

**GOVERNING AGREEMENT OF THE
WINDHAM ASSOCIATION
OF THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

(this governance document acts as by-laws)

Who we are and how we work together:

The Windham Association of the Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) is currently comprised of the following United Church of Christ (UCC) churches: Abington Congregational Church; Federated Church of Christ of Brooklyn; First Congregational Church of Canterbury; Central Village Congregational Church; Westfield Congregational Church of Danielson; East Woodstock Congregational Church; Hampton Congregational Church; First Church of Christ in Mansfield, Congregational; First Congregational Church of Plainfield; The Congregational Church of Putnam; Scotland Congregational Church; First Congregational Church of South Killingly; Storrs Congregational Church; Storrs Korean Church; Congregational Church of Thompson; First Congregational Church of Willimantic; Church of the Good Shepherd of West Woodstock; and First Congregational Church of Woodstock; delegates of these congregations and authorized ministers in good standing in this Association.

Members come together to strengthen our common witness to the mission of Jesus Christ, to affirm our collective responsibility to make our faith alive in the world, and to serve our member church communities as specified in this document.

Our Covenant: In keeping with the traditions of the United Church of Christ we, the member churches and authorized ministers in the Windham Association, relate to each other in a covenantal manner, promising each other to seek God's will and to be faithful to one another in the work we do. Each church is called to honor and respect the work and ministry of all members of the Association and to listen, hear, and carefully consider the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In this covenant, the members of the Association seek to walk together in all God's ways.

Our purpose and role:

We work together to be in active fellowship with the Southern New England Conference and the General Synod of the UCC, and to be concerned with the welfare of all local UCC churches within our boundaries. The role of the Windham Association is specifically to:

- Determine, confer, and certify standing of both local churches and authorized ministers in the UCC within the boundaries of this Association.
- Conduct other business that aligns with our mission of supporting clergy and churches.

Governance

For the purposes of electing officers and members of the Windham Association Council or gathering as an ecclesiastical council each member church in good standing is represented by its minister(s) and

up to two other delegates. In addition to those serving as representatives of member churches, voting members also include all authorized ministers who hold standing in this Association.

The administration of the Windham Association shall be accomplished by the Windham Association Council.

The Council shall meet regularly, at least six times annually. The Council shall include a Moderator, Vice Moderator, Registrar, Treasurer, and five Members at Large.

- Moderator: calls for and facilitates meetings, sets meeting agendas, serves as the chief point of contact for Association business, and provides an annual report to delegates and clergy of this Association. The Vice Moderator shall perform these duties in the Moderator's absence.
- Registrar: takes meeting minutes, records the results of consensus decisions and votes, and reports to the Southern New England Conference concerning installations, ordinations, commissions, licenses, or Members in Discernment, as well as persons or churches removed from membership. The registrar also transfers standing for authorized ministers in good standing.
- Treasurer: creates and oversees the budget, reports about finances at each meeting, collects dues, and pays bills.

Officers and Members at Large will be elected for a three-year term. The Registrar and the Treasurer have no term limit. All others are limited to two consecutive terms.

The Council will appoint three members to a nominating committee. The nominating committee will meet to determine the leadership needs of the Council, recruit new Council members based on those leadership needs, nominate new members, and orient them to the work of the Council.

A quorum, defined as the presence of more than one-half of the members, must be present for any decision made by either consensus or voting.

Decisions may also be made through any means by which a quorum of members can hear each other (such as through conference call) or by votes submitted in writing, in print or electronically.

Council Responsibilities

The Council will act as the Association's Committee on Ministry. We understand that our responsibilities are to:

- Consider the standing of local churches; review and recommend churches to the Association for membership or dismissal.
- Review and transfer standing of ordained ministers, accept candidates for Member In Discernment standing, and approve candidates for Lay Ministerial Standing or Ordained Ministerial Partner status.
- Review and recommend candidates for Ordained Ministerial Standing and Installation to an Ecclesiastical Council.
- Review and recommend candidates for Installation or Privilege of Call to an Ecclesiastical

Council or serve as that Council.

- Grant authorized ministers' leaves of absence when requested and accept the written resignation of such ministers.
- Review any allegations of pastoral misconduct by an authorized minister and, if the Council deems it appropriate, refer further exploration to a Unified Fitness Review (UFR) by the Conference UFR Committee (UFRC) and will accept the outcome of the UFRC as its own. The UFRC will follow the process for conducting a Fitness Review as described in the current UCC Manual on Ministry. The UFRC will also follow any additional processes agreed upon by all the participating Associations, so long as those processes do not conflict with the Manual on Ministry.
- Appoint one member to the Conference Unified Fitness Review Committee. The appointee must have been a member of an Association's Committee on Ministry within the last 6 years. The term of service for each member will be three years. The appointee may be renewed for up to two more terms of service. Attention to the importance of balancing gender, clergy, lay and the needed skills and experience on the UFRC shall be considered in making or renewing its appointments.
- Review and remove standing without prejudice of an authorized minister who is not retired and is no longer serving the church in the capacity for which he or she has standing.
- Grant reinstatement of standing, if appropriate, to authorized ministers who have had their standing removed and have reapplied for standing.
- Ensure that all decisions about standing are guided by the most current edition of the UCC Manual on Ministry.
- Act as mediator or counselor in local churches when invited to do so by the minister or the church leadership.
- Provide opportunities for continuing education and collegiality.

In addition to our responsibilities to our members, the Association has governance and administrative responsibilities. These may include creating and monitoring an annual budget, filling vacancies in volunteer officer positions, setting the agenda for meetings, reviewing and modifying Association guiding agreements and procedures, creating committees and task forces, engaging members to complete specific tasks, and communicating the decisions and actions of the Council to delegates and clergy of the Association.

Changes to this Agreement

From time to time the membership may wish to add more or less specificity to this document or to change it substantially. Changes may be made annually, presented in writing, and agreed to by the membership.

From time to time, members may decide to use a provision(s) contained in the bylaws of the Southern New England Conference, especially in cases in which members feel the need for specific procedural guidance not contained in this agreement. When the Southern New England Conference bylaws are used, the section used can be specified in the notes of an Association meeting.

Revised and adopted January 27, 2021