

**THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

POLICY MANUAL

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POLICY MANUAL

Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ

(Affirmed by the Board of Directors on 06 March 2010)

These policies, rules, procedures and guidelines shall not supersede the Bylaws of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ or the Minnesota Statutes 317A.

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THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mission Statement of the Minnesota Conference

The Mission of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ is to increase love of God and neighbor by strengthening covenantal relations among all settings of the United Church of Christ and by working with our ecumenical and interfaith partners.

LEGAL BASIS FOR THE CONFERENCE

Legal Status

The Minnesota Conference is a nonprofit corporation organized in 1963 under the “Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act” (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317). In 1989, Chapter 317 was rewritten as Chapter 317A, which now governs the Minnesota Conference.

The Conference Bylaws and the actions taken by the Annual Meeting, its voting members and its Work Groups, Committees, Program Ministries and Teams; by the Conference Board of Directors, its officers, its Executive Committee, subcommittees and task forces; and their members; and by Conference staff must conform to Chapter 317A.

In order to assure compliance with Minnesota Law, the Board of Directors is responsible for annually reviewing the Minnesota Statutes for any new laws, amendments, or repeals of old law applicable to the Minnesota Conference. Minnesota Statutes is printed every two years by the Revisor of Statutes office. A supplement is issued in odd-numbered years to show changes made during that legislative session. The statutes may be accessed at www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.asp. When new law, amendments or repeals of old law require changes to the Minnesota Conference Bylaws the Board of Directors is responsible for recommending bylaw amendments. When bylaw amendments require modifications to this Policy Manual those changes should be made as soon as possible following approval of bylaw revisions at an Annual Meeting or Special Meeting.

The Board of Directors is responsible for this Policy Manual. (Article VI, Section 5) The Board of Directors approved this version of the manual on **(Date)**. The primary distribution of the manual is through an electronic version maintained on the Minnesota Conference website: www.uccmn.org A paper copy is also available to any Minnesota Conference staff and/or volunteer when requested. Modifications or updates to this Policy Manual may be made electronically on a regular basis contingent on policy approval by the Board of Directors when required. A paper copy should be updated and reprinted by the Fall of each year if required.

Bylaws

The Minnesota Conference has Bylaws, which govern the internal actions of the Conference, as permitted by the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act. A copy of the

Bylaws is included as an addendum, may be obtained from the Conference office, or may be found in the conference directory.

Amending the Bylaws

Please see the Bylaws Article XII about amending the Bylaws.

VOTING MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE

Article IV, Section 3 establishes the voting membership of the Conference. See Article IV, Section 1, 2, 3 and 4 for membership of churches and clergy. Article IV, Section 5 speaks to the selection of lay delegates.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

Authorization of the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference

By law, the Conference must hold at least an annual meeting of members. (Minn. Stat. 317A.431).

The Annual Meeting shall be called by the Board of Directors and shall be held at a time and place within the area of the Conference to be determined by the Board of Directors. (Article V, Section 1.)

The powers of the Annual Meeting (Article V, Section 1) include:

- a) To organize as required for the transaction of business.
- b) To carry on, through the Board of Directors and other bodies, the work of the Conference, and provide for the financial support of this work.
- c) To receive reports from the officers, Conference Minister, Associate Conference Ministers, Conference committees and other bodies.
- d) To nominate and elect officers and persons to other positions as required elsewhere in these Bylaws.
- e) To review and adopt the Conference budget for the ensuing year.
- f) To review and act upon proposals and/or resolutions brought before the Annual Meeting.
- g) To adopt bylaws for the Conference, and as hereinafter provided, amend them.
- h) To transact any other business which may properly be brought before it.

Special Meetings of the Conference

Special meetings of the Conference may be called as provided in the Bylaws. (Article V, Section 2)

Quorum for the Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting

The Bylaws set the quorum for the Annual Meeting or for any special meeting of the Conference as “fifty voting members, provided that such members shall include persons

who are Lay Delegates or pastors of at least twenty-five Local Churches” of the Conference. (Article V, Section 4)

Policies and Procedures

Section Two of this manual contains policies and procedures related to the Annual Meeting.

CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Authorization

Article VI

Powers

The Board of Directors shall have the usual powers and duties of the Board of Directors of a corporation organized under the non-profit corporation law of the State of Minnesota. The Board of Directors shall be the governing body of the Conference between Annual Meetings. The Board of Directors may establish rules, consistent with the Bylaws, for the regulation of its own proceedings and those of the officers, agents, employees and committees, subcommittees, work groups, ministry teams, task forces, etc. of the Conference. It may appoint such officers and agents and shall have the power to form committees, subcommittees, ministry teams, task forces, etc. and to appoint their chairperson(s) and members to forward the work of the Conference, as it shall from time to time deem advisable. It may, except as otherwise provided in the Bylaws, determine the duties of the officers and committees of the Conference and fix their compensation, if any.

Duties

The Board of Directors shall provide for the organization of each Annual and Special Meeting (Article V, Section 6) and shall:

1. Plan, coordinate and evaluate the program of the Conference.
2. Have authority over both raising and disbursing of Conference funds.
3. Establish personnel policies and practices.
4. Receive mandated reports, and other reports it deems appropriate.
5. Present reports, recommendations, and appropriate business to each Annual Meeting.
6. Provide and oversee a Policy Manual with descriptions of duties, composition, and other matters related to work groups, committees, and ministry teams not otherwise provided for in the Bylaws. (Article VI, Section 5)

Meetings

The Conference Board of Directors meets regularly throughout the year. These meetings are scheduled at a meeting held immediately following the Annual Meeting. At that meeting the Conference Board of Directors will conduct any business that may be necessary as a result of actions of the Annual Meeting.

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

The Conference Board of Directors shall consist of:

- Six at-large members elected by the Conference Annual Meeting, at least three at each Annual Meeting for a two-year term. They may hold no more than three consecutive, full terms in office.
- Liaison members - One liaison to each of the Committees – Development Committee, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, and the Committee on Ministry. At least two liaisons shall be elected at each Annual Meeting of the Conference to serve two-year terms. They may hold no more than three consecutive full terms.
- The Officers of the Conference.
- The Conference Minister without vote.

THE OFFICERS OF THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE

The Officers of the Minnesota Conference are the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer. These positions are established by the Bylaws, Article V. The Officers are elected at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term and may hold no more than three consecutive full terms. Their terms start following the Annual Meeting and end following the Annual Meeting two years later. Each of the Officers is a voting member of the Conference and of the Board of Directors.

Moderator (Article V, Section 7)

The Moderator presides at Annual Meetings, special meetings of the Conference and at the Conference Board of Directors.

Vice-Moderator (Article V, Section 8)

The Vice-Moderator carries out the duties of the Moderator in case of the absence or inability of the Moderator to do so.

Secretary (Article V, Section 9)

The Secretary is responsible for recording the minutes of the Annual Meeting, Conference Board of Directors meetings and meetings of the Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Directors, as well as any special meetings of the Conference.

Treasurer (Article V, Section 10)

The Treasurer is responsible for receiving and depositing all funds of the Conference and disbursing all funds only in a manner and for the purposes prescribed by the Conference Board of Directors or its Executive Committee.

STAFF OF THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE

The Executive Staff of the Minnesota Conference is composed of the Conference Minister and the Associate Conference Ministers. A Call and Election procedure for these persons is outlined in Article IX.

The Program Staff of the Minnesota Conference is composed of the Ashley Minister for Faith Formation of Children and Youth and the Managing Director of Pilgrim Point Camp.

Additional paid and volunteer staff support the ministries of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ.

For policies relating to the Executive Staff and other Staff of the Minnesota Conference, see the Personnel Policies.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Authorization

The four officers of the Board of Directors constitute an Executive Committee. (Article VI, Section 8)

Duties

The Executive Committee is vested with such powers as may be delegated to it by the Board of Directors to act in the interval between meetings of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee is subject to the control and direction of the Conference Board of Directors. (Article VI, Section 8)

Meetings

As needed.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Authorization

Article VI, Section 9A

Duties

1. Promote and preserve the financial integrity of the Conference
2. Recommend financial policies to the Board of Directors
3. Prepare and monitor the Conference Budget
4. Make and monitor investments
5. Monitor risk and obtain insurance
6. Manage funds and property
7. Provide consultation on fundraising

Meetings

Meets monthly

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

The members of the Finance Committee are as follows:

1. Eight members are elected at the Annual Meeting;
2. The Conference Treasurer, with voice and vote;
3. The liaison, with voice and vote, elected to the Finance Committee from the Board of Directors.

Members are nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and elected by the Annual Meeting. Members of the Committee are elected for two-year terms and may be reelected up to three consecutive terms. In case of vacancy, the Board of Directors shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next Annual Meeting.

The chairperson is elected to two-year terms and may be re-elected to consecutive terms. The chairperson (or two co-chairpersons) is elected by the Finance Committee from among its members. The chairperson must step off the committee for at least one year after serving six years on the committee.

The Conference Treasurer is elected at the Annual Meeting.

Qualifications

It is recommended that members have a background in stewardship, finance, investment, accounting, banking, insurance, or other, related areas of expertise needed on the committee.

Investment Sub-committee

This information has been requested from the Finance Committee.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Authorization

Article VI, Section 9B.

Duties

The duties of this committee shall include overseeing the fund development program of the Conference, annually reviewing the fund development plan, assessing donor prospects, and facilitating execution of the fund development plan. Execution of the fund development plan may include: development of case statement, use of consultants, development of donor prospects, creation of solicitation materials, implementation of fund-raising events, and planned giving.

Meetings

As needed.

Composition, Election, and Terms of Office

The members of the Development Committee are as follows:

1. Six members nominated by the Nominating Work Group to the Conference at its Annual Meeting;
 2. The liaison, with voice and vote, elected from the Board of Directors.
- Members are elected by the Annual Meeting for two-year terms. Members may hold no more than three consecutive terms in office. Terms shall be staggered so that half of the committee shall be elected at each Annual Meeting.

Planned Giving Sub-Committee*

Purpose

To support the Minnesota Conference, local churches, and the wider church by fostering planned giving programs and plans.

Duties

1. To support and encourage churches to develop planned giving programs, endowment funds and policies.
2. To support and encourage planned gifts by individuals to local churches, the Minnesota Conference and its ministries, and the United Church of Christ and its national and global ministries.

Meetings

As needed

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

The Sub-committee consists of six members at large and a Volunteer Coordinator, serving two year staggered terms. Members are nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors. At-large members have two-year terms and may serve three consecutive full terms.

The chairperson and secretary are elected by the Subcommittee for a one year term and may serve two additional consecutive full terms.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Committee Authorization

Article VI, Section 9 C

Duties

The Personnel Committee:

1. Maintains and updates existing personnel policies and proposes new personnel policies to the Conference Board of Directors.
2. Annually reviews staffing needs and makes recommendation to the Conference Board of Directors.
3. Annually reviews salaries and makes recommendations of changes in compensation to the Conference Finance Committee.

4. Annually issues a budgetary projection of total wages and salaries to the Finance Committee for the coming year.
5. Ensures that performance reviews of all employees are completed on a periodic basis as per policy.
6. Annually administers the performance review of the Conference Minister as per policy.
7. Ensures performance review records are maintained per policy.
8. Receives, investigates, and reviews concerns or grievances regarding the performance of the Conference Minister and the Associate Conference Ministers. Provides confidential comment on these concerns to the Conference Board of Directors Executive Committee when warranted.
9. Pursuant to the Personnel Policy Manual:
 - Reviews sabbatical proposals by the Conference Minister and the Associate Conference Ministers.
 - Offers comment on the content of the proposals, the length of the sabbaticals, and on arrangements for coverage of responsibilities during the minister's absence.
 - Reviews reports written after the sabbatical is taken.

Consulting Role

The Personnel Committee:

1. Offers input on salaries and budget projections, but it is not primarily focused on financial matters.
2. Maintains policies on hiring and provides input into the hiring process, but it is not responsible for hiring ministers or staff.
3. Becomes involved in some personnel-related grievances, but it is not a pastoral relations committee.

Meetings

Meets quarterly, with additional meetings scheduled as needed.

Composition, Election, and Terms of Office

The members of the Personnel Committee are as follows:

1. Eight members nominated by the Nominating Work Group to the Conference at its Annual Meeting;
2. The liaison, with voice and vote, elected from the Board of Directors.

Members are elected by the Annual Meeting for two-year terms. Members may hold no more than three consecutive full terms. Terms shall be staggered so that half of the committee shall be elected at each Annual Meeting.

