### **Articles of Association**

### **WISCONSIN CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION**

### **of Churches and Ministers**

### **Organized April 27, 1968**

### Amended April 4, 2003 at First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

### Revised and Consolidated with the Wisconsin Congregational Ministers Association

### Amended, April 18, 2009 at Heritage Congregational Church, Madison, WI.

### Amended, April 17, 2010 at First Congregational Community Church Roscoe, IL.

### Amended, April 28, 2012 at Faith Congregational Church, Franklin WI.

### Amended, April 20, 2013 at Plymouth Congregational Church, Racine WI.

### Amended May 17, 2014 at Fox River Congregational Church, Pewaukee, WI

### Amended April 9, 2018 at North Shore Congregational Church, Fox Point, WI

### **COVENANT**

### We covenant with the Lord and with one another in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, known or to be made known to us and to be free from the will of humanity for the purpose of becoming perfectly subject to the will of God.

### We voluntarily associate ourselves together for faith, freedom, a fellowship, with Jesus Christ as our only Head. We affirm and maintain the freedom of individual conscience as enlightened by the Holy Spirit, our only interpreter of the Word of God.

### We also claim that each Church shall be free, independent, and forever devoid of any and all control by the Association.

### **ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION**

### **Article I. NAME**

### The name shall be the Wisconsin Congregational Association.

### **Article II.  PURPOSE**

### The Congregational Way affirms Fellowship among the churches as central and essential to the nature of what it means to be a Congregational Church. The purpose of this Association shall be to provide for that Fellowship among the member churches and act as a resource for Congregational Christian Churches. Fellowship is defined as: (1) that free relation of affection which binds churches together – first as a body of believers gathered in covenant around Christ and second as those covenant communities joined together in  covenant community for service to one another and the needs of the Church Catholic; (2) The Wisconsin Congregational Association gathered as an Ecclesiastical Council at the request of a local Church to provide advice on matters defined in such a call, and; (3) The Wisconsin Congregational Association gathered in regular meetings as defined hereinafter to conduct such business as is necessary to fulfill this Article and allow the opportunity for the free sharing of ideas, presentation of speakers for the edification of the member Churches, and the general enhancing of spiritual bonds among the member Churches to assist them in their local proclamation and witness of God. Any purpose or activity not expressly defined in these by-laws is reserved to the local Churches.

### **Article III. MEMBERSHIP**

### Membership in this Association shall be by Churches and ministers who are loyal to and support the stated purposes of the Association. Churches, Ministers, and Associate Members are entitled to membership subject to written application to the Executive Committee and vote of the Association.

### A.  RECEPTION OF MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

### 1. Reception of Churches

### Any Congregational Church subscribing to the Association’s Covenant may be received into the Association upon written request and by vote of the Association.

### 2. Reception of Ministers

### Ministers are received into membership through their appropriate call and installation to a member church or through the grant of ministerial recognition by the Association.

### 3. Reception of Associate Members

### Individuals from non-member Churches who subscribe to the purposes of this Association, may be enrolled as “Associate Members.” Ministers who have received recognition, but are not called to a member church will be Associate Members. Associate members of the Association have voice but not vote in the Association.

### B.  ACTIVE AND INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

### Members are categorized as active or inactive. The Secretary and Treasurer of the Association shall certify the list of active member Churches and Ministers to the Moderator prior to the convening of the Annual Meeting.

### 1.      Active Membership

### a. An active member Church is one that either sends a delegate to the Annual Meeting of the Association in the current or preceding year; or which has, in the two years immediately preceding the Annual Meeting, made a financial contribution to the operating budget of the Association.

### b. An active member minister is one who maintains his or her call or is recognized be the Association, who attends the Annual Meeting and/or meetings of the Minister’s Fellowship or the Theological Society.

### 2.      Inactive Membership

### a. Inactive members are those churches or ministers who for whatever reason have not met the qualifications for Active Membership. Inactive members may participate in Association Functions but do not have the right to vote or serve in Association positions.

### b. An inactive Church shall be automatically restored to active status by fulfilling the requirements for active membership. For churches by either sending a delegate to the Annual meeting or making a financial contribution to the Association. Ministers may be restored to active status by attending the Annual Meeting and/or the Ministers’ Fellowship.

### C. DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

### At the heart of Congregationalism is the mutual bond of fellowship between Churches. There are times when such fellowship is strained or no longer beneficial between parties. The Association does not infringe upon the rights of the local congregation or its ministers to withdraw from the Association at any time. The Association also reserves the right to dismiss a member if it deems appropriate. Thus, dismissal from membership of the Association can take place under three circumstances: voluntary withdrawal; termination by vote of the Association; or perpetual inactive status.

