

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



ADOPTED OCTOBER 2, 2022

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; and
- 5) Consider itself a partner in covenantal relationship and common ministry with the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ as described in Article III of the Constitution 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 set forth in this Constitution and Bylaws;
 - (c) and which, having been recommended by the Association's 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;

- 45 2) All ordained ministers who hold ministerial standing in the Association, in
46 accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;
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48 3) All commissioned ministers of the United Church of Christ who hold church
49 membership within the Association; and
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51 4) All licensed ministers and Members-in-Discernment of the Association.
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53 **ARTICLE IV- VOTING MEMBERSHIP**

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55 Voting members of the Association shall consist of:

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57 1) Three (3) lay delegates, plus one (1) youth delegate, from each local church;
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59 2) All ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers who hold standing in the
60 Association; and
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62 3) All members of the Executive Council, and all members of Standing Committees of
63 the Association under ARTICLE X.
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65 **ARTICLE V - MEETINGS**

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67 Association meetings shall consist of Regular Meetings, the Annual Meeting, and Special
68 Meetings.
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- 70 1) **Regular Meetings.** Two regular meetings of the
71 Association shall be held each year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. The
72 Executive Council shall determine the date, hour, place and content of these
73 meetings, and shall cause notice of the meeting to be given to each Member
74 Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the date.
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76 2) **The Annual Meeting.** The fiscal year of the Association shall end December 31. The
77 Fall meeting shall be the Annual Meeting of the Association.
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79 3) **Special Meetings.** The Executive Council is empowered to call Special Meetings
80 of the Association when necessary for purposes deemed essential, provided thirty (30)
81 days' notice of such meeting be given, and further provided the purpose of the Special
82 Meeting is expressly stated by the Clerk in the call.
83
84 4) **Quorum.** Lay delegates from twelve (12) of the member churches and twelve
85 (12) ordained ministers whose standing is in this Association shall constitute a
86 quorum at any duly called meeting of this Association.
87

88 5) **Parliamentary Procedure.** All meetings shall be conducted in a congenial manner
89 and in Christian fellowship. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the
90 parliamentary procedures of the Association.
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92 6) **Meeting Format.** All meetings may be held in-person, virtually (online via an
93 Internet platform), or a combination of both, at the discretion of the Moderator, Standing
94 Committee Chair, or Task Force Chair. For meetings requiring a Call, the meeting
95 format shall be specified in the Call with sufficient information to permit timely
96 participation by the membership.
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98 **ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS**

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100 The Officers of this Association shall be a Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, and Clerk, and
101 shall report their work in writing to the membership at the Annual Meeting.
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103 1) **Moderator.** The Moderator shall be elected for a single two (2) -year term.
104 The Moderator shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of two (2) years after
105 serving a full two-year term. In the event that the Moderator is unable to complete
106 a term, the Vice Moderator shall assume the remainder of that term. To the extent
107 possible, the Moderator shall be alternately a lay member and an ordained member.
108

109 2) **Vice Moderator.** The Vice Moderator shall be elected for a single two (2) -year
110 term. The Vice Moderator shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of two (2)
111 years after serving a full two-year term. To the extent possible, the Vice Moderator
112 shall be alternately a lay member and an ordained minister. At the end of the term,
113 the Vice Moderator may be nominated as Moderator unless he/she declines.
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115 3) **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be elected for a two (2) -year term with an
116 additional two (2) -year term possible. The Treasurer shall be ineligible for
117 reelection for a period of one (1) year after serving two (2) full consecutive two (2)
118 -year terms.
119

120 4) **Clerk.** The Clerk shall be elected for a three (3) -year term with an additional
121 three (3) -year term possible. The Clerk shall be ineligible for reelection for a
122 period of one (1) year after serving two (2) full consecutive three (3) -year terms.
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124 5) **Elections.** All officers shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee.
125 Nominations may also be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting, but no
126 nomination from the floor shall be in order until consent of the nominated person,
127 and the pastoral endorsement for any lay nominee, has been obtained. Officers
128 shall be elected by a majority vote at the Annual Meeting, begin service on the first
129 day of January of the year following election, and serve until their successors are
130 elected.
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132 6) **Duties.** The duties of officers shall consist of the following:
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134 (a) The Moderator shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the
135 Association, and shall serve as Chair of the Executive Council. The
136 Moderator shall be an *ex-officio* member of all committees.
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138 (b) The Vice Moderator shall act in the absence of the Moderator, and shall
139 fill the vacancy and term of the Moderator. The Vice Moderator shall be an
140 *ex-officio* member of all committees.
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142 (c) The Treasurer shall bill and collect Maine Conference UCC and
143 Association fellowship dues; receive all monies from the Member Churches,
144 keeping records of the monies received and disbursed as approved by the
145 Association and Executive Council. The Treasurer shall report to the
146 Executive Council monthly in writing, and shall create a budget which will be
147 presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association. The Treasurer's monthly
148 reports shall be filed with the Clerk.
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150 (d) The Clerk shall keep the roll of the Churches and ministers of the
151 Association, and keep full and accurate minutes of the proceedings of the
152 Association, which records shall be carefully preserved as the permanent
153 property of the Association. The Clerk shall call meetings as provided in the
154 Constitution and Bylaws. The Clerk shall be a member *ex officio* of the
155 Church and Ministry Committee, and shall issue letters transferring the
156 standing of ministers upon the Committee's approval, and shall file an
157 annual report with the Maine Conference. The Clerk shall receive reports
158 and communications from the Conference, and shall share them with the
159 Executive Council in a timely manner. The Clerk shall communicate to
160 Member Churches as directed by the Executive Council.
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162 **ARTICLE VII - EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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164 The Executive Council of the Association is formed as follows:
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166 1) **Functions.** The Executive Council shall have general oversight of the affairs of the
167 Association, propose a program and budget to the Annual Meeting, and see that the
168 decisions of the Association are implemented. It shall serve as a business committee
169 during meetings. The Executive Council shall nominate persons to serve on the
170 Nominating Committee. Between meetings of the Association, the Executive Council
171 shall, upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, fill Association vacancies as
172 they occur. The Executive Council may, with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present,
173 declare an office or a position on a committee to be vacant due to absence, misconduct,
174 incompetence, or other inability to complete a term on the part of the person holding it,

