

Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ

Third Annual Meeting 2022 Behavioral Covenant and Rules of Procedure

The 2020 Annual Meeting adopted the covenant and rules below, which remain in effect until superseded by a subsequent vote.

I. Behavioral Covenant

The Board of Directors of the Southern New England Conference, UCC affirms the following behavioral covenant and recommends its adoption by the delegates to the 2022 Annual Meeting. Together we commit to:

- **Speak for Self.** We will share from our own individual perspectives, avoiding statements like, “Everyone knows...” or, “I think we all can agree...” (which exclude people who may not know or agree) and, “Some people are saying...” (which avoids accountability for the speaker).
- **Share the Air.** We will be mindful of those who are monitoring and processing questions, and pay attention to how much time and space we take up. If we have spoken or submitted a question or comment already, or if someone else has given voice to our viewpoint, we will consider making room for other voices.
- **Communicate with Care.** We will choose words that are respectful and inclusive of the various characteristics and life experiences represented among our conferences, congregations, and communities. We will use language to build up, not break down. We will attend to the impact of our words and actions, and when harm is identified, we will listen and respond with care and respect.
- **Turn to Wonder.** If we find ourselves inclined to make a snap judgment or dismiss another person’s perspective, we will get curious. We will wonder (or ask) why they think the way they do and be open what we might have to learn from one another.
- **Lean on Spirit.** We will remember that God is present in our conversation and be intentional about listening for that still-speaking voice. We will leave time for prayer and stay receptive to the Spirit’s leading.

II. Rules of Procedure

The goal of these rules is to allow for fruitful participation by delegates in the context of an abbreviated, on-line meeting. Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order as interpreted by a Parliamentarian, except as indicated below.

1. The Board of Directors appoints a Business Committee for the Conference. The Business Committee includes the Moderator, Vice-moderator and Secretary of the Conference, with additional Board members, officers or others at the Board’s discretion.

2. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to participate in worship and networking opportunities. Voting members of the Conference, and those who have voice without vote in business sessions, are defined in the Bylaws of the Conference.
3. The Board of Directors may submit proposed actions directly to the Annual Meeting. Proposed actions from other sources are to be submitted to the Business Committee at least 90 days before the Annual Meeting. If the Business Committee deems an action appropriate to the goals of the Annual Meeting, the action will be placed on the agenda and sent to the churches in a Call to the Annual Meeting at least 30 days before the meeting.
4. Reports required by the Bylaws of the Conference, plus any proposals presented by the Boards, will be included in the Call to the Annual Meeting.
5. In order to receive consideration, any matter not included in the call should be placed in the hands of a member of the Business Committee before the meeting convenes. The Business Committee will determine whether the matter is appropriate to the goals of the meeting and whether there is sufficient room on the agenda for the matter to be added.
6. No new matters may be introduced after the meeting is convened, unless there is a two-thirds vote to place such matters on the agenda.
7. The Business Committee does not anticipate the need for debate at this meeting. The only planned vote will be on the Nominating Slate, which is neither debatable nor amendable, per Parliamentary procedure. However, in the event that a matter is placed on the agenda by two-thirds vote (see #6, above), the following shall be the procedure for considering votes coming to the floor of the Conference:
 - a. A designated sponsor shall be allowed three minutes to explain the proposed action. The floor will then be open for conversation and discernment as follows:
 - b. Each authorized member desiring to comment will be invited to do so by typing in the Q&A section at the appropriate time. All comments deemed to be in order will be read aloud by the Moderator.
 - c. Members who wish to be brought on screen to make their comments should first contact a member of the Business Committee by texting or calling a designated phone number. If their comment is deemed to be in order, they will be sent a link which will allow them to be brought on stage.
 - i. Each speaker will identify themselves by name and local church membership.
 - ii. Each speaker is encouraged to begin their statement with one of the following: “I believe...”, “I wonder...”, or “I pray ...”
 - iii. Each speaker may speak for a maximum of 60 seconds.
 - iv. Conversation will be guided by the Behavioral Covenant as voted by the meeting.
 - v. Moderators will be responsible for ensuring that all perspectives are sufficiently heard.
 - d. Members who wish to call a question or to raise a point of order may do so by typing their request in the Q&A box, which will be monitored by a member of the Business Committee.

- e. Members who wish to consult with a member of the Business Committee or a Parliamentarian may do so by texting or calling a designated phone number staffed by a member of the Business Committee.
 - f. Where amendments are allowable in the Bylaws, proposed amendments shall be presented in writing to the chair of the Business Committee before being presented on the floor. Only one amendment to a main motion shall be considered at a time. Any amendment that changes the general intent of the original main motion will be declared out of order by the Moderator.
 - g. No speaker shall speak to the same issue twice until all those that wish to speak have been heard once, except to answer questions addressed to them by the Moderator.
 - h. A motion to limit or extend the limits of debate is itself undebatable; such motions require a second and a two-thirds vote unless decided by general consent.
 - i. The Moderator may call for a motion to close debate when discussion is deemed as revealing no new light. The Moderator may call for a moment of silent prayer and reflection before taking a vote.
 - j. In the event that translation is needed, the Moderator will recognize a translator for equal time for the moving of a motion or responding to a motion.
 - k. Out of compassion and respect for one another, there will be no use of thumbs-up or other virtual applause mechanisms when a motion passes or fails, unless the vote on that motion has been unanimous.
8. The Conference will stay in session until all matters described above have been dealt with, or until the scheduled end of the business meeting, whichever is earlier.
- a. If at the scheduled end of the business meeting there is still unfinished business, the Moderator will call for a vote on whether or not to continue for 15 minutes. If the vote carries by a two-thirds majority, the meeting will continue. If it does not carry, all matters remaining on the Agenda will be referred to the Board of Directors.
 - b. If the Conference votes to stay in session, the process described above will be repeated at 15-minute intervals until all business is completed, or the meeting is adjourned with items leftover for later consideration by the Board of Directors. The Annual Meeting will then adjourn following worship.
9. These Rules of Procedure shall remain in effect until changed by a vote of a subsequent Annual Meeting or Special Meeting, or unless modified between Conference meetings by a vote of the Board of Directors for purposes of collaboration or adaptation during the start-up of the new Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Massachusetts Chapter 22 Section 27 Requirements for Remote Member Meeting

- (i) reasonable measures shall be implemented to verify that each person deemed present and permitted to vote at the meeting by means of remote communication is a member or proxyholder;

(ii) reasonable measures shall be implemented to provide such members and proxyholders a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting and to vote on matters submitted to the members, including an opportunity to read or hear to the proceedings of the meeting substantially concurrently with such proceedings, pose questions and make comments, regardless of whether the members can simultaneously communicate with each other during the meeting; and

(iii) if any member or proxyholder votes or takes other action at the meeting by means of remote communication, a record of such vote or other action shall be maintained by the corporation.