The chairperson is elected by the Personnel Committee from among its members.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Committee Authorization

Article VI, Section 9 D

Duties

The duties of this Committee shall include:

1. Recommending to the Conference Acting as an Association, through a regular meeting of the Conference or an Ecclesiastical Council: standing for churches, ordination and commissioning of ministers, and reception of ministers of other denominations by Privilege of Call;
2. Transferring of ministerial standing to or from another Association of the United Church of Christ, the standing of licensed ministers, and Dual Standing for ministers of other denominations temporarily serving in a United Church of Christ setting;
3. Establishing and maintaining relationships with persons in-care for ordained or commissioned ministry, and ministers of other denominations who are seeking Privilege of Call in the United Church of Christ;
4. Recommending to the Conference Board of Directors an in-care relationship with new churches or an exploring-church relationship with existing congregations who are considering full standing in the United Church of Christ.
5. Configuring itself with regard to appropriate subcommittees and an executive committee as it shall determine are necessary or appropriate from time to time to further the Committee on Ministry's work.
6. Utilizing the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ for all procedures related to the authorized ministries of the United Church of Christ, except where modified or supplemented by the Board of Directors of the Conference, or the Annual Meeting of the Conference. In matters of procedure or in matters of clarification, the Committee on Ministry may modify procedures in the Manual on Ministry. In matters of precedent-setting substance having to do with standing of clergy or of congregations, the Committee on Ministry shall consider such changes and then recommend them to the Conference Board of Directors when modifications need to be made.

Meetings

Meets quarterly

Composition, Election, and Terms of Office.

See the Bylaws for current composition.

Members are elected by the Annual Meeting for two-year terms. Members may hold no more than three consecutive, full terms in office. Terms shall be staggered so that half of the committee shall be elected at each Annual Meeting.

The chairperson is elected by the Committee on Ministry from among its members.

The term of office is two years. Members may serve three consecutive full terms.

RESPONSE TEAM

Committee Authorization:

The Response Team is accountable to the Committee on Ministry.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Response Team of the Minnesota Conference, United Church of Christ is to assist in the “oversight of ministries” work of the Committee on Ministry of the Minnesota Conference acting as an Association, and, thereby serve the entire United Church of Christ, by:

1. Responding to any request of the Committee on Ministry to investigate the facts surrounding any allegation of professional misconduct or boundary violation which, if found to be true, would call into question the fitness for ministry of any authorized minister in the United Church of Christ holding standing in the Minnesota Conference acting as an Association;
2. Reporting those findings to the Committee on Ministry; and
3. Supporting all persons and ministry settings involved in the process.

Norms

Members of the team will work under a signed covenant of confidentiality.

Duties

The “Oversight” section of *Manual on Ministry* further defines the role of the Response Team and the procedures used by the team. *Guidelines for Resourcing Committees on the Ministry*, published by the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team of Local Church Ministries is another guide for the work of the team. Members of the Response Team are considered to be “Association or Committee Representatives” in the procedure described for a “Fitness Review.” Specific duties of the team for a fitness review are described in section 8 of the *Manual on Ministry*.

Meetings

The Response Team meets three times per year, once in a retreat setting in the fall. Individual members are on call to serve in particular cases as needed. Response Team members will have available training in the area of their work.

Composition and Election

The Response Team shall consist of at least 12 members appointed by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministry

Terms: Two year terms twice renewable for a total of six years.

Chair is chosen from membership of Response Team.

The Associate Conference Ministers will staff the Clergy Misconduct Response Team.

SECTION TWO

MINNESOTA CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING

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THE ANNUAL MEETING

(See Policy Manual, Section One, Page 3 for Authorization and Powers)

The Board of Directors shall provide for each Annual and Special Meeting.

PROCEDURES AND RULES REGARDING BUSINESS SESSIONS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ (Adopted at the Annual Meeting, June, 2008)

1. Adoption of Rules

After the Annual Meeting is called to order and a quorum is declared, the first item of business is the adoption of the rules and procedures for the Annual Meeting. **These rules and procedures expire with the adjournment of each Annual Meeting and must be adopted annually.** The rules and procedures are adopted by a majority vote unless they remove privileges from any member, whereupon they must be adopted by a two-thirds vote.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda for the Annual Meeting, including the program of activities prepared and published by the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group, shall be the second item of business to be considered by the delegates. After its adoption by the delegates, the agenda becomes the “order” for the meeting.

3. The Chair

The presiding officer shall be the Moderator of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, who also serves as the Chairperson of the Conference Board of Directors. The Moderator shall preside unless or until the role is assigned to another officer for any reason regarded as essential to the flow of the Annual Meeting agenda.

4. Bar of the House

The Bar of the House, if established by the Moderator, is the area in which delegates are seated for convenience in identifying delegates for counting votes. Delegates are urged to observe the Bar of the House, if so ordered.

5. Visitors

Visitors may, by a vote of the delegates to the Annual Meeting, be given the privilege of engaging in discussion and debate, but shall not be given the right to vote.

6. Floor Procedures

Delegates wishing to speak shall seek recognition of the Moderator from a location near one of the floor microphones. After being recognized, the delegate is expected, for purposes of record, to state his or her name and the name of the jurisdiction (e.g., local church, conference, instrumentality) authorizing the presence of the delegate at the Annual Meeting. The speaker is asked to use the floor mike at all times. A member of the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group will be available to assist delegates with questions or issues of procedure. All motions, including amendments thereto, shall be written by the presenter and given to the Secretary immediately following presentation.

7. Open Mike Procedures

During the “Open Mike Session,” the following procedures will be in order:

- a. Persons wishing to speak will sign up on the clipboard at the Annual Meeting table.
- b. Comments will be limited to one minute maximum. There will be no debate.

8. Parliamentary Authority

The parliamentary authority shall be Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The Moderator will make all rulings with advice, if necessary, from the Parliamentarian, and subject, in accordance with parliamentary authority, to an appeal by any delegate regarding the decision of the Moderator.

9. Nominations and Voting

- a. The Nominating Work Group may present an initial slate of nominees, but nominations will not be closed until every delegate has had an opportunity to nominate from the floor. A nomination shall be made only with the consent of the person being nominated.
- b. Biographical information shall be made available orally or in writing to the voting delegates.

10. Debate on Resolutions

- a. When Necessary, due to the number of resolutions to be considered in the time available at the Annual Meeting, the Moderator may recommend, subject to the agreement of two-thirds of the voting delegates, the following limits on time:
 - 1) Debate on each resolution shall be limited to three (3) minutes each for opening statements, pro and con.
 - 2) Additional debate shall be limited to speeches of not more than two (2) minutes each.
 - 3) Debate on any amendments shall be limited to two (2) minutes for any opening argument, pro and con, and to one (1) minute supporting argument, pro and con, per amendment;
 - 4) Debate shall alternate between pro and con and shall be closed after up to three pro and three con speakers.
- b. By agreement of two-thirds of the voting delegates, the body may reconsider previous action and extend as well as limit debate.

11. Voting

- a. Voting shall be by the most expeditious method (e.g., voice, show of hand, standing), except that all contested elections shall be voted by ballot. There shall be no roll call voting.
- b. Voting shall be affirmed, if requested by the Moderator, by a board of tellers appointed by the Moderator.

**This set of Procedures and Rules shall not supersede
the Bylaws of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ
nor the articles governing them.**

The Resolution Process

(Adopted by the Board of Directors to comply with the timeline required for submission to the next Annual Meeting.)

A. Introduction to Resolutions:

Resolutions are expressions of opinion, will or intent considered by any convened assembly. Resolutions adopted by the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ become the position statements of that meeting. The Conference Minister interprets the views of the delegates at that Annual Meeting and conveys to the churches and to others, as directed, the resolve adopted by the delegates in the Annual Meeting. Resolutions, other than courtesy, timely and responsive resolutions, must be submitted to the office of the Minnesota Conference in advance of any meeting, in order that copies may be made and sent to delegates for study and review. Resolutions intended for General Synod consideration must be adopted in even-number years in order that they may be available to General Synod delegates according to their time-line.

B. The Categories of Resolutions are as follows:

Class I, Social Actions: Proposed resolutions on issues, problems or concerns of society about which the assembly chooses to address itself, either by study within its constituency, or so that the Annual Meeting may adopt a statement expressing a view on the issue, problem or concern.

Class II, Structural: Proposed resolutions designed to change the bylaws, structures or operations of the Minnesota Conference. Any resolution that is meant to amend the bylaws of the Minnesota Conference must follow the rules for an amendment, as outlined in the bylaws of the Minnesota Conference.

Class III, Procedural: Proposed resolutions having to do with the operations of the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference.

Class IV, Church Concerns: Proposed resolutions addressed to the local churches of the Minnesota Conference, or to the United Church of Christ, including its national bodies, on matters other than social issues. This includes actions on structural matters submitted to the Conference by the United Church of Christ. Resolutions sent from bodies outside the Minnesota Conference must be co-sponsored by an individual or body referred to in Section C.

Class V, Courtesy: Resolutions acknowledging appreciation and gratitude for services such as preparations for the Annual Meeting, years of service, years ordained, etc. Courtesy resolutions need not be submitted in advance of the Annual Meeting, but shall be submitted to the Moderator and Secretary in writing, at the earliest possible time.

Class VI, Timely: Resolutions dealing with issues, problems or concerns about which there was no possible knowledge or information before the resolution deadlines and where a delay would render the resolution moot. Timely resolutions shall be presented to the Annual Meeting as early as possible or at the time of the adoption of the agenda and accepted for inclusion in the resolution process. The nature of the timely issue, problem or concern shall be specified in the resolution.

Class VII, Responsive: Resolutions that arise out of the sense of resolve within the Annual Meeting. Responsive resolutions shall be submitted in writing to the Moderator and Secretary of the Annual Meeting. All responsive resolutions will be reviewed by the Resolutions Group (see description below) of the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group for determination as to whether it will be submitted to the delegates. If so, delegates will vote on whether to admit this resolution to the agenda. All responsive resolutions submitted to the delegates before the Hearing Process on Resolutions shall have a resolution hearing. All responsive resolutions submitted after the Hearings Process will not have a resolution hearing. All responsive resolutions submitted after the Hearing Process will be presented and debated on the floor of the Annual Meeting according to the rules outlined below.

C. Preparations of Resolutions:

Resolutions may be prepared and introduced by the following individuals and/or organizations:

1. Any local church of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, provided the resolution has been approved for submission by the congregation or by the official governing body of that congregation; certification of any vote must be reported by the church when the resolution is submitted;
2. Any structural entity created by the bylaws of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ;
3. The Board of Directors of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ; and/or
4. At least any five (5) delegates, certified and/or elected to an Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

D. Submitting Resolutions:

All resolutions must be submitted in writing. Persons or organizations submitting resolutions shall be clearly identified in the body of the resolution. Resolutions shall state clearly what action or position is contemplated, and indicates who bears the responsibility for implementation. Wording, insofar as possible, shall avoid conflicting or ambiguous interpretation. Resolutions must be concise. They shall be typed with line numbers. Any improperly drafted resolution will be returned for re-writing. These will be resubmitted to the Conference Office by March 20th. Any accompanying statements, not to exceed one page (8 ½ X 11, one side, single spaced with at least ten point type) must include Biblical and/or theological rationale and must be submitted with the resolution. Any accompanying statements will be published with the official minutes of the Annual Meeting but will not be subject to action or vote.

Resolutions in Classes I, II, III, and IV must be received by the office of the Minnesota Conference by the first Monday of March, so that all local churches and other parties may have adequate time for their consideration before the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference.

All resolutions will be referred to the Resolutions Group of the Annual Meeting Business Committee. The Resolutions Group is made up of the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group Chair or designee, the Moderator or designee from the Board of Directors, and the Conference Minister. If the Resolutions Group receives more than one resolution with essentially the same position or action on the same issue, the Resolutions Group will seek to arbitrate, through the writers and/or representatives involved an acceptable single resolution for presentation to the delegates. The resolutions group may edit any resolution for form and clarity, so long as the substance of the resolution is not changed. If the resolution repeats substantively an earlier resolution adopted by an Annual Meeting or current policy of the Conference, it will be returned to the sponsor with the earlier resolution or policy and not be forwarded to the Annual Conference.

The Annual Meeting Business Resolutions Group will report acceptable resolutions to the Annual Meeting delegates without recommendation. Resolutions will not be forwarded if they duplicate current policy, contain personal attacks or blatantly offensive language, or are inconsistent with the polity of the Minnesota Conference and the United Church of Christ. People who wish to dispute the ruling of the resolutions group may ask for agenda time to present their resolution to the board of directors prior to the annual meeting.

E. Procedure at Annual Meeting:

The procedure adopted by the Board of Directors (**no need to have this here because the entire policy is by the Board of Directors**) for presenting resolutions at Annual Meetings shall be as follows:

There will be at least one hearing session for each resolution, followed by a reconciliation session to attempt a compromise, if conflicting views are expressed during the hearing. A neutral Moderator designated by the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group shall convene each hearing session. Hearings will be for informational purposes only. All individuals or groups desiring to formulate substitute resolutions or amendments to resolutions do so outside of the hearing process.

