**St. Louis Association By-Laws**

**Article 1: IDENTITY**

**Section 1: Name**

We are a part of the Body of Christ. We are that part known as the St. Louis Association (SLA or Association), of the Missouri Mid-South Conference, of the United Church of Christ. We are a not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Missouri and registered as a not-for-profit corporation with the Secretary of State.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Section 2: Geographical Area**

As an Association our churches stretch from the city of St. Louis and its surrounding communities, to Jefferson and St. Francois Counties in Missouri; through Memphis, Tennessee; to the state of Arkansas. We include a wonderful diversity of people, ministry, missions, and settings. We celebrate our diversity. It creates within and among us a sense of wonder and surprise; it contributes to the common good and the building up of the Body of Christ; and it weaves us together in new and innovative ways.

**Section 3: Motto**

Our motto is: “We Are the Church Together.” By living together in a spirit of covenantal harmony and commitment to one another we are better able to live out Jesus’ command to love God, our neighbor, and one another.

**Section 4: Association Connections**

In the St. Louis Association we celebrate our connections to the wider church. We are a part of the Missouri Mid-South Conference and join with our partner Associations in fellowship, friendship, and mission as together we strive and work to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are connected to the United Church of Christ and like our brothers and sisters across the denomination, we proclaim a “Still-Speaking God.” We celebrate the work and witness of our ecumenical and interfaith partners and join with them in a journey toward wholeness, justice, and peace.

**Article 2: MISSION AND WORK**

**Section 1:**

It is the mission of the SLA to serve the Lord with gladness. The Association fulfills this mission through the following avenues of work:

 **A.** Responding to the need for compassionate service in our communities.

 **B.** Coordinating a fellowship of mutual concern and commitment among the churches of the
 Association dedicated to justice, witness, and compassion.

 **C.** Supporting the mission and outreach initiatives officially recognized by the Association.

 **D.** Practicing a hospitality that affirms, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s

 journey, you are welcome here.”

**E.** Determining, conferring, and certifying the standing of member local churches of the

 Association.[[2]](#footnote-2)

 **F.**  Reviewing, credentialing, and authorizing candidates for ordination, licensing, and

 commissioning.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**G.** Reviewing, authorizing, and mentoring “Members in Discernment”.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**H.** Sharing in the ministry and mission of the Missouri Mid-South Conference and the United

 Church of Christ.

**Article 3: MEMBERSHIP**

*“God has formed us to live, work, and worship together as connectional people in the church. Our mission and ministry are best accomplished by supporting one another. Together we find joy, strength, wisdom, and courage for the tumultuousness of life.”[[5]](#footnote-5)*

**Section 1:**

The Association is a covenantal and connectional body that consists of both Members and Partners. Members are those granted standing within the Association and who are integral to the faith, order, and life of the Association. Members include both Local Churches and Authorized Ministers. Partners are all those who officially work with and on behalf of the Association to extend the mission and ministry of the Association beyond the scope of a local church.

**A: Existing Local UCC Churches**

All Local Churches that fall within the United Church of Christ umbrella as defined in the current UCC Constitution and Bylaws (Article V—LOCAL CHURCHES) and that meet within the geographical area of the St. Louis Association (See Article 1, section 2) are considered members of the Association.

**B: Receiving a New Church into Membership**

Churches seeking UCC identity and a covenantal relationship with the St. Louis Association may request standing in the Association. Such churches, following a period of discernment, having completed conversations with a Conference Minister and the Committee on Ministry Preparation Team, may be received into membership in the following way:

 1. The Committee on Ministry Preparation Team, moved by the Holy Spirit to affirm the

 church’s request, recommends the church to the St. Louis Association Council.

2. The St. Louis Association Council must approve the request by a 2/3 majority of

 members present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Association

 Council. The Council then recommends the church to the Association at a duly called

 Association meeting.

 3. The Council’s recommendation of the church seeking membership must be approved

 by a 2/3 vote of the delegates present at such a meeting. If the recommendation is

 approved, the church is received into membership, and the church is welcomed into

 the covenantal life of the UCC family and granted all the rights, privileges, and

 responsibilities that such a life entails.

**C. Withdrawal from Membership**

The membership of a Local Church within the St. Louis Association may come to an end in the following ways:

 1. A member church, by its own request, may be removed from the roll of members.

 Such a request must be submitted in writing to the Committee on Ministry

 Oversight Team by an officially recognized officer of the church, for purposes of

 notification and record. The written request must be accompanied by the official

minutes of the congregational meeting at which a vote to withdraw was taken.

 2. When a church officially closes:

A church in the process of closing shall contact the Committee on Ministry Oversight Team and **a** Conference Minister for purposes of counsel, guidance, notification, and record.

 3. A member church may not otherwise be removed from the roll of member churches

 of the Association unless the action to remove has been:

 a. recommended by the Committee on Ministry Oversight Team after

 consultation with the Local Church, and

 b. approved by a 2/3 majority of members present and voting at any regular or

 special meeting of the Association Council, and

 c. voted and approved by a 2/3 majority of the delegates present at the Annual Business Meeting of the Association.

 4. All closings and withdrawals from membership are to be noted at the Annual

 Business Meeting of the Association and changed in the listing of Churches by the

 Clerk of the Association.

