CONSTITUTION FOR THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION
OF THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Amended 1997, 2009 and 2016

Mission Statement

We are called to Witness the grace of God expressed by Christ Jesus with
Encouragement, Assistance and Resourcing to local congregations.

PREAMBLE

The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God
and Savior; acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession; looks to
the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to
prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world; 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; affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to
make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and
in purity of heart before God; in accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the
practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, recognizes two sacraments: Baptism
and the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion; and

The Western Association has been authorized by the action of the Illinois Conference of
the United Church of Christ, and

The Western Association has met in Annual Meeting and has adopted a Mission
Statement. The following provisions are adopted as the constitution of the Western
Association of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE I – Name
The name of this Association shall be the Western Association of the Illinois
Conference of the United Church of Christ, herein referred to as the Association.

ARTICLE II – Duration
The duration of the Association is: perpetual.

ARTICLE III – Purpose and Function
A. This Association shall be comprised of United Church of Christ member
congregations and ministers, within its geographic boundaries, who feel called by Christ
to enter into a common covenant and mission, in order that they might better serve the
work of Christ in this world. The purpose of the Association is further outlined in the
Mission Statement of the Western Association of the Illinois Conference of the United
Church of Christ.

B. The Association shall carry on the work of the former Northern and Central
Association of the Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ insofar as it is appropriate
to this Association of the United Church of Christ.

C. The functions of the Association shall be:
   1. To provide for ecclesiastical standing of local churches and ordained,
      licensed, and commissioned ministers.
   2. To foster and fulfill within the sphere of the Association the life and mission
      priorities of the United Church of Christ.
   3. To provide for area groupings of churches which shall be called Mission
      Clusters.
   4. To establish and/or recognize networks, task forces, committees, and other
      program units.
   5. To empower local congregations and Mission Clusters to fulfill their missions.
   6. To contract for such professional services as needed within the Association,
      except for the services governed by the Constitution of the Illinois
      Conference.
   7. To coordinate and/or plan for metropolitan or regional ministries.
   8. To assist and guide clergy and local churches in pastoral placement and
      positive pastor-church relationships.
   9. To review, evaluate, and renew or terminate projects funded by the
      Association, such as those approved by the Leonhart Committee.
   10. To relate to ecumenical bodies within the Association.
   11. To join the Illinois Conference in issuing a call to the Associate Conference
       Minister (s) who will serve as a staff person (s) for the Association.
ARTICLE IV – Local Congregations

A. The basic unit of the life and organization of the Association is the local church. The Association affirms the rights and responsibilities of the local church as outlined in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.

B. The Local Churches of the Association and the wider United Church of Christ have, in covenantal relationship, a mutual God-given responsibility for the labors, well-being and needs and aspirations of its Local Churches.

B. The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Because of our covenantal nature, actions by, decisions of, or advice emanating from the General Synod, the Conference, the Association, and the Mission Clusters should be held in the highest regard by every local church.

ARTICLE V – Membership

A. The membership of the Association shall consist of all local churches, and all Ordained, Commissioned, and Licensed ministers who hold and are granted standing or recognition by the Association.

ARTICLE VI – Organization

A. ELECTED OFFICERS

The officers of the Association shall be Moderator, Vice-Moderator and Secretary. They shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year.

B. PROGRAM

The program of the Association shall be carried forward by the Association Council, the several Mission Clusters, committees, task forces and networks of the Association. This shall be done in consultation with the Associate Conference Minister (s).

C. ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

1. The Association shall have an Association Council, composed of the following members:

a. The elected officers of the Association.

b. Two youth members (age 22 or younger) elected by the Association at the annual meeting for terms of one year. No such representative shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

c. One ministerial and one lay representative, chosen by each Mission Cluster for terms of two years. These two representatives shall be chosen
in such a way that the terms of one representative shall expire every year. No such representative shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

d. The chairperson or designees, of each standing committee of the Association shall be voting members ex officio.

e. The following shall be non-voting members of the Association Council:
The Conference Minister, Associate Conference Minister(s), other professional staff members of the Conference or the Association, a representative of each network group recognized by the Association, chairpersons of task forces, and members of national boards and commissions who reside within the Association or who hold ministerial standing in the Association.

2. Each member of the Association Council shall be a member of a church which holds standing in the Association.

3. The Moderator shall be chairperson of the Association and Association Council and the Vice-Moderator shall be vice-chairperson.

4. The Association Council shall administer the affairs of the Association between meetings of the Association and shall be the trustees of all Association assets.

5. The Association shall have an Executive Committee which shall have such powers as shall be designated to it by the Association, the Association Council, and this constitution. The Executive Committee shall consist of:

   a. The elected officers of the Association

   b. One person selected by the Association Council from among its members

   c. The Associate Conference Minister(s), who shall not be a voting member.

