

Discipline Revision Proposals

FOR THE 2019 US NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Main Proposals

1. Local Church Ministers

Chapter 7, Paragraph 202.2
Chapter 11, Paragraph 422.4e

The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team recommends removing the category of “Local Church Minister” from the Discipline. This requires revisions in Chapter 7 (202.2) and Chapter 11 (422.4e).

Intent

When the Provisional license was created, it was intended to replace the Local Church license. This revision completes this process by accomplishing two things:

1. Eliminates confusion between the Lay Minister, Local Church, and Provisional licenses.
2. Brings all career ministers under the oversight of the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team.

In Chapter 7, “The Ministry,” delete ¶202.2 as shown below:

Classifications:

Ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, can be classified as follows:

1. Lay ministers.
2. ~~Local church ministers.~~
3. Provisional ministers.
4. Specialized ministers.
5. National conference ministers.
6. Ordained elders.

In Chapter 11, “Local Church Organization,” delete 422.4e from “Duties of the Local Board”:

4. Duties

- a. The board shall establish the structure that will best suit the needs and ministries of the congregation and community.
- b. The board shall keep its rulings and policies in harmony with the policies and proceedings of the US National Conference.
- c. The board shall provide for the selection of church leaders and lay delegates.
- d. The board shall provide for the responsible handling and accounting of the church’s finances.
- e. ~~The local board has authority in all matters pertaining to persons holding local church ministerial licenses.~~
- f. The local board has authority in all matters pertaining to persons holding the lay ministers license.
- g. The local board shall recommend to the bishop those ministers who are qualified for a national conference license.
- h. The local board shall have final authority the power to disband a local church, subject to the provisions in ¶452.
- i. The local board shall have power to withdraw from the denomination, subject to the provisions in Chapter 14, “Churches that Withdraw.”

2. Qualifications of Ministers

Chapter 7, “Ministers,” ¶203

This proposal would do three things:

1. Delete the second sentence of ¶203, General Qualifications.
2. Rather than leave the remaining sentence by itself, make it the first sentence of ¶205.1, “General Statement.”
3. Rename the heading of ¶205.1 “General Qualifications.”

Current Statement (the sentence to removed is in strike-through)

203 General Qualifications

No person shall be approved or retained as a licensed minister in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, whose life is not in harmony with the established moral [chapters 4 and 5] and social standards of the church as defined in the Discipline. ~~In addition, ministers are not permitted to use tobacco, beverage alcohol, and illicit drugs, or to engage in any immoral conduct, and their marriage relationships must be in harmony with the teachings of Scripture as defined in the Discipline.~~

Revise ¶205.1 by adding the sentence in bold (the remaining sentence from ¶203), and rename the subheading ¶205.1 “General Qualifications.”

205 Expectations

1. General Statement Qualifications

No person shall be approved or retained as a licensed minister in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, whose life is not in harmony with the established moral [chapters 4 and 5] and social standards of the church as defined in the Discipline.

All ministers are expected to model a Christ-centered lifestyle. In so doing, they will confirm the message of the death, resurrection, and return of Christ which they are to proclaim. They are to evangelize the lost, assimilate them into the church, and train those in their churches to be effective disciples of Jesus Christ as they nurture them in the faith.

3. Chapter 17, Connections

Intent

In 2005, we dissolved the annual conferences and replaced them with the cluster system, a brand new thing. In the years since, the cluster system has evolved significantly. Many of the original features no longer apply, or never even became reality. Most notably, the cluster system was very quickly centralized under the Office of the Bishop, as opposed to the decentralized structure which Chapter 17 still describes. We need to bring the chapter into line with current practice. This basically involves cutting out a lot of information and greatly simplifying the chapter.

Among other things:

1. Remove much of the information about forming clusters, since the system has been centralized under the Bishop’s office.
2. Remove the requirement that all ministers must participate in a cluster. Only senior pastors must do so.
3. Change the title of the chapter from “Connections” to “Clusters.”
4. Remove the information about Associations, which have no real place in our structure.

Current Connections Chapter

521 Introduction

United Brethren congregations and ministers are encouraged to associate formally and informally with congregations and groups both within and outside the United Brethren church to pursue goals and projects of common interest. There are two primary forms of connections—clusters and associations.

522 Clusters

1. Purpose

- a. All National Conference ministers and senior pastors of United Brethren congregations are required to participate in a cluster of their choice for the purpose of maintaining and developing pastoral and congregational health through mutual friendships, coaching, and accountability.
- b. Clusters are the entities to which all local congregations, preaching points, and ministers are primarily accountable.
- c. The cluster to which the local church is accountable shall be the cluster in which the senior pastor is a member.

