

1 **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

2  
3 **PREAMBLE**

4 1 The United Church of Christ, formed June 25, 1957, by the union of the Evangelical and  
5 Reformed Church and The General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches of the  
6 United States in order to express more fully the oneness in Christ of the churches composing it, to  
7 make more effective their common witness in Him, and to serve His kingdom in the world,  
8 hereby adopts this Constitution.

9  
10 2 The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and  
11 Savior. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word  
12 of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative  
13 and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed  
14 in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the  
15 responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in  
16 honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the  
17 teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two  
18 sacraments: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion.

19  
20 3 The provisions herein define and regulate the General Synod, the United Church of Christ  
21 Board and those Covenanted Ministries, Affiliated Ministries, and Associated Ministries, as  
22 hereinafter set forth, of the United Church of Christ which are related to the General Synod and  
23 describe the free and voluntary relationships which the Local Churches, Associations,  
24 Conferences and ministers sustain with the General Synod and with each other. The pattern of  
25 relationships and procedures so described is recommended to Local Churches, Associations,  
26 Conferences and authorized ministers, to enable them more effectively to accomplish their tasks  
27 and the work of the United Church of Christ.

28  
29 **ARTICLE I. NAME**

30 4 The name of this Church shall be UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

31  
32 **ARTICLE II. STRUCTURE**

33 5 The United Church of Christ is composed of Local Churches, Associations, Conferences and  
34 the General Synod.

35  
36 **ARTICLE III. COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS**

37 6 Within the United Church of Christ, the various expressions of the church relate to each other in  
38 a covenantal manner. Each expression of the Cehurch has responsibilities and rights in relation to  
39 the others, to the end that the whole Cehurch will seek God’s will and be faithful to God’s  
40 mission. Decisions are made in consultation and collaboration among the various parts of the  
41 structure. As members of the Body of Christ, each expression of the Cehurch is called to honor  
42 and respect the work and ministry of each other part. Each expression of the Cehurch listens,  
43 hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In this covenant, the  
44 various expressions of the United Church of Christ seek to walk together in all God’s ways.

45  
46 **ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

47 7 The Officers of the United Church of Christ shall be a General Minister and President, ~~an~~  
48 ~~Executive Minister for Local Church Ministries, an Executive Minister for Wider Church~~  
49 ~~Ministries, an Executive Minister for Justice and Witness Ministries,~~ the Associate General  
50 Ministers, and such other Officers as the General Synod may from time to time determine. They

51 shall be responsible to and called by election of the General Synod as Officers of the United  
52 Church of Christ.

53  
54 **Collegium of Officers**

55 ~~8 Composed of the~~ Officers of the United Church of Christ shall attend to the quality of  
56 relationships among the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries. The  
57 General Minister and President is the presiding Officer. The Officers of the United Church of  
58 Christ support and consult with the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries  
59 in carrying out their work in a spirit of coordination and cooperation. Led by the General Minister  
60 and President, the Officers of the United Church of Christ are responsible for providing  
61 leadership for the mission programming of the United Church of Christ and for the proper  
62 implementation of General Synod actions. The Officers of the United Church of Christ coordinate  
63 research, long-range planning, program evaluation, and report on the ongoing programs of the  
64 United Church of Christ. The election of Officers of the United Church of Christ shall reflect the  
65 commitment of the United Church of Christ to be an inclusive church. ~~meeting as peers, the~~  
66 ~~Collegium of Officers is responsible for providing leadership for the mission programming of the~~  
67 ~~United Church of Christ and for the implementation of General Synod actions. The General~~  
68 ~~Minister and President is the presiding officer of the Collegium. The Collegium shall attend to the~~  
69 ~~quality of relationships among the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries~~  
70 ~~and foster a climate of respect, collaboration, and collegiality among various expressions of the~~  
71 ~~church. The Collegium provides a setting for mutual accountability, for mutual reporting, and for~~  
72 ~~assessing the ongoing programs of the United Church of Christ. It shall reflect the commitment of~~  
73 ~~the United Church of Christ to be an inclusive church.~~

74  
75 **ARTICLE V. LOCAL CHURCHES**

76 9 The basic unit of the life and organization of the United Church of Christ is the Local Church.

