

THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE WISCONSIN CONFERENCE



All You Need to Know About the Re-structuring of the Wisconsin Conference, of the UCC

A Letter from our Conference Minister, Franz Riegert

Last fall, I shared details about the proposal to dissolve our four associations and shift to a single middle judicatory body – the Conference – responsible for carrying out the wider mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ in Wisconsin. In **Reshaping our Wider Church Connections** I lifted up the two themes that arose during a series of conversations that unfolded over many months: the desire for UCC relationships beyond the local church and the desire for more robust resource sharing across the Conference.

Our vision going forward is to continue building a network of resources to support congregational life. This graphic of our **Local Church Resource Hub** conveys the many ways in which we already provide ministry and programming guidance. Can you imagine if we had 75 working groups – think of them as passion hubs – that could help your congregation develop new ministry initiatives? Such covenantal collaborating is one way to foster vitality in the future Church.

The most significant shift ahead will be the move of the ecclesiastical work of Committees on Ministry to a unified approach across the Conference. The proposed **Unified COM** will have regional representation by nearly 50 volunteers in working groups dedicated to fulfilling three main ministerial functions: Authorization, Oversight and Support.

The dissolution of associations will be financially neutral because the missions and ministries carried out by associations will be carried out by the Conference. The administrative efficiencies and cost savings we gain will allow us to invest time and money into further developing relationships and resources. This **Dues and OCWM Explainer** details our plans to continue membership dues, assessed beginning in 2026 for the purpose of covering core administrative. Our Church's Wider Mission will continue to be the primary way we fund the mission and ministry of the Conference.

Consider joining a **virtual meeting** that will provide additional information and a chance to engage in conversation on March 13, hosted by the Northeast Association online only starting at 6:30 p.m. In the meantime, the Governance Team of the Wisconsin Conference Board of Directors is working on conference bylaw changes, and we are continuing conversations with association leaders regarding the combining of association funds and the transfer of functions to a unified ministry.

Official Action on the restructuring proposal will occur during the Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting, scheduled for June 6 and 7 at Green Lake Conference Center. The associations will meet in breakout sessions on June 7 to conduct final association business, to vote on dissolution and to offer a litany of gratitude and leave-taking. That afternoon, Annual Meeting delegates will vote to take on the functions of associations, with appropriate timetables established for the transition.

May God continue to bless you all,
Franz Riegert, Wisconsin Conference Minister