 5. A member church’s withdrawal from the Association or closure will not result in the

 forfeiture to the Association of ownership or control of real or personal property,

 or any rights therein, belonging to the church unless the member church specifies

 such action.

**Section 2: Ministerial Members**

All Authorized Ministers (ordained, licensed, and commissioned) holding standing within the Association are members of the Association. Authorized Ministers are defined and described in the current UCC Constitution and Bylaws (Article VI) and fall under the guidance of the current Manual on Ministry.

**Section 3: Partners in Mission and Partners in Ministry**

**A. Partners in Mission (Mission Partners)**

Partners in Mission (Mission Partners) include any recognized CHHSM or mission agency listed in the current UCC Yearbook, any institution of higher education listed by the UCC Council of Higher Education (this includes UCC seminaries) and those local agencies that lie within the Association boundaries that either receive Association funds or receive the official recognition of the Association.

**B. Partners in Ministry**

Partners in Ministry include National and Conference staff, members of the Conference Council, Members in Discernment, ecumenical and interfaith partners of the Association and of the United Church of Christ.

**Section 4: Voice and Vote**

 **A.** Each member church is entitled to be represented at all called meetings of the full

 Association by one (1) lay delegate for each one hundred (100) members or fraction thereof

 on the church roll, not to exceed twelve (12) delegates. In addition, each member church is

 entitled to two (2) young adult delegates (communicant members who are less than 30 years

 of age at the time of the meeting). Every delegate shall have voice and vote at all called

 meetings of the full Association.

 **B.** Any person holding standing as an ordained, licensed, or commissioned minister (active or

 retired) who is a member of the Association shall have voice and vote at all called meetings

 of the full Association.

 **C.** Lay members of the Association Council and all members of a Covenant Team who are not

 named as voting delegates by the local church of which they are a member shall have voice

 and vote at all called meetings of the full Association.

**Section 5: Ex-officio (voice and no vote)**

**A.** The Conference and Associate Conference Minister(s), whose standings are not in the

 St. Louis Association; along with Members in Discernment, delegates to the General Synod

 from the Missouri Mid-South Conference UCC, and official representatives to the Association

from other ministries and settings of the UCC, are honorary members of the Association and

 shall have voice but no vote.

 **B.** Representatives of ecumenical and interfaith partners, and Association Mission Partners,

 shall have voice but no vote.

 **C.** Any person not covered above may be granted voice but no vote by a majority vote of those

 present at a meeting of the Association.

**Article 4: ASSOCIATION MEETINGS**

**Section 1: Annual Fall Business Meeting**

The Annual Business Meeting (ABM) of the Association shall be held in the Fall of each year with the specific time and place to be determined by the Association Council. The purposes of the meeting shall be the following:

 **A.** Elect members of the Association Council and Covenant Teams; elect designated members

 of boards and agencies supported by the Association, and others as may be requested by the

 Conference or other judicatories. A simple majority of all votes cast shall be necessary for

the election of a candidate.

 **B.** Consider and adopt a budget for the Association.

 **C.** Present a report on the financial condition of the Association.

 **D.** Make available annual reports of the Association Council and Covenant Teams.

 **E.** Transact other business as shall properly come before the meeting. The rules contained

in the latest edition of *Roberts’ Rules of Order* shall govern the Association in all cases to

 which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with these Bylaws or any

special rules of order the Association may adopt.

**Section 2: Spring Program Meeting**

A program meeting of the Association shall be held in the Spring of each year, the specific time and place to be determined by the Association Council. The purpose of this meeting shall be to facilitate the work and ministry of local churches, and to spread a good and grace-filled Spirit throughout the Association.

**Section 3: Special Meetings**

A special meeting of the Association may be called at any time by the Association Council or upon written request by a petition signed by ten (10) member churches or ten (10) member ministers of the Association. Such special meetings shall be called by the Association Council within thirty (30) days of receipt of the petition and occur within ninety (90) days of the receipt of the petition. For special meetings the matter or matters for which the meeting is called shall be the only agenda item(s).

**Section 4: Notice of Meetings**

A notice of all Association meetings shall be sent to all members of the Association not less than twenty-one (21) and not more than sixty (60) days prior to any such regular or special meeting. If any special action, including but not limited to the budget, is to be taken, a copy of the special action shall be included in such notice.

**Section 5: Quorum**

A quorum is constituted by the presence of lay delegates from 10% of the member churches and 10% of the member ministers. The only matters that may be voted upon at any regular or special meeting of members are those described in the meeting notice unless one-third (1/3) of the member churches and one-third (1/3) of the member ministers are present.

**Article 5: ELECTIONS**

**Section 1: Association Council and Covenant Teams--Elected**

 **A.** Elected members of the Association Council and Covenant Teams are elected to three (3)

 year terms. A member may serve no more than two (2) consecutively elected terms. A year

 waiting period is required before an out-going member is eligible for another elected

position within the Association. This shall be a Sabbath rest and Jubilee year for the

 out-going member.

 B**.** One-third (1/3) of the elected members of the Association Council and one-third

 (1/3) of Covenant Team members shall be elected each year at the Annual Business Meeting

 of the Association. The Creative Ministries Team inaugural election year shall be the only

 exception to this. (See letter C below).

 **C.** For the inaugural year only, in order to establish the proper election cycle, members of the

 Creative Ministries Team shall be elected using the following schedule:

 two (2) members on the Team shall be elected to a one (1) year term; two (2) members on

 the Team to a two (2) year term, and two (2) members on the Team to a three (3) year term.