77  
78 10 A Local Church is composed of persons who, believing in the triune God, accepting Jesus  
79 Christ as Lord and Savior, and depending on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are organized for  
80 Christian worship, for the furtherance of Christian fellowship, and for the ongoing work of  
81 Christian witness.

82  
83 11 In accordance with the custom and usage of a Local Church, persons become members by (a)  
84 baptism and either confirmation or profession of faith in Jesus  
85 Christ as Lord and Savior; (b) reaffirmation or reprofession of faith; or (c) letter of transfer or  
86 certification from other Christian churches.

87  
88 12 All persons who are or shall become members of a Local Church of the  
89 United Church of Christ are thereby members of the United Church of Christ.

90  
91 13 Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed  
92 Church unite in the United Church of Christ without break in their respective historic continuities  
93 and traditions.

94  
95 14 The following Local Churches compose the United Church of Christ:

- 96  
97 a) The Local Churches of the Evangelical and Reformed Church;  
98  
99 b) The Local Churches of the Congregational Christian fellowship which vote to become a part of  
100 the United Church of Christ, or which vote to approve this Constitution;  
101

102 c) Any Congregational Christian Local Church which, although it has not voted to become a part  
103 of the United Church of Christ, or to approve this Constitution, votes to join the United Church of  
104 Christ after this Constitution is declared in force;

105  
106 d) Any Local Church which, after this Constitution is declared in force, is accepted, on any basis  
107 other than that described in paragraph 16, into an Association, or Conference, of the United  
108 Church of Christ;

109  
110 e) The Local Churches of any denomination which, after this Constitution is declared in force,  
111 unites with the United Church of Christ; and

112  
113 f) Any Local Church in a category not otherwise defined in this article, received upon its request,  
114 subject to such provisions as in consultation with the Conference may be specified by the  
115 Association within whose bounds it is located, and which are not inconsistent with this  
116 Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

117  
118 15 Local Churches of the United Church of Christ are represented in the General Synod by the  
119 delegates from the Conferences to which they belong.

120  
121 16 An Association or a Conference of the United Church of Christ may, under such provisions as  
122 it deems wise, admit, or continue to fellowship with, any Congregational Christian ~~L~~ocal  
123 ~~c~~Church which is not part of the United Church of Christ. The names and statistics of such  
124 churches shall be kept separately; their members shall not be counted in determining the number  
125 of delegates which the Conference is entitled to send to the General Synod or hold elective office  
126 in that body, except that no ~~O~~rdained ~~M~~inister who has full ~~S~~tanding or ~~O~~rdained  
127 ~~M~~inisterial ~~P~~artner ~~S~~tanding in the United Church of Christ shall be ineligible to be a  
128 delegate to the General Synod or to hold elective office in that body. No direct or indirect  
129 participation by any such ~~L~~ocal ~~c~~Church in, or support of, the work of the United Church of  
130 Christ, or of any of its Covenanted Ministries, The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ,  
131 United Church Funds, or of any Conference or Association, shall be construed as making it a  
132 Local Cehurch of the United Church of Christ.

133  
134 17 The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given  
135 responsibility for that Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ  
136 has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the wellbeing and needs and aspirations of its  
137 Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the  
138 Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.

139  
140 18 The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing  
141 in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right  
142 of each Local Church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as  
143 giving to the General Synod, or to any Conference or Association now, or at any future time, the  
144 power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any Local Church in the management of its own  
145 affairs, which affairs include, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of  
146 organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its  
147 own constitution and bylaws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit  
148 members in its own way and to provide for their discipline or dismissal; to call or dismiss its  
149 pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire, own, manage and dispose of  
150 property and funds; to control its own benevolences; and to withdraw by its own decision from  
151 the United Church of Christ at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or  
152 personal property owned by it.

153  
154 19 Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General Synod, a Conference or an  
155 Association, should be held in the highest regard by every Local Church.

156  
157 **ARTICLE VI. THE MINISTRY**

158 20 The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole Church and every member to  
159 participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and  
160 society. The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing  
161 faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service.

162  
163 21 The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms  
164 of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required.  
165 Recognizing God's call, the ecclesiastical authorization is granted by an Association through the  
166 rite of ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either Ordained Ministerial  
167 Standing or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and other acts of authorization.

