

Bylaws
of
The Eastern Association
Southern California Nevada Conference
United Church of Christ

As revised October 29, 2022

1. NAME AND AFFILIATION

- 1.1. The name of this Association is the Eastern Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ. It succeeds and continues without break portions of the Foothills Association, Orange Association, and San Bernardino Association as determined by the Board of Directors of the Southern California Nevada Conference.

2. PURPOSE AND POWERS

- 2.1. The purposes and powers of the Association are:
 - 2.1.1. To stimulate the spiritual life and mission interests of the churches of the Association in cooperation with the Conference, and through the Conference with the United Church of Christ and its boards, agencies and Covenanted Ministries, and to provide avenues of Christian community and service among and between the members of the churches of the Association.
 - 2.1.2. To determine, confer, and certify the Standing of Local Churches of the United Church of Christ within its boundaries.
 - 2.1.3. To determine, confer, and certify the Standing of Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ.
 - 2.1.4. Any adjustments of Association boundaries shall be carried out in consultation with the Conference Minister and with the approval of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, as set forth by the UCC Constitution and Bylaws.

3. FAITH

- 3.1. This Association 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, particularly as that faith is expressed in the Preamble of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ and in the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1. The following are members in the Eastern Association of Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ:

4.1.1. **Local Churches**

Local Churches with active Standing in the United Church of Christ that are located (e.g. incorporated) within the boundaries of the Association.

4.1.2. **Ministers**

United Church of Christ Authorized Ministers with current Ministerial Standing in the Eastern Association. The types of and processes for UCC Ministerial Authorization and Standing are outlined and defined by the current Manual on Ministry.

5. PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBER CHURCHES

- 5.1. Since the **Local Churches and Ministers** of the United Church of Christ constitute the Association, the responsible participation of member churches, lay persons, and **Ministers** is necessary to carry out the purposes of the Association.
- 5.2. The autonomy of the **Local Church** is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing in the Bylaws of the 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 its right to withdraw from the Association **by following the processes for doing so as described the Local Churches bylaws.**
- 5.3. A **Local Church** in this Association shall have the responsibility of participating in meetings of the Association: faithfully supporting Our Church's Wider Mission; paying of the Southern California Nevada Conference per capita dues; supplying information requested by the Conference or Association; holding actions, decisions or advice from General Synod, a Conference or Association in highest regard; recognizing the Association as an instrumentality of all the churches in their common life and service; and using the staff and facilities of the Association or Conference in order to strengthen the life and work of the churches and the Association.
- 5.4. The **Standing** and membership of a **Local Church** in this Association may be voluntarily terminated by the **Local Church** according to the **Local Church's** process. The **Local Church** is encouraged to consult with the Association Registrar and Conference Minister prior to terminating its affiliation. The **Local Church** must notify the Association Registrar and Conference Minister **following the Local Church's** action.

- 5.5. The Standing of a Local Church in this Association may be involuntarily terminated at any meeting of this Association by a majority vote of the voting membership of this Association. The process of reviewing a Local Church's Standing is serious business and is not done in haste. The process begins with the Committee on Ministry and the Local Church reviewing the covenantal expectations of a Local Church. If covenantal expectations of a Local Church have been repeatedly infringed or the Local Church does not engage with the Committee on Ministry, the Conference Minister and Conference Board of Directors shall be consulted and appropriate action determined. The leadership of the Local Church shall be notified at least 60 days prior to the Association meeting at which an action to end the Standing of the Local Church is proposed for vote. The proposed vote shall be specified in the call to the meeting at which the action is taken.

6. PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBER MINISTERS

- 6.1. Ministerial members of the Association are expected to attend its meetings and cooperate in its work to the extent of their ability, and to maintain active membership in a church of the Association. Each Minister shall complete an annual Information Review and complete Boundary Training as a requirement to maintain Ministerial Standing, as set forth and defined by the Committee on Ministry
- 6.2. Ministerial members of the Association may make request of the Committee on Ministry to engage in a discernment process when changes are needed to their form of Ministerial Standing because of life circumstance or when they are no longer engaged public ministry. The Manual on Ministry guides the options and discernment processes.
- 6.3. Any Ordained Minister who has current Standing in this Association must request transfer of Standing to the Association of the Local Church in which they have their membership. Transfer of Standing occurs upon written request to the Registrar of Committee on Ministry, provided that the Ordained Minister is not currently engaged in a Fitness Review or Program of Growth.