 Upon completion of each of these special terms, the member may be re-elected to one other

 three (3) year term.

**Section 2: Vacancies**

 **A.** A vacant position on the Association Council or a Covenant Team may be filled following a

 recommendation by the Nominating/Leadership Team. A vacant position that consists of

 more than one (1) year of a remaining term shall be considered a full term.

 **B.** All recommendations of the Nominating/Leadership Team to fill a vacant position must be

 approved by a majority vote of the Association Council.

**Article 6: ASSOCIATION COUNCIL AND COVENANT TEAM MEETINGS**

**Section 1: Meeting Schedules**

The Association Council and Covenant Teams shall each regularly meet on a day and time

 determined by its members.

**Section 2: Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called for the Council by its President, and for Covenant Teams by

 their Chairperson(s), or upon the request of one-third (1/3) of the Council or Team voting

 members.

**Section 3: Notification**

Council and Team members must be notified of their meetings not less than one week (7 days)

prior to the meeting.

**Section 4: Quorum**

 A quorum for the Council shall consist of five (5) of its members. A quorum for each

 Covenant Team shall consist of one-third (1/3) of their members.

**Article 7: ASSOCIATION COUNCIL**

 *“The St. Louis Association Council takes to heart the life and well-being of the Association. The Council believes and promotes the motto: ‘We Are the Church Together’.”[[6]](#footnote-6)*

**Section 1: Council Members—elected, appointed, and ex-officio**

 **A.** The Association Council shall consist of fourteen (14) members, nine (9) of whom are elected

 (see Article 5, Section A), and five (5) of whom are appointed—one (1) from each of the

 standing Covenant Teams of the Association.

1. Appointed members of Council have both voice and vote.

2. Appointed members of Council serve one year at a time. Appointed members may

 be reappointed to Council by their respective Covenant Team for as many years as

 they are willing to serve and/or as many years as their term on the Covenant Team

 allows.

 3. Covenant Teams shall notify the Council President and the Chair of Nominating/

 Leadership of their appointed Council member at least one month before the next

 Annual Business Meeting of the Association.

 **B.** The Conference Minister and Associate Conference Minister(s) shall be ex-officio members

 of the Association Council and all Association Covenant Teams, with voice but no vote.

**Section 2: Roles**

 **A.** Four (4) members of the Council shall serve as Officers of the Association and as an

 Executive Committee of the Council. They are the President, Vice-President, Treasurer,

and Secretary. The officers are chosen at an organizing meeting of the Council. The duties

 of the Officers of the Association shall be those which fall generally to their respective offices

according to the latest edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order.*

**B.** The President of the Council shall be an ex-officio member of all Covenant Teams.

**C.** Appointed members of Council shall fully participate in the ongoing work and activities of

 the Council. In addition, they shall bring the monthly report of the Covenant Team which

 they are representing.

 **D.** All members of Council, elected and appointed, are expected to regularly attend Council

 meetings, actively contribute to Council discussion and debate; when called upon, represent

 the Council at Association events, and work diligently and faithfully on behalf of the

 Association, filling any unforeseen role or task.

**Section 3: Council Responsibilities**

 **A.** The Council, with help and input from member ministers, Covenant Teams, and churches,

 discerns and casts a vision for and within the Association.

 **B.** The Council works to uphold and support the mission and work of the Association.

 **C.** The Council oversees the work of the Covenant Teams of the Association, and may

 establish additional project teams and programs as may be necessary from time to time

 to carry out the work of the Association.

 **D.** A representative from the Council shall be an official participant at all ordinations,

 installations, and other official and authorized acts of the Association.

 **E.** The Council shall propose and recommend a budget for the current fiscal year. A simple

 majority vote of the Council will forward the proposed budget to the Association for

 approval at the Annual Business Meeting.

 **F.** The Council shall adopt policies and procedures as may be necessary or prudent for the

 effective administration of the Association.

 **G.** The Council shall prepare the agenda for the Annual Business Meeting and set the program

 for the Spring Gathering.

 **H.** The Council shall act on such matters as may require attention between meetings of the

 Association including appeals of actions by the Committee on Ministry Teams, either

 Preparation or Oversight.

**Article 8: ASSOCIATION CLERK**

**Section 1: Position of the Association Clerk:**

**A.** The Association Clerk may or may not be a member of Council.

**B.** The Association Clerk shall be chosen in one of two ways:

1**.** The Council President may appoint the Association Clerk from among the Council

 members. The person appointed as Association Clerk must be approved by a majority

 of the Council. A Clerk who is a member of Council has both voice and vote.

 2**.** An Association Clerk, who is not a member of Council, must be recommended to the

 Council by the Nominating/Leadership Team. An Association Clerk that is not a Council

 member, who is continuing their service as Association Clerk for more than one year,

 must be approved by the Council each year. An Association Clerk that is not a Council

 member shall meet at least quarterly with the Council. The Association Clerk shall

 have voice but no vote on the Council.

**Section 2: Duties of the Association Clerk:**

 **A.** The Association Clerk shall, with the monthly information provided by the Committee on

 Ministry Preparation and Oversight Teams, and the Association Council, keep a list of the

 member Churches, Authorized Ministers, and Members in Discernment of the Association.

