

United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities

By Laws

(Revised June 2010)

I. Name

- a. There shall be an association of ministers with disabilities organized within the United Methodist Church, composed of ministers with disabilities and persons involved in and with such persons at all levels of the church.
- b. The organization shall be known as the United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities.

II. Purpose

- a. The purpose of the association shall be:
 - 1) To plan for, foster, develop, promote and seek to encourage programs and fellowship of persons within the church with disabilities, to include ministers that have been ordained, consecrated, commissioned or licensed, seminary students, others preparing for ministry and other persons involved with such persons;
 - 2) To promote and encourage assistance and acceptance within annual conferences;
 - 3) To relate to annual conferences and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry, Division of Diaconal Ministry and Division of Chaplains and Related Ministries; and the General Board Of Global Ministries-UMCOR Health.
 - 4) To provide for Christian fellowship, support, encouragement, and spiritual growth;
 - 5) To assist bishops and cabinets of the annual conferences in understanding that ordained, commissioned, and lay ministers with disabilities possess gifts and graces for ministry and service to the church, and to assist them in helping create an attitude of acceptance for ministers with disabilities in the annual conference;
 - 6) To work to create a supportive fellowship of ministers with disabilities within the United Methodist Church which will enable these persons to feel that they are important to the ongoing vitality of the denomination at every level of the church.
 - 7) To provide the kind of acceptance and accessibility in which the gifts and graces of all persons may be accepted and honored and valued as a part of the body of Christ;
 - 8) To provide an arena in which understanding and growth might take place and environmental, architectural, communication and attitudinal barriers be removed that tends to isolate and reject all persons with disabilities, especially those whose commitment is in ministry within the United Methodist Church.

- 9) To provide special seminars where ministers with disabilities might discuss attitudes, appearance, pastor-parish relationships and focus on ways to improve his/her ability to be in ministry.
- 10) To give general leadership to those boards and agencies connected with or responsible for ministers with disabilities, at every level of the church to open the doors of the church wide enough that all may enter and be a true and accepted part of the Kingdom of God.
- 11) To be advocates for persons with disabilities; to recognize their call to ministry, to encourage and assist them in the ordination process and to help them continue in ministry when such a person encounters other issues related to their disability and ministry.

III. Membership

a. Membership in the Association shall be open to:

- 1) **Regular Membership:** Regular Membership shall have voice and vote. Membership will be open to United Methodists with disabilities who are ordained, consecrat4ed, commissioned, or licensed, seminary students, others preparing for ministry and other persons involved with such persons.
- 2) **Affiliate Membership:** Affiliate Membership shall have voice without vote and shall be composed of: United Methodist persons, at all levels of the church with a disability and/or involved in ministries with persons who have disabilities.
- 3) **Associate Membership:** Associate Membership shall have voice without vote and shall be composed of: persons of other denominations with a disability and/or who are involved in ministries with persons with disabilities.

b. Membership Dues

- 1) Shall be recommended by the Executive Committee and approved at the annual meeting.
- 2) The Annual Membership due date shall be July 1st of each year.
- 3) The Membership of the Association shall be determined by those who have paid the Annual dues.

IV. Executive Committee

- a. The General Membership shall be the governing body of the Association. The Executive Committee shall conduct the business of the Association between the meetings of the Association and shall be accountable to the General Membership.
- b. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers and the chairpersons of the standing committees. Representatives of the following bodies shall serve in an advisory capacity:

- General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
- Division of Ordained Ministry
- Division of Diaconal Ministry
- Division of Chaplains and Related Ministries
- General Board Of Global Ministries-UMCOR Health
- General Council on Ministries
- Council of Bishops

The Co-chairpersons of the Board shall serve as the chairpersons of the Executive Committee. The presence of a majority of the Committee shall be necessary for the transaction of any business. Between meetings of the Association, the Executive Committee shall have general charge of the affairs of the organization.

- c. As many as three members of the Executive Committee may be Affiliate and/or Associate members of the Association. These persons have full voice and vote within the Association and its committees.
- d. Minutes of the Executive Committee shall be mailed, emailed or distributed by other means to each member of the Association within thirty days following any meeting of the Committee.

