

# UCC ROOTS

## *Remembering our History*

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### **He shared our past and shaped our future**

In 1962, the formation of the United Church of Christ was scarcely five years old when it gave birth to another union. This time two midwestern theological schools rooted in the Evangelical and Reformed tradition and in the educational efforts of the Congregational Christians established the “United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities” in New Brighton, Minnesota. It was a union of “Mission House Seminary,” an Evangelical and Reformed school in Plymouth/Sheboygan, Wisconsin and “Yankton School of Theology,” a Congregational Christian school in Yankton, South Dakota. The dean of the new school was Louis Herman Gunnemann, who served from 1962 to 1974.

Gunnemann (1910-1989) had attended Mission House and served as a pastor in Iowa and Indiana. In the 1950s he joined the Mission House faculty, later becoming its dean.



Building on his studies at Princeton Theological Seminary and his active involvement in the ecumenical movement, Gunnemann helped chronicle and define the evolving UCC. His book, *The Shaping of the United Church of Christ* (1977) is still basic reading.

As chair of the UCC Commission on Worship, Gunnemann nurtured innovative new UCC worship resources—*Services of the Church*—booklets in a loose-leaf binder. Members of the Commission were impressed by his capacity to balance widely divergent views of liturgical and free church worship. Some years later he served on the worship commission of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), focusing on the importance of worship liturgies in the ecumenical movement. He was a member of the United Board for Homeland Ministries and was assistant moderator of the UCC General Synod in 1975.

In the 1980s Gunnemann became one of two co-editors of a new journal—*PRISM: A Theological Forum for the United Church of Christ* that was sponsored by UCC seminaries to stimulate theological conversation in the church.

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