All resolutions and supporting statements will be printed in the minutes of the Annual Meeting kept for a period of one year.

All resolutions must have a person who represents the delegate or group submitting the resolution present at the hearing and at the plenary sessions of the Annual Meeting to serve as spokesperson for that resolution. Resolutions without a spokesperson present will not be considered. Any amendments and substitute resolutions presented following any reconciliation session shall be brought to the floor of the Annual Meeting as a compromise resolution for action at the time the resolution is scheduled for discussion. Amendments or substitute resolutions will not be considered until they are presented to the moderator in clearly written (preferably typed) form.

F. Debate on Resolutions: (This is a guideline based on previous passed rules, but this rule must be voted on at the beginning at the next Annual Meeting)

1. When necessary, due to the number of resolutions to be considered in the time available at the Annual Meeting, the Moderator may impose, subject to the agreement of two-thirds of the voting delegates, the following limits on time: Debate on each resolution shall be limited to three (3) minutes each for opening statements, pro and con, the first speech to be limited to two (2) minutes and the second speech to be limited to one (1) minute;
2. Debate on any amendments shall be limited to two (2) minutes for any opening argument each, pro and con, and to one (1) minute supporting argument each, pro and con, per amendment; and
3. Limiting the overall time for consideration of resolutions, subject to the will of the voting delegates, to reconsider previous action, and to extend as well as to limit debate will be given consideration by the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group and the moderator.

G. Forums:

Some issues or concerns may not be ready for presentation as resolutions; therefore, a forum may be held where issues or concerns are presented and discussed. Forum leaders may seek definitions and help to illuminate alternatives, allowing sufficient time for questions and suggestions from the participants and encouraging involvement in all aspects of the forum. Any forum, if a consensus exists among the participants, may present a Class VII Responsive resolution to the Annual Meeting.

Any church group or individual wanting to present a forum shall contact the Chairperson of the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group to make the necessary arrangements.

H. Rules for Presentation in Plenary:

A motion to postpone temporarily, “lay on the table,” may be followed by a motion to resume consideration, “to take from the table,” at the same or any subsequent plenary session during that Annual Meeting. All resolutions and motions, including amendments thereto, other than those dealing with procedural matters, shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Annual Meeting immediately following presentation. *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, unless otherwise provided for, shall govern all proceedings of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Annual Meeting Planning Work Group shall propose to the assembled delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ such other rules as it deems necessary for the orderly processing of business regarding resolutions.

The Resolution Process: A Worksheet (Revised December, 2005)
Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ

Note: All proposed resolutions shall be submitted to the Minnesota Conference Office prior to the first Monday of March. Any improperly drafted resolution will be returned for re-writing. (And will be resubmitted by March 20.)

Please complete the following information. Please be brief, including items 1 through 5 on one page and item 6 on another page. Resolutions should be typed, with numbered lines in no smaller than ten point type. For further assistance, see the enclosed materials on the Resolution Process.

Title of Resolution:

Date Resolution is Submitted:

Name of Submitting Body or Persons: (Please include complete names, mailing addresses and telephone numbers of submitters and spokesperson.)

Summary Statement of Intent of the Resolution:

Background and Supporting Statement: (Please include historical facts concerning the issue or concern, as well as biblical and theological statements.)

Text of the resolution, which shall include the following:

Reasons for the proposed action;

The specific action to be taken;

The funding implications for the proposed action; and

Who is directed or requested to take the proposed action.

NOMINATING WORK GROUP

(updated 09/17/12)

Work Group Authorization

(Article V, Section 11 A)

Duties

1. Make nominations for positions to be filled by election at the Annual Meeting.
2. Make nominations for positions to be approved by the Conference Board of Directors.
3. Make nominations for positions to be approved by the Conference Minister.
4. When vacancies occur in the above positions between Annual Meetings, provide nominations to the Board of Directors. (Article V, Section 11, Part A 2)
5. Ensure that all nominees are formally notified. To insure that nominees made between Annual Meetings are formally notified, a copy of proposed nominations sent to the Board of Directors will be sent to the Administrative Assistant to the Conference Minister including a contact address and home church. Upon checking the Board minutes to see that the Board has confirmed the nomination, the Administrative Assistant to the Conference Minister will send a notification letter to the nominee; a copy of that letter will be sent to the chair of the group/committee/team to which that person has been nominated.
6. It is desirable that nominations represent a mix of geographical locations, gender, lay/clergy status, and other demographic factors representing our Conference after accounting for passion, skills, and interests.

Meetings

The Work Group meets five times per year, ordinarily in September, November, January, April and May, with additional meetings as necessary.

Composition, Election, Terms of Office

The Conference Nominating Work Group consists of eight members. These members are nominated by the Nominating Work Group and elected by the Conference at the Annual Meeting.

Eight members elected by the Conference for a term of two years, from the close of one Annual Meeting to the close of the second Annual Meeting thereafter. Members may hold no more than three consecutive full terms. The chairperson or chairpersons are nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and elected at the Conference Annual Meeting. Chairperson(s) may serve two years, from the close of one Annual Meeting up to the close of the second Annual Meeting, with a maximum of three consecutive full terms.

The terms of the Chairperson(s) and the members shall continue until a successor is duly elected. (Article V, Section 11, Part A 1)

Norms

The norms of the Nominating Work Group shall be:

1. Agenda will be distributed in advance.
2. Meetings will begin with devotions.
3. We will work on a consensus decision-making model.
4. We will use confidentiality regarding people discussed for positions.
5. Meeting schedules will be established at the spring meeting for the upcoming year.
6. We will be faithful in attendance and notify the chair if we are unable to be present.
7. Each member will serve as a liaison to one or more of the particular group(s) we are serving.
8. Email will only be used for decisions when we have consensus.
9. We will strive for diversity on Committees, and actively seek people who have not yet had the opportunity to serve within the Conference.

ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING WORK GROUP

Work Group Authorization

(Article V, Section 11, Part B 1)

Duties

The Annual Meeting Planning Work Group oversees all matters related to planning all Annual Meetings of the Conference. (Bylaws, Article V, Section 11, Part B 2)

Meetings

The Work Group generally meets four times a year. The first meeting of the year is usually in August or September, at which time the meeting schedule for the coming year is determined. Other meetings are in the fall, winter and spring. The first and last of the planning meetings are usually held at the site of the Annual Meeting.

Composition, Election, and Terms of Office

Eight members shall be nominated by the Nominating Work Group and elected by the Conference, at least four at each Annual Meeting, for a two year term extending from the close of that meeting to the close of the second Annual Meeting thereafter. They may hold no more than three consecutive terms.

One chairperson or two co-chairpersons are nominated by the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group, endorsed by the Conference Nominating Work Group, and elected by the Conference at its Annual Meeting, for a two-year term extending from the close of that meeting to the close of the second Annual meeting thereafter. The chairperson(s) may serve for a maximum of three consecutive full terms. The terms of the Chairperson(s) and the members shall continue until a successor is duly elected. (Article V, Section 11, Part B).

MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Purpose

The Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ is in covenant with local churches, other Conferences and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. In order to fully participate in that covenant there are representatives who serve as liaisons between the Conference and Ministries of the General Synod as well as with the General Synod itself.

Representatives to the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ

Purpose

Representatives serve as a liaison between the covenant ministries of the United Church of Christ - the Office of General Minister and President, the Executive Council, the Justice and Witness Ministries, Local Church Ministries, and Wider Church Ministries.

The Representatives to the National Ministries

The Minnesota Conference is entitled to a representative on each of the four Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ. The representatives are chosen in the following manner: the Minnesota Conference is asked to submit names of members to the Nominating Committee of the United Church of Christ. The Conference is asked to find members from a variety of age, gender, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic groups. The Conference staff utilizes information from skill banks and local churches to find individuals to nominate. From this group of persons the Nominating Committee of the United Church of Christ selects individuals to nominate to the General Synod for election to the covenant ministries.

Duties

Once elected, the representatives are asked to attend each of the meetings of their national ministry and may be asked to attend the General Synod. They are asked to report back to the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Conference and the Annual Meeting, as well as to carry concerns of the Conference to their respective ministries.

Terms of Office

The terms of office are dictated by the United Church of Christ Constitution and Bylaws.

POLICY REGARDING NOMINATIONS FOR GENERAL SYNOD DELEGATES

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for the selection of General Synod delegates and briefly outlines the responsibilities of delegates. (See Bylaws, Article VI, Section 9)

RATIONALE

The Minnesota Conference sends eighteen delegates to each General Synod (divided into two classes of nine delegates each). Of these people, the UCC By-Laws state that 50% must be lay, and 20% must be youth/young adult (under 30). In addition, each Conference should strive for diversity among our delegates, being aware of gender, age, and ethnic/racial diversity. The UCC Constitution Bylaws (2001) Sections 186-7 reads:

“Delegates and alternate delegates shall be chosen by each Conference from among its ordained ministers in full standing or ordained ministerial partner standing and the members of its Local Churches. Conferences may initiate and consider nominations from the Associations. From each Conference, ... (a) lay persons shall constitute at least fifty percent of the delegates and (b) the delegation shall reflect the United Church of Christ’s commitment to affirmative action; it shall be representative of racial and ethnic persons (Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders), women and youth and young adults (at least twenty percent of each delegation shall be under 30 years of age at the time of the commencing of their terms, and where possible, be represented equally by (1) youth, persons of high school age; and (2) young adults, persons graduated from high school or over 19 years of age. Despite any lack of exact compliance with these requirements, actions of a General Synod which is constituted in substantial compliance with these representation requirements, as determined by the Executive Council, shall be valid. 187 The term of Conference delegates, other than any elected to fill unexpired terms, shall begin at the opening of the next regular meeting of the General Synod following their election and shall continue for a period of four years, terminating at the opening of the third regular meeting of the General Synod following such election; provided, however, that each Conference delegation shall be divided into two classes with terms expiring in alternate biennium. When the number in one class from a given Conference exceeds the number in the other class by more than one, the Conference shall at the earliest possible opportunity make use of a two- year term for one delegate or fill any delegate vacancy that may occur in such a way as to equalize the two classes. No delegate who has served a second consecutive four-year term shall again be elected until after at least two years have elapsed. Delegates shall be members of all regular and special meetings of the General Synod which are held during their term of office unless they have become separated from the Conference which elected them.”
(<http://www.ucc.org/aboutus/constitution.htm>)

The following policy will help us to be faithful to the requirements of the wider United Church of Christ, and intentional in the process we use to make our selections. It will also give some guidance to delegates about the responsibilities that they undertake when agreeing to serve as a delegate.

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING DELEGATES

When selecting candidates to serve as General Synod Delegates the Nominating Work Group shall be guided by the following procedure:

1. The Nominating Work Group shall strive to meet the requirements and requests of the General Synod when choosing delegates. This means that between the two classes of General Synod Delegates (18 in total) there should ideally be:
 - Three clergy female Three clergy male
 - Three lay female Three lay maleTwo youth/young adult (under 30) female (Ideally one under 18, one 19 and over)
Two youth/young adult (under 30) male (Ideally one under 18, one 19 and over)
Two other people chosen that round out the slate and contribute to its diversity
2. For each delegate there shall be an alternate closely matching the demographics of the delegate to which he or she is paired.
3. The Nominating Work Group will strive to choose delegates who have not represented the Minnesota Conference UCC at General Synod in the past ten years. Delegate candidates who have never served as a delegate for the Minnesota Conference shall have priority as long as the requirements and requests of the General Synod for delegate selection can be met.
4. The Nominating Work Group will seek candidates for the position of General Synod Delegate from the Associate Conference Ministers, the Conference Minister, and self-nomination through Skill Bank Forms distributed at Conference Annual Meetings. The Nominating Work Group will also generate additional names.
5. The Nominating Work Group will contact candidates for the position of General Synod Delegate. The Nominating Work Group will also contact candidates to serve as alternate delegates, in case the designated delegate cannot attend a particular General Synod.
6. At the close of General Synod, the Conference Office shall maintain a record of the delegates and alternates who *attended* General Synod that year. This list shall be passed on to the Nominating Work Group.

POLICY: DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES

When asked to serve as a delegate to General Synod, candidates shall be informed that:

1. Delegates are expected to attend (and alternates are encouraged to attend) conference delegate orientation meetings before and after General Synod to prepare for, and debrief after the Synod experience.
2. If a delegate is, for some reason, unable to attend General Synod, he or she shall contact the Conference Office. The Conference Office shall call the alternate for the delegate who cannot attend General Synod. If the designated alternate is not able to attend, the Nominating Work Group shall contact other appropriate alternates, or find a suitable alternate for the position if no other suitable alternate is available.

3. Delegates are expected to be available to churches to share information about General Synod, and are encouraged to contact their area churches and offer to speak with them about General Synod.

ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Purpose

The Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ is committed to relating to and working with other churches and faiths and values ecumenical expressions of ministry. In our covenant to work together and relate to other churches, ecumenical relationships are vital. Participation with other denominations in councils and conferences, activities and agencies is part of our life as “United and Uniting” Christians. United Church of Christ members of the Conference are urged to participate with other denominations, faith communities or secular agencies in coalitions or task forces as the opportunity arises. (See Bylaws, Article XI)

Conference Participation

Official representatives to ecumenical agencies shall be chosen in accordance with the provisions of the agencies. Those not elected by the annual Meeting shall be appointed by the Conference Minister upon recommendation by the Nominating Work Group. These appointments shall be reported to and confirmed by the Board of Directors and reported to the Annual Meeting.

SECTION THREE

PROGRAM MINISTRY TEAMS

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PROGRAM MINISTRY AREAS AND MINISTRY TEAMS

Authorization

Article VII, Section 1, A.B.C. and D.

Purpose

Many programmatic functions of the Conference are carried out through Program Ministry Areas.

The Program Ministry Areas

There are four Program Ministry Areas:

1. Faith and Spiritual Development Ministries
2. Stewardship and Financial Development Ministries
3. Church Growth and Renewal Ministries
4. Prophetic Ministries

The Program Areas are groupings of Teams related in function. The areas themselves have no membership or structure.

1. FAITH AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRIES

Faith Formation of Children and Youth Team*

Team Authorization

Purpose

Duties

Meetings

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

*This section under review until October 27

Pilgrim Point/Outdoor Ministry Team*

Team Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

Our Savior commanded us: "Go and make disciples!" The Outdoor Ministry Team of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ believes the camp and conference

setting is a particularly effective means to respond to Jesus' command because of the unique setting away from the everyday world. In the beautiful outdoor environment, it is our hope that campers will:

1. Make a deepened commitment to live a Christian lifestyle;
2. Be renewed in personal faith;
3. Discover a new relationship of trust and love for God;
4. Return home as more effective church members; and
5. Gain a greater joy in being a part of the Christian community.

Duties

The Outdoor Ministry Team is responsible for programs, property and promotion of outdoor ministries within the Conference. It manages Pilgrim Point Camp near Alexandria, Minnesota. It plans and implements the Team's programs and its operating budget.

Meetings

The Team meets six times per year, in November, January and March, May, July and September. Other meetings are held as needed.

Composition, Election and Term of Office

The Team consists of:

- Twelve at-large members, nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Board of Directors
- One youth member selected by the Youth Ministry Team

Each member serves a two-year term and may be re-elected to two additional consecutive full terms. The Conference Nominating Work Group shall attempt to maintain representation from across the Conference. The chairperson is elected by the team for a one-year term and may serve an additional one-year term.

* This section is under review.

Spiritual Development Team*

Team Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

Duties

Meetings

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

* Purpose, Duties, Meetings and Composition, Election and Terms of Office are in process.

2. STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRIES

CUE Seminaries Team**

Team Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

The CUE Seminaries Team supports the covenantal relationship of the Minnesota Conference, the three mid-western seminaries of the United Church of Christ and the other mid-western Conferences by raising funds in support of the annual operating budgets of Chicago Theological Seminary, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, and Eden Theological Seminary through CUE.

Duties

1. Promote awareness of and support for the three Midwestern seminaries of the United Church of Christ;
2. Provide communications and media to churches in the Minnesota Conference about the three CUE seminaries and the costs of training clergy;
3. Assure the fullest possible participation of churches within the Minnesota Conference in support of CUE;
4. Prepare an annual budget for Team expenses to be presented to the Conference Finance Committee.

Meetings

As needed.

Composition, Election, and Term of Office

This team consists of six members nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors. The CUE Executive Director is a resource person to this team.

All members have a two-year term and may serve three consecutive full terms. The Team chooses its own chair (or co-chairs).

**This team is not currently active

Our Church's Wider Mission Team

Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

The Our Church's Wider Mission Team promotes the mission of the church in all its settings: local, conference, national and global. In cooperation with other Teams of the Conference, the Our Church's Wider Mission Team seeks to provide local churches and their members with creative opportunities to engage in and support the wider ministries of the church through faithful stewardship.

Duties

1. Create and provide educational materials on mission and stewardship in the United Church of Christ for local churches;
2. Promote Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) at the Conference Annual Meeting by developing workshops, presentations, and promotional materials;
3. Invite, cultivate, develop and monitor generous financial giving by churches and individuals to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) through a coordinated program of direct contact, ongoing relationship, mutual accountability, and regular review;
4. Coordinate and oversee Conference mission activities, such as the Mission Interpreter's Program and the Philippine Partnership Task Force;
5. Consult regularly with the Minnesota Conference representatives serving on boards of the denomination's covenanted ministries;
6. Coordinate for the Conference the overall plan and responsibilities for the schedule of special offerings, including promotion of One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors In Need, the Christmas Fund and Strengthen the Church Fund; and consultation with Conference Teams responsible for the promotion of other special offerings such as the Conference's Just Peace offering;
7. Work with other Conference groups as requested or needed.

Meetings

The Team normally meets at the Church Center at least four times per year. The meeting schedule is set at the first meeting following the Conference Annual Meeting.

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

The Team consists of nine members:

- Seven at-large members, nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors;
- The Mission Interpretation Coordinator of the Minnesota Conference (ex officio with voice and vote);
- Chairperson of the Philippine Partnership Task Force (ex officio with voice and vote)

At-large members serve two-year terms and may serve three consecutive full terms.

The chairperson and the secretary are elected by the Team for one-year terms and may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

3. CHURCH GROWTH AND RENEWAL MINISTRIES

Evangelism Team

Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

The mission of the Evangelism Team is to inspire, energize, and resource this ministry by local churches, by clusters of churches, and by the Minnesota Conference, and to do so in the context of the distinctive ethos of the United Church of Christ. Our vision is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ by equipping congregations of the Minnesota Conference to be healthy, active, faithful, and outreaching, through a variety of resources and modes of education and support.

Duties

- 1 Search for and assemble a wide variety of print, video and people resources including those available from the United Church of Christ denomination, and regularly communicate the availability of these resources throughout the Conference;
- 2 Organize and offer learning experiences such as retreats, workshops, and the like on the theology and methodologies of evangelism at least annually;
- 3 Assist in organizing and implementing evangelism efforts of local churches and the Conference in cooperation with clusters and other entities of the Minnesota Conference,;
- 4 Develop resources that pay particular attention to the wide variety of settings across the state of Minnesota, seeking resources suitable for rural, suburban, and urban settings, for a variety of cultures, races, sexual orientations, and languages, for persons with disabilities, and for all ages;
- 5 Cooperate with the Conference Our Church's Wider Ministry Team to promote the Strengthen the Church special offering, and have use of 75 percent of the Conference's share of this offering for the work of this Team above and beyond basic Team expenses; the Team shall set aside a portion of these funds to be available for grants to local churches or Clusters and shall develop and oversee a grants process. The specific amount shall be calculated based on the amount in the strengthening the Church fund on October 1 of any year.
- 6 Prepare an annual budget for submission to the Conference Finance Committee.

Meetings

Approximately six times yearly at locations and on a schedule to be determined by the Team at its first meeting after the Conference Annual Meeting.

Composition, Election, Terms of Office

This team consists of six members nominated by the Conference Nominating Work

Group and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors. All members have two year terms and may serve up to three consecutive full terms. The Team shall choose its own chair (or co-chairs) for one year terms.

New Church Development Team^{*}, ^{**}

Team Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

We envision the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ having the ability to be a strong partner with the United Church of Christ Covenantal Ministries of the denomination, interested local churches in the planting and support of new congregations. Therefore, the purpose of the New Church Development Team is to seek and organize resources (money, staff, and structural support) that will make it possible for new church development to become a regular component of the life of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Duties

1. With authorization of the Conference Board of Directors, seek and manage special funds to support new churches;
2. Work closely with staff, interested local churches, and the national United Church of Christ in the planting of new churches;
3. Evaluate and recommend to the Conference Board of Directors the use of special funds as they become available (such as, for site acquisition and leadership subsidies in new churches);
4. As needed, create working task forces around special projects and define the purpose and scope of these working groups; and
5. Discern when this team has completed its work with the new congregation.

Meetings

Six times a year, sometimes more often, at locations and schedule to be determined by the team.

Composition, Election, and Terms of Office

This team consists of nine members nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors.

Terms shall be for two years and members may be elected for three consecutive full terms. The Team chooses its own chair (or co-chairs) annually.

*This section under review.

**This team is not currently active

Professional Development of Authorized Ministers

Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

The Professional Development of Authorized Ministers Team supports and assists the authorized ministers of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ in pursuit of excellence in ministry by encouraging their professional, personal, and spiritual development, and encourages all churches in the Minnesota Conference, as well as institutions in Minnesota that employ United Church of Christ clergy, to be committed partners in fostering professional excellence.

Duties

1. Review annually and revise, as needed, the Conference Compensation Guidelines for Authorized Ministers along with the Worksheet and present these to the Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting for approval.
2. Recommend and develop programs for authorized ministers on faith formation, self care, and other matters related to religious leadership in our times.
3. Ensure that the workshop “Power and Boundaries in Ministry” meets the requirement of our Conference and are offered across the Conference.
4. Develop, review and implement continuing education guidelines and expectations for authorized ministers in the Minnesota Conference.
5. Administer and grant scholarship programs for seminary students who are “In Care” of the Minnesota Conference.

Meetings

Four times per year.

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

The Team consists of six members.

- Four at-large members are nominated by the Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Board of Directors for two year terms. They may serve up to three consecutive full terms.
- A representative from the Committee on Ministry
- A representative is requested from United Theological Seminary to be appointed by the President

Terms are staggered for continuity. The Team will elect a chairperson and a secretary for one year terms, and may re-elect them for an additional term.

4. PROPHETIC MINISTRIES

Emmaus Anti-Racist, Multi-Cultural Transformation Leadership Team

Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

Communicate and enact the Emmaus goals of anti-racist, multi-racial, multi-cultural transformation within all parts of the Conference.

Duties

1. Offer Antiracism Study-Discussion Circle (ASDIC) sessions for individuals who are members of the Board of Directors, teams, committees, those who attend the Annual Meeting, the staff, others who are active in the Conference, and interested congregations.
2. Offer one-day Minnesota Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative (MCARI) workshops for individuals who are members of the Board of Directors, teams, committees, those who attend the Annual Meeting, the staff, and others who are active in the Conference, and interested congregations.
3. Implement outreach strategies including an information table, presentations, workshops and one-on-one conversations with attendees at the Annual Meeting.
4. Publish the Emmaus newsletter and conduct other outreach activities.
5. Provide curriculum for informal discussions, adult forums, sermons, and reading circles.
6. Engage congregations and pastors through presentations to the clergy clusters and through Readers Theater presentations.

Meetings

Meets monthly.

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

Originally the Emmaus Ad Hoc Taskforce of the Justice and Witness Committee, current members were appointed by Conference Council in 2003-2004. Nominations for new members are reviewed by the Team, referred to the Conference Nominating Work Group, and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors. Terms have been established but term limits have not been applied.

Justice and Witness Team

Authorization

Bylaws Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

The Justice and Witness Team seeks to provide a Biblical understanding of prophetic ministry and to equip congregations in the Minnesota Conference with the knowledge and skills necessary to shape social policies in keeping with God's vision of a just and loving society.

Duties

1. Educate the churches in the Minnesota Conference on matters of peace and justice;
2. Encourage public policy advocacy;
3. Serve as a resource to churches and other groups in the Conference;
4. Organize and administer (with the assistance of the Conference Office Administrator) the Conference Justice and Witness special offering;
5. Recognize churches at the Conference Annual Meeting that have actively worked in areas of social justice, e.g. accessibility, eco-justice, etc;
6. Receive and respond to requests for grants or loans from the Conference Justice and Witness special offering (grant form on Conference website);
7. Coordinate with the United Church of Christ National Justice and Witness Ministries office through our Minnesota Conference Representative;
8. Prepare and submit to the Conference Finance Committee an annual operating budget for Team expenses and other program initiatives related to the mission of this Team.

Meetings

The Team shall meet at least four times a year at a time and place agreed upon as soon as possible following the Annual Meeting of the Conference in June. Additional meetings may be called as needed, and regular consultation between meetings by telephone and e-mail are expected.

Composition, Election and Terms

This team consists of eight members nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors.

All members have two-year terms and may serve three consecutive full terms. At its last meeting before the Conference Annual Meeting the Team shall choose its own chairperson or two co-chairpersons for a one-year term that will begin immediately following the Conference Annual Meeting. The chair and co-chair may serve a second one-year term. The Team shall also select a recording secretary at the same time as the chair and co-chair are selected.

