

1 WESTERN ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS
2 CONSTITUTION FOR THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION
3 OF THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
4 Amended 1997, 2009 and 2016
5
6

7 **Mission Statement**

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

10
11 **PREAMBLE**

12
13 The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God
14 and Savior; acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession; looks to
15 the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to
16 prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world; claims as its own the faith of the
17 historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of
18 the Protestant Reformers; affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to
19 make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and
20 in purity of heart before God; in accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the
21 practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, recognizes two sacraments: Baptism
22 and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion; and
23

24 The Western Association has been authorized by the action of the Illinois Conference of
25 the United Church of Christ, and
26

27 The Western Association has met in Annual Meeting and has adopted a Mission
28 Statement. The following provisions are adopted as the constitution of the Western
29 Association of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ.
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32 **ARTICLE I – Name**

33 The name of this Association shall be the **Western Association** of the Illinois
34 Conference of the United Church of Christ, herein referred to as the Association.
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37 **ARTICLE II – Duration**

38 The duration of the Association is: perpetual.
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41 **ARTICLE III – Purpose and Function**

42 A. This Association shall be comprised of United Church of Christ member
43 congregations and ministers, within its geographic boundaries, who feel called by Christ

44 to enter into a common covenant and mission, in order that they might better serve the
45 work of Christ in this world. The purpose of the Association is further outlined in the
46 Mission Statement of the Western Association of the Illinois Conference of the United
47 Church of Christ.

48

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

52

53 C. The functions of the Association shall be:

54

55 1. To provide for ecclesiastical standing of local churches and ordained,
56 licensed, and commissioned ministers.

57

58 2. To foster and fulfill within the sphere of the Association the life and mission
59 priorities of the United Church of Christ.

60

61 3. To provide for area groupings of churches which shall be called Mission
62 Clusters.

63

64 4. To establish and/or recognize networks, task forces, committees, and other
65 program units.

66

67 5. To empower local congregations and Mission Clusters to fulfill their missions.

68

69 6. To contract for such professional services as needed within the Association,
70 except for the services governed by the Constitution of the Illinois
71 Conference.

72

73 7. To coordinate and/or plan for metropolitan or regional ministries.

74

75 8. To assist and guide clergy and local churches in pastoral placement and
76 positive pastor-church relationships.

77

78 9. To review, evaluate, and renew or terminate projects funded by the
79 Association, such as those approved by the Leonhart Committee.

80

81 10. To relate to ecumenical bodies within the Association.

82

83 11. To join the Illinois Conference in issuing a call to the Associate Conference
84 Minister (s) who will serve as a staff person (s) for the Association.

85

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88 **ARTICLE IV – Local Congregations**

- 89 A. The basic unit of the life and organization of the Association is the local
90 church. The Association affirms the rights and responsibilities of the local
91 church as outlined in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.
92
93
94 B. The Local Churches of the Association and the wider United Church of Christ
95 have, in covenantal relationship, a mutual God-given responsibility for the labors,
96 well-being and needs and aspirations of its Local Churches.
97
98 B. The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own
99 action. Because of our covenantal nature, actions by, decisions of, or advice
100 emanating from the General Synod, the Conference, the Association, and the
101 Mission Clusters should be held in the highest regard by every local church.
102

103 **ARTICLE V – Membership**

- 104 A. The membership of the Association shall consist of all local churches, and all
105 Ordained, Commissioned, and Licensed ministers who hold and are granted
106 standing or recognition by the Association.
107
108

109 **ARTICLE VI – Organization**

110 A. ELECTED OFFICERS

111 The officers of the Association shall be Moderator, Vice-Moderator and Secretary.
112 They shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year.
113

114 B. PROGRAM

115 The program of the Association shall be carried forward by the Association
116 Council, the several Mission Clusters, committees, task forces and networks of
117 the Association. This shall be done in consultation with the Associate Conference
118 Minister (s).
119

120 C. ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

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

123
124 a. The elected officers of the Association.
125

126 b. Two youth members (age 22 or younger) elected by the Association at the
127 annual meeting for terms of one year. No such representative shall serve
128 more than two consecutive terms.
129

130 c. One ministerial and one lay representative, chosen by each Mission
131 Cluster for terms of two years. These two representatives shall be chosen

132 in such a way that the terms of one representative shall expire every year.
133 No such representative shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

134
135 d. The chairperson or designees, of each standing committee of the
136 Association shall be voting members ex officio.

137
138 e. The following shall be non-voting members of the Association Council:
139 The Conference Minister, Associate Conference Minister (s), other
140 professional staff members of the Conference or the Association, a
141 representative of each network group recognized by the Association,
142 chairpersons of task forces, and members of national boards and
143 commissions who reside within the Association or who hold ministerial
144 standing in the Association.

145
146 2. Each member of the Association Council shall be a member of a church which
147 holds standing in the Association.

148
149 3. The Moderator shall be chairperson of the Association and Association Council
150 and the Vice-Moderator shall be vice-chairperson.

151
152 4. The Association Council shall administer the affairs of the Association
153 between meetings of the Association and shall be the trustees of all
154 Association assets.

155
156 5. The Association shall have an Executive Committee which shall have such
157 powers as shall be designated to it by the Association, the Association
158 Council, and this constitution. The Executive Committee shall consist of:

159
160 a. The elected officers of the Association

161
162 b. One person selected by the Association Council from among its members

163
164 c. The Associate Conference Minister(s), who shall not be a voting member.

165
166 D. MISSION CLUSTERS

167 For the purpose of strengthening program and fellowship, the Association shall
168 provide for the establishment of Mission Clusters according to the provisions of
169 the Bylaws.