V. Meetings

- a. The Association shall meet at least Bi-annually at a time and place to be determined by the Association or the Executive Committee. At least ninety days advanced notice of the intended time and place shall be given to the members of the Association.
- b. There shall be at least one meeting of the Executive Committee held annually. This meeting shall be prior to the meeting of the Association.
- c. Additional meetings of the Association or the Executive Committee shall be held as may be deemed necessary by the Association Members, by the Executive Committee, or by the Steering Committee.
- d. All meetings of the Association shall be held in a totally accessible facility with accessible housing accommodations available to all participants.

VI. Officers

- a. The Officers of the Association shall be elected at the general meeting of the Association and shall serve for a period of four (4) years. No person may serve for more than four consecutive years in the same office.
- b. The initial officers shall be elected at the organizational meeting of the Association.
- c. The officers shall be members in good standing of the United Methodist Church and of the Association.
- d. Every attempt will be made so that the officers will be inclusive as to gender, race, type of disability and geographical area.
- e. The officers of the Association shall be:
 - Two Co-chairpersons
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Chairperson of Program
 - Chairperson of Promotion and Publicity
 - Chairperson of Development
 - Chairperson of Conference Relationships and Membership
 - Chairperson of Continuing Education and Seminary Relations
 - Chairperson of Legislative Action
 - Liaison Representative with United Methodist Congress of the Deaf
 - Seminary Representative at Large (current Seminary Student)
- f. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

- 1) Co-chairpersons

The co-chairpersons shall work together to supervise and direct the affairs of the organization and shall preside over all meetings of the Association and perform all duties incident to the office of Co-chair and such; other duties as may be provided in the bylaws or as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee of the Association. The co-chairpersons shall be accountable to the Executive Committee and to the Association. The co-chairpersons shall, with the approval of the Executive Committee, appoint all standing and special committees of the Association, including the chairpersons of the special committees and shall be Ex-officio members of each with voice and vote. The two co-chairpersons shall jointly share these responsibilities and, in the event that one is not present, the other shall assume all duties herein described.

If one co-chairperson becomes incapacitated, resigns or for any reason cannot perform the duties of the co-chair position, then the other co-chairperson shall assume all duties until a special election can be held and the position filled. This special election shall be as soon as possible.

2) Secretary

The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Association and Executive Committee, be the custodian of all records, papers and documents, give all notices as are required, and generally perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as may be assigned by one or both of the Co-chairpersons, required by law, by these bylaws or which may be assigned by the Executive Committee of the Association.

3) Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of all funds of the Association, shall deposit the funds as received and required by the Association or the Executive Committee, keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the Associations properties and business transactions, file papers and documents with the Secretary of the Association, file papers and documents of incorporation, Church and Government financial papers with the appropriate agencies, render reports and accountings to the Executive Committee and to the Association as may be required by law, by these bylaws, as may be requested by either or both of the co-chairpersons, or which may be assigned by the Executive Committee or the Association. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Committee on Finance with voice and vote.

4) Chairperson of Program

The Chairperson of Program shall be responsible for programs planned, developed or sponsored by the Association. The Chairperson of Program shall plan the program in cooperation with the local arrangements committee for the annual meeting of the Association.

The Chairperson of Program shall arrange a Bi-annual seminar on the shape of our ministry which will deal with attitudes, techniques and related concerns. This shall be in cooperation with the Bi-Annual Association meeting and shall be approved for C.E.U.'s through a seminary.

5) Chairperson of Promotion and Publicity

The Chairperson of Promotion and Publicity shall be responsible for publicity relating to the Association and shall disseminate information, newsletters, news releases, program details, etc. to the members of the Association and to the appropriate Boards and agencies of the United Methodist Church.

6) Chairperson of Development

The Chairperson of Development shall be responsible for helping to direct and secure funding for the operation of the Association and its programs of ministry across the church.

7) Chairperson of Conference Relationships and Membership

The Chairperson of Conference Relationships and Membership shall work directly with the members of the Association and the various annual conferences of the church to help foster an attitude of acceptance for all persons with disabilities, especially those ministers that have been ordained, consecrated, commissioned or licensed, seminary students, and others preparing for ministry especially and particularly when appointments are in question and cabinets need outside resources in understanding the abilities as well as the gifts and graces of members of the Association.

The Chairperson of Conference Relationships and Membership shall also be responsible for membership growth.

