

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  
12 Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its  
13 creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church  
14 expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It  
15 affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of  
16 worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance  
17 with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it  
18 recognizes two 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 Church has responsibilities and rights in relation to  
39 the others, to the end that the whole Church 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 Church is called to honor  
42 and respect the work and ministry of each other part. Each expression of the Church 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  
60 Minister 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  
63 coordinate research, long-range planning, program evaluation, and report on the ongoing  
64 programs of the United Church of Christ. The election of Officers of the United Church of Christ  
65 shall reflect the commitment of the United Church of Christ to be an inclusive church. ~~meeting as~~  
66 ~~peers, the Collegium of Officers is responsible for providing leadership for the mission~~  
67 ~~programming of the United Church of Christ and for the implementation of General Synod~~  
68 ~~actions. The General Minister and President is the presiding officer of the Collegium. The~~  
69 ~~Collegium shall attend to the quality of relationships among the United Church of Christ Board~~  
70 ~~and the Covenanted Ministries and foster a climate of respect, collaboration, and collegiality~~  
71 ~~among various expressions of the church. The Collegium provides a setting for mutual~~  
72 ~~accountability, for mutual reporting, and for assessing the ongoing programs of the United~~  
73 ~~Church of Christ. It shall reflect the commitment of the United Church of Christ to be an~~  
74 ~~inclusive church.~~

75  
76 **ARTICLE V. LOCAL CHURCHES**

77 9 The basic unit of the life and organization of the United Church of Christ is the Local Church.

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

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

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

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

95  
96 14 The following Local Churches compose the United Church of Christ:

97  
98 a) The Local Churches of the Evangelical and Reformed Church;

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

102  
103 c) Any Congregational Christian Local Church which, although it has not voted to become a part  
104 of the United Church of Christ, or to approve this Constitution, votes to join the United Church of  
105 Christ after this Constitution is declared in force;  
106  
107 d) Any Local Church which, after this Constitution is declared in force, is accepted, on any basis  
108 other than that described in paragraph 16, into an Association, or Conference, of the United  
109 Church of Christ;  
110  
111 e) The Local Churches of any denomination which, after this Constitution is declared in force,  
112 unites with the United Church of Christ; and  
113  
114 f) Any Local Church in a category not otherwise defined in this article, received upon its request,  
115 subject to such provisions as in consultation with the Conference may be specified by the  
116 Association within whose bounds it is located, and which are not inconsistent with this  
117 Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.  
118  
119 15 Local Churches of the United Church of Christ are represented in the General Synod by the  
120 delegates from the Conferences to which they belong.  
121  
122 16 An Association or a Conference of the United Church of Christ may, under such provisions as  
123 it deems wise, admit, or continue to fellowship with, any Congregational Christian ~~L~~Local  
124 ~~c~~Church which is not part of the United Church of Christ. The names and statistics of such  
125 churches shall be kept separately; their members shall not be counted in determining the number  
126 of delegates which the Conference is entitled to send to the General Synod or hold elective office  
127 in that body, except that no ~~O~~rdained ~~M~~minister who has full ~~S~~tanding or ~~O~~rdained  
128 ~~M~~ministerial ~~P~~artner ~~S~~tanding in the United Church of Christ shall be ineligible to be a  
129 delegate to the General Synod or to hold elective office in that body. No direct or indirect  
130 participation by any such ~~L~~Local ~~c~~Church in, or support of, the work of the United Church of  
131 Christ, or of any of its Covenanted Ministries, The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ,  
132 United Church Funds, or of any Conference or Association, shall be construed as making it a  
133 Local Ce church of the United Church of Christ.  
134  
135 17 The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given  
136 responsibility for that Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ  
137 has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the wellbeing and needs and aspirations of its  
138 Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the  
139 Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.  
140  
141 18 The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing  
142 in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right  
143 of each Local Church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as  
144 giving to the General Synod, or to any Conference or Association now, or at any future time, the  
145 power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any Local Church in the management of its own  
146 affairs, which affairs include, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of  
147 organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its  
148 own constitution and bylaws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit  
149 members in its own way and to provide for their discipline or dismissal; to call or dismiss its  
150 pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire, own, manage and dispose of  
151 property and funds; to control its own benevolences; and to withdraw by its own decision from

152 the United Church of Christ at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or  
153 personal property owned by it.