Open and Affirming/ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (ONA/LGBT) Team

Authorization

Article VII, Section 1

Purpose

The team provides leadership in living out the call of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) to be an Open and Affirming (ONA) conference. The team nourishes and provides resources to existing ONA churches in the Minnesota Conference. It seeks to increase the number of local churches of the Minnesota Conference who vote to become ONA. It deepens the extravagant welcome and radical inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons in the programs and ministries of all settings of the UCC in Minnesota. In covenant with the Minnesota Chapter of the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns, the ONA/LGBT team advocates for justice for LGBT person in religious and secular arenas

Duties

- a. Provide support to churches in the Minnesota Conference UCC seeking to become ONA and for their continuing development as ONA Congregations.
- b. Plan workshops for the Minnesota Conference UCC Annual Meeting and other education and support to churches to encourage understanding of ONA and other issues of concern to the LGBT community and Allies.
- c. Provide advocacy and support to all LGBT persons who are in authorized ministry during search and call processes and during a call in settings within the Minnesota Conference UCC.
- d. Conduct annual ONA worship service and other celebrations.
- e. Promote and integrate LGBT concerns throughout the structure of the Minnesota Conference UCC.
- f. Be a resource to persons seeking to develop and present resolutions that impact LGBT concerns to the Minnesota Conference UCC

Meetings

The Team meets six times per year, in September, November, January, March, May and July. Other meetings are held as needed.

Composition, Election and Terms of Office

The Team consists of:

- Five to nine members, including one to three ONA Trained/Active Consultants and four to six at-large members, nominated by the Conference Nominating Work Group and appointed by the Conference Board of Directors

Each member serves a two-year term and may be re-elected to two additional consecutive full terms. The Conference Nominating Work Group shall attempt to maintain representation from across the Conference. A Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary are elected by the team for a one-year term.

SECTION FOUR

GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS

PURPOSE

This section provides guidelines for meetings of all bodies except Local Churches that make up the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

CONTENT OF THE SECTION

Scheduling meetings (Page 2)

Canceling meetings (Page 2)

Quorum (Page 3)

Open meeting policy (Page 3)

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Attendance policy (Page 6)

Chair or Moderator Responsibilities Regarding Attendance and Participation (Page 7)

Decision making (Page 7)

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SCHEDULING MEETINGS

Set A Meeting Schedule

At its June meeting, following the Annual Meeting, the Conference Board of Directors will set its meetings for the next year. At their first meeting following the Annual Meeting in June, Committees, Work Groups, Teams and other bodies shall set meeting schedules for the next year.

Committee, Work Group, Team and other bodies' meeting dates must be coordinated with the staff liaison and the Conference Board of Directors' meeting schedules.

Secretaries of each body will communicate this schedule to the Conference office administrator. The schedule information should include dates, locations and times of the meetings. This will allow the Conference office administrator to post meeting dates and locations on a central calendar that can be used as a reference for Conference staff or anyone calling the Conference office for information.

Notice of Meeting

Written communication of the year's meeting schedule to group members is sufficient notice of the meeting, although reminders before each meeting via mail, phone or e-mail may improve attendance.

Rescheduled or Additional Meetings

Committees, Work Groups, Teams and other bodies may sometimes find it necessary to reschedule a set meeting or schedule additional meetings to get their work done. When groups find it necessary to reschedule a meeting or schedule an additional meeting, they should take care to do so in a way that will permit the most members to attend consistent with permitting the work of the group to move forward. The chair or secretary will be responsible for communicating information about rescheduled or additional meetings to the Conference office administrator via phone, mail, or e-mail.

When Notice Is Not Required

Sometimes a small group of members will gather between meetings to do the work of the group. Such ad hoc gatherings are not meetings, and therefore the secretary does not need to notify members or the Conference office of ad hoc gatherings.

CANCELING MEETINGS

The Board of Directors, Committees, Work Groups, Teams and other bodies should cancel meetings only for good cause, such as bad weather that will prevent members from traveling safely or knowledge that a quorum of members will not be able to attend.

The chair or secretary will notify all members and Conference staff as soon as possible when a meeting will be cancelled and will also inform the Conference office.

QUORUM POLICY

Quorum Required

The Board and each Committee, Work Group, Team or other body's meeting must have a quorum of members present in order to do the business. Decisions made when there is no quorum of members present are not valid or binding.

Conference Board of Directors Quorum

One-half plus one of the voting members of the Conference Board of Directors must be present to constitute a quorum. (Article VI, Section 6). Voting members may not authorize a proxy to represent or vote for them.

Executive Committee Quorum

Powers of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors may be delegated to it and to act in the interval between meetings of the Board of Directors. Quorum is a simple majority of members.

Committee, Work Group and Team Quorum

A Committee, Work Group and Team have a quorum if attendance equals or exceeds at least one-third of all group positions (including vacant positions).

Example of a Group Quorum

The "Good Works Committee" has 12 positions, but only 10 positions are currently filled, and two positions are vacant. The Group has a quorum if four members attend a meeting (one-third of 12 positions),

Quorum Not Required At All Gatherings of Committee, Work Group and Team Members

Small groups of Group members often need to gather between meetings on an ad hoc basis to do the work of the Group. An example of this work is drafting a document for review at the next Committee, Work Group, and Team meeting.

Characteristic of these "between meetings" tasks is that the work done will be presented to the group for its approval, because gatherings of a group's members between meetings do not have decision-making authority. Such gatherings of group members are therefore not meetings and do not require a quorum.

OPEN MEETING POLICY

Any United Church of Christ Member May Attend

Generally, all Conference Board of Directors meetings and Committee, Work Group, Team and other body meetings are open to any member of a local church in the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Any member of a local church in the Minnesota Conference may call the Conference office to learn the date, time and location of any Conference Board of Directors meeting, Annual Meeting, Special Meeting, Committee, Work Group or Team meeting and attend the meeting.

Exception: Meetings of Conference Board of Directors' Executive Committee

Meetings of the Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Directors are, by definition, executive sessions, and may exclude visitors.

Exception: Discussion of Confidential Matters

Groups may exclude visitors when they need to discuss confidential matters. This exception is a very narrow one and should not be used to undo the open meeting policy. (See the section on confidentiality in this chapter for more information.)

Exception: Groups May Exclude Some Visitors

Groups may, but are not required to, exclude from their meetings persons who are not members of a local church in the Minnesota Conference. In addition, persons who are members of a local church in the Minnesota Conference who seek to attend a group meeting in a dual capacity (such as a member of a local congregation who is also representing a news organization) may be excluded from a group meeting by a vote of group members present and voting at the meeting.

Visitors Must Identify Themselves

If a group has visitors, the visitors must identify themselves and any organization they represent. Visitors who are unwilling to identify themselves must leave the meeting.

Visitors at Ad Hoc Gatherings

When group members gather on an ad hoc basis between meetings to do group business, they are not holding a group meeting, and therefore, there is no requirement to admit anyone who is not a member of the group assigned to work on that task.

Permitting Visitors To Speak at a Meeting

As a courtesy, the group may decide to invite any visitor(s) it permits to attend its meetings to speak about why they are attending the meeting, but this is not required.

Groups that do permit visitors to speak should designate a time to hear from visitors and should set a time limit for each speaker. Groups are advised to find a way to permit interested visitors to make their views known to the group outside the meeting, if they cannot accommodate those wishes during the meeting.

Presence of the Media at a Group Meeting

Although this is highly unlikely, if visitors are from the media, the group should politely but firmly require members of the press or broadcasting to leave the meeting. The chair should refer any questions by the media to the Minnesota Conference Minister. See the Conference “Public Relations and Endorsement Policy” for general guidance, or call the Conference office with specific questions about dealing with the media.

MEETING NORMS

Board of Directors, Committees, Work Groups and Teams Will Establish Norms

The Board of Directors and each Committee, Work Group and Team has a responsibility to establish *written* meeting norms to guide their internal functioning. Norms are an agreement by group members to abide by certain rules in order to expedite the group's work and to help group members maintain good relationships with each other

Types of Norms

There are several types of norms:

1. **Value norms** speak to the values of the group. Example: "On this group, we particularly value age diversity, so we will have representation by members in their teens and twenties."
2. **Behavior norms** speak to specific behaviors by group members that the group wants to encourage. Examples: "We will have only one person speak at a time," or "We will make decisions by consensus."
3. **Role or Task norms** speak to roles or tasks performed by group members. Example: "The hospitality chair will bring luscious treats to every meeting."

Each group should decide how many and what types of norms will help it in its work. Norms should be kept simple and relatively few.

Norms Need Consensus

Norms need to have the consent of all group members in order to be effective. If one or more group members actively object to a norm, then the group should spend more time looking for a norm that all members can reach consensus on.

When to Establish Norms

If your group has not established norms, it should do so now. Norms should be written and shared with every group member. Don't forget to share your norms with new group members when they join your group. Norms can also be posted at every group meeting.

Norms Can Be Changed

Norms can be added, dropped or changed by consensus. They should be reviewed periodically, perhaps in shorter periods (say, six months) when the group first establishes its norms, and after longer periods (say, every year) when the group has had norms for a while.

Abiding by the Norms

Every group member has the right and responsibility to call the group's attention to behaviors that disregard the norms and request that the members abide by the norms. Although designated leaders such as the chairperson and secretary have a particular obligation to monitor the group's performance, individual members have a strong role to play in the success of the group. That is why every member has the right to call the group back to its values or its task.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(This policy was adopted by the Conference Council on December 2, 1995 and slightly amended for the manual.)

Rationale

Optimal group functioning is dependent upon the full participation of each group member. Frequent absence by a group member places a greater burden on attending members of the group. Regular attendance at Committee, Work Group, Board of Directors and task force meetings is expected and encouraged.

This policy is not intended to penalize well-intentioned people, but to ensure that groups function well and to equalize the distribution of responsibilities.

Expected Standard

Group members shall plan to attend all regularly scheduled group meetings and any additional meetings the group calls in order to do its work. Group members who find that they will not be able to attend a meeting should call or e-mail the chairperson as soon as they realize they will not be able to attend.

Failure or Inability To Meet the Minimum Standard

Group members, who miss half the regularly-scheduled meetings of their group in one year, will be considered to have resigned from the group. This is a de facto resignation that does not require a vote of the group to take effect. See “Group Chair Responsibilities” below for warning, notification and resignation provisions.

Groups Can Vote To Dismiss A Member for Low Participation

Groups can vote to dismiss a member whose attendance or participation is not acceptable, even if attendance is above the minimum established above. For such an action to be valid:

- The motion to dismiss a member must be held at a duly-called meeting;
- The person whose dismissal is being considered must be informed of the pending action and is entitled to be present with voice and vote;
- The vote to dismiss must be at least two-thirds of the members present and voting.

Groups May Retain Services of Consultant

Groups have the option of retaining the services and expertise of a former group member who cannot meet attendance standards as a consultant. The former member will be replaced at the earliest possible opportunity by a new member, however. (See “Hiring Consultants” in Section Six for more information about consultants.)

Groups Will Take Attendance Reliably

Each group is responsible for setting up a reliable mechanism to take attendance at each meeting. It is the secretary’s responsibility to record attendance as part of taking the minutes of the meeting. If the secretary is absent, another group member must record attendance and take minutes.

Chair Or Moderator Responsibility Regarding Attendance or Participation Issues

The group chair (or Board of Directors Moderator) has the following responsibilities regarding attendance or participation issues:

Responsibilities re: De Facto Resignation

1. To communicate attendance expectations to group members or Board of Directors members as part of the new members' orientation to the group or to delegate such communication to another group member.
2. To communicate directly with any group members or Board of Directors members whose attendance is in danger of falling below the established attendance standard, to learn of the circumstances, and to counsel the person on the potential consequences of failing to attend.
3. To request the written resignation of any group members who find themselves unable to improve their attendance to the acceptable standard.
4. To notify any group members in writing whose attendance has fallen below the minimum standard that a de facto resignation has taken place.

Chair Responsibilities Re: Dismissal

The Board of Directors' moderator (or designated chair) or chair of another body is responsible for notifying their respective group members whose attendance or participation may be above the minimum standard but unacceptable to the group or Board of Directors that:

1. A motion to dismiss the Board of Directors or group member will be heard at the next duly scheduled Board of Directors or group meeting.
2. The Board of Directors or group member may attend the meeting, where he or she will have both voice and vote,
3. Two-thirds of the votes of the members present and voting can dismiss the member.

Role of Nominating Work Group for Persons Elected by the Annual Meeting

In instances where persons elected by the Annual Meeting must be replaced by vote of the Annual Meeting, the Conference Board of Directors' secretary or the group secretary will provide documentation of the circumstances of the member's non-participation in writing to the Conference Nominating Work Group. The Nominating Work Group will report its findings to the Annual Meeting with a recommendation for action.

In the event that a member is removed from office under the terms of this policy, the Conference Board of Directors shall make use of the established procedures of the Conference to secure a replacement as soon as possible. (Article V, Section 11, Part A2)

DECISION MAKING

Deciding what decision-making process(es) to use is one of the most important tasks of groups. The way a group makes decisions demonstrates its commitment to justice, models its respect for diversity, and, exemplifies its trust in the working of the Holy Spirit.