168  
169 22 Ordination is the rite whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in  
170 cooperation with the person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and  
171 authorizes that member whom God has called to ordained ministry, and sets that person apart by  
172 prayer and the laying on of hands. By this rite Ordained Ministerial Standing and status  
173 recognition as an Ordained Ministerial Partner is conferred and authorization given to perform the  
174 duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

175  
176 23 An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been  
177 called by God and ordained to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites  
178 of the Church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.

179  
180 24 Ordained Ministerial Standing is an ongoing covenant of mutual accountability, as  
181 described ~~in Paragraph 25~~ herein, which recognizes and continues the authorization of that person  
182 to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry. Ordained Ministerial  
183 Standing in the United Church of Christ is granted by and held in an Association in cooperation  
184 with a Local Cehurch and confers voting membership in the Association.

185  
186 25 The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner ~~(see Article VII)~~ to a Local  
187 Church establishes a covenantal relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained  
188 Ministerial Partner, the Local Church, and the United Church of Christ as represented by an  
189 Association. The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to other forms of  
190 ministry recognized by an Association of the United Church of Christ establishes a covenantal  
191 relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the calling body, the  
192 United Church of Christ as represented by an Association and the Local Church where the  
193 Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner is a member.

194  
195 26 Commissioning is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an  
196 Association, in cooperation with a person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ,  
197 recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to a specific church-related ministry  
198 which is recognized by that Association, but not requiring ordination or licensing. By this act the  
199 ~~status-standing~~ of Commissioned Minister is conferred and authorization granted to perform  
200 duties necessary to and for the specific ministry, and voting membership in that Association is  
201 granted.  
202

203 27 A Commissioned Minister in the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been  
204 called by God and commissioned for a specific church-related ministry.  
205

206 28 Licensing is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in  
207 cooperation with a person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and  
208 authorizes that member whom God has called to perform specified duties in a designated Local  
209 Church or within that Association, mainly preaching and conducting services of worship, for a  
210 designated time within a covenant of mutual accountability that includes appropriate supervision  
211 and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed. Voting membership in that  
212 Association is granted.  
213

214 29 A Licensed Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members whom God has  
215 called and who has been recognized and authorized by an Association to perform specified duties  
216 in a designated Local Church or within that Association, mainly preaching and conducting  
217 services of worship, for a designated time within a covenant of mutual accountability that  
218 includes appropriate supervision and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed.  
219

220 30 A Member in Discernment is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by  
221 God and who is, in covenant with that member's Local Church and Association, engaging in a  
222 time of discernment of that call and preparation for [the potential of](#) authorized ministry in  
223 response to that call.  
224

225 **ARTICLE VII. RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION OF THE ORDAINED**  
226 **MINISTRIES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN**  
227 **CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

228 31 The United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognize the  
229 ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that church  
230 and these ministries to be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ.  
231

232 32 The ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of  
233 Christ) are reconciled. An [o](#)Ordained [m](#)Minister with ordained ministerial standing in one church  
234 may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an ordained minister to  
235 the other.  
236

237 33 The designations “Ordained Ministerial Partner” and “[O](#)rdained [M](#)inisterial [P](#)artner  
238 [S](#)tanding” manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition and reconciliation of  
239 the ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of  
240 Christ).  
241

242 34 Each member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds ordained ministerial  
243 standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the  
244 United Church of Christ.  
245

246 35 Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds [O](#)rdained [M](#)inisterial [S](#)tanding in  
247 the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples  
248 of Christ).  
249

250 36 Ordained [M](#)inisterial [P](#)artner [S](#)tanding is authorization granted to an [o](#)Ordained  
251 [m](#)Minister with ordained ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of  
252 Christ) who has a call to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in  
253 the United Church of Christ. This authorization assumes knowledge of, and appreciation for, the

254 history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ. Ordained ~~M~~inisterial ~~P~~artner  
255 ~~S~~tanding provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the  
256 prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

257  
258 **[New ARTICLE]. RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION OF THE ORDAINED**  
259 **MINISTRIES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE UNITED CHURCH**  
260 **OF CANADA**

261 [New ¶] The United Church of Christ and The United Church of Canada recognize the ordained  
262 ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that church and these  
263 ministries to be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ.

264  
265 [New ¶] The ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and The United Church of  
266 Canada are reconciled. An ordained minister with ordained ministerial standing in one church  
267 may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an ordained minister to  
268 the other.