### 1. Voluntary withdrawal

### A Church or minister may voluntarily withdraw from the Association by providing written notification of such an intention to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Congregational Association.

### 2.      Termination by Vote of Association

### A member (whether Church or minister) may also be dismissed from the Association by a three quarters (¾) majority vote of active members at an Annual Meeting.

### 3.      Continual Inactive Status

### A member, having remained inactive for four years, will be removed from membership in the Association. Such termination of membership will transpire one year after due notification in writing by the Executive committee, if no attempts are made to re-establish active membership.

### **Article IV. DELEGATES AND VOTING**

### A. An active member Church may elect one lay delegate, who shall be an active member of said Church.  The designated Minister, senior or associate, shall also be a delegate to this Association with right of vote. Vote by the Association must be a majority of the active member Churches present and voting each Church having two votes, one by delegate and one by pastor.

### B. Honorary, Fraternal Delegates, and Visitors, shall normally have the right to the floor, which may be limited by the Moderator when urgency of business may require, but shall have no vote.

### **Article V. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

### OFFICERS: The officers of this Association, elected at the Annual Meeting, shall be a Moderator, Moderator elect, a Secretary,  a Treasurer, Ambassador(s), and the Chairperson of the Youth and Camp Committee., men or women, either clergy or lay who are members of active member Churches, shall be eligible for election to office.

### They shall take office at the first Executive Committee meeting following the Annual Meeting.

### MODERATOR: The Moderator shall serve as the official representative of the Association and shall preside at all meetings of the Association and of the Executive Committee. The Moderator shall serve a term of one year after which that person shall not be eligible for election to any Association Office until after the expiration of one year.

### MODERATOR-ELECT: The Moderator-elect shall succeed to the office of Moderator at the expiration of the current Moderator’s term of office. If the Moderator is unable to complete the term of office, the Moderator-elect shall fulfill the Moderator’s duties for the balance of the term and shall then become Moderator for that person’s regular term. The Moderator-elect shall be elected for a term of one year. The Moderator-elect will be responsible for facilitating the pulpit exchanges among the member churches of the Association. The Moderator-elect shall chair the Recognition of Ministry Committee if the Committee is needed during the term. The Moderator-elect shall not be eligible for election to any Association office until after the expiration of one-year following the term as Moderator.

### SECRETARY: The Secretary shall keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings of the Association and of the Executive Committee. The Secretary shall keep a record of the membership of the Churches of the Association, shall keep an attendance record of Churches represented at meetings of the Association, and shall receive official communications, notices, and correspondence as directed by the Association or Executive Committee. The Secretary shall be elected for a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

### TREASURER: The Treasurer shall receive all contributions and disburse all funds as are necessary to carry on the business of the Association. The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

### AMBASSADOR(S): Two Ambassadors from the active member Churches, one lay and one clergy, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall take office at the first Executive Committee meeting following the Annual Meeting. Each representative shall be elected for a term of two years and may be re-elected for one additional term of two years after which that person shall be ineligible for re-election to this office for a period of one year. The Ambassador(s) shall serve in cooperation with the Executive Committee as liaison, official representative and formal designee between the Association, its member churches, and such other religious bodies and institutions as the Association deems appropriate. The Ambassador(s) may lend such advice and counsel as may be sought by member and non‑member churches and clergy, within the parameters set forth in Article II of the Articles of Association.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee shall consist of the six officers of the Association*,* the Chairperson of the Youth and Camp Committee, and the President of the Ministerial Fellowship, making a total of nine persons. The Immediate Past Moderator shall be an ex-officio member (non-voting).

### RESPONSIBILITIES: the Executive Committee shall act for the Association in the time between Annual Meetings. It shall transact such business as the Association shall direct. The Executive Committee shall have authority to contract for all necessary expenditures for the carrying out of policies authorized by the Association. The Executive Committee shall make a full report of all its doings, the consideration of which shall be a part of the order of business at the next regular meeting of the Association. It may make rules for its own guidance not inconsistent with the Articles of Association.

### a.       The Executive Committee may submit to the Association for consideration any recommendations that it may understand are helpful for the further development of the life and work of the Churches.

### b.      The Executive Committee shall propose an agenda for the Annual meeting, but such agenda may be modified and amended by the delegates gathered for the meeting and the discussions and actions of the meeting shall not in any manner be limited by the suggested agenda.

### c.       The Executive Committee shall serve as the business committee for the meetings of the Association.

### d.      The Executive Committee shall prepare the proposed annual budget for the Association and present it for discussion, approval, and adoption at the Annual Meeting.