Groups are encouraged to give prayerful thought and discussion to their decision-making processes. Groups that habitually defer decisions to a leader or someone with expertise, or groups that use only a majority vote may find their work enhanced if they periodically apply other decision-making options to their processes.

Establish a Norm About Decision Making

Because decision making is so vital to group life, groups are encouraged to establish a group norm or policy about decision-making. This norm might name the group's preferred decision-making process, but also name situations where the group will apply another decision-making process.

Decision-Making Options

Groups may not realize the wealth of decision-making options open to them. These include:

1. The group makes a decision by consensus
2. The group makes a decision by unanimity.
3. The group makes a decision by super-majority vote (often two-thirds vote or three-quarters vote).
4. The group makes a decision by majority vote.
5. The leader or delegated decision-maker gathers input from the group, but makes the decision by him or herself, then announces it to the group.
6. The leader or delegated decision-maker makes a decision alone and announces it to the group.

Each of these options can be legitimate decision making processes, depending on the circumstances.

Strengths of Each Decision Making Option

Each decision-making option has qualities to recommend it:

- If the group tends to polarize or break into the same recurring factions, a consensus decision-making model (Option 2) may be appropriate, because the act of seeking and finding a consensus can help break down polarization.
- If the decision is serious, a super-majority or even unanimity, Options 2 or 3, may be appropriate.
- If the matter is routine and the will of the majority is sufficient to obtain the group's buy-in to the decision, Option 4 may be the most appropriate.
- If the decision is of little consequence to the group or if the matter to be decided is absolutely urgent, Options 5 or 6 may be appropriate.

Weaknesses of Each Option

Each decision-making option also has its weaknesses:

- Groups that require consensus on routine matters may bog themselves down in "correct process" at the expense of efficiency *and* effectiveness.
- Groups that require super-majority votes or unanimity may also strangle the flow of work.
- Groups that routinely rely on a majority vote to decide all matters may not be working hard enough to accommodate the legitimate needs of a minority. Majority members may be unaware of a rising level of polarization within the group. This may result in demoralization of group members, with a subsequent falling off of attendance or participation.

- Groups that defer too many decisions to leaders or persons with expertise may find that members feel discounted, or that support for decisions is not where it needs to be to get the work done.

Distinction Between Consensus and Unanimity

Consensus is not the same thing as unanimity. One definition of consensus is “a decision that everyone can live with, even if the decision is not every member’s first choice.” Another definition of consensus is “an agreement by a group to go in a certain direction for a certain length of time.” In contrast, unanimity is full agreement by all parties that the chosen course of action is the right action.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The Conference Board of Directors or other bodies may find that there are times when they will need to keep matters before them confidential. Certainly, some of the work of the Personnel Committee is confidential. Confidentiality must be kept in order to maintain trust with the people the Conference serves.

Definition

Confidentiality is a promise not to disclose sensitive or private information except to people

- who are authorized to see it, because they need the information to carry out a responsibility,
- or should be permitted to see it, because they are the subject of the information (as in a performance evaluation).

Confidentiality may apply to processes or to information. When confidentiality applies to processes, it usually applies to processes only while they are under way. Once a process has reached a conclusion, the conclusion is not usually confidential, because the decision must be communicated.

Information may be confidential in perpetuity or it may be disclosed after a designated period of time has passed. Disclosure of confidential information may be compelled in certain legal matters.

Short of disclosure compelled by law, other disclosure of confidential information will require a Conference Board of Directors policy decision.

Groups are cautioned not to confuse the temporary need for confidentiality during a process with silence about the process itself. Stakeholders have a legitimate need to understand that the process being used to make a decision will be fair.

General Rule

Generally, the work of the Conference Board of Directors and groups is not confidential.

Confidential Records Will Be Kept at Conference Office

Confidential records or documents will be kept at the Conference office in a locked file cabinet. Secretaries of the Board or other group who must work with confidential records away from the Conference offices must take steps to protect and limit access to these working documents. Once

finished with the confidential records, the secretary should forward them to the Conference office administrator. The records must be marked confidential, and the secretary should include a cover letter explaining what the documents are and why they are confidential.

Establishing a Policy on Confidentiality

Groups that regularly deal with confidential processes or confidential information must create a written policy on confidentiality that will include the following:

- What process or information is confidential;
- Why it is confidential;
- How long it will remain confidential;
- Who may have access to the confidential information and under what circumstances;
- How confidential records will be kept and protected, and how they will be disposed of.

Complaints about Misapplication of Confidentiality Policy

Persons who are concerned that a policy on confidentiality is being applied incorrectly or inconsistently are encouraged to raise their concerns directly to the group that is administering the policy and request a change in practice or policy.

When a group receives such a request, it must put the matter on the agenda of its next scheduled meeting. The group must also invite the person who made the complaint to come to the meeting and permit him or her to speak to the complaint. The group will make a prompt decision on the complaint and communicate the decision to the person who brought the complaint.

If the person who made the complaint is not satisfied with the group's action, it may appeal the decision to the Conference Board of Directors.

Urgent Exception to Complaint Process

If the matter is urgent, the person who made the complaint may bypass the group if it will not meet in a timely manner, and bring the matter directly to the Conference Minister or the Moderator of the Conference.

If the Conference Minister or the Moderator believes the situation warrants immediate attention, either one may request the Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Directors to hear the complaint and render a decision that is binding on the group.

The person who made the complaint and the chairperson of the relevant group will come to the Executive Committee meeting to speak to the complaint, if requested by the Executive Committee or if they wish.

MEETING MINUTES

Importance of Minutes

Meeting minutes are the official record of group or Board of Directors business. They are used to:

- Communicate with members who were absent from the meeting,
- Remind group or Board of Directors members of earlier decisions,
- Reduce the need for rework, and
- Reinforce consistency and fairness.

- Protect the Conference in legal matters.

It is very important that groups take complete, accurate minutes and distribute them in a timely fashion.

MINUTES FORMAT

Heading

The heading of the minutes will include:

- Name of the group or Board of Directors
- Date and location of the meeting
- Names of those present, absent and excused
- Name of the meeting chairperson
- Name of the person taking the minutes

Actions

Include the following information about decisions made or action taken:

- Include the exact text of any motions and the name of the person who made the motion. The person making a complicated or lengthy motion should write it out for the recording secretary.
- Record the decision-making process: majority vote, consensus, or other method.
- Record the decision on the motion: passed, defeated or tabled. The vote count is not necessary.
- Recording the discussion may be desirable if it was contentious, but usually, it is unnecessary.

Other Information

Include the following information in the minutes:

- Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were approved or amended. If amended, list the changes.
- Items on the agenda, in the order covered, with a brief summary of what happened
- Date, time and place of next meeting
- Follow-up: a recap of who will do what by when
- Whether there was a motion to adjourn
- Whether the meeting opened or closed with prayer

Send Minutes

Before the next scheduled meeting, send a copy of the minutes to the following people:

- Group members,
- Conference Staff

Include Handouts With Minutes

If there were any handouts at the meeting, send the handouts to group members or the staff liaison who were not present at the meeting, as well as a copy to the Conference office.

Keep a Copy of the Minutes

The recording secretary is responsible for keeping a copy of the minutes and all handouts as a permanent record. The minutes will also be kept in the Conference Office.

SECTION FIVE

ADDITIONAL CONFERENCE POLICIES

DESCRIPTION

This chapter explains additional Conference policies that are of particular importance to members of the Conference Board of Directors, Committees, Work Groups, Teams and other bodies of the Conference.

PURPOSE

These policies are included in this manual to communicate expectations, prevent misunderstandings, and provide guidance to members of the Board of Directors, Committees, Work Groups, Teams and other bodies of the Conference as they do the work of the Conference.

CONTENT OF THE SECTION

Conference Public Relations and Endorsement Policy (Page 2)

Conference Solicitations Policy (Page 4)

Conflict of Interest Policy (Page 6)

Expense Reimbursement Policy (Page 11)

Counting of Offerings at the Conference Annual Meeting (Page 12)

Policy on Hiring Consultants (Page 12)

Policy for Use of Conference Contributions to North Central Ministry Development Center (Page 15)

CONFERENCE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ENDORSEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

This section explains who may speak for the Conference and who may endorse activities or positions for the Conference. This policy was originally created as a 1986 Board of Directors policy that has been amended for this manual.

INCLUDED

The following topics are covered in this policy:

- Rationale
- Policy

RATIONALE

The Conference Board of Directors recognizes the potential for inadvertent damage to the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ from ill-advised responses to inquiries from members, the public, or particularly from representatives of the media. As a result, this policy was put into effect in 1986.

This policy is intended to enhance the accuracy, consistency, and timeliness of the information, not to impede its flow.

General Principle

Individuals and groups are encouraged to honor and respect the province of others. For example, if some question concerns the Conference, refer the questioner to the Conference Minister or the Conference Moderator. If a question concerns an event, refer the person to the chairperson of the event.

When an officially recorded stand has not been taken by a deliberative body of the United Church of Christ, all persons making public comment in any media are urged to emphasize that they are speaking only for themselves and not for their congregation, Conference or the denomination.

Speaking on Conference or National Policies

In dealing with *any media* (newspapers, radio, television, internet, etc.) on positions, stands and occurrences relating to the *Minnesota Conference*, the Annual Meeting, the Conference Board of Directors or its Executive Committee, the spokespersons should be the Conference Minister or the Conference Moderator or their designee.

In dealing with *Minnesota media* about the positions, stands and occurrences of the *General Synod or national church* instrumentalities, boards or offices, their successor bodies, the spokespersons should be the Conference Minister or the Conference Moderator or their designee.

If *National media* seek information about the positions, stands and occurrences of the *General Synod or United Church of Christ* denominational instrumentalities, boards or offices, or their successor bodies, the questioner should be referred to the United Church of Christ Office of Proclamation, Identity and Communication.

Gatherings Sponsored by the Conference

At any gathering sponsored by or for the Minnesota Conference, the person in charge of the event will normally be considered the spokesperson for questions related to the event. When that person is absent, this authority should be delegated to another knowledgeable adult. It is advisable that someone always be present who is in charge and available to the media.

Basis for Statements to Media

Spokespersons should be guided by the written positions and stands taken by official bodies of the United Church of Christ. They should stress, where applicable, that the General Synod, Conference Board of Directors, or its Executive Committee do not speak “for” the churches and their members, but “to” them.

Emergencies: Notify Conference First

When emergencies or other situations arise that are likely to trigger public attention or curiosity, the spokesperson should first report to the Conference office or the Conference Minister. In an emergency, the Conference Minister will be the spokesperson to the media unless he/she designates someone else to do so.

Be Willing to Ask For Help

No one should feel as if he or she must face the media alone, especially in cases where there is likely to be extensive interest in a stand of the denomination or in a situation that has occurred. Spokespersons are strongly urged to seek help from their Conference before making their first statement.

The Conference can provide help on reviewing the statement, explaining policies or stands of the denomination, or providing legal guidance, if needed.

Purpose of Emergency Communications to the Media

The designated spokesperson should seek out the news media to convey pertinent information, even when it is unfavorable. The spokesperson should also communicate where and how he or she can be reached immediately.

The goal is to create the impression that the Minnesota Conference is and will continue to be honest and forthright and that we are prepared to be judged under the light of truth. If the Conference is maltreated, there are news councils, readers’ representatives, libel laws and other avenues through which we can seek redress.

Suggestions for Emergency Statements

Suggested points to cover in an emergency or in other sensitive situations, where appropriate:

- Briefly and objectively explain the known facts. Avoid blaming, provocative, or defensive language.
- Watch your tone. Be positive, open, and assertive. Avoid being aggressive or passive, even if questions strike you as unfair.
- Avoid conjecture about anyone’s intent, character, the likely outcomes, and so on. Say, for example, “It would be inappropriate (or premature) to comment on that.”
- Be prepared to answer a question about whether anything similar has occurred before.
- Express appropriate sympathy for anyone who has been harmed or claims to have been harmed.
- Briefly explain the Conference’s and the denomination’s policy and process for handling the situation.
- Express the church’s commitment to handle the situation professionally, responsibly, and compassionately.
- Inform people when they can expect updates.

Endorsements

The Conference Board of Directors, subject to the action of the Annual Meeting and the Bylaws of the Conference, is the only body that is authorized to make public statements that may be viewed as position stands or endorsements. These stands or endorsements have the potential to reflect positively or

adversely on the public image of the United Church of Christ. While this policy should in no way abridge an individual's right to free speech, it does recognize the distinction between personal viewpoints and corporate viewpoints

Role of Executive Ministers

The Executive Ministers (the Conference Minister and Associate Conference Ministers) will be sensitive to the principles outlined in this policy, seeking to be in concert with the Conference and national bodies of the United Church of Christ. They will, however, be free to use their names and official designations in circumstances where no explicit Conference or national church position has been taken, and in all cases, they will be free to exercise the prophetic role they discern to be appropriate.

