

1 **PREAMBLE**

2
3 The members of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ affirm the Statement of Faith
4 of the United Church of Christ and covenant* together to express fully our oneness in Christ and to
5 make more effective our common witness to Jesus, the Savior.

6
7 We believe that God is calling us into an ever-deepening and ever-expanding mission in the world.

8
9 In partial response to the call of God, we have established and shall maintain this New York
10 Conference as a Conference* of the United Church of Christ. The purposes of the Conference will
11 include but not be limited to: developing and maintaining cooperative relationships within the United
12 Church of Christ in all its settings and with other denominations and ecumenical endeavors; nurturing a
13 mission vision; encouraging and preserving shared relationships among the Associations*, the local
14 settings, and all the people within our churches; developing and nourishing our witness beyond local
15 church and Association areas; giving support to local mission outreach; fostering Affirmative Action*
16 goals at all Conference levels, especially in seeking new church members or new member churches;
17 and being supportive in sharing our beliefs, concerns, and joys.

18
19 To these ends, we covenant and pledge ourselves, one to the other, and hereby adopt these By-Laws.

20
21 * Terms defined or explained in the Glossary attached to these By-Laws.

22 **ARTICLE I**

23 **Membership**

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26 100. The following shall be members in good standing of the Conference as provided in the Certificate
27 of Consolidation dated May 31, 1963, as amended:

28
29 101. All Churches and ministers presently members of the New York Conference of the United
30 Church of Christ, Inc.;

31
32 102. Churches and ministers hereafter received into and granted standing by any Association and the
33 Conference as follows:

34

35 102.1. Any church within the Conference boundaries may be admitted into membership in an
36 Association and the Conference upon the vote of such church to join the United Church of Christ
37 and to accept the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ and the Constitution
38 and By-Laws of the Association concerned and the Conference and when the petition of such
39 church for membership and its By-Laws have been accepted by such Association and the
40 Conference;

41

42 102.2. A church established by the Conference or by the Conference and Local Church Ministries, a
43 Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ, shall become a member of an Association
44 and the Conference when it has incorporated, voted to join the United Church of Christ, and
45 voted to accept the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ and the Constitution
46 and By-Laws of the Association concerned and the Conference and when its petition for
47 membership and its By-Laws have been accepted by the Association and the Conference;

48

49 103. Every Commissioned Minister holding standing in any Association within the Conference; and,
50 every Licensed Minister who has been granted voting membership in an Association of the
51 Conference;

52

53 104. All officers of the Conference and all members of the Conference Board; and

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55 105. Lay persons serving as Moderators and Registrars of Associations during the term of their
56 respective offices.

57

58

ARTICLE II

59

Meetings of the Conference

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61 106. The Annual Meeting of the Conference shall be held for the purposes of electing the officers of
62 the Conference, adopting a budget and addressing the concerns of the Conference,
63 Associations and local settings. The Annual Meeting shall take place in May or June of each
64 year unless otherwise determined by the Conference Board. All attendees of the Annual Meeting
65 may have voice, as granted by the Moderator or Vice Moderator. However, only delegates shall
66 have voting privileges.

67

68 107. Special meetings of the Conference may be called by the Conference Board or on petition of at
69 least 30 churches from two (2) or more Associations. The business which may be transacted at

70 any special meeting shall be confined to matters normally incident to the conduct of the meeting
71 and to matters which are related to the purpose or purposes set forth in the notice of such
72 meetings.

73
74 108. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of any special meeting shall be given to all members of
75 the Conference by mail not less than 30 days prior to the date of the meeting. It shall be the
76 responsibility of each member church to notify its delegates of all meetings.

77
78 109. All meetings of the Conference shall be conducted pursuant to the most current version of
79 Robert's Rules of Order and by the standing rules adopted by the delegates at the meeting.

81 **ARTICLE III**

82 Delegates

83
84 110. Each member church is entitled to be represented at all Conference meetings by two (2) voting
85 lay delegates. Churches with more than 250 members are entitled to be represented by one
86 additional lay delegate for every additional 250 members or major fraction thereof as shown in
87 the New York Conference directory most recently published prior to the date of the call to the
88 meeting. All individuals holding ministerial standing in the Conference shall be considered voting
89 delegates. Members of the Official Board of the Conference, and moderators and registrars of
90 the Associations, during their respective terms, shall also be considered voting delegates.

