

Constitution and Bylaws
Suffolk Association
New York Conference – United Church of Christ
With Amendments as of May 2005

I. NAME

The name of this Association is the Suffolk Association of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ.

II. PURPOSES AND POWERS

The purposes of this Association are:

1. To express the oneness in Christ of the churches composing it and to make more effective their Christian witness and service.
2. To continue without break the ecclesiastical and legal identify of the Suffolk Association of Congregational Christian Churches and ministers and to continue in fellowship with any Congregational Christian local church within its boundaries which is not part of the United Church of Christ.

(The name and statistics of Congregational Christian churches which are members of this Association but which are not a part of the United Church of Christ shall be kept separately: their members shall not be counted in determining the number of delegates which the New York conference is entitled to send to the General Synod, nor shall any member of such a church be a delegate to the General Synod or hold elective office in that body. No other limitation shall be imposed or exist upon the full participation and rights of such churches or members in this Association.)

3. To determine, confer and certify to the standing of local churches of the United Church of Christ within its boundaries.
4. To determine, confer and certify to the standing of ministers of the United Church of Christ.
5. To continue to hold and to certify to the standing of all Congregational Christian churches and ministers who are members of the Association but who have not become parts of, or ministers of, the United Church of Christ.
6. To exercise the powers and perform the functions of an Ecclesiastical Council as described in the Manual on the Ministry in the United Church of Christ on request of a church or other parties concerned.

7. To cooperate with the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ and with the United Church of Christ and its boards, agencies and instrumentalities.
8. Any adjustment of Association boundaries or transfer of membership of churches between Associations shall be done in consultation with the New York Conference.
9. As the clergy, lay leaders and churches of this Association, we seek to NURTURE, MAINTAIN AND ENCOURAGE member churches and each other. Likewise, we work with other constituent bodies to INFLUENCE AND EDUCATE as an advocate for the values of our Christian faith. This we do to the end that the world will be transformed as Jesus envisioned.

III. FAITH

This Association claims as its own faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds 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 in the Statement of Faith as expressed in its doxological form.

IV. MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION

The membership of this Association shall include the following:

1. Churches
 - a. any local church whose articles or statement of faith are in essential agreement with that of this 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 Committee of Church and Ministry 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.
 - b. each member church is entitled to be represented at meetings of the Association by four delegates, at least one of whom shall be a youth delegate, and by its minister(s). Churches with membership of 400 or over shall be entitled to one additional delegate for every 100 members or fraction thereof over 400.

2. MINISTERS

- a. any person upon whom full ministerial standing is conferred through ordination by this Association in cooperation with a local church.
 - b. any ordained minister who, having been examined by the Committee on Church and Ministry and found to be qualified by virtue of educational and theological attainments, knowledge of the history, polity and practices of the United Church of Christ and their Christian faith and experience and having been recommended by the Committee, is received into the Association by a two-thirds vote of the Association.
 - e. 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.
3. Lay officers of the Association who are not delegates are members in good standing. Commissioned workers, licentiates and lay preachers with standing in the Association who are not delegates are members in good standing.

4. HONORARY AND AFFILIATED MEMBERS

- a. the Conference Minister, other members of the Conference staff, official representatives of the General Synod and of national boards, agencies and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ in attendance are Associate Delegates with voice but without vote.
- b. ministers of other denominations who wish to retain their present denominational standing and who have become pastors of a local church of the United Church of Christ, or of yoked charges or federated churches affiliated with the United Church of Christ shall be enrolled as affiliate ministerial members of the Association for the duration of these pastorates and during that period may have the rights and privileges of such membership except that they shall have no vote on matters affecting the standing of ministers or local churches. They shall not be elected as officer of the Association or Conference or General Synod, nor be a delegate to General Synod.
- c. Interim ministers, if not having standing with the Association, shall be considered Affiliate Members of the Association for the duration of their interim pastorate upon vote of the Church and Ministry Committee.

V: PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBER CHURCHES

The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modified only by its own action. Nothing in the By Laws of this Association shall destroy or limit the right of each local church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as giving to the Association now, or at any future time, the power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any local church in the management of its own affairs or to withdraw from this Association at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of real or personal property or any rights therein belonging to the church.

Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from the General Synod and the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ and this Association should be held in the highest regard by every member church of the Association.

No church may be removed from the roll of members except upon recommendation of the Committee on Church and Ministry and by two-thirds of the Association, due notice of the proposed action having been given to the parties concerned.

VI. PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBER MINISTERS

Just as member churches and the Association have, in fellowship, mutual responsibility laid upon them by God for each other's well-being and aspirations, so have member ministers and the Association. Member ministers agree to be faithful in attendance at meetings of the Association and in participation in its work.