1. The list shall be used to assist in the communication of the Association, and

2. for determining official delegates at the Annual Business Meeting of the Association.

 3. The Association Clerk shall provide, at the request of the Council or any of the

 Covenant Teams, the most current list of all member Churches and Authorized

 Ministers of the Association.

 **B.** The Association Clerk shall assist in registration at the Annual Business Meeting and Spring

 Gathering of the Association.

**Article 9: COVENANT TEAMS**

The Covenant Teams of the Association are: Committee on Ministry Preparation, Committee on Ministry Oversight, Nominating/Leadership, Mission/Outreach, and Creative Ministries.

**Section 1: The Committee on Ministry (CoM) Preparation Team (Preparation Team)**

*“The Committee on Ministry Preparation Covenant Team prepares, supports, and authorizes people for ministry in the United Church of Christ.”[[7]](#footnote-7)*

 **A. Members—elected, appointed, and ex-officio**

 1. The CoM Preparation Team shall consist of twelve (12) elected members,

 one of whom shall be appointed to serve on the Council (see Article 7, Section 1-A

 and #1,2,3).

2. The Chair of the Preparation Team shall notify the Chair of Nominating/Leadership

 and the Council President of their appointed Council member at least one month

 before the next Annual Business Meeting of the Association.

 3. The Conference Minister, Associate Conference Minister(s), and Association

Council President shall be ex-officio members of the CoM Preparation Team with

voice but no vote.

 **B. Duties and Responsibilities**

 1. It is the duty of the Preparation Team to walk with candidates in the discernment

 process for Authorized Ministry using the Constitution and Bylaws of the United

 Church of Christ and the current United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry as

 guides.

 2. The Preparation Team shall be responsible for the work of the Association in the

 following areas:

 a. Care for those in the discernment process for Authorized Ministry—

 ordained, licensed, and commissioned—including but not limited to the

 assignment of an advisor, arranging for psychological testing, meeting with

 the candidate regularly, working with the “care” committee of the local

 congregation sponsoring the candidate, and approving a candidate’s terms

 of call.

 b. Conduct interviews with candidates for ordination, commissioning, and licensing.

c. Authorize a candidate for ordination pending a call.

 d. Receive and act upon requests for licensure.

e. A representative of the Preparation Team will participate with a

 representative from the Association Council at services of Commissioning

 and Ordination.

 f. The Preparation Team will meet with churches seeking membership in

 the Association (See Article 3, Section 1).

 **C. Reporting**

 1. The Preparation Team, through its appointed Council member, shall regularly report

 its meeting date, members in attendance, the official actions of its meetings, and any

other decisions and discussions as may be appropriate or helpful to the Association

Council.

**2.** The Preparation Team shall maintain an accurate list of all those in the discernment

process and report that list to the Conference and to the St. Louis Association Clerk

 whenever changes occur.

**Section 2: The Committee on Ministry (Com) Oversight Team (Oversight Team)**

*“It is the goal of the Committee on Ministry Oversight Team to keep pastors and churches spiritually healthy.”[[8]](#footnote-8)*

 **A. Members—elected, appointed, and ex-officio**

 1. The CoM Oversight Team shall consist of twelve (12) elected members, one of

 whom shall be appointed to serve on the Council (see Article 6, Section 1-A and

 #1,2,3).

2. The Chair of the Oversight Team shall notify the Chair of Nominating/Leadership and

 the Council President of their appointed Council member at least one month before

 the next Annual Business Meeting of the Association.

 3. The Conference Minister, Associate Conference Ministers, and Association Council

 President shall be ex-officio members of the CoM Oversight Team, with voice but

 no vote.

 **B. Authority**

CoM Oversight, shall have as its primary authority the most recent edition of the

 Manual on Ministry, the UCC Manual on the Church, the UCC Constitution and Bylaws, the

 Bylaws of the St. Louis Association, and all policies adopted by the Association relating to

 CoM Oversight matters.

 **C. Duties and Responsibilities—Authorized Ministers**

 1. The Oversight Team shall act in all matters relating to the granting or transfer

 of standing of ordained ministers.

 2. The Oversight Team shall provide opportunities for Authorized Ministers to

 share information and insight concerning their ministerial role and ministry context.

 This may be done through: an Annual Information Review, entrance and exit

 interviews, appointing a mentor, conducting Periodic Support Consultations,

 providing Boundary training, or other support procedures as may seem appropriate

 and helpful.

 3. The Oversight Team shall conduct the following professional reviews: Fitness

 for Ministry Reviews, Situational Support Consultations, and other interventions as

 may be necessary for the well-being of the church—its clergy and its members.

 4. A representative from the Oversight Team shall participate, with a representative

 from the Association Council, at Services of Installation of ministers called to

 churches, missions, hospitals, agencies, etc.

 5. The Oversight Team shall grant endorsement for certification by professional

 organizations.

 6. The Oversight Team shall advocate for pastors in matters of a fair compensation,

 sabbatical leave, continuing education, etc.

 7. The Oversight Team shall work with a local church in the establishment of a

 Pastoral Relations Committee.

 **D. CoM Oversight Team—Local Churches**

While respecting the integrity of the Local Church (as defined in the UCC Constitution and

Bylaws, Article 5, Sections 10 & 18)[[9]](#footnote-9) the Oversight Team is charged to do its best to maintain the covenantal bonds between the Association and the Local Church (Ephesians 4.1-3).