8) Chairperson of Continuing Education and Seminary Relations

The Chairperson of Continuing Education and Seminary Relations shall enable the Association to gather information from United Methodist seminaries concerning curriculum, accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the administration, faculty, staff, and student body. This person shall also encourage seminaries to offer courses that raise the awareness of the abilities and gifts that persons with disabilities can bring to the profession of ministry, and shall inform and encourage persons that have been ordained, consecrated, commissioned or licensed and others preparing for ministry to continue to pursue education in their field.

The Chairperson of Continuing Education and Seminary Relations shall work with the Association and the appropriate General Boards and Agencies to develop C.E.U. events across the general church.

9) Chairperson of Legislative Action

The Chairperson of Legislative Action shall have the responsibility of keeping the members informed of current or pending legislation, both of the church and civil, concerning persons with disabilities. This chairperson shall bring to the Executive Committee proposed legislation which can be referred to the Association to bring before the United Methodist Church. This legislation will make the profession of ministry and all areas of ministry more accessible to ministers that have been ordained, consecrated, commissioned or licensed, seminary students, others preparing for ministry and other persons involved with such persons.

10) Liaison Representative with United Methodist Congress of the Deaf

There shall be a Liaison Representative with the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf who is both a member of the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf and the United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities. This person shall have voice and vote in the Association.

11) Seminary Representative

There shall be a Seminary Representative who shall be a current seminary student with a disability preparing for ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church and will serve as a channel of information on the current status of United Methodist Seminaries with regard to persons with disabilities (e.g. administration, curriculum, accessibility, etc.). This person shall have voice and vote in the Association.

- g. Any officer elected to office may be removed by the persons authorized under these bylaws to elect such, whenever in their judgment the best interests of this Association will be served.
- h. All officers and members of the Association who handle monies for the organization shall be covered by a blanket fidelity bond in the amount of \$30,000 or an amount that is three times the amount normally handled by the Treasurer of the Association in any one calendar or fiscal year, whichever amount is greater.
- i. There shall be an external audit conducted annually covering the overall financial operation of the Association.

VII. Committees

- a. The following Committees shall be standing Committees of the Association whose chairpersons shall be elected by the Association. The members of the committees shall be appointed by the Co-chairpersons of the Association with the approval of the Executive Committee.

1) Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall be composed of the two Co-Chairpersons, secretary, and treasurer. The Steering Committee shall coordinate the business of the Executive Committee, setting the agenda, and coordinating the business which will be presented to the Executive Committee. This committee shall assist the Co-Chairpersons with the business of the Association.

2) Committee on Finance

The Committee on Finance shall be composed of at least six members of the Association, including the chairperson, the Treasurer, the Co-chairpersons and the Chairperson of Development. The Chairperson of Finance and the Treasurer shall be the ones with authority to dispense funds in consultation with the other.

3) Committee on Program

The Committee on Program shall be composed of at least six members of the Association, including the Chairperson of Program, The Chairperson for Promotion and Publicity and the Co-Chair-persons of the Association. This committee shall be responsible for recommending, developing and monitoring programs of ministry and education which the Association shall sponsor. This committee shall recommend new programs to the Committee on Finance before presenting them to the Executive Committee or to the Association.

4) Committee on Nominations

The Committee on Nominations shall be composed of three members of the Association elected by the Association. The Association shall initially elect all three members of the Committee on Nominations and shall indicate which shall serve for one year, which for two years, and which for three years. Thereafter, one member of the committee shall be elected annually by the Association, thus providing for a continually rotating committee.

The Committee on Nominations shall recommend to the Association the persons to be elected as officers of the Association and to such positions as the Executive Committee and/or the Association may direct.

5) Committee on Promotion and Publicity

The Committee on Promotion and Publicity shall be composed of at least six members of the Association, including the Chairperson of Promotion and Publicity and the Co-Chairpersons. This committee shall be responsible for publicity relating to the Association and shall disseminate information, newsletters, news releases, program details, etc. to the members of the Association, to United Methodist News Service, and to the appropriate Boards and Agencies of the United Methodist Church.

6) Committee on Development

The Committee on Development shall be composed of at least six members of the Association, including the Chairperson of Development and the Co-Chairpersons. This committee shall be responsible for helping to direct and secure funding for the operation of the Association and its programs of ministry across the church.