Role of Committees, Work Groups, Teams and Others

All Board and Committee, Work Group, and Team members, officers, and Executive Ministers of the Conference will be sensitive to the principles outlined in this policy, always being faithful to the positions taken by the Conference and national bodies. They will exercise great care in cases where no explicit position has been taken and responsive to the guidance of the Executive Ministers.

CONFERENCE SOLICITATIONS POLICY

PURPOSE

This section covers the policy on Conference-wide solicitations by groups within the Conference. This policy was originally created in 1974, revised in 1989, and amended for this manual.

INCLUDED

The following topics are covered in this section:

- Rationale
- All-Church Offerings
- Other Special UCC Offerings
- Policy

RATIONALE

The Minnesota Conference is often requested to support Conference-wide solicitations from groups that are part of the Conference and some that are not part of the Conference. These requests are usually for causes not funded by the Conference budget.

This policy was created to provide a method to address such fund-raising efforts and monitor their frequency so that member churches can plan their stewardship cycles and not be subjected to unreasonable pressures.

ALL CHURCH OFFERINGS

Strong consideration should be given to the all-church offerings as designated by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. These are the current all-church offerings:

- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthening the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

Support Priorities

The Conference urges all members of local churches to give support through their benevolence programs to the support of the Conference and the United Church of Christ denomination through Basic Support and Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM).

From time to time, the United Church of Christ may initiate other special offering requests. Churches should then give priority to these time-sensitive requests.

Conference Board of Directors Role

The Conference Board of Directors will take responsibility for coordinating all Conference-wide solicitations by United Church of Christ agencies, including itself.

Requests for Solicitation*

Anyone who is a member of a Conference Committee or other body or who works on a Conference sponsored activity and who wants to solicit funds in support of itself or of any outside organization must follow the steps below:

1. Submit a request with a justification and an outline of the method of solicitation to the Conference Minister at least three months in advance of the planned solicitation.
2. The Conference Minister will refer the request to the Our Churches Wider Mission Team and to the Finance Committee for study and recommendation to the Conference Board of Directors.
3. The Conference Board of Directors will vote whether to accept or deny the request. The Board of Directors will communicate its decision to the requesting body.
4. All funds solicited must be sent to the Conference office. The Conference accountant will deposit receipts, write a check or checks to support the designated program or activity, and account for all transactions. Credit in Conference records will not be given for funds that did not come through the Conference office.
5. In case of emergency, such as a natural disaster, the Conference Minister or his/her designee, in consultation with the Conference Moderator, may abbreviate this procedure in order to respond more quickly to the need. However, no solicitations will be permitted without approval of the Conference Board of Directors or its Executive Committee.
6. If member churches answer a United Church of Christ denominational appeal for special assistance, these offerings can be forwarded to the Conference office, where the full amount will immediately be forwarded to the appropriate national office.

*This aspect of the Conference Solicitations Policy is currently under review.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

PURPOSE

This section defines conflict of interest and explains how persons who have a potential conflict of interest or who observe a conflict of interest should address this concern. This is a policy created in 1999.

INCLUDED

The following topics are included in this policy:

- Definition
- Policy

DEFINITION

The Situation

A conflict of interest arises when a person plays a dual role where he or she has competing interests or competing responsibilities as a result of the two roles. The problem is that the person is unable to discharge their responsibilities in both roles with justice. One responsibility can be performed well, but only by risking or sacrificing the other responsibility.

Importance of Appearance

An appearance of conflict of interest is as damaging as an actual conflict, because it calls into question the work, the process, and the integrity of the persons or the organization. The appearance of a conflict of interest can destroy trust and right relationship.

Not All Dual Roles Are Potential Conflicts of Interests

Persons play multiple roles throughout their lives. Not all dual or multiple roles constitute a conflict of interest. For example, a Conference Board of Directors member is also a member of a local church. A member of the Finance Committee is also an accountant. (That's why he was urged to serve on the Finance Committee!). The problem of conflict of interest arises when the dual roles involve competing interests or competing responsibilities.

Conflict of Interest Is Not Only About Money

People are generally aware of conflicts of interest that involve personal financial benefit. Nevertheless, there are other kinds of conflict of interest. Anything that a person values can help create a conflict of interest, where there are dual roles with competing responsibilities.

Benefit May Not Be Direct or Personal

The benefit of the conflict of interest does not have to be direct or personal to be a conflict of interest. For example, directing Conference resources to one's relatives or friends can also be a conflict of interest.

Conflict of Interest May Be Brief

A conflict of interest may arise out of a brief occurrence, such as one issue or one vote taken by a Committee or other body of the Conference, rather than out of a long-standing situation. Committees and other groups must be aware, then, that a conflict of interest may occur at any time.

Conflict of Interest Under the Law

The Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act is concerned with conflicts of interests in contracts between the corporation (the Conference) and outside parties. This would include undisclosed relationships between a Board of Directors member, Committee member, employee, or agent of the Conference and another party that could be used as reason to void a contract between the Conference and the outside party. Prior disclosure of such relationships removes this as a reason to void a contract. The relevant relationships are spouse, child, spouse of a child, brother, sister, or spouse of a brother or sister.

This statute is also concerned with undisclosed material financial interests between the corporation (the Conference) and outside parties where the transaction or contract will benefit the Board of Directors member or the group member who votes for them. (Minn. Stat. 317A.255)

Example of a Conflict of Interest

This is hypothetical:

A member of the Professional Development of Authorized Ministers Team votes on a motion in Committee to require clergy in the Conference to take continuing education courses in a certain discipline. This Committee member is also a self-employed trainer who offers workshops in this discipline and looks forward to tapping into the new client base she has just voted to create.

In this example, the two roles are:

- Committee member, with a responsibility to provide caring guidance to clergy on professional development on behalf of the Conference, and
- Business owner, with an interest in ensuring her profitability.

These two roles are in competition and a conflict of interest is created, because the Committee member cannot vote on this issue without seeming to sacrifice either her Committee duty to provide caring

guidance to clergy on their professional development or her interest in ensuring the profitability of her business.

Potential Damage from Appearance of Conflict

It may be argued that there is no conflict of interest and that the group member's two interests genuinely coincide. It may truly be a good decision that clergy should take continuing education on a particular topic. And it is good for the group member's business to be profitable. Nevertheless, the fact that this member voted on this motion creates at least the *appearance* of conflict of interest, because it calls into question the integrity of the group's decision-making.

The appearance of a conflict of interest can be just as damaging as an actual conflict of interest, because of the effect on integrity and trust. Did the group member vote to enrich herself at the expense of the Conference and its clergy? Did the whole group vote to enrich a work group, Committee or team member at the expense of the Conference and its clergy? How can this individual and this Committee be trusted in the future?

Example of a What is Not a Conflict of Interest

This is hypothetical: The Finance Committee asks a member of a local church, who is an accountant, to serve on the Committee. They find him particularly suited to this position because of his professional expertise and his demonstrated commitment to the church. This does not represent a conflict of interest because the dual roles, accountant and Committee member, are not competing with each other.

If however, the Committee votes whether to retain this Committee member's accounting firm to do the annual Conference audit, the Committee member now has a conflict of interest, because his roles are now in competition. As a Committee member he has a responsibility to ensure that Conference funds are used prudently, but as the owner or employee of an accounting firm, he has a responsibility to generate business for his firm. If he votes on this motion, he cannot do justice to one or the other of his roles.

POLICY

Group Members Are Responsible for Recognizing and Disclosing Their Own Conflicts of Interest

Conference Board of Directors members and Committee, Work Group and Team members are responsible for recognizing and disclosing their own conflicts of interest. General disclosure can take place at the first meeting the new member attends. It is also recommended that the Board of Directors and other bodies include the responsibility to disclose conflicts of interest as a meeting norm. Board of Directors and group members should:

- Name his or her employer or clients if either do business with the Conference, or a local church within the Conference.
- If self-employed, disclose whether he or she has done business with the Conference or its member congregations.
- Disclose the same information about his or her spouse or partner
- Disclose whether the spouse or partner is a clergy member with standing in the Conference acting as an Association.

Chairs Should Ask About Potential Conflict Before Votes

Before the Conference Board of Directors or another body votes, especially on financial matters, such as authorizing the use of funds or creating a mandate that will require others to use funds, the Board of Directors Moderator or other group chairperson should ask members who are present and voting whether they have a conflict of interest in voting on this motion. Members who have a conflict of interest should disclose this information.

Remember, the potential conflict of interest does not have to involve direct benefit to the group member.

Members May State or Ask About Potential Conflicts of Interest of Others

Conference Board of Directors members or other body members may state within the meeting their belief that another member has a conflict of interest. The group member should name the competing interests of the dual relationship. A Board of Directors or other body member may also request in a meeting that any members who have a conflict of interest disclose that information.

If a member with the supposed conflict of interest does not agree that a conflict exists, the group should decide the matter by vote. The member with the potential conflict of interest may vote on this matter. The decision of the group is binding on the member only for the motion under discussion.

The goal of this policy is to encourage Board of Directors and other group members to recognize potential conflicts of interest that might damage their work and their integrity. This policy is not intended to be used to shut group members out of discussions or votes for personal reasons.

Steps to Avoid Conflicts of Interest

The Conference Board of Directors and other bodies can take various steps to deal with a potential conflict of interest. Some steps are simpler to implement and some are more complex. The more comprehensive steps may take more time and money to implement. Which steps to use depends on the impact of the potential conflict. Examples are described below.

Required: Members with a Conflict of Interest Should Not Vote on a Motion

At a minimum, any Conference Board of Directors member or group member who has a conflict of interest on a particular motion before the Board of Directors or a group will not vote on that motion. The Board of Directors or other body member will disclose the conflict of interest as the reason for not voting, and not simply abstain from voting without naming the reason.

In Matters of “Material Financial Interest”

When addressing the matter of a “material financial interest”, that is substantial enough that it would, or reasonably could, affect an interested person’s judgment (the interested person could be the person or the organization), the following procedures must be followed:

- The interested person/party could make a presentation to the group (Board of Directors, committee, team, task force, etc.) but after this they should leave the meeting during discussion and vote.
- The group shall rely on appropriate data as to comparability prior to making its decision (competitive bids, a consideration of alternatives).
- The chair may appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- Exercising due diligence, the group shall determine whether it can obtain a more advantageous transaction arrangement with reasonable efforts from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- If this is not reasonably attainable, the group shall determine whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interest of the Minnesota Conference and whether the transaction or arrangement is fair and reasonable to the Minnesota Conference. The group shall decide whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement in conformity with such determination.

If applicable, approval of such a transaction must be by a majority vote of the disinterested members. All steps taken in this process should be fully noted in the meetings of the group.

Groups Should Decide if Further Steps Are Necessary

In cases where there is a conflict of interest, the Conference Board of Directors and other groups should decide, after time for full discussion, prayer and discernment, whether additional steps are necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. In addition to considering the impact on others, the impact on the Conference Board of Directors or other groups, these bodies also need to consider proportionality in their response to conflicts of interest.

Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Conference Ministry Staff

Conflict of interest arises when people play dual roles where they have competing interests or competing responsibilities as a result of multiple roles. Conference Ministry Staff (Conference Minister, Associate Conference Ministers, Program Ministers) may, from time to time, find themselves in a situation where carrying out one set of responsibilities may cause benefits to come to themselves or to their families in ways that could reasonably be considered unfair.

In addition, Conference Ministry Staff may find themselves in situations where they have dual roles, and execution of responsibilities of one role may sacrifice the integrity of a competing role.

An appearance of conflict of interest may be as damaging to the Conference as an actual conflict, because it calls into question the work, the process, and the integrity of the persons in the organization. An appearance of improperly-managed conflict of interest can erode the trust that is vital to the health of the Conference.

This document contains **guidelines, not policies**. These guidelines shall assist Conference Ministry Staff members when real or apparent conflict of interest arises. It should be recognized that these guidelines may not fit every circumstance. When questions arise, staff members should confer first with other staff, and if appropriate, with either the Conference Personnel Committee and/or the Committee on Ministry Executive Committee to clarify what steps should be taken.

1. Search-and-Call process for Family Members of Conference Ministry Staff

An authorized minister who is a spouse or other family member of the Conference Ministry Staff member who is in good standing has the same right as anyone else to be a candidate for open positions. Conference Ministers and/or Associate Conference Ministers staffing a search process have the obligation to uphold the norms of the UCC Search-and-Call process. Staff members are expected to ensure that all candidates in good standing who wish to be considered have an equal and fair access to the search committee and to information about the position, and staff members are expected to ensure that the search committee and the candidates are the decision makers, not staff.