The privilege and responsibility of living out our covenant belongs to every member of each local church. The Association diligently seeks, therefore, in concert with the New York Conference and the United Church of Christ, to provide opportunities for the members of its churches to exercise such gifts of teaching, evangelizing, healing, preaching, and administration as God has bestowed upon them

The Association recognizes that God calls certain persons to full time service for various forms of ministry in the Church. This calling is recognized by ordination, commissioning or other appropriate services of dedication.

A minister under sixty-five years of age who withdraws from active full time service in the ministry applies to the Association through the Committee on Church and Ministry for leave of absence. The Association may grant said minister a leave of absence for one year at a time. Except in special cases, such leave is not granted for more than five successive years. On recommendation of the Committee on Church and Ministry, a minister on leave of absence more than five years may be restored to membership and ministerial standing by a two-thirds vote of the Association.

A minister retiring from active ministry by reason of age or sickness shall not forfeit ministerial standing in this Association.

Any ordained minister who is in good and regular standing in this Association may receive a transfer to another ecclesiastical body upon written request to the Registrar.

No minister can be removed from the Roll of Members except upon recommendation of the Committee on Church and Ministry and by two-thirds vote of the Association, due notice of the proposed action having been given to the parties concerned.

VII. MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings of the Association shall be held in the spring and fall at such times and place as the Association may designate or, lacking such designation, as may be determined by Association Council. Notice of any meeting shall be given to each church and each ministerial member prior to the second Sunday preceding the date of the meeting.
2. Special meetings may be called by the Registrar upon request of the Association Council or upon the written request of three churches.
3. Delegates from not less than three of the member churches together with not less than three of the ministers of the Association shall constitute a quorum.

VIII. OFFICERS

The officers of this Association elected annually shall be a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, a Registrar, a Treasurer, and such other officers as the Association may deem advisable. The Moderator and Vice Moderator shall serve for a period not to exceed two terms. The Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall be alternately a lay person and a minister.

1. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the Association and at Association Council. The Moderator shall serve ex-officio on all committees.
2. The Vice Moderator shall serve as Moderator in the absence of the Moderator.
3. The Registrar shall keep the roll of the churches and ministers of the Association and record Minutes of meetings and call meetings as provided in this Constitution and By Laws. The Registrar shall issue letters transferring the standing of ministers, report annually to the Association and the New York Conference the list of churches and ministers and suggest such revisions as deemed appropriate for action by the Association.

The Registrar shall be an EX OFFICIO member of the Church and Ministry Committee with vote.

4. The Treasurer will administer the budget at the direction of the Association Council, receiving and distributing all funds.

BY LAWS

I. Association Mission - Maintenance and Nurturance

There shall be an Association Council consisting of the of the officers of the Association, the Chair of each standing committee, an appointed delegate from the Woman's Fellowship, one appointed youth delegate and one delegate from each member church. Persons with in the bounds of the Association who are mean appointed delegate from the Woman's Fellowship, one appointed youth delegate and one delegate from each member church. Persons with in the bounds of the Association who are members of the Conference Committees or the Executive Council are members EX_OFFICIO, without vote.

- a) Each church will be responsible for advising the chair of the Nominating Committee of the names of their delegate and one alternate delegate.
- b) The church's minister may serve as the delegate of a church. Likewise, a member of the church who is also the chair or a member of an Association Committee may serve as the delegate of a church. However, one vote per person is permitted.
- c) Public Relations Liaison will attend Association Council meetings with vote.

This Council shall be the coordinating body of the Association. It shall insure that the programs established by the Association are implemented by the committees. It shall compile the annual budget for presentation to the Association Annual Meeting in the Spring. It shall direct the Registrar to prepare an annual report for presentation to the Association Annual Spring Meeting. It shall act for the Association on minor matters when the Association cannot meet.

The Council shall have the power to appoint such commissions or task forces and their chairpersons as it deems necessary to carry out said mission and program. Commissions or task forces so constituted shall be of limited duration, not to exceed three years, unless so voted by the Council.

The Council shall have regular meetings at least four times per year including the Spring and Fall meetings. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Moderator. A quorum shall be ten. (Amendment 3-22-93) The moderator shall preside at all meetings and the Registrar shall serve as scribe.

The Association Council shall act for the Suffolk Association (including elections to fill vacancies) between meetings thereof, always assuming that unless such action is taken with unanimity, it must have the confirmation of the Suffolk Association. Such actions shall be reported to the Suffolk Association.