91
92 111. Consistent with Article 3, paragraphs 186m, 197 and 190 of the Constitution of the United
93 Church of Christ, delegates and alternate delegates from the Conference to the General Synod*
94 shall be elected by the Conference. Nominations for these offices shall be made by the
95 Associations in accordance with a ratio as established periodically by the Conference. Delegates
96 at large may be nominated by the Conference. All Associations should be represented in the
97 General Synod delegation by at least one delegate.

98
99 112. In the selection of delegates to Conference and to General Synod, every attempt shall be made
100 to provide equitable representation of geographic area, laity and individuals with ministerial
101 authorization. In the selection of delegates to Conference and General Synod, every attempt
102 shall also be made to provide equitable representation consistent with the Affirmative Action
103 goals of the Conference.

104

105 **ARTICLE IV**

106 **Officers and Staff**

107

108 113. A Moderator and a Vice Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Conference.
109 They shall perform such duties as usually pertain to their office or as are properly required by the
110 Conference. Such officers shall serve for a three-year term and shall be eligible for re-election.
111 No person may serve more than two (2) successive terms. The Moderator shall preside at all
112 meetings of the Conference. The Vice Moderator shall perform the duties of the Moderator in the
113 absence or disability or at the request of the Moderator.

114

115 114. A Conference Minister* shall be nominated by a specifically organized Search Committee
116 appointed by the Conference Board. Every effort will be made, in the appointment of Search
117 Committee members, to provide equitable representation geographically, and between laity and
118 individuals with ministerial authorization. A candidate for the position of Conference Minister shall
119 hold ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ along with any other
120 qualifications to be set by the Conference Board. The candidate thus chosen shall be presented
121 to the Conference, and, upon at least thirty days notice, elected at the Annual Meeting or by a
122 Special Meeting of the Conference. The term of the Call shall be indefinite with annual evaluation
123 by the Conference Personnel Committee in cooperation with the Conference Board.

124

125 115. A Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Conference. The term of office of the Treasurer
126 shall be one year. S/he shall be eligible for re-election.

127

128 116. The Treasurer shall perform such duties as usually pertain to her/his office or as are properly
129 required by the Conference Board. S/he shall make an Annual Report to the Conference, which
130 report shall be subject to audit, and shall regularly report to the Conference Board and the
131 Executive Committee.

132

133 117. The Secretary shall be elected annually by the Conference. The term of office of the Secretary
134 shall be one year. S/he shall be eligible for re-election.

135

136 118. The Secretary shall issue notices of all meetings of the Conference, the Conference Board, and
137 the Executive Committee. S/he shall attend all meetings of the Conference, the Conference
138 Board, and the Executive Committee and keep the minutes thereof. S/he shall perform all such

139 other duties as usually pertain to the office of secretary, or as are properly required by the
140 Conference Board.

141

142 119. The Conference Minister shall be head of staff, administrator of Conference programs, and
143 general overseer of Conference operations, a chief executive officer. S/He shall be the
144 Conference's liaison with the wider Church (denominationally and ecumenically) with the support
145 of the Conference Ministry Team.

146 The Conference Minister shall be a theologian, pastor and teacher. S/He shall take the lead in
147 promoting the ministry and mission of the Conference and shall, with the members of the
148 Conference Ministry Team*, facilitate networking of local congregations. The Conference
149 Minister shall maintain the official records of the Conference.

150

151 120. The Conference or the Conference Board may elect or provide for such additional resource
152 person(s) and staff as it may determine necessary for its governance work. Such additional
153 resource person(s) shall have such authority and perform such duties for a prescribed period of
154 time as the Conference, the Conference Board or the Conference Minister may sanction.
155 This/these resource person(s) shall have voice without vote on the Official Board.

156

157 121. In case of the absence or disability of any officer of the Conference, or in case of a vacancy in
158 any office, the Conference Board may reassign an officer's powers and duties to any other
159 officer or member of the Conference.

160

161 122. The Conference Minister shall work in consultation with the Conference Board to hire ministry
162 team staff for the conference.

163

164 123. The Conference Minister, in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Conference
165 Board, shall hire administrative staff.