The Oversight Team does this by:

 1. Encouraging Local Churches to seek the covenantal perspective of other Local

 Churches and the Oversight Team on issues affecting a Local Church’s life and

 ministry.

 2. Recognizing that conflict sometimes arises within any human endeavor, that the

 church is not exempt from conflict, and that a Situational Support Consultation is

 sometimes called for, the Oversight Team is to be open to receiving and shall

 respond to any invitation to assist Local Churches in resolving matters of

 disagreement and conflict. If, in the opinion of the Oversight Team, resolution

 or reconciliation is not possible, the Oversight Team or the Local Church, may

 request the assistance of the Association Council.

 **E. Reporting**

 1. The Oversight Team, through its appointed Council member, shall regularly

 report its meeting date, members in attendance, the official actions of its meetings,

 and any other decisions and discussions as may be appropriate or helpful to the

 Association Council.

 2. All transfers in and out of the Association, retirements, changes in church or

 ministerial standing or status shall be reported, after each and every meeting, to the

 Conference and to the Association Clerk for purposes of maintaining an accurate and

 updated list.

**Section 3: Nominating/Leadership Team**

*“We identify and encourage the gifts of our people and challenge them to use these gifts for the work of the Association.”[[10]](#footnote-10) “We have chosen you for a future that is God’s. Lead us beyond what we are already doing. Help us make a difference…As you lead, think about the time when you will want to pass your torch of leadership along to someone else. Provide opportunities for others to practice their leadership skills, to grow in ministry. Support them—whether they succeed or fail—so that they will continue in ministry. Help them grow in commitment to God’s will, compassion for others, and competence in their tasks.”[[11]](#footnote-11)*

 **A. Members—elected and ex-officio (See Article 6, Section 1-B and Section 2-B)**

The Nominating/Leadership Team shall consist of six (6) elected members, one of whom

 shall be appointed to serve on the Council (see Article 6, Section 1-A and #1,2,3).

 (Covenant Teams shall notify the Chair of Nominating/Leadership and the Council

 President of their appointed Council member at least one month before the next Annual

Business Meeting of the Association).

 **B. Duties and Responsibilities**

 1. It is the responsibility of the Nominating/Leadership Team to nominate all candidates

 for all elected or vacated positions on Council, the Covenant Teams, and any other

 elected or vacated positions the Association or Conference may require

(See Article 5, Sections 1 & 2). Additional nominations, with the consent of a

nominee present at the time of the nomination, may be made from the floor by

 voting delegates at the Annual Business Meeting.

 a. A list of nominated candidates will be distributed at least twenty-one (21)

 days before the Annual Business Meeting.

 b. At the Annual Business Meeting, the Chair of the Nominating/Leadership

 Team, or their representative, will introduce the nominees.

2. The Nominating/Leadership Team shall do its best to recruit Council and Covenant

 Team members that reflect the diversity of the Association, remembering to “Draw

 the circle wide! Draw it wider still!”[[12]](#footnote-12)

 3. The Nominating/Leadership Team shall keep, record, and publish the term limits of

 members serving on Covenant Teams.

4. The Nominating/Leadership Team will promote leadership development for the

 Association through the training and mentoring of current and aspiring leaders.

 **C. Reporting**

The Nominating/Leadership Team, through its appointed Council member, shall regularly

 report its meeting date, members in attendance, the official actions of its meetings and any

 other decisions and discussions as may be appropriate or helpful to the Association Council.

**Section 4: Mission/Outreach Team**

*“Grounded in the Biblical vision of shalom (true and full physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness), justice is how we treat each other in community. It becomes a reality when we truly affirm and respect the inherent dignity, worth and equality of each person as a sister or brother created in the image of God and included fully in the family of God.”[[13]](#footnote-13) “The Mission/Outreach Team inspires and supports mission as the heart of the covenant with God and one another. Together we minister through various agencies to those in need.”[[14]](#footnote-14)*

 **A. Members—elected and ex-officio (see Article 6, Section 1-B and Section 2-B)**

 The Mission/Outreach Team shall consist of six (6) elected members, one of whom shall be

appointed to serve on the Council (see Article 6, Section 1-A and #1,2,3). (The Chair of

Mission/Outreach shall notify the Chair of Nominating/Leadership and the Council President

 of their appointed Council member at least one month before the next Annual Business

 Meeting of the Association).

 **B. Duties and Responsibilities**

The Mission/Outreach Team shall encourage cooperative mission, partner support, and work among the congregations of the Association.

 1. Partner Support—the Mission/Outreach Team shall:

 a. Develop and review, in cooperation with the Association Council, criteria

 for evaluating all funding requests for financial support by the Association.

 b. Receive all funding requests of Mission Partners in a budgeted calendar year.

 c. Study and evaluate each Mission Partner in meeting the criteria for funding

 by the Association. This may include personal phone calls and visits by Team

 members to the Mission Partner’s site.

 d. Propose, in consultation with the Association Council, a budget to support

 Mission Partners.

 2. Mission Development—the Mission/Outreach Team shall:

 a. Encourage and propose new mission ministries and related projects in the

 Association.

 b. Encourage participation in cooperative, ecumenical and/or interfaith

 projects among the Local Churches of the Association.

