing of local churches and ordained ministers.
 - b. Receiving and acting upon requests from pastors and churches on behalf of persons who desire a status as Members in Discernment or Lay Ministerial Standing; and present the same to the Association Council.

- c. Receiving and acting upon applications of a local church for the ordination of a member to the ministry.
- d. Recommend to the Association Council that they convene an Ecclesiastical Council for candidates being considered for ordination or for privilege of call.
- e. Providing for the installation of a duly-called minister as pastor and teacher of a church or related ministry.
- f. Acting in cases of need for counsel or discipline of churches or ministers. In the case of an allegation of pastoral misconduct requiring possible disciplinary action, the Church and Ministry Commission, in consultation with the Conference Ministry Team and the Association president, is authorized to take such action as is deemed appropriate on behalf of the Association. (Reference: Oversight of Ministries of the United Church of Christ, Guidelines Resourcing Committees on the Ministry.)
- g. Appeals process:
 - (1) Any decision that results in a change of ministerial standing is subject to review and appeal.
 - (2) Grounds for appeal include a review of the process; potential bias of reviewers; validity of facts; additional new information.
 - (3) Appeals may be filed by the minister affected by the decision or by the individual raising concerns about the fitness of the minister. Any such appeal must be filed in writing within 30 days of the date of the decision.
 - (4) The Association Council shall be the review body or may designate a special review board to preclude potential conflicts. The Association Council shall conduct all such reviews in accordance with recommendations and guidelines found in the Manual on Ministry.
- h. Cooperating with Congregations in the placement of ministers in the Association.

C. The election and terms of Commission members are the following:

- 1. Church and Ministry Commission shall be composed of thirteen (13) persons including the chair. These persons shall be elected to serve for three-year terms, divided in such a way that one-third of the Commission is elected each

year. After serving two full consecutive terms, Commission members are ineligible for reelection for a period of one year.

2. All other Commissions shall be composed of at least five persons serving in three classes. Its members shall serve three year terms, so arranged that one class shall retire each year. After serving two full consecutive terms, members are ineligible for re-election for a period of one year.
3. At the time of annual elections at an Association meeting, the nominated Chairpersons are to be so designated on the ballot. Commissions shall elect their new Chair, for approval by the Association, prior to the Association meeting at which elections will be conducted.

VII. The Conference Minister

- A. The election, separation, and function of the Conference Minister shall be as specified by the Central Atlantic Conference.
- B. The Conference Minister or designee shall collaborate with the Association Council. In consultation with the President of the Association, he/she may call special meetings of the Association Council.
- C. The Conference Minister or designee, in consultation with the appropriate Chairperson, may convene Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces.

VIII. Meetings

- A. The Annual Meeting of this Association shall be held in the spring at such time and place as this Association may designate, or lacking such designation, as may be determined by the Association Council. The meeting will be held early enough in the spring to allow sufficient time for any resolutions to go to the Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference. Notice of any Association Meeting shall be given to each church and to each ministerial member at least four weeks prior to the date of the meeting.
- B. Each local church shall be entitled to be represented by the same number of delegates as represent that congregation in the Central Atlantic Conference. Each local church shall also choose alternate delegates according to the number to which it is entitled. Non-delegate members of local churches may attend without privilege of vote.
- C. Delegates from not less than one-fourth of the local churches which are members of this Association together with not less than one-fourth of the clergy serving in the member churches shall constitute a quorum for all meetings, except for an Ecclesiastical Council, when a quorum shall consist of a minimum of 12 clergy with standing and lay delegates from one-fourth of member churches.

- D. Other meetings or activities may be held each year for inspiration, information, and promotion as such a time and place as determined by Association Council.
- E. Special meetings may be called by the Association Council of this Association, or upon written request from the President of ten (10) local churches or at the written request of twenty-five (25) delegate members of this Association, specifying the particular business to be transacted. The Secretary shall notify the members by written notice of the time and place of the meeting, and of the items of business that will claim attention, at least four (4) weeks before the time of such meeting.
- F. The Conference Minister, other members of the Conference staff, official representatives of the General Synod and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ, interdenominational boards and agencies, and fraternal delegates of other denominations in attendance are Associate delegates in an advisory capacity with voice, but without vote.
- G. The Association may conduct meetings of the Association, either the Annual Meeting or other meetings as needed, by means of telephone conference or similar communications equipment that allows all Persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and such participation in a meeting shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. If all the participants are participating by telephone conference or similar communications equipment, the meeting shall be deemed to be held at the principal place of business of the Association. The Association may conduct official business, including the making and passing of motions and changes to the Constitution and Bylaws, in these meetings. These decisions shall be included in the minutes presented at the next regularly scheduled Association meeting.

IX. Interpretation of these Bylaws

Any problem concerning the interpretation of these Bylaws shall be resolved by the Association Council.

X. Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by the Association Council, ten (10) local churches, or any group of twenty-five (25) delegate members of this Association. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of this Association at least three months prior to the meeting of this Association at which they are to be presented. At least two months prior to the meeting of this Association, the Secretary shall transmit such proposed amendments to all ministerial members and to the appropriate lay officer of each church. Adoption of an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of those voting delegates present and voting at the meeting of the Association. Amendments may be adopted at any Annual Meeting or special meeting called for that purpose.

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