7) Committee on Conference Relations and Membership

The Committee on Conference Relations and Membership shall be composed of at least six members of the Association, including the Chairperson of Conference Relations and Membership and the Co-Chairpersons. This committee shall work directly with the members of the Association and the various annual conferences of the church to help foster an attitude of acceptance for all persons with disabilities, especially those ministers that have been ordained, consecrated, commissioned or licensed, seminary students, and others preparing for ministry especially and particularly when appointments are in question and cabinets need outside resources in understanding the abilities as well as the gifts and graces of members of the Association.

The Committee on Conference Relations and Membership is also responsible for membership as this committee will be the one most directly related with the annual conferences.

8) Committee on Continuing Education and Seminary Relations

The Committee on Continuing Education and Seminary Relations shall be composed of at least six members of the Association, including the Chairperson of Continuing Education and Seminary Relations, the two Co-Chairpersons of the Association, and the Seminary Representative. The Committee on Continuing Education and Seminary Relations shall enable the Association to gather information from United Methodist Seminaries concerning curriculum, accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the administration, faculty, staff and student body. This committee shall also encourage seminaries to offer courses that raise the awareness of the abilities and gifts which persons with disabilities can bring to the profession of ministry, and shall inform and encourage persons that have been ordained, consecrated, commissioned or licensed and others preparing for ministry to continue to pursue education in their field. The Committee on Continuing Education and Seminary Relations shall work with the Association and the appropriate General Boards and Agencies to develop Continuing Education Unit (C.E.U.) events across the general church.

9) Committee on Legislative Action

The Committee on Legislative Action shall be composed of at least six members of the Association, including the Chairperson of Legislative Action and the two Co-Chairpersons. The Committee on Legislative Action shall have the responsibility of keeping the members informed of current or pending legislation, both of the church and civil, concerning persons with disabilities. This committee shall bring to the Executive Committee proposed legislation which can be referred to the Association to bring before the United Methodist Church. This legislation will make the profession of ministry and all areas of ministry more accessible to ministers that have been ordained, consecrated, commissioned or licensed, seminary students, others preparing for ministry and other persons involved with such persons.

- b. The Chairperson of each standing committee shall be elected by the Association. These persons shall serve until their terms on the Executive Committee shall expire. In the event the Chairperson shall resign or be unable to complete his/her term, the Co-Chairpersons shall appoint his/her replacement with the approval of the Executive Committee for the unexpired term. Each Committee shall elect its own secretary or recorder.
- c. Recommendations from each of the Committees for action by the Executive Committee or Association shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee or Association for its consideration.

VIII. Finances

- a. The Treasurer of the Association shall be the fiscal officer of the Association. The Treasurer shall receive, deposit, hold in trust, and disburse all funds for and on behalf of the Association.
- b. The Treasurer shall be covered by a Fidelity Bond as detailed in Paragraph 6.08 of these Bylaws.

- c. The funding of operating expenses programs, activities, conferences, workshops, seminars and other training events and convocations developed and provided by the Association shall be derived from:
 - 1) Membership dues of the Association which shall be determined by the membership,
 - 2) Registration fees for the various events,
 - 3) Offerings and gifts,
 - 4) Contributions from the Division of Ordained Ministry, the Division of Diaconal Ministry, and the Division of Chaplains and Related Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; the General Board Of Global Ministries-UMCOR Health; the General Council on Ministries; and/or the various Jurisdictional or annual conferences of the United Methodist Church,
 - 5) Foundations, trusts or corporate gifts,
 - 6) Local church contributions,
 - 7) Individual contributions and gifts,
 - 8) Conference Board of Ministry and Boards of Diaconal Ministry Continuing Education Funds.
- d. Budgeting
 - 1) The Association may fund the operating expenses of the Executive Committee, including all the expenses of the Executive Committee meeting.
 - 2) The Association may provide for the expenses of the program, room and board of the Annual meeting through the registration fee. The registration fee can be adjusted according to the funds available to the Association.
 - 3) The Association may fund other programming, education, advocacy, research, and/or other areas of ministry of the Association.

IX. Amendments

- a. These bylaws may be amended by the Association in a regular or special session. Any amendment in the bylaws must be proposed in writing at least 30 days in advance of a regular or special meeting of the body. Adoption of any amendment must be by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.