

**The Sunrise Association of Churches and Ministers  
Maine Conference  
United Church of Christ**

**BY-LAWS**

Amended October 31, 2015

**1. NAME**

- 1.1. This body shall be known as the Sunrise Association of Churches and Ministers of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) hereafter in these By-Laws known as Association and Conference, respectively.

**2. FAITH**

- 2.1. The Association claims as its own the spirit of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the Preamble to the Constitution of the UCC.

**3. PURPOSE & COVENANT**

- 3.1. The purpose of this Association shall be to promote the spiritual life, to develop cooperative relationships among our churches and ministers, to conserve the standing of the ministry, and to work with our conference and national organizations in the furtherance of our denominational activities.
- 3.2. We hold to the autonomy of the local church, and its independence of all ecclesiastical control, and in this way witness to the reality that the Church is known best in this world as that place where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name for worship.
- 3.3. In carrying out this purpose, the Association, except when requested by a local congregation, shall exercise no ecclesiastical authority, nor interfere with the government or discipline of the churches.
- 3.4. When such advice or action is desired, it shall be by the Association sitting as an Ecclesiastical Council, to be called by the Clerk, at the request of a local church, in accordance with the rules adopted by the Association for the regulation of such councils.
- 3.5. While affirming the liberty of our churches, we hold also to the unity and universality of the Church, which is the body of Christ. We therefore cherish the fellowship of the churches, united in association, conference, and national bodies, for counsel and cooperation in matters of mutual concern, and will unite with all bodies of the church in hearty cooperation, and will earnestly seek, so far as in us lies, that the prayer of our Lord for His disciples may be answered: that all may be one.
- 3.6. The Association, acting for the whole UCC, ordains, commissions, and licenses persons for ministry; grants and maintains member in discernment status, ordained ministerial standing, and dual ordained ministerial standing; grants privilege of call; installs authorized ministers; and reviews and disciplines its authorized ministers in accordance with the Manual on Ministry.
- 3.7. This Association of churches shall therefore be in covenantal relationship with the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ and the General Synod of the UCC.

**4. MEMBERSHIP**

4.1. The membership shall consist of churches and ministers, as provided in the following paragraphs of this Article.

#### 4.2. CHURCHES

4.2.1. All churches in Hancock, Waldo, and Washington Counties and adjoining areas that are affiliated with the United Church of Christ and which actively support the work of the association will be considered as member churches upon the formation of the Sunrise Association.

4.2.2. All churches as shall hereafter be received by a vote of the Association shall be member churches.

4.2.3. Recommendations for new church membership shall be developed by the Association Committee on Ministry, following the guidelines of the United Church of Christ *Manual on Church*.

4.2.4. The Association shall develop covenants for the continued good standing of churches.

#### 4.2.5. Termination of Church Membership

4.2.5.1. Churches in good standing may dissolve their connection with the Association upon their written request.

#### 4.3. MINISTERIAL MEMBERSHIP (Standing)

4.3.1. At the formation of the Sunrise Association, all ministerial members in good standing with the Washington Association and the Hancock-Waldo Association shall initially qualify as Ministerial members in good standing in the Sunrise Association.

4.3.2. Ministerial membership (Standing) may be extended to:

4.3.2.1. Authorized Ministers<sup>1</sup> who:

4.3.2.1.1. are serving member churches in the Association (in a settled or interim basis); or

4.3.2.1.2. are serving in covenanted ministries as missionaries, teachers, chaplains, and other recognized ministerial calls; or

4.3.2.1.3. having served in such capacities, here or elsewhere, are retired from active service and desire to have their standing in this Association; or

4.3.2.1.4. are classified by the Association as being on a Leave of Absence.

4.3.2.2. All persons holding status as Members in Discernment in the Association.

4.3.3. Ministerial Membership (Standing) is extended and approved by the Association Committee on Ministry.

#### 4.3.4. Requirements of Ministerial Membership (Standing)

4.3.4.1. Ministerial Members must hold active or associate membership in a UCC congregation.

4.3.4.2. Ministerial members must provide the Association Committee on Ministry with satisfactory credentials of their authorization or standing, which may include:

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<sup>1</sup> Authorized Ministers are those individuals holding ministerial standing (authorization) from a recognized Association of the United Church of Christ as an Ordained Minister, a Licensed Minister, a Commissioned Minister, a Minister serving with Privilege of Call, or a Minister serving with Dual Standing.