3. Recognition

 The Mission/Outreach Team shall develop, in cooperation with the Council,

 standards and guidelines for those agencies, foundations, or groups seeking a

 non -funded relationship with the Association. Recognized entities shall have a

 mission and vision compatible with the mission, vision, and work of the Association.

 **C. Reporting**

 The Mission/Outreach Team, through its appointed Council member, shall regularly report its

 meeting date, members in attendance, the official actions of its meetings, and any other

 decisions as may be appropriate or helpful to the Association Council.

**Section 5: Creative Ministries Team**

*“Creativity fine-tunes our listening. By focusing our full love and attention on the creativity buried within, we train our awareness to see the Spirit’s subtle stirrings over the waters of that which wants to be created in us. As we engage our creativity in the service of our spirituality, we discern the frequency of our soul’s yearnings and the deeper currents of life. We hear the cries of our neighbor and know the meaning under the silence. Knitting together the known and unknown, the seen and unseen, our creativity helps us make something whole and beautiful out of the pieces of our existence.”[[15]](#footnote-15)*

 **A. Members—elected and ex-officio (see Article 6, Section 1-B and Section 2-B)**

 The Creative Ministries Team (CMT) shall consist of six (6) elected members, one of whom

 shall be appointed to a one year term to represent (CMT) as a member of the Council (see

Article 6, Section 1-A and #1,2,3). **(**The Chair of Creative Ministries shall notify the Chair of

 Nominating/Leadership and the Council President of their appointed Council member at

 least one month before the next Annual Business Meeting of the Association).

 **B. The Role of the Creative Ministries Team**

1. *“Creativity is an essential part of the human experience. Creativity is life.”[[16]](#footnote-16)*

 The (CMT) shall help identify, ignite, and encourage the creative impulse of the

 Association.

2. *“Creativity is a gift freely given by the Creator to all of God’s children. It allows us to enhance and to beautify our surroundings.”[[17]](#footnote-17)*

The (CMT) shall provide leadership on issues ranging from technology, worship, art, music, drama, the environment, etc.

 3. *“Creating is a spiritual practice, a sturdy bridge between humans and the divine. It is*

*the vehicle by which we transcend the mundane, allowing us to commune with our own inner divinity.”[[18]](#footnote-18)*

The (CMT) shall assist the member churches of the Association to develop, renew, or revision the spiritual life of the congregation.

4. *“Creativity is a holy attribute. Creating and creation are part of the job description for the Eternal Divine, the Creator. We human beings, made in the image and likeness of the Creator, also exercise this attribute. The creative urge is imprinted in the spiritual DNA of every human being. Creativity is both a remembrance of that shared heritage and an act of worship.”[[19]](#footnote-19)*

 The (CMT) may on occasion provide a forum where the creative life of the Association can be shared and experienced by all.

 **C. Reporting**

 The Creative Ministries Team, through their appointed Council member, shall regularly

 report its meeting date, members in attendance, the official actions of its meetings, and any

 other decisions as may be appropriate or helpful to the work and mission of the Council.

**Article 10: APPEALS**

 **A.** Any decision by the CoM Oversight Team or the Com Preparation Team that

 adversely affects a Member or Partner of the Association may be appealed by that

 Member or Partner. The appeal must be made to the Association Council within thirty (30)

 days of the decision. The appeal must be in writing. The Council must then act upon the

 appeal within ninety (90) days. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Council is needed to

 overturn any decision of the CoM Oversight Team or the CoM Preparation Team.

 **B.** Any Association Council decision that adversely affects a Member or Partner of the

 Association may be appealed by that Member or Partner. The appeal must be made within

thirty (30) days of the decision. The appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Council

 President. The Council President shall then call for a Special Meeting of the Association

 following the steps found in these Bylaws (Article 5, Section 3, Special Meetings). The

meeting shall be conducted according to the latest edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order.* A two-

 thirds (2/3) vote of the assembled delegates of the Association is needed to overturn any

 decision of the Association Council.

**Article 11: FINANCES**

The primary responsibility for the securing of funds for the financial support of the Association rests upon the Association Council in co-operation with member authorized ministers, member churches and their individual members. It is the responsibility of the Council to see that a budget is prepared.

**Section 1: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Association shall be the calendar year.

**Section 2: Financial Audit**

An audit or completeness review of the financial records of the Association shall be made at least every three years.

**Article 12: ENDOWMENT FUND FOR MISSION**

**Section1: Purpose of Endowment**

The purpose of the Endowment shall be to support the mission and work of the Association.

**Section 2: Endowment Fund – General**

As used herein, "income" shall include all income received by the Association Council from the property constituting the Endowment Fund including, without limitation, interest, dividends, and so much of the net appreciation, realized and unrealized, in the fair value of the assets of the Endowment Fund over the "historic dollar value" (as defined in R.S. Mo. section 402.010) of the fund as is prudent under the standards established herein and by R.S. Mo. section 402.035. As used herein, "net income" shall mean income as defined herein, less all charges and all expenses which the Association Council may incur in connection with the ownership, investment and reinvestment of such property.

All of the investment funds held by the Association Council, including all net income earned on such funds (herein referred to collectively as the "Endowment Fund") shall be held by the Association Council in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

**Section 3: Trustees**

The Association Council will serve as the Trustees of the Endowment. Except as may be otherwise specifically provided herein, the Trustees shall have all of the same powers and duties conferred upon Trustees general under Section 456.500 through 456.670 of the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri (or the corresponding section or sections of any such future law), said provisions being incorporated herein by reference.