7. MEETINGS

- 7.1. Regular meetings of the Association shall be held in Spring which shall be the Annual Meeting at which time elections will be held and in Fall at which the budget will be adopted. Notice of any Association meeting shall be given to each Local Church and each Minister at least 30 days preceding the date of the meeting. A resolution may be submitted to the Executive Committee by any member or church with active Standing in the Eastern Association. The resolution must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the spring or fall Association meeting at which the resolution is to be considered.
- 7.2. Special meetings, including Ecclesiastical Councils, shall be called by the Registrar upon request of the Executive Committee or Committee on Ministry, or upon written request of the official boards of five member churches, which shall contain a clear statement of the reasons for the call.

- 7.3. At the discretion of the Executive Committee, any regular or special meeting of the Association may be held by, or may permit some or all members to attend by, communications equipment that allows members to substantially participate in the meeting, including reading and/or hearing the proceedings of the meeting concurrently, to vote concurrently, and which allows the Association to verify that each member participating remotely is a member. The Association must maintain records of the votes taken at meetings held by communications equipment. A written consent of each member participating remotely must be on file with the Association.
- 7.4. Voting rights of members
- 7.4.1. Each member church is entitled to be represented at meetings of the Association by three (3) lay delegates who are entitled to voice and vote.
- 7.4.2. Every Minister (as provided in §4.1.2) of the Association is entitled to voice and vote.
- 7.4.3. Lay officers of the Association who are not delegates of their Local Churches are entitled to voice and vote.
- 7.4.4. The Conference Minister, other members of the Conference Ministry Ordained Staff (when not ministerial members of the Association), and professional staff persons of judicatories, boards, agencies or instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ in attendance at an Association meeting shall have voice but no vote.
- 7.4.5. Twenty voting members, representing at least one-third of the active churches of the Association shall constitute a quorum. Active churches are those who have done either of the following within the previous 24 months: sent one or more delegates and/or pastors to an Association meeting or Ecclesiastical Council, or paid per capita dues to the Conference.
- 7.5. The Association acts as an Ecclesiastical Council. An Ecclesiastical Council is a meeting of the Association for the purpose of considering the readiness of a ministerial candidate for ordination. The Executive Committee shall invite all the churches and Ministers of the Association, together with its officers, to act as an Ecclesiastical Council, whose decision shall become the decision of the Association.

8. OFFICERS

- 8.1. The officers of this Association shall be a Past Moderator, Moderator, a Vice Moderator (at least one of whom shall be a lay person and at least one of whom shall be an Ordained Minister) a Treasurer, Registrar, Historian, and such other officers as the Association may deem advisable. All officers shall be members of Local Churches in the Association.
- 8.2. The duties of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator and the Treasurer shall be such as usually pertain to such offices. The Vice Moderator shall be the Moderator elect. The Moderator shall serve one term as Moderator followed by one term as Past Moderator. The position of Moderator shall alternate between Ordained Ministers and laypersons whenever possible.

- 8.3. The Historian shall preserve historical records of the Association and shall encourage the churches to preserve their own records, reports and documents of historical value, and to forward to the Conference Historian significant records for placing in proper archives.
- 8.4. The Registrar shall preserve records of all proceedings of the Association, shall issue calls for all meetings, shall make an annual report to the Association, shall conduct correspondence, shall maintain the minutes of the Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the **Committee on Ministry**. A record of Association Membership, **Local Churches** and **Authorized Ministers**, shall be maintained by the Registrar who shall submit reports to the Association and Conference regarding **Standing**.
- 8.5. Term of office shall be for one year beginning June 1 of each year. After one full term, the Past Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of one term. The Treasurer, Registrar, and Historian shall be eligible to serve consecutive terms if properly nominated and elected.

9. COMMITTEES

9.1. **Executive Committee**

- 9.1.1. There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the Officers of the Association, the chairpersons of the Association Committees, and such other representatives of United Church of Christ organizations at the Association level recognized by the Association, and three (3) members-at-large elected by the Association for a three (3) year term so arranged that one (1) member-at-large shall be elected annually. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by the Moderator.
- 9.1.2. **Any member of the Executive shall be eligible for re-election for up to three terms if nominated. Following the third term, a member must take at least a year of sabbath before being nominated to an association committee.**
- 9.1.3. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for implementing all programs voted by the Association. It shall be responsible for creating various programs designed to enable **Local Churches** and **Ministers** to know and to discharge their mission more effectively. It shall develop the agenda for Association meetings.
- 9.1.4. The **Executive** Committee shall meet **at least** every two (2) months. Special meetings of the Committee may be called by the Moderator or the Vice Moderator. A quorum shall consist of one half (½) its members.