170
171 E. STANDING COMMITTEES

172 The Association, in assuming its responsibility to elect its leadership and provide
173 standing for churches and individuals, shall authorize four standing committees.
174 A standing committee is intended to address specific ongoing areas of policy and
175 procedure to fulfill the mission of the Association. These committees, which shall

176 be accountable to the Association, shall be the Nominating Committee, the
177 Church and Ministry Committee, the Planning Committee and the Leonhart
178 Committee. The composition, function, and procedures of these committees
179 shall be as provided for in the Bylaws.

- 181 1. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for presenting a slate of
182 nominees for positions as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws of the
183 Association to be presented to the full Association at its annual business
184 meeting.
- 185
- 186 2. The Church and Ministry Committee, in accordance with provisions of the
187 Constitution and Bylaws, shall be responsible for granting, reviewing,
188 transferring and terminating the standing of churches and ordained, licensed,
189 and commissioned ministers of this Association.
- 190
- 191 3. The Planning Committee, for Association Meetings, in accordance with the
192 provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws, shall be responsible for planning
193 the Annual Meeting, the Fall Meeting of the Association, or any special
194 meetings as assigned by the Association Council.
- 195
- 196 4. The Leonhart Committee, in accordance with the provisions of the Leonhart
197 endowment of the Western Association, shall be responsible for the annual
198 review of grant requests and distribution of grant funding to local Western
199 Association congregations for the purposes of educational and evangelistic
200 programs.

201

202 F. TASK FORCES, NETWORKS, AND OTHER PROGRAM UNITS

203 The Association shall form and/or authorize task forces, networks and other
204 program units as provided for in the Bylaws as needed.

205

206 G. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

- 207 1. The Association, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, notice of
208 the proposal having been given in the call of the meeting, may request the
209 Illinois Conference to exercise the functions of the Association.
- 210
- 211 2. Any adjustment of Association membership or transfer of membership of
212 churches between Associations shall be done by the Association in
213 consultation with the churches involved and with the approval of the Illinois
214 Conference.

215

216 **ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS**

- 217 A. The control of the affairs of the Association shall be vested in the voting
218 members.
- 219

- 220
221 B. The Annual meeting of the Association shall be held prior to the annual
222 meeting of the Conference, at a time and place to be determined by the
223 Association Council. In addition to regular Association business, items of
224 Conference concern shall be presented for consideration and recommendation
225 where possible.
226
227 C. Special meetings may be called by the Association Council. Special meetings
228 may also be called by the Council on petition of at least five local churches
229 holding standing in the Association. The Association Council shall issue a call for
230 a special meeting within fifteen (15) days of a petition being presented to the
231 Secretary of the Association. **Only matters specified in the call shall be**
232 **acted upon at a special meeting.**
233
234 D. The Association Secretary shall issue all notices of both regular and special
235 meetings. Such notices shall be transmitted to the ministers and churches of the
236 Association at least thirty days prior to the proposed date of the meeting. In the
237 case of a special meeting, the specific items to be considered shall be clearly
238 stated in the call.
239
240 E. The voting membership of the Association shall consist of the ordained,
241 Commissioned, and licensed ministers holding standing in the Association and
242 two (2) duly elected lay delegates and one (1) youth delegate (age 22 or under)
243 from each local church.
244
245 F. A quorum shall consist of 50 voting members representing a majority of the
246 Mission Clusters and at least 25% of the churches of the Association.
247
248 G. The Conference Minister and other conference staff persons in attendance are
249 Associate Members with voice but without vote unless they hold standing in the
250 Association.
251
252 H. Members of the Association Council, standing committees, task forces and
253 recognized networks who are not duly elected delegates shall be associate
254 members of the Association with voice but without vote.
255
256 I. Other persons may be granted voice without vote by action of the Association.
257
258

259 **ARTICLE VIII – Resolution**

- 260 A. All resolutions to be presented at a meeting of the Association shall be
261 received in the Association office no later than sixty (60) days prior to the
262 meeting, and shall follow the format for resolutions established by the Illinois
263 Conference.

- 264
265 B. All resolutions to be considered for adoption by the Association shall be in
266 possession of the churches no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the
267 meeting.
268
269 C. All resolutions submitted after the established deadline, but prior to the
270 Association Meeting will be presented to the Executive Committee. The
271 Executive Committee shall determine if the resolution is placed on the agenda of
272 the Association meeting.
273
274 D. Emergency resolutions presented at an Association meeting shall be
275 accompanied by the signatures of 25% of the delegates present and voting.
276
277

278 **ARTICLE IX – Amendments**
279

- 280 A. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by the Association Council or
281 by at least ten local churches holding standing in the Association. Proposed
282 amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Association Council at least sixty
283 (60) days prior to the Association meeting at which they are to be considered.
284 Notice of such amendments shall be transmitted in writing, to the churches and
285 ministers of this Association at least thirty (30) days prior to the Association
286 meeting at which they are to be considered.
287
288 B. The Amendments to the Constitution of the Association shall be considered in
289 effect at such time as they are adopted by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of
290 the voting delegates at a duly called regular or special meeting of this
291 Association.
292
293

294 **ARTICLE X – Bylaws**
295

- 296 A. The Association shall adopt a set of Bylaws. Such Bylaws shall further define the
297 operating procedures, accepted customs and corporate life of the Association.
298
299 B. The Bylaws of the Association shall not contradict the Constitution of the
300 Association. If any portion of the Bylaws is found to be in contradiction to any
301 portion of the Constitution, all pertinent portions of the Constitution shall
302 supersede any statements made in the Bylaws.
303
304 A. The By Laws of the Association shall be considered in effect at such time as they
305 are adopted by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting delegates at a duly
306 called regular or special meeting of this Association.
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Approved by Association Action, April 23, 2016