

**Constitution and Bylaws of the
Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ**
(Congregational Christian Churches)

**ARTICLE I
COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP
AT ANNUAL AND SPECIAL MEETINGS**

The voting membership at each Annual or Special Meeting shall consist of:

- A. Delegates from Local Churches in Connecticut which are in regular standing with their Association in the Conference, with each church entitled to two (2) delegates for the first four hundred (400) members, and an additional delegate for each additional four hundred (400) members or major fraction thereof;
- B. All officers of the Conference, elected members of the Board of Directors, members of the Committees of the Conference and members of the Committees of the Board of Directors named in the Bylaws, during their tenure in office;
- C. All moderators of Associations of the Conference;
- D. All former moderators of the Annual Meetings of the Connecticut Conference;
- E. The Dean of Yale Divinity School and the President of Hartford Seminary if such persons are members of Local Churches of the United Church of Christ holding standing in an Association of the Conference;
- F. All Authorized Ministers in regular standing in Associations of this Conference;
- G. The chairperson, or a designee, of each Ministry Team authorized by the Board of Directors for that year.
- H. One youth delegate, who shall be no more than 22 years of age, from each Local Church.



Serving as a Delegate in the United Church of Christ

When the Annual Meeting gathers, it does so as a setting of the Church of Jesus Christ. As such, it is the responsibility of the delegates and ministers to listen to one another and to discern the mind of Christ on the issues before the Meeting. For over 350 years, such gatherings have been understood to be essential to discernment. If it were not so, there would be no need for the Meeting; people could simply send in written ballots. Because we are the Body of Christ and therefore joined in organic union with one another, we believe it essential that all in attendance remain open to the movement of the Holy Spirit among those gathered. It is not common for a church to instruct its delegates to vote in a particular way; indeed, such direction runs against historical Congregationalism's understanding and conviction, as well as the polity of the United Church of Christ.

Many delegations from churches will come to the Meeting favored with insights from dialogue among the members of the church about issues that are known ahead of time and shared in the communications about the Meeting. In the United Church of Christ, we often speak of delegates being “informed, not instructed.” Delegates are elected by their congregation as persons of respect with delegated authority to vote their conscience as they discern the mind of Christ for the Conference and its ministry and mission.

Often resolutions are changed during the process of an Annual Meeting, either as a result of the hearings or in the course of the debate. Thus the chances are slim that a particular resolution or affirmation would remain as worded in the advance materials. This is another reason delegates must be free to vote according to the understanding they develop with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the context of the Meeting. On many occasions we expect to vote a particular way and change our minds based on prayer and the dialogue and advocacy of others!