### e.       The Executive Committee shall not exceed the authorizations to it by the Association.

### C. YOUTH AND CAMP COMMITTEE

### 1. The Youth and Camp Committee shall be comprised of ten members: The Chairperson, two Adult Members at Large (one lay, one clergy), the Junior and Senior High School Camp Directors, the Mini Camp Director, Special Events Coordinators, and two youth, one representing the Junior High age group and one representing the Senior High age group.

### 2. The Youth & Camp Committee shall be responsible for overseeing all of the youth ministry events of the Association. These events shall include an annual camping program, and any other special events. In all its endeavors, the Committee’s purpose shall be to offer opportunities for young people to grow in faith and fellowship, in harmony with the ideals of the Association’s covenant.

### 3. Chairperson: The Chairperson of the Youth and Camp Committee shall be nominated by the Association Nominating Committee and be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association and shall take office at the close of camp in the year in which they were elected. The term of office shall be one year. The Chairperson may be elected for one additional term of one year after which that person shall not be eligible for re-election until after the expiration of one year.

### 4. Adult Members At Large: Two adult Members At Large, one lay and one clergy, shall be elected and shall take office at the close of camp in the year in which they were elected. One representative shall beelected at each Annual Meeting for a term of two years and may be re-elected for one additional term of two years after which that person shall not be eligible for re-election until after the expiration of one year.

### 5. Camp Directors: The Youth and Camp Committee shall, each year, be responsible for securing Directors for Junior High Camp, Senior High Camp and Mini Camp. The Directors shall be members of the Youth and Camp Committee until such time as their successors are secured.

### 6. Special Events Coordinators: The Youth & Camp Committee shall strive to have two Special Events Coordinators in office at all times. The Special Events Coordinators shall be appointed by the Youth & Camp Committee, and shall be members of the Committee for as long as they continue in this role. Normally, the two Special Events Coordinators will serve staggered two-year terms, with one new term beginning at the close of each year’s camp. However, if a vacancy arises, the Youth & Camp Committee shall endeavor to fill the vacancy as quickly as possible, with the new Coordinator serving the remainder of the unexpired term. Special Events Coordinators may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms, or six consecutive years, after which they will not be eligible for re-election until after the expiration of one year. A Special Events Coordinator may be removed from office, for any reason, by a three-quarters (75%) vote of the other eight members of the Youth & Camp Committee (i.e. at least six of the eight other voting members). The Special Events Coordinators will be responsible for all aspects of any Association youth events other than camp. Such events may include any of the following: rallies, retreats, lock-ins, service projects, fundraisers, or other gatherings. With regard to all such events, the Special Events Coordinators’ duties shall include, but not be limited to, planning, scheduling, site selection, promotion, budgeting, volunteer recruitment, program content, discipline, and submission of all income and expenses for each event to the Treasurer of the Association. It is understood that the Special Events Coordinators may solicit assistance from other volunteers, and may delegate specific responsibilities to such volunteers.

### D. RECOGNITION OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

### 1. The Recognition of Ministry Committee shall be composed of three members, 1 lay member at large, 1 clergy member at large, and the Moderator-elect who acts as the chairperson of the Committee.

### a. At such time as a request for recognition is made to the WCA Executive Committee, that Committee will select the at-large members of the recognition of ministry committee. They will serve until the action on the request has been resolved.

### b. The Recognition of Ministry Committee shall meet when requested to review a request by an ordained minister who is not currently serving in a member church for recognition. This may happen if a minister retires, if a minister chooses not to remain in active ministry, if a minister is a chaplain or employed by an agency other than a congregation for ministering to the needs of people.

### i. The request will contain evidence of prior ordination, employment history and additional information requested by the Committee.

### c. If the Committee’s recommendation is favorable, the action submitted to the Executive Committee who will endorse or reject the recommendation. .

### E. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

### 1.      MEMBERSHIP: The Nominating Committee shall consist of three members from the active member Churches of the Association who shall be elected at the Annual meeting. They shall be elected to serve until the next Annual meeting.

### 2.      DUTIES: The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of officers and committee members for election at the Annual Meeting. No nominations may be presented unless the nominee has consented to serve if elected. Nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

### 3.      VACANCIES: In case an office becomes vacant between Annual meetings the Executive Committee, after consulting with the Nominating Committee, shall fill the vacancy by interim appointment until the next Annual Meeting.

### F. OTHER COMMITTEES

### The active Member Churches of the Association may elect other committees as needed. The purpose of the committee and the length of time required to fulfill the stated purpose shall be included in the constituting motion.