269  
270 [New ¶] The designations “Ordained Ministerial Partner” and “Ordained Ministerial Partner  
271 Standing” manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition and reconciliation of  
272 the ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and The United Church of Canada.

273  
274 [New ¶] Each member of The United Church of Canada who holds ordained ministerial standing  
275 in The United Church of Canada is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the United Church of  
276 Christ.

277  
278 [New ¶] Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained Ministerial Standing  
279 in the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of The United Church of  
280 Canada.

281  
282 [New ¶] Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is authorization granted to an ordained minister  
283 with ordained ministerial standing in The United Church of Canada who has a call to perform the  
284 duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ. This  
285 authorization assumes knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the  
286 United Church of Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical  
287 authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the  
288 United Church of Christ.

289  
290  
291 **ARTICLE VIII. ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFERENCES**

292 37 Associations and Conferences are bodies organized on a territorial basis to perform functions  
293 in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of  
294 Christ.

295  
296 **Associations**

297 38 An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is  
298 composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding ~~S~~tanding  
299 or ~~O~~rdained ~~M~~inisterial ~~P~~artner ~~S~~tanding therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed  
300 Ministers in that Association.

301  
302 ~~39 Subsequent to the initial organization of Associations in the United Church of Christ, t~~The  
303 boundaries of any new Association, or any adjustment of boundaries between Associations, shall  
304 be determined by the Associations concerned with the approval of the Conference or Conferences

305 involved. The standing of an Association as a body of the United Church of Christ is determined  
306 by the Conference in which it is located.

307  
308 40 An Association is that body which determines, confers, and certifies to the standing of the  
309 Local Churches of the United Church of Christ within its area.

310  
311 41 An Association is that body which grants authorization that is required for various forms of  
312 ministry in and on behalf of the Church. Such authorization is granted through the rite of  
313 ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either Ordained Ministerial Standing  
314 or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and other acts of authorization. Such authorization  
315 may be terminated by the Association.

316  
317 42 An Association may retain or secure its own charter, and adopt its own constitution, bylaws  
318 and other rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this  
319 Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

320  
321 43 An Association is related to the General Synod through its Conference.

322  
323 44 When an Association meets, its voting membership includes the lay delegates selected by and  
324 representing the Local Churches of that Association, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or  
325 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed  
326 Ministers of that Association, and such additional members as may be specified by the  
327 Association in its constitution or bylaws.-

328  
329 45 Meetings of the Association are held annually and at such other times as may be necessary for  
330 the discharge of its responsibilities.

331  
332 **Conferences**

333 46 A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local  
334 Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or Ordained  
335 Ministerial Partner Standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an  
336 Association, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations.

337  
338 ~~47 Subsequent to the initial organization of Conferences in the United Church of Christ, t~~The  
339 boundaries of any new Conference, or any adjustment of boundaries between Conferences, shall  
340 be determined by the Conferences concerned with the approval of the General Synod. The  
341 standing of a Conference as a body of the United Church of Christ is determined by the General  
342 Synod.

343  
344 48 A Conference may retain or secure its own charter, and adopt its own constitution, bylaws and  
345 other rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this Constitution  
346 and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

347  
348 49 A Conference is related to the General Synod as described in the Bylaws of the United Church  
349 of Christ.

350  
351 50 When a Conference meets, its voting membership includes lay delegates selected by and  
352 representing the Local Churches of that Conference, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or  
353 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when  
354 acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations,  
355 and such additional members as may be specified by the Conference.