**Section 4: Contributions to the Endowment**

The Association Council shall have the power to receive as a part of its Endowment Fund, directly from any individual, firm, corporation or other entity, as a donor, gifts and contributions in money, securities, or in any other form of property, including, by way of explanation and not in limitation, direct gifts for the purposes of its Endowment Fund, gifts in memory of any deceased person or in appreciation or recognition of any living person, gifts in the form of a devise or bequest under a Will or Trust Instrument, and gifts of proceeds or portions of proceeds of insurance, annuity, or endowment policies or contracts.

**Section 5: Acknowledgment of Gifts**

The Association Council shall establish means for acknowledging the receipt of each gift and contribution including, whenever feasible, a designation of the value ascribed to each gift. The Association Council may in its discretion, but shall not be obligated to, accept gifts made upon special terms or conditions or containing limitations or directions as to the investment or use of the substance of the gift, the use or accumulation of the income, and the ultimate disposition of the gift and any accumulations of income (as distinguished from those terms and conditions hereafter specifically set forth), and may arrange for separate identification and recording of all transactions with respect to any such special or restricted gift or gifts.

**Section 6: Restricted Gifts**

Income which, under special conditions of a gift, is required to be distributed for the support, use and maintenance of a specific ministry or purpose of the Association Council, shall be distributed for that purpose or ministry as long as it continues to exist. If that ministry or purpose is discontinued or otherwise ceases to exist, the income shall then be distributed as determined by the Association Council.

The Association Council shall honor donors' specific, written restrictions or directions relating to, and made at the time of, endowment donations to the Association Council unless such written restrictions or directions are released through written consent of the donor or as otherwise provided by law.

**Section 7: Use of Endowment Fund**

The net income of the Endowment Fund shall be used, applied and/or distributed for the following purposes and uses, at such times and in such amounts as shall be determined by the Association Council, subject to the limitations set forth in this Section: to provide for the proper management, conservation, and disbursement of funds made available for the operation and support of the St Louis Association.

**Section 8: Expenditure of Net Income**

Unless otherwise limited by the applicable gift instrument, the Trustees may accumulate so much of the annual net income of an Endowment Fund as is prudent under the standards established herein and by R.S. Mo. section 402.035, and may hold any or all of such accumulated income in an income reserve for subsequent expenditure for the uses and purposes for which this Endowment Fund is established, or may add any or all of such accumulated income to the principal of the Endowment Fund as is prudent under such standards.

Unless otherwise limited by the applicable gift instrument, the Trustees may appropriate for expenditure for the uses and purposes for which the Endowment Fund is established so much of the net income of the assets of the Endowment Fund as is prudent under the standards established herein and by R.S. Mo. section 402.035.

This section does not limit the authority of the Trustees to accumulate income or to add the same to principal of the Endowment Fund or to expend funds as permitted under the terms of the applicable gift instrument.

In no event shall the Trustees appropriate for expenditure in any year an amount greater than seven percent (7%) of the fair market value of the Endowment Fund, calculated on the basis of market values determined at least quarterly and averaged over a period of not less than four (4) years immediately preceding the year in which the appropriation for expenditure is made. This subsection does not apply to an appropriation for expenditure permitted by the applicable gift instrument.

**Section 9: Investment and Reinvestment of the Funds**

The provisions of this Section 9 shall apply to the management of the Endowment Fund by the Association Council.

The Association Council shall invest and reinvest the property constituting the Endowment Fund, and each investment shall be managed and protected in accordance with the principles herein established. Trustees shall not have the authority to manage investments of Endowment Funds themselves. Trustees shall retain and oversee professional investment managers for managing SLA Endowment Funds. In exercising the authority granted in this Section, the Association Council shall be guided by its concept of the policy of a prudent investor whose investment purpose includes both income and capital appreciation and shall not otherwise be restricted by any law, rule or custom (i) requiring safety of principal as a primary consideration, or (ii) requiring diversification of investment; provided, that the Association Council shall not be obligated to amortize out of, or reimburse, income for any premium or discount incurred upon the acquisition of any property of the Endowment Fund. In amplification, but not limitation, of the foregoing, the Association Council may:

**A.** protect the Endowment Fund and its property by insurance against damage, loss or liability;

**B.** establish checking account(s) in which may be deposited income and/or principal cash;

**C.** employ, at the expense of the Endowment Fund, attorneys, brokers, custodians of assets,

 and other agents and employees;

Within three months after the close of each of the Association Council's fiscal years, and at such other time(s) as the Association Council deems convenient, the Association Council shall review an itemized written statement accurately reflecting the position of the Endowment Fund's income and principal accounts as of a date reasonably close to the date the statement is submitted, and the receipts, disbursements and changes therein since the Endowment Fund's inception or the previous accounting, as the case may be. A summary of such statement shall be presented to a meeting of the member churches of the St Louis Association at least once during each calendar year.

**Article 13: DISSOLUTION**

In the event of the dissolution of the Association for any reason whatsoever, all Association assets, including the endowments shall be paid over and distributed in one-half (1/2) shares to the Missouri Mid-South Conference of the United Church of Christ, or its successor, for its general religious and charitable purposes; and one-half (1/2) to funded Association Mission Partners during the year of dissolution. In no event shall any of the Association assets or Endowment Funds ever inure to the benefit of any private person or for-profit corporation.