- 4.3.4.2.1. Authorization certificates;
- 4.3.4.2.2. Letters of Call or “Four-way Covenants;”
- 4.3.4.2.3. Letters of Transfer from other Associations;
- 4.3.4.2.4. Records of mandatory training or required background checks.
- 4.3.4.3. Boundary Training
  - 4.3.4.3.1. In order for Ministerial Membership (Standing) to remain active, all ministerial members must show evidence of completing an Ethical Boundary Training Course within the past three years. This is an ongoing requirement; training must be repeated or augmented at least once every three years. Training Courses are subject to approval by the Association Committee on Ministry.
  - 4.3.4.3.2. It is the responsibility of each ministerial member to complete this training as required.
  - 4.3.4.3.3. The Committee on Ministry will review the ministerial standing of those who have not fulfilled this requirement.
  - 4.3.4.3.4. Retired members who currently are not and do not expect to be actively engaged in authorized ministry may be excused from this requirement after conversation with the Committee on Ministry.
- 4.3.5. Termination of Ministerial Membership (Standing)
  - 4.3.5.1. Ministerial Members may request that standing be terminated or transferred to another Association for personal or professional reasons.
    - 4.3.5.1.1. Requests for transfer of ministerial standing should be made in writing to the Chair of the Committee on Ministry.
  - 4.3.5.2. The Association Committee on Ministry has the authority to terminate standing for cause:
    - 4.3.5.2.1. under the provisions of Section 7.4. of these bylaws; or
    - 4.3.5.2.2. In the event that members fail to maintain membership requirements specified in Section 3.3.4. of these bylaws.
    - 4.3.5.2.3. Termination of standing under this provision (3.3.5.2.) shall be in accordance with the guidelines of the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry.
  - 4.3.5.3. The Association Committee on Ministry has the authority to suspend or terminate ministerial membership (standing) without prejudice for the following reasons:
    - 4.3.5.3.1. The Ministerial Member fails to respond to regular surveys seeking information on training and ministerial activity; or
    - 4.3.5.3.2. The Association is unable to locate the ministerial member, following repeated attempts through standard means (mail, email, phone, etc.); or
    - 4.3.5.3.3. Upon the member’s death.
    - 4.3.5.3.4. Ministerial Membership suspended or terminated under this provision (3.3.5.3.) may be reinstated with the approval of the Committee on Ministry.

## 5. MEETINGS

### 5.1. FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS:

- 5.1.1. This Sunrise Association shall hold two meetings each year.
  - 5.1.1.1. A Fellowship Meeting will be held in the spring.
  - 5.1.1.2. An Annual Meeting will be held in the fall; at which elections are held and a budget established,
  - 5.1.1.3. Additional meetings of the Association may be called by the Coordinating Council upon due notice to the churches and ministers of the Association for:
    - 5.1.1.3.1. Celebrations;
    - 5.1.1.3.2. Special business; or
    - 5.1.1.3.3. Educational opportunities.
    - 5.1.1.3.4. The time, place and the agenda of such meetings shall be designated by the Coordinating Council with due notice to the Association.

## 5.2. ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL MEETINGS:

- 5.2.1. The Association shall meet as an Ecclesiastical Council for the purpose of ordination and for other purposes as guided by the UCC Manual on Ministry and the policies and procedures of the Maine Conference of the UCC.
- 5.2.2. Meetings of an Ecclesiastical Council shall be called by the Coordinating Council after consultation with, or recommendation from the Committee on Ministry.
- 5.2.3. The call for an Ecclesiastical Council meeting shall be issued through the Clerk of the Association and the agenda shall be limited to the matter named in the call.
- 5.2.4. The minutes of every Ecclesiastical Council shall be filed with the clerk of the Conference.

## 6. REPRESENTATION AND QUORUMS

### 6.1. Delegates

- 6.1.1. Each member church is entitled to be represented at meetings of the Association by three delegates, one of whom is the pastor.
- 6.1.2. All officers and Ministerial Members of the Association are delegates.
- 6.1.3. Voting power shall rest with the delegates.
- 6.1.4. All members have a voice and are welcome to participate at meetings.

### 6.2. Quorums

- 6.2.1. A quorum shall be one lay delegate from each of 25% of each of the member churches of the Association and 25% of all authorized clergy.

## 7. OFFICERS, TERMS, AND DUTIES

### 7.1. The Officers of the Association shall be:

#### 7.1.1. MODERATOR – two year term.

- 7.1.1.1. When possible the office of moderator may alternate between a lay member and clergy.
- 7.1.1.2. The Moderator shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Association.
- 7.1.1.3. The Moderator shall serve as chairperson of the Coordinating Council.
- 7.1.1.4. The Moderator shall be an ex-officio (voice but no vote) member of all committees.

#### 7.1.2. VICE-MODERATOR – two year term

7.1.2.1. The Vice-Moderator shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Association in the absence of the moderator and shall fill the vacancy and term of the Moderator if needed.

7.1.2.2. When possible, the office of Vice-Moderator shall alternate between a lay member and clergy.

7.1.2.3. At the request of the moderator, the vice moderator may assume and fulfill the roles of the moderator for specified purposes.