356  
357 51 Meetings of the Conference are held annually and at such other times as may be necessary for  
358 the discharge of its responsibilities.  
359  
360 **Conferences Acting as Associations**  
361 52 A Conference may exercise the functions of an Association when they are delegated to it by an  
362 Association or where no Association exists.  
363  
364 **ARTICLE IX. THE GENERAL SYNOD**  
365 53 The General Synod is the gathering of a faith community representative of the wider church to  
366 listen for and discern the call of God to the United Church of Christ. The General Synod  
367 deliberates, discerns, and identifies the mission of the wider church of the United Church of  
368 Christ in God’s world and receives and offers suggestions, invitations, challenges, and assistance  
369 in covenant with Local Churches, Conferences, and other settings as they engage in mission  
370 together. The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ and is  
371 composed of voting delegates, as described in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ. A  
372 quorum for the conduct of business shall consist of one-third of the voting delegates, provided  
373 that in this number at least two-thirds of the Conferences are represented by at least one delegate  
374 each. There shall also be associate delegates and ecumenical delegates, without vote, as  
375 determined by the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ or action of the General Synod.  
376  
377 **Powers and Responsibilities of the General Synod**  
378 54 The General Synod has the following powers and responsibilities, provided, however, that no  
379 power vested in the General Synod shall invade the autonomy of Conferences, Associations, and  
380 Local Churches, or impair their right to acquire, own, manage, and dispose of property and funds:  
381  
382 a) To carry on, directly and through the United Church of Christ Board, as well as through the  
383 Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries and other bodies, the work of the United  
384 Church of Christ, and to provide for the financial support of this work;  
385  
386 b) To create such bodies, temporary or permanent, incorporated or unincorporated, suitable for  
387 the discharge of its responsibilities;  
388  
389 c) To organize as required for the transaction of business;  
390  
391 d) To call and elect Officers of the United Church of Christ who shall be chosen from the  
392 membership of the United Church of Christ and who shall serve as Officers of the General Synod;  
393  
394 e) To elect all the at-large members of the United Church of Christ Board, which shall act as the  
395 General Synod ad interim and carry out the United Church of Christ Board’s other responsibilities  
396 as described in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;  
397  
398 f) To establish and maintain national headquarters for the United Church of Christ;  
399  
400 g) To establish a Treasury, which shall receive funds contributed to the General Synod for the  
401 support of the United Church of Christ and for its Covenanted Ministries;  
402  
403 h) To determine the relationships of the United Church of Christ with ecumenical organizations,  
404 world confessional bodies, interfaith and other interdenominational agencies;  
405



- 406 i) To encourage conversations with other communions and when appropriate to authorize and  
407 guide negotiations with them, looking toward formal union;  
408  
409 j) To amend this Constitution as hereinafter provided; and  
410  
411 k) To adopt Bylaws for the United Church of Christ and, as hereinafter provided, to amend them.  
412

### 413 **Meetings of the General Synod**

414 55 The General Synod shall hold meetings at regular intervals as provided in the Bylaws of the  
415 United Church of Christ. Special meetings may be called in the manner provided in those Bylaws.  
416

### 417 **Correlation**

418 56 a) The General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board shall consider the work of all  
419 Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries. It shall also correlate their work, publicity and  
420 promotion, preventing duplication and effecting economies of administration, so as to secure  
421 maximum effectiveness and efficiency through careful stewardship of personnel and financial  
422 resources.  
423

424 b) The General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board and each of the Board of Directors  
425 of all Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries shall assure that due protection shall be  
426 given to all assets, trust funds, including pension funds so that the legacy/historic restrictions on  
427 the use of restricted funds and the intended use restrictions of the unrestricted funds of each of the  
428 historic ministries are monitored, accounted for, maintained and reported to the United Church of  
429 Christ Board to assure that the use of all such assets and funds will be allocated and used based  
430 on donor intent, whenever that can be determined.  
431

## 432 **ARTICLE XI. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD**

433 57 The United Church of Christ Board is the successor to and agent for the Executive Council  
434 and the Office of General Ministries (including its predecessor offices and bodies: President,  
435 Secretary, and Director of Finance and Treasurer of the United Church of Christ; Commission on  
436 Development; Stewardship Council; Office of Communication; and ministries of research  
437 formerly conducted by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries), and as such continues  
438 the work, mandates and legacies of these predecessor bodies and offices. The members of the  
439 United Church of Christ Board shall serve as the directors of each of the Covenanted Ministries.  
440 The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible for strategic planning and policymaking.  
441 The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible, with the General Minister and President,  
442 for the ecumenical and interfaith relationships of the United Church of Christ in the national  
443 setting. In all its work, the United Church of Christ Board shall be guided by the policies  
444 established by the General Synod. The United Church of Christ Board shall be incorporated in  
445 order to carry out its mandates and responsibilities, including without limitation, performing all  
446 legal functions of the General Synod, as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the United  
447 Church of Christ. The members of the United Church of Christ Board shall be elected ~~and or~~  
448 ~~serve ex officio~~ appointed and shall serve as provided in the Bylaws of the United Church of  
449 Christ.  
450

## 451 **ARTICLE XII. COVENANTED MINISTRIES**

452 58 The United Church of Christ recognizes the call to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in  
453 word and deed through the work of Local Churches; Associations; Conferences; national  
454 expressions; and global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships. The United Church of Christ is  
455 and seeks to be an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural church, accessible to all, engaging in

456 ministries of justice, witness, healing, teaching, and preaching. There are three Covenanted  
457 Ministries ~~as defined and set forth in the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of~~  
458 ~~Christ~~: Local Church Ministries, Wider Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries. A  
459 Covenanted Ministry may retain or secure its own charter and adopt its own bylaws and other  
460 rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this Constitution and  
461 the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ and in accordance with advice and counsel given from  
462 time to time by the General Synod.

