The Business Committee of the Thirty-Third General Synod has recommended this proposed resolution be sent to a Committee of the General Synod.

THE ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST REQUEST TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FORMAL GROUP

A Prudential Resolution

Submitted by the:
Iowa Conference
Nebraska Conference
New Hampshire Conference
South Dakota Conference

SUMMARY

The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers (AACM) seeks to be recognized as a Self-Created Group according to United Church of Christ By-Laws, Article VI., existing to be a supportive expression of the Living Christ, in relationship with one another and with the Body of Christ, in all its forms. The term “Associate Conference Minister” is used ubiquitously in AACM documents to refer to all persons who serve in the role either designated as associate conference minister or all the various titles of those functioning in similar job responsibilities and expectations. AACM serves to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING

The fundamental biblical grounding for the proposed recognition of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers is found in Christ’s farewell discourse in the Gospel of John, “…that all of them may be one,” John 17:21 (NIV). For centuries, this has been a scriptural basis for uniting Christians throughout the world.

In the context of the challenges of today’s secularizing culture and the opportunities created by increasingly powerful means of communication, we have been inspired by the Deutero-Pauline ambition, “…that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith…and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12-13 (NIV). To us, this means that we are called to outgrow an attitude of “going it alone” that has been prominent in our polity for more than three hundred years (since the 1648 Cambridge Platform). It means that we are called to build a stronger and larger network of covenants through which we can become stronger as the body of Christ serving across the breadth of the United Church of Christ. It means that we can be much stronger by capitalizing on the many ways we are increasingly interdependent in today’s world. This means building and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with all United Church of Christ Associate Conference Ministers through the existence and support of the AACM.

The Alliance seeks to live out its purpose of:
• Building and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with all United Church of Christ Associate Conference Ministers.
• Developing and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with the United Church of Christ Council of Conference Ministers, officers of the Church, UCC Covenantal partners, and UCC Board of Directors.
• Being a resource to share information and best practices to promote excellence in our various ministries.
• Being a collective voice of advocacy for concerns important to the role and work of the Associate Conference Minister as they relate to the life of the United Church of Christ.

We believe that discerning God’s will and God’s call to us is best done in community, gathering, listening and sharing with one another. This we have done through meeting and sharing ideas at AM21 in 2018 and 2019 intentionally discerning a call to unite for the intention of being a resource to share support, information and best practices to promote excellence in our various ministries.

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ takes seriously our individual Christian covenant with God as the primal covenant from which our human covenants are derived and by which they are shaped.¹

WHEREAS in the above view it is “the covenantal relationship with God that creates the church and, in turn created a covenantal relationship among the people who are the church.”²

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ holds seriously the call to be an open and welcoming faith community, accepting into the church body and leadership all facets of expression found in God’s people, creating a rich diversity of expression, background, culture, sexual and gender identity and expression.

WHEREAS the work of conference ministry and associate conference ministry places those doing the work at the intersection of church life, between the Local Church and the National Setting, including associations where those exist calling for “keeping communication flowing in all directions, nurturing relationships, articulating and supporting covenantal relationships.”³

WHEREAS in response to “[t]he Proposal for Action adopted by the Twentieth General Synod called upon local churches, conferences and associations, those called and employed by the church, and various national bodies to act in a variety of ways in support of the fair and just compensation of all persons called and employed by the church”⁴ the AACM states it provides resources and advocacy to support ACMs in their positions.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the establishment of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers, a Self-Created Group serving to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers be identified as related in covenant to the United Church of Christ, through a primary relationship as a Self-Created Group with the United Church of Christ Board.

FUNDING: The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

4 Fair & Just Compensation A Report to the Twenty-first General Synod 97-GS-50 62-65