7.1.3. CLERK - two year term.

7.1.3.1. The Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining all records and minutes of all Association meetings.

7.1.3.2. Immediately following the spring and fall meetings and any other meetings at which business is conducted, the Clerk shall send the minutes to each member of the Coordinating Council, the Maine Conference, UCC office, as well as, on request, to any member of the Association.

7.1.3.3. The Clerk may use either email or ground mail for communication.

7.1.4. TREASURER - two year term.

7.1.4.1. The Treasurer shall:

7.1.4.1.1. bill and collect Maine Conference UCC and Association fellowship dues;

7.1.4.1.2. receive all monies from the Member Churches,

7.1.4.1.3. Keep proper accounts of the monies received and disbursed as approved by the Association and Coordinating Council.

7.1.4.2. The Treasurer shall make regular reports to the Coordinating Council throughout the year.

7.1.4.3. The Treasurer shall submit a written report at the Annual meeting of the Association.

7.1.4.3.1. The Treasurer's annual written report shall be filed with the Clerk of the Association.

7.1.5. AUDITOR- one year term.

7.1.5.1. The Auditor shall review the treasurer's accounts of the monies received and disbursed annually.

7.1.5.2. The auditor shall submit a written report to be presented at the Annual meeting of the Association.

7.2. Elections

7.2.1. Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association.

7.2.2. When possible, officers shall be chosen from candidates who reside in differing geographic areas of the Association.

7.2.3. Officers may continue for a second term if desired by the Association, but serving a third consecutive term shall only occur under special circumstances as approved by the Association.

## **8. STANDING COMMITTEES**

8.1. The following are the standing committees of the Association:

8.2. COORDINATING COUNCIL

8.2.1. The Coordinating Council shall consist of all officers of the Association; three at-large delegates; representatives to conference committees/teams; the Committee on Ministry chairperson or designee; and other persons deemed necessary by the Coordinating Council to do the work of the greater Church community.

8.2.2. Duty and Authority. The Coordinating Council:

8.2.2.1. Conducts month to month business of the Association;

8.2.3. Plans business and fellowship meetings of the Association, Ecclesiastical Council meetings, and any special meetings of the Association;

8.2.4. Approves items on behalf of the Association;

8.2.5. Prepares reports to the Association on business and action taken on its behalf;

8.2.6. Establishes a yearly budget to be voted on at the Association Annual Meeting; and

8.2.7. Serves as the core membership of the Nominating Committee.

8.3. Election and Term

8.3.1. At large delegates and representatives to Conference committees/teams shall be elected at Annual Meetings of the Association to fill two year terms.

8.4. COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

8.4.1. Duty and Authority

8.4.1.1. The duty of this Committee shall be to act on behalf of the Association in all matters pertaining to the standing of churches and ministerial members in the Association.

8.4.2. The committee has the authority to:

8.4.2.1. Work with churches seeking membership in the Association and provide recommendations to the Coordinating Council regarding membership;

8.4.2.2. Provide assistance and encouragement for member churches in support of our mutual, covenantal relationship;

8.4.2.3. Oversee the standing of churches within the Association and make recommendations to the Coordinating Council regarding any change in church membership status;

8.4.2.4. Approve candidates for status as Members in Discernment;

8.4.2.5. Authorize individuals as Licensed Ministers within the Association;

8.4.2.6. Authorize individuals as Commissioned Ministers within the Association;

8.4.2.7. Authorize ministers as holding Dual Standing and Privilege of Call within the Association;

8.4.2.8. Recommend to the Coordinating Council candidates for examination by an Ecclesiastical Council leading to Ordained Ministerial Status;

8.4.2.9. Approve the transfer of standing for authorized ministers seeking membership in the Association, and recommend transfer of standing for authorized ministers seeking membership in other Associations;

8.4.2.10. Provide support and oversight for authorized ministers with standing in the Association, including the monitoring of all ongoing requirements for ministerial standing (boundary training, etc.);

- 8.4.2.11. Investigate problems with authorized ministry that come to the attention of the Association;
- 8.4.2.12. Determine and institute actions and outcomes in response to support and oversight activities, up to and including termination of ministerial standing.

#### 8.4.3. Membership

- 8.4.3.1. The Committee on Ministry shall consist of nine members.
- 8.4.3.2. Whenever possible, committee membership shall be equally representative of lay and clergy, male and female.
- 8.4.3.3. Three members of the committee shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association each year for a term of three years.
- 8.4.3.4. Members of the committee, after serving two full terms, shall be ineligible to serve on the committee for one year.
- 8.4.3.5. If the Nominating Committee is unable to fill expired terms, a member may continue beyond established term limits for one year.
- 8.4.3.6. In the event that a position on the Committee becomes vacant during a term, the Coordinating Council shall appoint an individual to serve in that position for the remainder of the term of that position.

