

September 7, 2020

Dear Friends In Christ:

Greetings to the churches of the Grand West Association (GWA) of the United Church of Christ from the GWA Council.

In expression of the covenantal relationship between all the churches of the GWA and the various settings of the United Church of Christ we write to seek your assistance, and to offer opportunities for members of your congregation to serve the wider church. The important work of the GWA is done almost entirely by volunteers, with support and guidance by a quarter-time staff (Associate Conference Minister – ACM) deployed by the Michigan Conference.

We invite you to read over the committee structure and responsibilities below and think about whom in your congregation would be an asset to one of the committees that we might contact them in relation to serving on the committee. On all committees, an effort is made to provide diversity of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and geographical distribution of GWA churches.

The Grand West Association elects five officers: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, and Registrar. They, along with a representative from the standing committees, United Church Outreach, Pilgrim Manor, and the GWA member serving on the Conference Board of Directors, make up the Association Council. The council is responsible for the work of the association between association meetings, and oversight of the association committees.

There are three standing committees of the Grand West Association:

Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry is responsible for authorizing ministry in the churches of the association, consultation and support for congregations with questions about ministry or who are experiencing difficulties, dealing with accusations about clergy conduct. This committee works with those moving toward ordination, credentialing new clergy coming to serve a church in the association, working with non-UCC clergy seeking standing in the United Church of Christ, working with churches on ordinations and installations, and holding the standing of churches and clergy (both active and retired.)

The committee is made up of 12 members, six lay and six clergy elected for staggered three-year terms. The association Moderator, Registrar, and Associate Conference Minister serve as ex-officio members with voice but not vote.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee is responsible for planning and coordinating the two general meetings of the association - spring and fall. These meetings serve not simply to do the official business of the association (as a church of congregational polity, delegates and clergy elect officers and committee members, vote on the budget and all substantive matters) but also to provide opportunities for fellowship, learning, and inspiration.

The committee is made up of six persons serving staggered three-year terms, three of whom shall be lay and three clergy.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee nominates persons to serve as officers of the association, as well as those to serve on the three standing committees of the association.

The committee is made up of six members serving staggered terms, three lay and three clergy.

Again, we thank you for your ministry through Christ on behalf of the world God intends and in covenant with the churches of the Grand West Association, the Michigan Conference, and the national setting of the United Church of Christ. We will be in touch with you to answer any questions and to hear whom you might recommend we invite to serve in the association.

In service together,

David England, Moderator,

On behalf of the Grand West Association Council