### **Article VI. THE MINISTRY**

### A.    This Association affirms the importance of the ministry which, as the Cambridge Platform points out “…the Lord Jesus out of his tender compassion hath appointed, and ordained officers which he would not have done, if they had not been useful and needful for the church” and, while not denying the validity of other ways of ordination, holds, as did our forebears, that a gathered Church, being complete under Christ, with all spiritual and ecclesiastical power, has the right to call and to ordain its own minister.

### B.     This Association stands ready to assist a gathered Church in the calling of Councils (such as the Ecclesiastical Council of the Vicinage) for advice and assistance as to ordination and/or installation.

### C.     There are two common pathways to the ordained ministry.

### 1.      The first path is when a person is called to the ministry initially and following completion of four years in college proceeds into an accredited theological school.

### 2.      The second path is the emergence from the laity, whereby a person is called as a mature lay person whose professional experience and training has been in a vocation other than the professional clergy. This path, historically, has normally led to licensed lay ministry or to a local ordination.

### D.      The Association encourages all churches to invite all Association congregations as participants, chiefly by means of the Ecclesiastical Council of the Vicinage, during the call, ordination and/or installation of ministers to their churches, regardless of the pathway to the ministry from which a person has been called.

### **Articles VII. MINISTERIAL STANDING**

### A. This Association grants recognition to the called minister of any member Church of this Association,

### B. Recognition with the Association may also be given to interim ministers, chaplains, retired ministers and others as deemed appropriate. Those Ministers would become Associate Members of the Wisconsin Congregational Association.

### **Article VIII.MINISTERS’ FELLOWSHIP**

### A.    The purpose of this Fellowship shall be to provide mutual encouragement, mental stimulation, spiritual inspiration and professional improvement for all its members.

### B.     Membership shall be open to any Congregational minister who adheres to the purposes of this Association. (For example; such membership shall be open to ministers of Churches (regularly or locally ordained or licensed), interim ministers, retired ministers, chaplains, ministers who are serving in executive and administrative positions, missionaries, and ministers serving as teachers in colleges, universities or seminaries.)

### C.     The officers of this Fellowship shall consist of a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer elected by the members.

### 1.      The election of officers shall take place annually at the September meeting of the Fellowship.

### 2.      The Fellowship shall collect, keep and maintain its own funds.

### 3.      The Treasurer will file an annual report of funds and activities with the Executive Committee.

### (As of the date of the acceptance of this revised Wisconsin Congregational Association’s “Articles of Association and By-laws,” all current members of the Wisconsin Congregational Ministers Association are automatically members of the Ministers Society.)

### **Article IX Theological Society**

### The Theological Society exists to promote reflection on the Congregational Way. The Society will keep and publish copies of the meeting’s presentations, typically on the Association’s website, to encourage wider discussion and application of its reflection. The Society meets at times and places as determined by the Convener of the Theological Society in consultation with its members, typically four to five times throughout the academic year. Membership is open to all members of the WCA and their guests.

### The Convener of the Theological Society must be a member of and active Association church and is presented by the Nominating Committee each year to be voted on at the annual meeting. Convener sets the year’s agenda presenters, and venues as well as serves on the Executive Committee of the Association.

### **Article X, MEETINGS**

### REGULAR MEETINGS: The Wisconsin Congregational Association shall hold an Annual Meeting in the spring of each year, the date and location to be fixed by the Executive Committee.

### SPECIAL MEETINGS: Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee or upon request of five active member Churches. The purpose of the Special Meeting shall be stated clearly in the call for the meeting.

### NOTICE OF MEETINGS: Member Churches shall be notified of all meetings at least two months in advance of the scheduled meeting date.

### QUORUM: A quorum at all meetings where actions affecting the Association are to be taken shall consist of a majority / one third of active member Churches. If a quorum is not present the business may proceed, but all voting will be considered as provisional until other members, not present, can approve or disapprove by a mailed ballot that is to be sent and received by the secretary of the Executive Committee of the Association.

### PROGRAM: The program of the meetings shall be consistent with the Covenant and emphasize faith, freedom, and fellowship.

### **Article XI. AMENDMENTS**

### At any duly called meeting of the Association, if a majority of active members of the Association is represented by delegates present at such a meeting, these Article of Association may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active member Churches represented at such a meeting through their delegates. Notice of such proposed amendment or amendments shall be printed and distributed with the call to the meeting at which they are to be considered.

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### **Article XII. COVENANT**:

### The Covenant of the Association may be amended only by a unanimous vote of the member Churches taken by mail ballot