and may appoint a replacement. The Executive Council may also appoint ad hoc committees and Task Forces.

2) **Membership/Meetings.** The Executive Council shall consist of the Officers; the Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee; the Chair of the Nominating Committee; and three at-large members. The three at-large members shall attend the Executive Council meetings to represent the general membership of the Association, and shall be elected to three (3) -year terms by a majority vote at the Annual Meeting. The at-large members shall begin service on the first day of January of the year following election, serve until their successors are elected, and shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of one (1) year after serving two (2) consecutive three-year terms. 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.

3) **Fiduciary Responsibility.** The Executive Council shall fulfill its fiduciary responsibility by monthly review and scrutiny of the Treasurer's written report, and by adherence to the Association's yearly budget approved at the Annual Meeting.

4) **Quorum.** 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 the Association's Guidelines for the Ministerial Discernment Process; a Policies and Procedure Manual developed by the Church and Ministry Committee; guidelines provided by the office of Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) 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 or alternative continuing educational activity 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) **Church and Ministry Committee.** A Church and Ministry Committee, numbering 12 members, and to the extent possible comprised equally of clergy and laity. The Church and Ministry Committee Chair is an additional Committee member and shall be elected by the Association to serve a three (3) -year term of office.

(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 Association or the Church and Ministry Committee, MESA 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;
- 2) Grant, reject or withdraw standing of Member 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 or transfer of standing for ordained and commissioned ministers, and review such standing regularly;
- 5) Conduct review and discipline of ministers holding standing in the 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; and
- 6) Support and nurture Member Churches and ministers.

(b) The work of the Church and Ministry Committee shall be done in accordance with the UCC Manual on Ministry, a Policies and Procedure Manual developed by the Committee and approved by the Executive Council, and the Association's Guidelines for the Ministerial Discernment Process.

(c) The work of the Committee shall be reported to the Association at its two regular meetings and to the Executive Council monthly.

(d) The Church and Ministry Committee shall meet a minimum of ten (10) times per year, with special meetings as necessary and shall report their work in writing to the membership at the Annual Meeting.

2) **Nominating Committee.** A Nominating Committee, consisting of three (3) members, which shall elect its own Chair. The Nominating Committee shall develop and maintain a list of prospective participants, both laypersons and ministers, in the Association program and shall:

(a) Prepare a slate of officers, at-large members of the Executive Council, representatives to Conference Committees, and Association Committee Chairs 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 Chairs of the Committees regarding their suggestions for new members on their Committees;

(c) Receive from each incumbent Committee a name for chair for coming vacancies;

(d) Secure the consent of the nominees prior to the meeting at which their names will be presented for election; and

(e) 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) **Terms 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 Standing Committee member shall serve more than two (2) full consecutive terms.

4) **Quorum.** A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Committee's members, and is required to conduct the business of the Committee.

5) **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

1) **Functions.** The Association shall meet and act as an Ecclesiastical Council:

(a) for the examination and ordination of candidates for the Christian ministry or for privilege of call;

(b) for the examination and commissioning of candidates for commissioned ministry;

(c) for the reception of a church into Association membership; or

(d) for appeals on procedural grounds from a decision of the Executive Council to terminate or suspend the ministerial standing of an ordained minister with standing in the Association, and after an unsuccessful appeal to the Executive Council on procedural grounds from a three fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Church and Ministry committee to terminate or suspend.

2) **Membership.** Membership of an Ecclesiastical Council shall be composed of:

(a) One (1) lay delegate from each Member Church;

(b) Ministers with standing in this Association; and

(c) Officers and Standing Committee members of the Association.

3) **Method of Call.** When requested by the Chair 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 of 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 at least thirty (30) days before the meeting.

4) **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 Ecclesiastical Council.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended or revised at any Regular or Special 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 ADOPTED OCTOBER 2, 2022