**Article 14: REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1: Review**

The Association Council shall appoint a task force or project team to review, and if necessary, suggest revision or amendments to these By-Laws, at least every five (5) years or sooner at the discretion of the Association Council.

**Section 2: Amendments**

Amendments or revisions to these By-Laws may be suggested by a Review Team (as described above, Article 13, Section 1) or by any Member of the Association. The By-Laws of the Association may be amended or revised by a majority vote at the Annual Business Meeting of the Association or at a Special Meeting of the Association provided the amendments or revisions have been approved by a simple majority of the Association Council at a previous Council meeting. Any amendment or revision proposal that is forwarded to an Association meeting must be sent to the Members of the Association no later than the notice required for such meeting as provided herein.

**LITURGICAL ADDENDUM**

OUR COVENANTAL LIFE

*“Within the United Church of Christ, the various expressions of the church relate to each other in a covenantal manner. Each expression of the church has responsibilities and rights in relation to the others; to the end that the whole church will seek God’s will and be faithful to God’s mission. Decisions are made in consultation and collaboration among the various parts of the structure. As members of the Body of Christ, each expression of the church is called to honor and respect the work and ministry of each other part. Each expression of the church listens, hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In this covenant, the various expressions of the United Church of Christ seek to walk together in all God’s ways.”* (Constitution and Bylaws of the UCC, Article III: COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS)

**Section 1: The Covenantal Promises of the Association Covenant Teams**

Covenant Teams of the Association promise to:

**A.** Affirm and model the importance of faithful service.

 **B.** Model and translate the promise and presence of the reign of God.

 **C.** Be a place where resources can be shared and training offered.

 **D.** Be a Team where persons come together and work together for the common good and for

 the sake of Christ’s mission.

 **E.** Communicate actions, decisions, ideas, and information in a healthy and helpful way.

 **F.** Support and encourage the health and wellbeing of the local church, its ministers, and its

 members.

 **G.** Encourage a generous and gracious spirit among its members.

 **H.** Practice good and faithful financial oversight and stewardship of its gifts and assets.

**Section 2: The Covenantal Promises of the Local Church**

Local Churches promise to:

**A.** Support the mission and work of the Gospel through support of the mission and work of the

 Association, Conference, and Denomination.

 **B.** Send delegates or representatives to Association meetings and activities.

 **C.** Work in and through the appropriate channels in time of conflict or transition.

 **D.** Live in a spirit of cooperation with member churches, helping one another when possible.

 **E.** Demonstrate gifts of the Spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ.

 **F.** Pray for one another.

 **G.** Meet regularly for worship, practice love, kindness, and justice toward neighbor and toward

 one another (Mark 12.29-31, Micah 6.8, John 13.34).

**Section 3: The Covenantal Promises of Authorized Ministers**

Authorized Ministers promise to:

 **A.** Uphold and live out the Ordained, Licensed, or Commissioned Minister’s Code.

 **B.** Participate in Boundary Training and yearly review according to the schedule determined by

 the Committee on Ministry Oversight Team.

 **C.** Model diversity and embrace inclusivity.

 **D.** Participate in, support, and interpret faithfully the life, ministry, and mission of the

 Association, Conference, and Denomination.

 **E.** Honor colleagues, leaders, and members as fellow servants of Jesus Christ.

 **F.** Work together as partners and colleagues in carrying out God’s mission and vision to the

 world and to all creation.

 **G.** Treat all people with dignity and respect.

**Section 4: The Covenantal Promises of Partners in Mission and Ministry**

Partners in Mission and Ministry promise to:

 **A.** Maintain the integrity of the relationship by having active Association representatives on

 Boards, Councils, and other governing bodies.

 **B.** Communicate to and participate in Association sponsored events and meetings.

 **C.** Provide opportunities for Association members to participate in, support, and encourage

 the mission and ministry of the partner.

 **D.** Contribute to the life of the Association by demonstrating good works, pastoral care and

 counsel, and through mutual love and support.

Adopted by Council: May 9, 2013

Adopted by the St. Louis Association:

1. Associations are defined in the UCC Constitution and Bylaws, Article VIII: ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFERENCES. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In accordance with the UCC Constitution and Bylaws and the current edition of the Manual on Ministry. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Anson, Marsha. “River of Hope”, *These Days,* vol. 42. No. 3, July, 23, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Statement from All-Committee Event on August 11, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Statement from All-Committee Event on August 11, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Statement from All-Committee Event on August 11, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. These sections affirm the Local Church as “The basic unit of the life and organization of the United Church of Christ”, and insure the “autonomy” of the Local Church “in the management of its own affairs.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Statement from All-Committee Event on August 11, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *The Disciples’ Advocate,* Fall 2012, Published by Disciples Home Missions. Volume 11 Number 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *“Sing! Prayer and Praise”,* The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 2009, p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid., Spring 2012. Volume 10 Number 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Statement from All-Committee Event on August 11, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “Finding the Sacred,” in *Alive Now,* Vol. 43, No. 4,July/August, 2013. The Upper Room, Nashville, Tennessee,

 pp. 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “A Way of Life,” Ibid., p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)