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

157  
158 **ARTICLE VI. THE MINISTRY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

203  
204 27 A Commissioned Minister in the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been  
205 called by God and commissioned for a specific church-related ministry.  
206

207 28 Licensing is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in  
208 cooperation with a person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and  
209 authorizes that member whom God has called to perform specified duties in a designated Local  
210 Church or within that Association, mainly preaching and conducting services of worship, for a  
211 designated time within a covenant of mutual accountability that includes appropriate supervision  
212 and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed. Voting membership in that  
213 Association is granted.  
214

215 29 A Licensed Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members whom God has  
216 called and who has been recognized and authorized by an Association to perform specified duties  
217 in a designated Local Church or within that Association, mainly preaching and conducting  
218 services of worship, for a designated time within a covenant of mutual accountability that  
219 includes appropriate supervision and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed.  
220

221 30 A Member in Discernment is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by  
222 God and who is, in covenant with that member’s Local Church and Association, engaging in a  
223 time of discernment of that call and preparation for [the potential of](#) authorized ministry in  
224 response to that call.  
225

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

229 31 The United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognize the  
230 ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that church  
231 and these ministries to be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ.  
232

233 32 The ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of  
234 Christ) are reconciled. An [o](#)Ordained [m](#)Minister with ordained ministerial standing in one church  
235 may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an ordained minister to  
236 the other.  
237

238 33 The designations “Ordained Ministerial Partner” and “[O](#)rdained [M](#)inisterial [P](#)artner  
239 [S](#)tanding” manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition and reconciliation of  
240 the ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of  
241 Christ).  
242

243 34 Each member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds ordained ministerial  
244 standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the  
245 United Church of Christ.  
246

247 35 Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds [O](#)rdained [M](#)inisterial [S](#)tanding in  
248 the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples  
249 of Christ).  
250

251 36 Ordained [M](#)inisterial [P](#)artner [S](#)tanding is authorization granted to an [o](#)Ordained  
252 [m](#)Minister with ordained ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of



253 Christ) who has a call to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in  
254 the United Church of Christ. This authorization assumes knowledge of, and appreciation for, the  
255 history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner  
256 Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the  
257 prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.  
258  
259  
260

## 261 **ARTICLE VIII. ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFERENCES**

262 37 Associations and Conferences are bodies organized on a territorial basis to perform functions  
263 in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of  
264 Christ.  
265

### 266 **Associations**

267 38 An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is  
268 composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing  
269 or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed  
270 Ministers in that Association.  
271

272 39 ~~Subsequent to the initial organization of Associations in the United Church of Christ, t~~The  
273 boundaries of any new Association, or any adjustment of boundaries between Associations, shall  
274 be determined by the Associations concerned with the approval of the Conference or Conferences  
275 involved. The standing of an Association as a body of the United Church of Christ is determined  
276 by the Conference in which it is located.  
277

278 40 An Association is that body which determines, confers, and certifies to the standing of the  
279 Local Churches of the United Church of Christ within its area.  
280

281 41 An Association is that body which grants authorization that is required for various forms of  
282 ministry in and on behalf of the Church. Such authorization is granted through the rite of  
283 ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either Ordained Ministerial Standing  
284 or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and other acts of authorization. Such authorization  
285 may be terminated by the Association.  
286

287 42 An Association may retain or secure its own charter, and adopt its own constitution, bylaws  
288 and other rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this  
289 Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.  
290

291 43 An Association is related to the General Synod through its Conference.  
292

293 44 When an Association meets, its voting membership includes the lay delegates selected by and  
294 representing the Local Churches of that Association, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or  
295 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed  
296 Ministers of that Association, and such additional members as may be specified by the  
297 Association in its constitution or bylaws.-  
298

299 45 Meetings of the Association are held annually and at such other times as may be necessary for  
300 the discharge of its responsibilities.  
301

### 302 **Conferences**

303 46 A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local  
304 Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding Sstanding or Ordained  
305 Ministerial Partner Sstanding in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an  
306 Association, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations.

307  
308 ~~47 Subsequent to the initial organization of Conferences in the United Church of Christ, t~~The  
309 boundaries of any new Conference, or any adjustment of boundaries between Conferences, shall  
310 be determined by the Conferences concerned with the approval of the General Synod. The  
311 standing of a Conference as a body of the United Church of Christ is determined by the General  
312 Synod.

313  
314 48 A Conference may retain or secure its own charter, and adopt its own constitution, bylaws and  
315 other rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this Constitution  
316 and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

317  
318 49 A Conference is related to the General Synod as described in the Bylaws of the United Church  
319 of Christ.

320  
321 50 When a Conference meets, its voting membership includes lay delegates selected by and  
322 representing the Local Churches of that Conference, all Ordained Ministers holding Sstanding or  
323 Ordained Ministerial Partner Sstanding in its Associations or in the Conference itself when  
324 acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations,  
325 and such additional members as may be specified by the Conference.

326  
327 51 Meetings of the Conference are held annually and at such other times as may be necessary for  
328 the discharge of its responsibilities.

329  
330 **Conferences Acting as Associations**

331 52 A Conference may exercise the functions of an Association when they are delegated to it by an  
332 Association or where no Association exists.