463  
464 **Powers and Responsibilities of Covenanted Ministries**

465 59 Each Covenanted Ministry shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

466  
467 a) To carry out the Covenanted Ministry's programmatic work, including the historical mandates  
468 of its predecessor bodies, as set forth in its Charter and Bylaws, or referred from the General  
469 Synod, or as set forth in the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;

470  
471 b) To retain responsibility for all legacies and other property received, maintained or held by it,  
472 and to approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or other property;

473  
474 c) To work in covenantal relationship with the General Synod, the United Church of Christ  
475 Board, and other Ministries to fulfill its mandates;

476  
477 ~~d) To participate through its Executive Minister in the Collegium of Officers;~~

478  
479 e) To participate in the Mission Planning Council;

480  
481 ~~f) To nominate and elect its Executive Minister as set forth in paragraph 61b;~~

482  
483 g) To organize itself as it deems necessary to carry out its programmatic work, including the  
484 fulfillment of historical mandates, which shall be carried out in accordance with this Constitution  
485 and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, through the United Church of Christ Board;

486  
487 h) To determine its budget to be submitted to the United Church of Christ Board in accordance  
488 with the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;

489  
490 i) To adopt its own charter, bylaws, and rules of procedure which it deems essential to its own  
491 welfare, not inconsistent with the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;

492  
493 j) To hold in highest regard actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General  
494 Synod, the United Church of Christ Board, another Covenanted Ministry, a Conference, an  
495 Association, or a Local Church.

496  
497 60 Each Covenanted Ministry shall be incorporated in order to fulfill its mandates; fulfill all  
498 normal, lawful purposes; and receive, hold, manage, and distribute real and personal property,  
499 endowments, and restricted funds in compliance with the terms, conditions, and requirements of  
500 said funds. The voting membership of each Covenanted Ministry shall be the members of that  
501 corporation's Board of Directors.

502  
503 61 The corporation documents of Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, and  
504 Wider Church Ministries shall reflect their covenantal relationship with the General Synod and  
505 shall provide:

506

- 507 a) that the members of the United Church of Christ Board comprise the Board of Directors of the  
508 Covenanted Ministry;  
509  
510 ~~b) that the Covenanted Ministry shall vest the General Synod with the power to call by election~~  
511 ~~the Executive Minister of the Covenanted Ministry;~~  
512  
513 c) that any modification of the provisions or powers in a ~~or b~~ above shall be authorized  
514 only after consultation with the ~~Collegium of~~ Officers and the United Church of Christ Board and  
515 after presentation to the General Synod, and shall require an affirmative vote of not  
516 less than two-thirds of all voting members of the Covenanted Ministry;  
517  
518 d) that the Covenanted Ministry must approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or  
519 other property;  
520  
521 e) that dissolution of the Covenanted Ministry shall occur only with an affirmative vote of not  
522 less than two-thirds of all members of the Covenanted Ministry, after advice and consultation  
523 with the General Synod, and only with provision for the transfer of the ownership, management,  
524 and control of its assets and funds to a successor corporation that is legally obligated and  
525 empowered to own and carry out the obligations, terms, conditions, and requirements of said  
526 assets and funds, as the Board of Directors shall determine. In keeping with the covenantal basis  
527 of the United Church of Christ, such successor corporation shall be related to the United Church  
528 of Christ whenever legally permissible and appropriate, all as determined by the Board of  
529 Directors of the Covenanted Ministry.