166

167 **ARTICLE V**

168 Governance

169

170 124. The Conference Board shall consist of fourteen (14) members, nominated through the
171 Conference Governance Team and elected at Conference Annual Meeting. The Conference
172 Board will have as members: the Conference Minister, Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer,
173 Secretary, nine members each of whom reside in a different association of the Conference

174 among whom at least one member will have Administrative expertise, one member will have
175 Congregational Development expertise, one member will have Wider Church expertise, one
176 member will have Leadership Development expertise. Elected Conference Board members will
177 be eligible to serve for two three-year consecutive terms.
178

179 125. The Conference Board shall possess and exercise between meetings of the Conference the full
180 power and authority of the Conference. However, it cannot annul or reverse any action taken by
181 the Conference. The Conference Board shall have primary fiscal decision making responsibility
182 for the Conference, subject to the direction of the Conference and subject to the approval of the
183 budget by the Conference at the Annual Meeting. Within these limitations the Conference Board
184 shall be responsible for the receipt and disbursement of all Our Church's Wider Mission funds
185 and other benevolent giving to the Conference or for the account of the United Church of Christ.
186 The Conference Board shall also engage in budget planning and determination of financial
187 priorities for administration, program and services, including financial requests for program, staff
188 and services within the Associations.
189

190 126. The Conference Board shall meet at least once per year. Written or personal notice of the time
191 and place of each meeting shall be given to each member of the Conference Board not less than
192 eight (8) days prior to the meeting. Nine (9) voting members of the Conference Board shall
193 constitute a quorum, and the vote of a majority of the members present shall decide any
194 question.
195

196 127. An Executive Committee shall be elected from the Conference Board and will include: the
197 Moderator, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Conference, three (3) additional members of the
198 Conference Board, and the Conference Minister. The Executive Committee shall possess and
199 exercise such powers as the Conference Board shall delegate to it and shall possess between
200 meetings of the Conference Board the full power and authority of such Board. However, it cannot
201 annul or reverse any action taken by the Conference Board. The Executive Committee shall
202 keep a record of all actions taken by it which shall be reported at the next meeting of the
203 Conference Board.
204

205 128. The Conference Board or the Conference may adopt policies and procedures to establish such
206 task forces as it may determine to accomplish and perform specific projects or to deal with
207 particular areas of governance or concern, including but not limited to Ministry Teams.
208

209 **ARTICLE VI**

210 Ministry Teams

211

212 129. The responsibility for the total program of the Conference belongs to the Conference. Ministry
213 Teams shall be established to meet the program and ministry needs of the various settings of the
214 conference. Written reports of the work of the Ministry Teams will be submitted to the
215 Conference Minister. These Ministry Teams shall work in collaborations with all settings of the
216 church.

217

218 130. Each Ministry Team shall develop written policies that govern its nomination and election
219 process.

220

221 **ARTICLE VII**

222 Governance Team

223

224 131. Before the Annual Meeting, the Conference Board shall nominate seven (7) individuals to serve
225 on the Governance Team. These individuals will be presented at the Annual Meeting for election.
226 Two members of the Governance Team will be members of the Conference Board. The term of
227 office of the members shall be three years. A member of the Governance Team who has served
228 a full term shall be ineligible for re-election for a period of one year. The Governance Team shall
229 elect its own chairperson and secretary.

230

231 132. The Governance Team shall select candidates for all Conference Board positions. In selecting
232 such candidates for nomination the Governance Team shall consider recommendations made by
233 associations, local congregations, and other settings of the conference, and will make every
234 attempt to provide for equitable representation geographically, and between laity and persons
235 with ministerial authorization.

236

237 133. The Governance Team on behalf of the Conference Board shall present nominees for election at
238 the Annual Meeting of the Conference. Nominations may also be made from the floor by voting
239 delegates.

240

241 134. The Governance Team shall maintain permanent and continuing records of persons who are, or
242 may be, eligible for nomination and election to office and for other service to the Conference.
243 The Governance Team shall actively consult with and seek to identify qualified and gifted

244 candidates from the Associations and local churches of the Conference. It shall advise the
245 Conference Board regarding persons eligible to serve in various capacities and the records of
246 the Governance Team shall at all times be available to the Conference Board upon request.

247

248 135. The Governance Team shall develop policies that frame the work of Ministry Teams. Those
249 policies shall be approved by the Conference Board.

250

251

ARTICLE VIII

252

Investment Committee

253

254 136. The New York Conference of the United Church of Christ hereby establishes an Endowment Fund
255 that shall be managed by the Investment Committee. The Investment Committee shall be
256 elected by the voting delegates to the Conference at its Annual Meeting. The Committee shall
257 consist of five (5) members. Terms of office shall be for three (3) years. The election of members
258 shall be staggered in a three year cycle (2 one year, 2 the next year, 1 the third year). The
259 Investment Committee shall elect its own chairperson and secretary. The Investment Committee
260 shall make a formal report, at least annually, to the Conference Board and the Conference at the
261 Annual Meeting of the Conference. Additional reports may be given as stipulated by the policies
262 and procedures of the Investment Committee and when requested or as necessary. See also the
263 Investment Committee policies and procedures.