2. Formation of Clusters

- a. A cluster typically consists of five to ten (ideally not more than seven) United Brethren ministers and their congregations.
- b. Groups wishing to form a cluster will present a formal request, including admissions standards, to the Bishop, who possesses the authority to approve, disapprove, or request modifications.
- c. Non-United Brethren participants may be included in approved clusters.

3. Responsibilities of Approved Clusters.

- a. *Assumptions.* United Brethren participants in approved clusters shall maintain the core values, Confession of Faith, Constitution, and the Discipline of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, and follow all applicable laws, ethical guidelines, fiscal requirements, and sound business practices, so as not to bring disrepute on the cause of Christ.
- b. *Accountability.* United Brethren participants in approved clusters shall remain accountable collectively to the United Brethren Church and follow reporting processes to inform the US Bishop and the Executive Leadership Team of its activities and processes.
- c. *Standards.* The cluster shall also establish standards and methods whereby its participants can hold each other mutually accountable to maintain the United Brethren commitment to moral character, doctrinal soundness, administrative integrity, and ministry competence.

4. Privileges of Approved Clusters.

- a. *Standards.* Approved clusters may adopt group admission standards, setting forth qualifications and assumptions for participation, so long as they do not conflict with the Confession of Faith, the Core Values, the Constitution, and the Discipline.
- b. *Admitting Members.* Approved clusters may admit additional ministers and congregations beyond those that sought original approval, provided such members meet the approved admissions standards of the cluster.
- c. *Releasing Members.* Approved clusters may release ministers and congregations that desire to join another cluster or that do not maintain the standards, policies, or procedures of the cluster. Released parties are expected to seek membership in another cluster or be assigned to a cluster by the bishop.

523 Cluster Leaders

The cluster leader will be appointed and accountable to the US bishop and/or his appointee. The responsibilities of the cluster leader will include the following:

1. The cluster leader will facilitate the cluster meetings.
2. The cluster leader will support and resource the pastors and churches involved.
3. The cluster leader will assist in nurturing local church licensees.
4. The cluster leader will act as a liaison between the US Bishop and the pastors and churches involved in the cluster.
5. The cluster leader or his designate will serve on the stationing committee for United Brethren churches in the cluster.

524 Associations

All local congregations, preaching points, and ministers may also freely form or join with any association(s) of churches or ministries to pursue goals and projects of common interest (such as church planting projects, local initiatives, joint evangelistic activities, camping ministries, etc.).

Replace the current chapter 17 with the following:

Clusters

521 Description

1. A cluster typically consists of five to ten (ideally not more than seven) United Brethren senior pastors and their congregations.
2. Clusters are the entities to which all local congregations, preaching points, and ministers are primarily accountable.
3. All senior pastors of United Brethren congregations are required to participate in a cluster.
4. The cluster to which the local church is accountable shall be the cluster in which the senior pastor is a member.
5. The bishop is responsible for the formation of clusters and their general oversight.

522 Cluster Leaders

The cluster leader will be appointed and accountable to the US bishop and/or the bishop's appointee. The responsibilities of the cluster leader will include the following:

1. The cluster leader will facilitate the cluster meetings.
2. The cluster leader will support and resource the pastors and churches involved.
3. The cluster leader will assist in nurturing local church licensees.
4. The cluster leader will act as a liaison between the US Bishop and the pastors and churches involved in the cluster.
5. The cluster leader or his designate will serve on the stationing committee for United Brethren churches in the cluster.

4. Organizing New Churches: Adopting Non-United Brethren Congregations

¶402.2b

The current wording is inaccurate. The Core Values and Confession of Faith are documents of the International Church, not of the US church. This proposal corrects the wording.

Current wording of ¶402.2b.

b. The church's willingness to abide by the Confession of Faith, Core Values, and Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

Revise ¶402.2b as follows. Only point b is being revised, but all of ¶402.2 is included for context.

¶402 Adopting Non-United Brethren Congregations

2. The US bishop or his appointee will meet with leaders from the church to investigate such areas as: a. The doctrinal teachings of the church.

a. The doctrinal teachings of the church.

b. The church's willingness to abide by the Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA., and the Confession of Faith and Core values of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International.

c. The church's willingness to meet the expectations of all other full-member churches in the national conference.

d. The willingness of the church's members or constituents to individually become members of the United Brethren church, according to the procedures specified in the Discipline.

e. Evidence of financial self-sufficiency and an ability and willingness to pay the partnership fee.

5. The US Bishop: Duties

¶512.2a

¶512.2a is unnecessary, and should be deleted.

1. Chapter 21, "Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team," makes recruiting new ministers a joint duty of the bishop and PMLT. ¶634.2 says: "2. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall develop in conjunction with the bishop a strategy to recruit new pastors." That's where it belongs."