530  
531 62 The General Synod, in covenant with a Covenanted Ministry, may, from time to time, delegate  
532 or assign to a Covenanted Ministry such responsibilities as fall within that Covenanted Ministry's  
533 purpose and mission as set forth in the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of  
534 Christ and in that Covenanted Ministry's corporate documents.  
535

536 63 Each Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ shall report its finances annually to  
537 the United Church of Christ Board and to each regular meeting of the General Synod. Each  
538 Covenanted Ministry shall submit to the United Church of Christ Board, acting as the Budget  
539 Committee of the General Synod, a detailed request for support of its work through funds  
540 allocated from the biennial income goal to be recommended to the General Synod.  
541

#### 542 **Incorporation of Existing and Prior Agencies**

543 64 The Covenanted Ministries ~~listed in paragraph 58 above~~, acting as successors to and agents for  
544 all predecessor bodies related to the United Church of Christ, continue the work, mandates, and  
545 legacies previously carried on by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,  
546 the Board of International Missions, the Commission on World Service, the Congregational  
547 Christian Service Committee, the United Church Board for World Ministries, Board of National  
548 Missions, Board of Christian Education and Publication, Board of Business Management, Board  
549 of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the U. S., the American Missionary Association,  
550 Congregational Church Building Society, Congregational Education Society, Congregational  
551 Home Missionary Society, Congregational Publishing Society, The Congregational Sunday  
552 School Extension Society, the Congregational Women's Home Missionary Federation, the United  
553 Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society,  
554 Commission for Racial Justice, Office for Church Life and Leadership, Office for Church in  
555 Society, Stewardship Council, and Office of Communication.  
556

#### 557 **Local Church Ministries**

558 65 The purpose and mission of Local Church Ministries, to be carried out in accordance with the  
559 Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, shall be to encourage and support the Local Churches of  
560 the United Church of Christ in the fulfillment of God’s mission. Specifically, Local Church  
561 Ministries continues the work of, and acts as agent for, the following predecessor bodies: the  
562 Office for Church Life and Leadership, the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and  
563 Society, the Stewardship Council, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and its  
564 predecessor bodies: The Board of National Missions, Board of Christian Education and  
565 Publication, Board of Business Management, Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church  
566 in the U.S., the American Missionary Association, Congregational Church Building Society,  
567 Congregational Education Society, Congregational Home Mission Society, Congregational  
568 Publishing Society, The Congregational Sunday School Extension Society, the Congregational  
569 Women’s Home Missionary Federation.  
570

571 **Justice and Witness Ministries**

572 66 The purpose and mission of Justice and Witness Ministries, to be carried out in accordance  
573 with the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, shall be to enable and encourage Local  
574 Churches, Associations, Conferences, and the national expressions of the United Church of Christ  
575 to engage in God’s mission globally by direct action for the integrity of creation, justice, and  
576 peace. Justice and Witness Ministries continues the work of, and acts as agent for, the following  
577 predecessor bodies: the Office for Church in Society, the Commission for Racial Justice, the  
578 Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society. It also continues the following:  
579 ministries of public policy advocacy in the area of communications formerly conducted by the  
580 Office of Communication, ministries of prophetic service and action formerly conducted by the  
581 Division of the American Missionary Association of the United Church Board for Homeland  
582 Ministries, ministries of global advocacy in the U.S.A. formerly conducted by the United Church  
583 Board for World Ministries.  
584

585 **Wider Church Ministries**

586 67 The purpose and mission of Wider Church Ministries, to be carried out in accordance with the  
587 Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, shall be to encourage and support Local Churches,  
588 Associations, Conferences, and the national expressions of the United Church of Christ to  
589 participate in the global, multiracial, multicultural church, and to support United Church of Christ  
590 ministries around the world and the nation. Wider Church Ministries continues the work of, and  
591 acts as agent for, the following predecessor bodies: the United Church Board for World  
592 Ministries, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Board of  
593 International Missions, the Commission on World Service, and the Congregational Christian  
594 Service Committee. It also continues the following: ministries of volunteer services formerly  
595 conducted by the Division of the American Missionary Association of the United Church Board  
596 for Homeland Ministries; ministries of the Health and Welfare Coordinating Council formerly  
597 related to the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.  
598

599 **ARTICLE XII. AFFILIATED AND ASSOCIATED MINISTRIES**

600 68 An Affiliated Ministry of the United Church of Christ is a nonprofit corporation which  
601 provides services to or for the United Church of Christ, and whose Board of Trustees is elected by  
602 its corporate membership, and which was recognized previously as an Instrumentality by the  
603 General Synod.  
604