There shall be an Executive Committee of the Association Council consisting of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Registrar, Treasurer, and Chairperson of the Church & Ministry Committee, and staffed by the Metro Suffolk Association Conference Minister of the NY Conference, UCC. This Executive Committee shall act for the Association Council between meeting thereof, always assuming that unless such action is taken with unanimity, it must have the confirmation of the Suffolk Association. Such actions shall be reported to the Suffolk Association.

II. COMMITTEE ON CHURCH AND MINISTRY

1. There shall be a Committee on Church and Ministry consisting of six
Six persons, at least two of who shall be lay persons and at least two of
Who shall be ministers, for a term of three years? No member shall serve
More than two consecutive terms. No member shall serve more than two
consecutive terms.
2. The Registrar shall be an EX OFFICIO member of this committee with vote.
3. The Committee on Church and Ministry shall pass upon the credentials
of local churches applying for membership in the Association, using criteria
consistent with the descriptions set forth in Article IV of the Constitution
of the United Church of Christ and shall recommend to the Association those
which it deems to be qualified.
4. a) It shall pass upon the credentials of ministers applying for membership in
in the Association, using criteria consistent with the appropriate description,
set forth in Article V of the Constitution, Article I of the By Laws of the
United Church of Christ adopted by the General Synod of the United
Church of Christ on July 4, 1961, and shall recommend to the Association
those whom it deems to be qualified.

b) It shall receive requests from churches on behalf of persons who desire
status as “student ‘in care’ of the Association”, “licentiate”, “commissioned
worker” or “lay minister” and present the same to the Association with
recommendations.

c) The Committee shall consider the application of a local church for the
ordination of a member to the ministry. It shall examine the fitness of the
candidate and, if found qualified, certify the candidate to the Association
for ordination.

d) When requested, the Committee shall provide for the installation of a duly
minister as pastor and teacher of a church or parish, the relationship
continuing until mutually terminated.

e) Matters involving the need for counseling churches or ministers, including
questions of discipline or withdrawal of fellowship, shall be referred to the
chairpersons of the Association’s Committee on Church and Ministry or a

member of the Association whom they designate. If deemed advisable after consultation, the Committee may recommend appropriate action to the Association.

- f) The Committee shall be responsible for implementing and interpreting the By Laws of the United Church of Christ as adopted on July 4, 1961 relating to the Ministry. (Article I, 101 through 143 inclusive.)

III. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

There shall be a Nominating Committee Consisting of five persons elected for a term of one year. Members shall serve from the conclusion of the meeting at which they were elected. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms. . No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms

This Committee shall present to the Annual Meeting nominations for all offices in the Association, committee chairpersons or convenors, members and for all officers in the Conference for which the Association has responsibility and persons to fill any other office as the Association may direct. The terms of all officers to begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

IV. THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAM AND MISSION

This Committee will plan programs for the Fall and Spring Meetings of the Suffolk Association, plus any other programs or activities as requested by the Association Council.

The Committee will also be responsible for recommending mission and stewardship priorities, and will recommend funding to be voted on at the Spring Meeting of the Association.

The Committee will have responsibility for publishing the Association Directory and the Association Pulpit Supply List.

Persons who have unexpired terms on the Stewardship and Spiritual Life Committees will be given the option of finishing out their terms on the Committee for Program and Mission. As a result, this Committee may have more than six members for its first two years of existence. After that, this Committee will consist of six persons expected for a term of two years on a staggered basis. No Member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

V. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

There shall be a Personnel Committee consisting of three people, each with a term of office of three years in such manner that one term shall expire annually. Members are not to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. They shall be responsible for evaluating the

work of area staff. A member of this Committee shall represent the Association on the State Personnel Committee.

VI. PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

One individual shall be elected annually to edit Suffolk Association publications, to foster inter-church communication within the Association and to publicize events of common interest such as Association events and local church activities.

VII. BUDGET

The Association Council shall annually compile the budget for the Association which shall be voted on at the Fall meeting. The fiscal year of the Association shall run from January to December.

The Association Council shall assess per capita dues annually to be voted on at the Fall meeting.

The Treasurer and Registrar shall receive an annual stipend to be determined by the Association.

The Stewardship and Mission Committee shall be responsible for recommending the benevolence of the Association.

Scholarship funds and continuing education funds shall be recommended to the Association by the Church and Ministry Committee.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

The Constitution and By Laws 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 Amends(s) is made in writing to the current delegates of member churches and ministers at least thirty days before the proposed Amendment(s) is acted upon.

IX. 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 in the By Laws. The order of business shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise provided in the By Laws.