#### 8.4.4. General Provisions

- 8.4.4.1. The work of the committee in supporting local churches shall follow policies and guidelines established by the Association and the United Church of Christ *Manual on Church*.
- 8.4.4.2. The work of the committee in the authorization of ministry and the oversight of authorized ministers shall follow the policies and guidelines established by the Association and the United Church of Christ *Manual on Ministry*.
- 8.4.4.3. The committee, in consultation with the Coordinating Council, may assign and delegate investigative work, Fitness Reviews, and the institution of actions and outcomes for authorized ministers as a result of oversight work to other Associations or Conferences with their permission and acceptance of such work.

#### 8.4.5. Appeals of Decisions

- 8.4.5.1. Decisions by the committee regarding the authorization and oversight of churches and ministers may be appealed to the Coordinating Council.
- 8.4.5.2. Appeals must be made in writing to the chairperson of the Coordinating Council, and must state the reason (grounds) for the appeal.
- 8.4.5.3. Appeals must be received by the Coordinating Council within thirty days of the authorization or oversight decision made by the Committee on Ministry.
- 8.4.5.4. Grounds for any appeal of any authorization or oversight action shall be limited to the process followed to reach that decision. The hearing and review of the appeal shall also be limited to the process leading to the authorization or oversight action.
- 8.4.5.5. In the case of an authorization decision, only individuals directly affected by that decision may file an appeal.
- 8.4.5.6. In the case of an oversight decision, only those persons directly affected by that decision may file an appeal. In the event of a Fitness Review, this might include any

person whose authorization is directly affected by the oversight decision and any individuals who raised the question of fitness leading to the review.

8.4.5.7. The process of hearing an appeal, including outcomes from such an appeal, shall be guided by the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry.

#### 8.4.6. Record Keeping

8.4.6.1. The Committee shall keep accurate records of all persons who hold ministerial standing within the Association, including:

- 8.4.6.1.1. Name, address, and other contact information;
- 8.4.6.1.2. Level of standing (ordained, licensed, etc.);
- 8.4.6.1.3. Level of activity (active, retired, leave of absence); and
- 8.4.6.1.4. Status of in-service training (Boundary Awareness, etc.)

8.4.6.2. The Committee will communicate changes in standing information in a timely fashion to the Association Clerk, the Maine Conference, and the United Church of Christ using procedures developed by those organizations for that purpose.

### 8.5. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

8.5.1. The Coordinating Council shall serve as the Nominating Committee.

8.5.2. The Nominating Committee shall identify and appoint persons to fill vacancies that occur between annual meetings of the Association.

8.5.3. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of officers for consideration by the members of the Association at the Annual Meeting consisting of:

- 8.5.3.1. Association Officers;
- 8.5.3.2. Association Committee members; and
- 8.5.3.3. Representatives to Conference Committees/Teams.

## 9. MEMBERSHIP DUES

9.1. Per Capita membership dues shall be determined by the Association at its annual meeting.

9.2. Dues shall be allocated and based on the requests of the Conference and the needs of the Association.

9.3. At the discretion of the Coordinating Council, an offering in-kind for the work of the Association or any other entity may be received and dispersed as approved by a vote at an Association meeting.

## 10. FISCAL YEAR

10.1. The fiscal year of the Association shall be from January first to December thirty first.

## 11. DISSOLUTION

11.1. In the event of the dissolution of the Sunrise Association of Churches and Ministers, after all bills have been paid the total assets shall be liquidated and allotted to the Maine Conference, UCC, or its successor in accordance with current government regulations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## 12. PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

12.1. All meetings shall be conducted in a congenial manner and in Christian fellowship.

12.2. If the Moderator or a majority of the voting delegates at a particular meeting vote to adhere to *Robert's Rules Order-Newly Revised*, that shall be the parliamentary authority for

matters of procedure not covered by these By-Laws for that meeting or a designated portion of it.

### **13. AMENDMENTS**

- 13.1. Proposed amendments to these By-Laws may be submitted in writing at any Association meeting.
- 13.2. Proposed amendments shall be adopted by a vote at a subsequent business meeting, provided that notice of proposed amendments is given in the call to said meeting.
- 13.3. Proposed amendments shall be adopted if a quorum is achieved, and if approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting.

### **14. BY-LAW REVIEW**

- 14.1. The Coordinating Council will initiate a review of the By-Laws every 3 years, or as changes are needed.

### **Notes:**

- The Bylaws of the Sunrise Association were adopted (with one amendment) On October 4, 2014.
- The Bylaws were amended on October 31, 2015.