264

265

ARTICLE IX

266

Personnel Committee

267

268 137. The Conference Personnel Committee is a committee of the Conference Board consisting of nine
269 members, with one member elected from each of the nine Associations for suggested three (3)
270 year terms and one (1) at-large member appointed by the Conference Board for a one (1) year
271 term in accordance with the Conference Personnel Policy Handbook. The Personnel Committee
272 shall elect its own chairperson and secretary. The Chair of the Personnel Committee (or an
273 authorized representative) is a voting member of the Conference Board.

274

275 138. The Personnel Committee shall clarify and recommend personnel policies and standards for
276 Conference personnel. The Committee shall help each member of the Conference Ministry Team
277 refine and interpret his or her job description as needed, seek ways to help him/her effectively
278 carry out his/her responsibilities, and advocate for him/her on the Conference Board.

279

280 139. The Personnel Committee shall provide for the annual evaluation of the Conference staff and
281 shall report the results of these evaluations to the Conference Board.

282

283

ARTICLE X

284

Relationships to Associations and Local Churches

285

286 140. The autonomy and independent programs of the several Associations and the local churches
287 within the Conference are recognized as paramount within the area of their respective concerns.
288 In this regard the Conference adopts the definitions and statements of covenantal relationships
289 among the Conference, Associations and the local settings as are set forth in the Constitution
290 and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.

291

292

ARTICLE XI

293

294 141. These By-Laws may be amended at any Annual or special meeting of the Conference by a two-
295 thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting. All proposed amendments must have been
296 mailed to the members at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be
297 taken.

298

299

GLOSSARY

300

Affirmative Action:

302 Our belief in Affirmative Action is rooted in the belief that the church is called to model its commitment
303 to be inclusive in a pluralistic society. Commitment to Affirmative Action reflects the basic belief that the
304 institution is strengthened by the gifts, skills, and perspective of all within the life of the church and the
305 broader community. Our vision is to move beyond the past limitations that have prevented any person
306 from gaining access to a position because of authorized ministerial standing or by lay status (except for
307 positions otherwise designated as requiring ministerial standing), race or ethnicity, age, gender, gender
308 identity, disability, or sexual orientation, and to achieve diverse inclusion at all levels of the Conference
309 and in local church membership.

310

Association:

312 An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all
313 Local Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial

314 partner standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers of that Association, and those Licensed Ministers
315 who have been granted voting membership in that Association. An Association determines, confers,
316 and certifies to the standing of the Local Churches of the United Church of Christ within its area. An
317 Association grants, certifies to, transfers and terminates ordained ministerial standing or ordained
318 ministerial partner standing in the United Church of Christ. (Constitution, Article VIII; Bylaws, Article II,
319 Paragraph 157-166, The Constitution and Bylaws, United Church of Christ)

320

321 **Conference:**

322 A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local Churches in a
323 geographical area, all Authorized Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in
324 its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers
325 in its Associations, and those Licensed Ministers who have been granted voting membership in its
326 Associations. (Constitution, Article VIII; Bylaws, Article II, Paragraphs 167-177, The Constitution and
327 Bylaws, United Church of Christ)

328

329 **Conference Minister:**

330 The Conference Minister is the chief executive of a Conference of the United Church of Christ.

331

332 **Covenantal Relationship:**

333 A covenantal relationship is the state of being bound together through commitments to and
334 expectations of one another in faithfulness to God's will and reliance upon God's grace.

335

336 **General Synod:**

337 The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ which has among its
338 functions establishing the Constitution and Bylaws provisions for ministry in the United Church of Christ.
339 (Constitution, Article IX; Bylaws, Article III, The Constitution and Bylaws, United Church of Christ)

340

341 **Local Setting:**

342 A Local Setting is a location or organization where ministry, which holds membership in an Association
343 of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ, is performed. For further clarification on
344 ministry settings please refer to the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry.

345

346 **Mail:**

347 Mail shall, for the purposes of these bylaws, be defined as it is in the latest revision of Robert's Rules of
348 Order.