



HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Memo From: Constitution Review and Rewrite Task Force

To: The Heartland Conference

The constitution review and rewrite task force offers you the complete public draft of a “substitute constitution”. This represents work by the dedicated task force composed of Mr. Tom Hathaway, moderator, SONKA, Rev. Terry Williams, past BOD member, CSEOA, Rev. Lauren Roe, member BOD, DOC representative, Rev. Brian Burke, LWA (One), current annual gathering chair, Rev. David Plant, past moderator, task force chair, NWOA, and Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins, Heartland Conference Minister. We give thanks to Heather Kimmel, General Counsel for the United Church of Christ who regularly reviewed our work for those items required by law as well as comparative information regarding current conference practices in evaluating and drafting constitutions considering the changing nature of our many UCC settings' unique needs. This draft has been reviewed by the Board of Directors and the Executive Teams of the Associations and is ready for your study and response.

Overall, the attempt of the work was to 1. Streamline the existing constitution by removing any language that no longer applies to the current needs/practices of the Conference. 2. A desire for a document that provides the ability to respond nimbly to changing times. 3. Preserve the appropriate organizational structure that is mandated when something is included in a constitution. 4. Include new legal language currently required under State of Ohio law. 5. Keep language that shows a continuity of history and authority since the Conference's founding. There is an accompanying document in this “packet” giving specific notes regarding changes to the existing constitution referenced by specific paragraphs to aid you as you see the side-by-side comparisons.

While the accompanying document details many of the significant changes and rationale for them, of particular note, is a constitutional requirement to develop a Policy and Procedures Manual that is reviewed and approved biennially by the Board. This manual will outline many of the specifics currently included in the existing constitution. For example: how representation is handled in standing committees or individual taskforces. It is the intent that the same specificity will be included in the Policy and Procedure Manual at all times regarding all the practices of the Conference. Mandatory review by the Board of Directors will guarantee continuity of practice while, at the same time, allowing for changes to be made to meet current times without the need for continual constitutional rewriting and amending. We anticipate that as the Policy and Procedures Manual is fully developed it will give an even broader understanding of how the work of the Conference is being carried out, helping staff and the Board of Directors to meet their obligations. The manual, scheduled to be fully compiled by the middle of next year, will be available for the entire conference to reference and review at all times.

As stated, the next step in the process is for your engagement with the material, participation in the Zoom meetings to answer questions, and share any suggestions, so that the task force might prepare a final document to be presented to the Board of Directors for approval to bring a resolution to put the document before the fall Annual Gathering of the Conference for a final vote.