When a family member of a Conference Ministry Staff member wishes to be considered as a candidate, another staff member should staff that process, if possible. If another staff member is not available, the Conference Ministry Staff member in question should urge the search committee to treat the family member as any other candidate. The Conference Ministry Staff member should take great care not to provide “insider information” to her/his family member that other candidates do not receive and should remind search committee members regularly that they are the decision makers who must make their selection based on their own objective criteria about gifts needed in their next minister.

2. Search-and-Call for Oneself

It is *never* appropriate for a Conference Ministry Staff person to become a candidate for a position where s/he is providing staff support for the search committee.

3. Hiring family Members as Support Staff

Although there may be advantages to having a family member be on the support staff for a member of the Conference Ministry Staff, the hazards are substantial. These guidelines discourage the hiring of family members as support staff where one family member is accountable to another family member.

4. Awarding Contracts or Other Business to Family Members

Family members of Conference Ministry Staff may offer services or materials that would be of interest to the Conference. When a Conference Ministry Staff member is involved in decisions about awarding contracts or other business to that staff member's family, the staff member should be prepared to demonstrate that the contract or business was awarded on its own merit and not because the supplier is a member of the Conference Ministry Staff member's family.

5. Family members on certain Conference Committees or in certain Conference positions

Family members of the Conference Ministry Staff are discouraged from serving on the Conference Board of Directors, Personnel Committee, or Finance Committee.

6. Conference Ministry Staff handling money of the Conference

Conference Ministry Staff are discouraged from routinely carrying and handling cash or checks from funds already in the possession of the Conference or en route to the Conference. There may be special donations, registration fees, or offerings that a Conference Ministry Staff member is asked to carry to the Conference office. These guidelines recommend that the staff transmit such funds to the Conference Business Administrator as quickly as possible.

7. Mediation or Other Problem-solving in Local Churches where the Conference Ministry Staff is a member

If there is a need for assistance from a Conference or Associate Conference Minister for conflict mediation or other problem-solving in a local church where the staff person is a member, another staff person will be asked to offer assistance. If there are allegations of misconduct against a minister of the church where a Conference Ministry Staff is a member, that staff person should recuse herself/himself from all proceedings related to this allegation.

8. Telephone References

An Associate Conference Minister should avoid becoming an advocate for a candidate to a search committee they are staffing. When providing telephone references for candidates, they serve as information providers.

9. Role of Conference Ministry Staff in Local Congregations where they are Members

Conference Ministry Staff shall refrain from serving in positions in the churches of their membership where they might be asked to make decisions regarding the employment status of that church's pastoral staff.

10. Personal Relationships

Members of the Conference Ministry Staff shall maintain appropriate boundaries with those having or seeking ministerial authorization in the Conference and those serving in elected and appointed positions in the Conference. Friendships between staff and these persons in the Conference should not lead the staff person to seek special privileges or interfere with the staff person discharging the duties of her/his position.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy explains requirements for reimbursement of allowable expenses by groups and their members. This section covers aspects of the policy.

POLICY

Allowable Expenses

Conference Board of Directors and group members may receive reimbursement for their expenses when the expense is directly related to the work of the group.

Examples of reimbursable expenses:

- Copying costs for group mailings and distribution
- Mileage costs of group members
- Postage
- Refreshments for meetings

If group members have questions about whether an expense will be allowed, they should call the Conference Business Administrator at (612) 871-0359, preferably before incurring the expense.

Reimbursement Form Types

There are two types of reimbursement forms for group members: one is for mileage and one is for all other allowable expenses.

The mileage expense form is called "Volunteer Mileage Reimbursement Form."

The other expense form is called "Volunteer Expense Reimbursement Form."

Receipts Required

Group members must attach *original* receipts to the Volunteer Expense Reimbursement Form for *all* expenses for which they want to be reimbursed, except mileage reimbursement requests. Make sure you ask for a receipt with your purchases!

Mileage Reimbursement Rate

Effective August 1, 2008, the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ will reimburse volunteer mileage at the congressionally-determined volunteer rate or at 50% of the (Internal Revenue Service) mileage reimbursement rate, whichever is the greater.

Filling Out Reimbursement Forms

Group members should fill out the forms completely and legibly. Please print, except where a signature is requested. If a Committee, Work Group, Team or Task Force code is not listed on the form, simply print the name of the Committee or other group, and the Conference accountant will supply the code.

Authorizing Reimbursement Forms

Group members' forms must be authorized by the group chair and the staff liaison to the group. Board of Directors and group members may not authorize their own expense forms. Doing so is a conflict of interest.

"Donated" Expenses as In-kind Contributions

As a gift to the Conference, some members have chosen not to claim reimbursement for their expenses. The Conference is grateful for these gifts, but does not expect this gesture of its volunteers. Such a gift constitutes an in-kind donation to the Conference. It is helpful to the Finance Committee to track the

value of all such in-kind donations. Board of Directors and group members who do so are requested to fill out reimbursement forms and note that the expense is an in-kind donation.

When to Submit Forms

Forms should be submitted to the Conference Office. Forms must be submitted within 60 days of incurring the expense in order to be paid.

Where to Submit Forms

Submit forms and receipts to the Conference Business Administrator at:
Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ
122 West Franklin Avenue, Room 323
Minneapolis, MN 55404

COUNTING OF OFFERINGS AT THE CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING

PURPOSE

This Policy describes how offerings at the Conference Annual Meeting will be handled. This policy was created by the Finance Committee in August 2004.

RATIONALE

This policy was created to give the Conference internal controls over handling offerings at the Conference Annual Meeting.

PROCEDURE

Two unrelated individuals appointed by the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group should be assigned the task of handling the offering.

- The offering should always be controlled by two or more persons.
- The cash should be counted in a secure area.
- All checks should be endorsed as soon as possible.
- All cash should be deposited in the bank. The cash receipts should be deposited intact without being reduced by disbursements.
- The deposit should be signed and forwarded to the Conference office on the next business day. The Conference staff person should record gifts over \$250 for appropriate recording per IRS requirements.
- The deposit should be made as soon as possible.

HIRING CONSULTANTS

PURPOSE

This policy is to guide Conference staff, the Conference Board of Directors and Other Bodies in their use of outside consultants for pay or for free. This policy was first created in 1984 and has been amended.

INCLUDED

The following topics are covered in this policy:

- Definition
- Policy

DEFINITION

A consultant is a person hired for pay or enlisted for free to provide expertise for a specific project to the Conference, the Conference Board of Directors or other bodies of the Board of Directors or the Annual Meeting.

The consultant, whether paid or free, may not be a member of the Board of Directors or group he or she is working for. The Conference may not hire its own staff as consultants.

This definition does not seek to prevent Conference staff, the Conference Board of Directors or other bodies of the Conference from informally seeking expert opinions or feedback on an intermittent basis from anyone. Such conversations do not establish a consulting relationship, which is generally paid and generally for a specific project.

POLICY

Fees*

Consultant fees in excess of \$500 annually must have prior approval of the Conference Board of Directors.

Inform Board of Directors of Consulting Relationship

Whether the fee will exceed the Conference Board of Directors limit or not, the body that hires a consultant for pay or enlists a consultant for free must inform the Conference Board of Directors that it intends to establish a relationship with a consultant.

Letter of Agreement

The following items must be written into a letter of agreement with any paid consultant:

- The consultant's name, company name, business address, telephone number and e-mail address;
- The task to be accomplished, with a justification of need;
- The specific deliverables: a report, a survey, a graphic, a web page, a manual, a training curriculum or training session, a workshop, and so on;
- The qualifications required and how the consultant meets the qualifications;
- The duration of the project, with starting and ending dates;
- Number of hours the consultant will be needed;
- Total fee or hourly rate with a maximum cap;
- Conflict of interest disclosure;
- The name of the Board of Directors or group member who will be the liaison to the consultant.
- The name of the consulting liaison, if the consultant works for a company and is not a self-employed individual.

If the total fee will exceed the Conference Board of Directors limit of \$500, the letter of agreement must be submitted to the Conference Board of Directors for approval. The Conference Minister and the Conference Moderator will sign the letter of agreement. Work may not begin without Conference Board of Directors approval.

If the total fee does not exceed the Conference Board of Directors limit, the chair may sign the letter of agreement, provided that:

- The group's budget is sufficient to pay for the consultant
- The group has passed a motion for the consultant's services;
- The group chair informs the Conference Board of Directors of the relationship with the consultant.

Even if the consultant is providing services for free, whoever engages the consultant, whether it is a Conference staff person, the Conference Board of Directors or a group, should still create a simple letter of agreement to prevent misunderstandings.

*This aspect of the Hiring Consultants Policy is currently under review.

Amending the Letter of Agreement

The letter of agreement must be amended if:

- The total fee increases or decreases
- The project time line needs to be extended or reduced
- The scope of the project increases or decreases
- The deliverables change in scope, number, or some other significant factor

Signing the Amended Letter of Agreement

If the fee increased beyond the Conference limit of \$500, the amended contract will need to be signed by the Conference Minister and Conference Moderator, instead of the group chair.

Name a Liaison During Project

A person on the staff, Board of Directors or the group that hired or enlisted the consultant will be named as liaison for the duration of the agreement. This person's name should be included in the letter of agreement. This person's responsibility is to:

- Be the consultant's contact
- Provide direction to the consultant
- Provide updates to the group or Board of Directors during the project
- Inform the group or Board of Directors of any problems that arise
- Make a final report to the Conference Board of Directors and, if appropriate, to the group at the end of the project.

If the consultant is not a single individual, a liaison from the consulting organization should also be designated and named in the letter of agreement. This person will be the Conference's contact within the consulting organization.

Final Report

The Conference liaison will make a final report to Conference Board of Directors following the end of the project. This report should be brief and include:

- A copy of the consultant's work, or, if that is not feasible because of the nature of the project, a summary of the consultant's work
- An evaluation of the quality and quantity of the work
- An evaluation of users' or beneficiaries' satisfaction with the work
- Final cost
- If this can be obtained: The consultant's assessment of the experience of working with the Conference, especially if the consultant has expressed concerns during the project.

USE OF CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO NORTH CENTRAL MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Updated 08.30.10

DESCRIPTION

This policy explains how funds contributed by the Minnesota Conference in its role as a covenant partner of the North Central Ministry Development Center (NCMDC) may be used.

PURPOSE

The Conference Board of Directors intends for its annual contractual fee to be used for priority needs, such as Phase 1 and Phase 2 assessments and evaluations. At the discretion of the Conference Minister, unused funds can be made available for voluntary developmental programs.

INCLUDED

The following topics are covered in this policy:

- Definitions
- Policy

DEFINITIONS

Persons Under Authorization

Persons under authorization applies to persons who have some covenantal relationship to the Committee on Ministry of the Minnesota Conference. This relationship includes authorized ministers, whether ordained, commissioned or licensed; ministers or persons seeking standing; members in discernment; and those applying to become members in discernment.

Assessments

A Phase 1 assessment is required of anyone applying for Member in Discernment status. A Phase 2 assessment is required of a Member in Discernment prior to the scheduling of his/her Ordination Examination. Cost sharing of assessments is described in the policies of the Committee on Ministry.

Developmental Programs

Developmental programs are sought by persons of their own volition who are under the authorization of the Committee on Ministry of the Minnesota Conference.

Evaluative Programs

Evaluative programs are sought by Conference Staff or the Committee on Ministry for a person who is under the Committee's authorization, often as part of an examination of ministerial fitness or a situational support consultation. In such cases, the client is the Conference, and the Conference Minister will receive the report from NCMDC.

POLICY

All reports from assessments and evaluative programs will be released to the Conference Minister who will direct them to the appropriate party.

The Conference Minister will coordinate the use of the Conference contribution to NCMDC.

EVALUATIVE PROGRAM

If the Committee on Ministry or a member of the Conference Staff wishes to request an evaluation of a person by the NCMDC, they must make a written request to the Conference Minister. The Conference

Minister, or an Associate Conference Minister designated by the Conference Minister, will make contact with NCMDC to authorize the evaluation and to make clear that the Conference is the client and will receive the report.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Individuals May Apply

An individual who wishes to use a portion of the Minnesota Conference contribution to NCMDC must make a request in writing to the Conference Minister or Associate Conference Minister of the Conference. The approval and coordination of Developmental Programs using Conference funds is at the discretion of the Conference Minister. (See “PURPOSE”, above.)

Co-payments

Individuals using the Developmental Program will pay half the fee for the program, whether the full program or the limited program, and will be sent an invoice for this from the Conference. There is an additional fee, to be paid directly to NCMDC, if an individual’s spouse or partner participates in the Development Program.

Co-payments should be paid by a check made out to the Minnesota Conference and should be sent to the Conference office at 122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 323, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

The co-payment can be reduced upon request of the individual requesting the Development Program. The decision will be made by the Conference Minister in consultation with the Associate Conference Minister where the person is under authorization.