D. MISSION CLUSTERS
For the purpose of strengthening program and fellowship, the Association shall provide for the establishment of Mission Clusters according to the provisions of the Bylaws.

E. STANDING COMMITTEES
The Association, in assuming its responsibility to elect its leadership and provide standing for churches and individuals, shall authorize four standing committees. A standing committee is intended to address specific ongoing areas of policy and procedure to fulfill the mission of the Association. These committees, which shall
be accountable to the Association, shall be the Nominating Committee, the
Church and Ministry Committee, the Planning Committee and the Leonhart
Committee. The composition, function, and procedures of these committees
shall be as provided for in the Bylaws.

1. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for presenting a slate of
nominees for positions as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws of the
Association to be presented to the full Association at its annual business
meeting.

2. The Church and Ministry Committee, in accordance with provisions of the
Constitution and Bylaws, shall be responsible for granting, reviewing,
transferring and terminating the standing of churches and ordained, licensed,
and commissioned ministers of this Association.

3. The Planning Committee, for Association Meetings, in accordance with the
provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws, shall be responsible for planning
the Annual Meeting, the Fall Meeting of the Association, or any special
meetings as assigned by the Association Council.

4. The Leonhart Committee, in accordance with the provisions of the Leonhart
endowment of the Western Association, shall be responsible for the annual
review of grant requests and distribution of grant funding to local Western
Association congregations for the purposes of educational and evangelistic
programs.

F. TASK FORCES, NETWORKS, AND OTHER PROGRAM UNITS
The Association shall form and/or authorize task forces, networks and other
program units as provided for in the Bylaws as needed.

G. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES
1. The Association, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, notice of
the proposal having been given in the call of the meeting, may request the
Illinois Conference to exercise the functions of the Association.

2. Any adjustment of Association membership or transfer of membership of
churches between Associations shall be done by the Association in
consultation with the churches involved and with the approval of the Illinois
Conference.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS
A. The control of the affairs of the Association shall be vested in the voting
members.
The Annual meeting of the Association shall be held prior to the annual meeting of the Conference, at a time and place to be determined by the Association Council. In addition to regular Association business, items of Conference concern shall be presented for consideration and recommendation where possible.

C. Special meetings may be called by the Association Council. Special meetings may also be called by the Council on petition of at least five local churches holding standing in the Association. The Association Council shall issue a call for a special meeting within fifteen (15) days of a petition being presented to the Secretary of the Association. Only matters specified in the call shall be acted upon at a special meeting.

D. The Association Secretary shall issue all notices of both regular and special meetings. Such notices shall be transmitted to the ministers and churches of the Association at least thirty days prior to the proposed date of the meeting. In the case of a special meeting, the specific items to be considered shall be clearly stated in the call.

E. The voting membership of the Association shall consist of the ordained, commissioned, and licensed ministers holding standing in the Association and two (2) duly elected lay delegates and one (1) youth delegate (age 22 or under) from each local church.

F. A quorum shall consist of 50 voting members representing a majority of the Mission Clusters and at least 25% of the churches of the Association.

G. The Conference Minister and other conference staff persons in attendance are Associate Members with voice but without vote unless they hold standing in the Association.

H. Members of the Association Council, standing committees, task forces and recognized networks who are not duly elected delegates shall be associate members of the Association with voice but without vote.

I. Other persons may be granted voice without vote by action of the Association.

ARTICLE VIII – Resolution

A. All resolutions to be presented at a meeting of the Association shall be received in the Association office no later than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting, and shall follow the format for resolutions established by the Illinois Conference.
B. All resolutions to be considered for adoption by the Association shall be in possession of the churches no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting.

C. All resolutions submitted after the established deadline, but prior to the Association Meeting will be presented to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall determine if the resolution is placed on the agenda of the Association meeting.

D. Emergency resolutions presented at an Association meeting shall be accompanied by the signatures of 25% of the delegates present and voting.

ARTICLE IX – Amendments

A. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by the Association Council or by at least ten local churches holding standing in the Association. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Association Council at least sixty (60) days prior to the Association meeting at which they are to be considered. Notice of such amendments shall be transmitted in writing, to the churches and ministers of this Association at least thirty (30) days prior to the Association meeting at which they are to be considered.

B. The Amendments to the Constitution of the Association shall be considered in effect at such time as they are adopted by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting delegates at a duly called regular or special meeting of this Association.

ARTICLE X – Bylaws

A. The Association shall adopt a set of Bylaws. Such Bylaws shall further define the operating procedures, accepted customs and corporate life of the Association.

B. The Bylaws of the Association shall not contradict the Constitution of the Association. If any portion of the Bylaws is found to be in contradiction to any portion of the Constitution, all pertinent portions of the Constitution shall supersede any statements made in the Bylaws.

A. The By Laws of the Association shall be considered in effect at such time as they are adopted by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting delegates at a duly called regular or special meeting of this Association.

Approved by Association Action, April 23, 2016