605 69 An Associated Ministry of the United Church of Christ Board of the General Synod of the  
606 United Church of Christ is a nonprofit corporation which provides services to or for the United  
607 Church of Christ, and whose corporate membership is nominated and elected by the United

608 Church of Christ Board, and which was recognized previously as an Instrumentality by the  
609 General Synod.

610

### 611 **Pension and Relief Activities**

612 70 The pension activities of the United Church of Christ are administered by a nonprofit  
613 membership corporation(s) known as The Pension Boards—United  
614 Church of Christ and designated as an Affiliated Ministry of the United Church of  
615 Christ. The control of each such corporation lies in its members through a Board of Trustees  
616 chosen by the members from a list of persons whose names have been presented to and approved  
617 by the General Synod or by the United Church of Christ Board in accordance with the Bylaws.  
618 Persons for this list may be proposed by any member of the corporation(s) or by the Trustees  
619 thereof. Such corporation(s) shall report its program and finance annually to its members and to  
620 the United Church of Christ Board and to each regular meeting of the General Synod. The  
621 General Synod shall from time to time make examination of the practices and developments of  
622 such corporation(s).

623

624 71 The ministerial relief activities of the United Church of Christ, by whatever corporate bodies  
625 administered, are coordinated with the pension activities of the Church through corporation(s)  
626 above described. The pension and the relief corporation(s) shall submit to the United Church of  
627 Christ Board, acting as the Budget Committee of the General Synod, a request for allocation of  
628 sufficient funds, from the budget to be approved by the United Church of Christ Board, for the  
629 payment of ministerial relief benefits and such other benefits as the United Church of Christ  
630 Board may provide. Payment of such benefits shall be limited to the funds received for that  
631 purpose.

632

### 633 **United Church Funds**

634 72 The United Church Funds, Inc., is designated as an Associated Ministry of the United Church  
635 of Christ Board of the United Church of Christ to receive gifts from individuals and  
636 organizations, to hold such funds and property as may be entrusted or conveyed to it by the  
637 General Synod and other organizations, and administer, invest, and reinvest the same and other  
638 funds in trust or otherwise, as set forth in the Bylaws.

639

640 73 The United Church Funds shall report its program and finances annually to the United Church  
641 of Christ Board and to each regular meeting of the General Synod, and shall submit to the United  
642 Church of Christ Board, acting as the Budget Committee of the General Synod, a detailed request  
643 for support of its work through funds allocated from the ~~biennial~~-income goal to be recommended  
644 to the General Synod.

645

## 646 **ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS**

### 647 **The Constitution**

648 74 Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by a Conference, the General Synod or the  
649 United Church of Christ Board. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the  
650 General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ at least three months prior to a  
651 meeting of the General Synod to which they are to be presented. At least two months prior to the  
652 meeting of the General Synod, the General Minister and President shall transmit such proposed  
653 amendments to the delegates, to the Conferences and to the Local Churches. Adoption of an  
654 amendment to the Constitution shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and  
655 voting in the General Synod and, before the next regular meeting of the General Synod, an  
656 affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Conferences. If so approved the General Synod, in session,  
657 or the United Church of Christ Board, shall declare the amendment adopted and in force.

658

659 **The Bylaws**

660 75 Amendments to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ may be proposed by an  
661 Association, a Conference, the General Synod, or the United Church of Christ Board. Such  
662 proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the General Minister and President of the  
663 United Church of Christ at least three months prior to the meeting of the General Synod to which  
664 they are to be presented. At least two months prior to the meeting of the General Synod, the  
665 General Minister and President shall transmit such proposed amendments to the delegates, to the  
666 Conferences and to the Local Churches. Any Bylaw that is contingent upon a  
667 Constitutional provision shall not be effective until after the Constitutional provision is ratified  
668 and declared in force. Adoption of an amendment to the Bylaws shall require a two-thirds  
669 affirmative vote of those present and voting in the General Synod, and shall be effective upon  
670 adoption unless otherwise set forth in the vote.

671

672 †The General Synod declared the original Constitution of the United Church of Christ in force June, 1961, upon  
673 ratification of 2/3 of the Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and by 2/3 of the Congregational Christian  
674 churches voting.

675

676

677 In effect July 3, 2017 (tracked changes awaiting ratification by the Conferences pursuant to United Church of Christ Constitution para.  
678 75)