2. In addition, we don't think in terms of recruiting new churches, but this is stated as a duty of the bishop in ¶512.2a.

Delete ¶512.2a.

a. Develop and implement a strategy for recruiting future ministers and churches.

6. The US Bishop: Partnerships

Chapter 16, "The US Bishop," ¶512.4d, "Duties of the Bishop: Partnerships."

Prior to 2011, national conference delegations to the General Conference were based on the national conference's size, and they had to include both laypersons and ministers. In 2011, the constituency of the General Conference changed to include only two persons from each national conference, with no requirement that either of them be a layperson. However, the language in ¶512.4d has not been updated. All we need to do is strike the word "ministerial" to make it accurate.

Delete the word "ministerial" from ¶512.4d:

d. The bishop is an ex-officio ~~ministerial~~ member of the US delegation to the General Conference.

Editorial Changes

Editorial changes do not involve changing any meaning or content. They typically involve updating terminology, how information is organized, and consistency of expression. We have five editorial changes.

Editorial 1: Terminology

Make these changes wherever they occur, along with appropriate pluralizations.

1. Change “chairman” to “chairperson.”
 2. Change “layman” to “layperson.”
 3. Change “Global Ministries” to “UB Global.”
 4. Change “assessments” to “partnership fee.”
 5. Change “Paragraph” to “¶.”
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Editorial 2: Executive Leadership Team responsibilities

There are eight responsibilities of the Executive Leadership Team. The first five begin with “The Executive Leadership Team shall...”, but the other three don’t. To make the wording consistent, we are adding those words to the beginning of points 6-8. The words in bold would be added or, in point 6, substituted.

6. The **ELT Executive Leadership Team** shall develop and approve evaluation procedures for the US bishop, and shall approve job descriptions and evaluation procedures for the directors and staff.

7. **The Executive Leadership Team shall** approve new appointments to the Higher Education Leadership Team.

8. **The Executive Leadership Team shall** approve job descriptions and operating procedures of leadership for inclusion in the manual of operations.

Editorial 3: Full Member Churches

The term “full-member church” is a relic from the days when we had affiliate churches. We ended that designation in 2005, but the language remains in five places.

- ¶401.3 deals with “Congregations Arising from Church Plants.”
- ¶402.2c, ¶402.8 and ¶402.9 deal with “Adopting Non-UB Congregations.”
- ¶441.1 deals with “Churches in Crisis.”

Remove the words in strike-through from these four passages:

- ¶401.3: The congregation is willing to carry out the expectations of ~~other full-member~~ churches in the national conference.
 - ¶402.2c: The church’s willingness to meet the expectations of all ~~other full-member~~ churches in the national conference.
 - ¶402.8: The Executive Leadership Team determines that the congregation meets the basic criteria for a ~~full-member~~ church as stated in Chapter 11, “Local Church Organization.”
 - ¶402.9: The Executive Leadership Team designates the church as a ~~full-member~~ congregation of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
 - ¶441.1: Any existing ~~full-member~~ congregation shall require national conference intervention whenever it becomes unhealthy or shows consistent decline, as evidenced by any combination of the following...
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Editorial 4: US National Conference: Lay Representation

Chapter 15, “US National Conference,” ¶503.2c

Currently, the published formula only goes to 451-550, and lets people figure out on their own anything beyond that. This would expand the formula to 2050 attendees. Currently, our largest church has an attendance of around 1800.

Revise as follows. All of the additional content is in bold.

c. The following formula will be used to determine the number of lay delegates from each congregation.

Ave. Attendance	Lay Delegates
1-150	1
151-250	2
251-350	3
351-450	4
451-550	5
551-650	6
651-750	7
751-850	8
851-950	9
951-1050	10
1051-1150	11
1151-1250	12
1251-1350	13
1351-1450	14
1451-1550	15
1551-1650	16
1651-1750	17
1751-1850	18
1851-1950	19
1951-2050	20

etc. etc.

Editorial 5: US National Conference: Delegates

503 Delegates to the National Conference

Reorganize the content to list the categories of delegates, rather than include them all in one paragraph. No content is being changed, beyond eliminating one “and.” Listing aids comprehension and makes it easier to revise in the future.

Current wording:

The voting members of the United States National Conference are the US bishop, the national directors, the ministerial delegate(s) from each congregation, and the lay delegates chosen by each congregation according to Paragraph 423. Churches are eligible to send lay delegates if they have a signed National Conference Covenant on file with the national office.

Revise as follows:

The voting members of the United States National Conference are:

1. The US bishop,
2. The national directors.
3. The ministerial delegate(s) from each congregation.
4. The lay delegates chosen by each congregation according to ¶423. Churches are eligible to send lay delegates if they have a signed National Conference Covenant on file with the national office.