- 9.1.5. At the discretion of the Moderator, any meeting of the Executive Committee may be held by, or may permit some or all members of the Executive Committee to attend by, communications equipment that allows members to substantially participate in the meeting, including reading and/or hearing the proceedings of the meeting concurrently, to propose or object to a specific action taken by the Executive Committee, to vote concurrently, and which allows the Executive Committee to verify that each member participating remotely is a member. The Executive Committee must maintain records of the votes taken at meetings held by communications equipment. A written consent of each member of the Executive Committee participating remotely must be on file with the Association.
- 9.1.6. The Executive Committee shall present a budget to a fall meeting of the Association and recommend procedures for securing funds. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year (January 1–December 31.)
- 9.1.7. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill all vacancies in elected offices until the next Association Annual Meeting.

9.2. **Committee on Ministry**

- 9.2.1. There shall be a **Committee on Ministry** consisting of at least twelve (12) persons elected to serve for three (3) years; at least four (4) shall be elected annually. The Nominating Committee shall give careful concern to the skills and spiritual maturity needed for this work, and shall seek skilled, faithful people from diverse perspectives, including perspectives informed by diversity of race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, geography, and disability. The Nominating Committee shall seek a balance of clergy and lay people serving the Committee. The term of office shall begin June 1.
- 9.2.2. The **Committee on Ministry** shall meet at least every two (2) months.
- 9.2.3. A member of **Committee on Ministry** shall be eligible for re-election for a second term if nominated. Following the second term, a member must take at least a year of sabbath before being nominated to an association committee.
- 9.2.4. The Registrar shall be an ex-officio member **Committee on Ministry** with voice and vote and be the secretary.
- 9.2.5. The **Committee on Ministry** shall be responsible for matters pertaining to policy and be responsible for implementing and interpreting the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ relating to the Ministry (Article 1, 101 through 142 inclusive). The **Committee** shall be guided by the current Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ. The **Committee on Ministry** shall attend to the nurture, support, and examination of candidates for Authorized Ministry and Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ as well as the nurture, support, and discernment with congregations seeking Standing as a Local Church of the United Church of Christ. The **Committee on Ministry** will also attend to the care, nurture, and support of Authorized Ministers and Local Churches in accordance with practices described by the Manual on Ministry and the Manual on Church

9.2.6. The Committee on Ministry participates covenantally with the Conference Ethics Team. The Conference Ethics Team oversees the support and accountability processes of Fitness Reviews and follow the processes described in the Manual on Ministry in response to questions regarding unhealthy behavior or misconduct of a person with Ministerial Standing in light of the UCC Ministerial Code. Covenantally, the Ethics Team acts on behalf of the Committee on Ministry and the Association and shares the final outcome of the Fitness Review with the Committee on Ministry at the conclusion.

9.3. Nominating Committee

9.3.1. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of six (6) persons elected for a term of three (3) years and so arranged that two members shall be elected annually. The term of office shall begin June 1. The Moderator shall convene the first meeting at which the Committee shall elect its chairperson from among its elected members.

9.3.2. Any member of the Nominating Committee shall be eligible for re-election for a second term if nominated. Following the second term, a member must take at least a year of sabbath before being nominated to an association committee.

9.3.3. The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of this committee with voice and vote.

9.3.4. Subject to provisions of §8, this Committee shall nominate persons for: all offices in the Association where there are vacancies, all officers in the Conference for which the Association has elective responsibility, and such other offices as the Association may direct.

9.3.5. Nominations shall be made in such a way that the leadership of the Association shall possess the skills and spiritual maturity needed for their role and reflect the cultural and geographic diversity of the Association.

9.3.6. The Committee shall consult with member churches for suggested names for candidates for all offices after providing clarity of the qualifications and skills needed for the role.

9.3.7. Special committees may be appointed as needed by the Moderator or Executive Committee.

10.AMENDMENTS

10.1. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of those present and voting at any regular meeting of the Association, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, provided that notice thereof and a copy of such proposed amendments is sent in writing to the member Local Churches and Ministers at least thirty (30) days before the proposed amendment or amendments are acted upon.

11. PROCEDURES

- 11.1. Business shall be transacted by a majority of those present and voting at any duly called meeting, except as otherwise provided in the Bylaws.
- 11.2. The Constitution of the United Church of Christ, the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ, and the Manual on Church of the United Church of Christ shall provide standards for all ecclesiastical procedures. Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall govern all parliamentary procedures unless otherwise provided for in this document.
- 11.3. These Bylaws shall be in force when adopted by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote at a meeting of Association called for that purpose.