333  
334 **ARTICLE IX. THE GENERAL SYNOD**

335 53 The General Synod is the gathering of a faith community representative of the wider church to  
336 listen for and discern the call of God to the United Church of Christ. The General Synod  
337 deliberates, discerns, and identifies the mission of the wider church of the United Church of  
338 Christ in God's world and receives and offers suggestions, invitations, challenges, and assistance  
339 in covenant with Local Churches, Conferences, and other settings as they engage in mission  
340 together. The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ and is  
341 composed of voting delegates, as described in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ. A  
342 quorum for the conduct of business shall consist of one-third of the voting delegates, provided  
343 that in this number at least two-thirds of the Conferences are represented by at least one delegate  
344 each. There shall also be associate delegates and ecumenical delegates, without vote, as  
345 determined by the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ or action of the General Synod.

346  
347 **Powers and Responsibilities of the General Synod**

348 54 The General Synod has the following powers and responsibilities, provided, however, that no  
349 power vested in the General Synod shall invade the autonomy of Conferences, Associations, and  
350 Local Churches, or impair their right to acquire, own, manage, and dispose of property and funds:

351

- 352 a) To carry on, directly and through the United Church of Christ Board, as well as through the  
 353 Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries and other bodies, the work of the United  
 354 Church of Christ, and to provide for the financial support of this work;  
 355  
 356 b) To create such bodies, temporary or permanent, incorporated or unincorporated, suitable for  
 357 the discharge of its responsibilities;  
 358  
 359 c) To organize as required for the transaction of business;  
 360  
 361 d) To call and elect Officers of the United Church of Christ who shall be chosen from the  
 362 membership of the United Church of Christ and who shall serve as Officers of the General Synod;  
 363  
 364 e) To elect all [the at-large](#) members of the United Church of Christ Board, which shall act as the  
 365 General Synod ad interim and carry out the United Church of Christ Board's other responsibilities  
 366 as described in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;  
 367  
 368 f) To establish and maintain national headquarters for the United Church of Christ;  
 369  
 370 g) To establish a Treasury, which shall receive funds contributed to the General Synod for the  
 371 support of the United Church of Christ and for its Covenanted Ministries;  
 372  
 373 h) To determine the relationships of the United Church of Christ with ecumenical organizations,  
 374 world confessional bodies, interfaith and other interdenominational agencies;  
 375  
 376 i) To encourage conversations with other communions and when appropriate to authorize and  
 377 guide negotiations with them, looking toward formal union;  
 378  
 379 j) To amend this Constitution as hereinafter provided; and  
 380  
 381 k) To adopt Bylaws for the United Church of Christ and, as hereinafter provided, to amend them.

382  
 383 **Meetings of the General Synod**

384 55 The General Synod shall hold meetings at regular intervals as provided in the Bylaws of the  
 385 United Church of Christ. Special meetings may be called in the manner provided in those Bylaws.  
 386

387 **Correlation**

388 56 a) The General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board shall consider the work of all  
 389 Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries. It shall also correlate their work, publicity and  
 390 promotion, preventing duplication and effecting economies of administration, so as to secure  
 391 maximum effectiveness and efficiency through careful stewardship of personnel and financial  
 392 resources.  
 393

394 b) The General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board and each of the Board of Directors  
 395 of all Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries shall assure that due protection shall be  
 396 given to all assets, trust funds, including pension funds so that the legacy/historic restrictions on  
 397 the use of restricted funds and the intended use restrictions of the unrestricted funds of each of the  
 398 historic ministries are monitored, accounted for, maintained and reported to the United Church of  
 399 Christ Board to assure that the use of all such assets and funds will be allocated and used based  
 400 on donor intent, whenever that can be determined.  
 401

402 **ARTICLE X. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD**



403 57 The United Church of Christ Board is the successor to and agent for the Executive Council  
404 and the Office of General Ministries (including its predecessor offices and bodies: President,  
405 Secretary, and Director of Finance and Treasurer of the United Church of Christ; Commission on  
406 Development; Stewardship Council; Office of Communication; and ministries of research  
407 formerly conducted by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries), and as such continues  
408 the work, mandates and legacies of these predecessor bodies and offices. The members of the  
409 United Church of Christ Board shall serve as the directors of each of the Covenanted Ministries.  
410 The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible for strategic planning and policymaking.  
411 The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible, with the General Minister and President,  
412 for the ecumenical and interfaith relationships of the United Church of Christ in the national  
413 setting. In all its work, the United Church of Christ Board shall be guided by the policies  
414 established by the General Synod. The United Church of Christ Board shall be incorporated in  
415 order to carry out its mandates and responsibilities, including without limitation, performing all  
416 legal functions of the General Synod, as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the United  
417 Church of Christ. The members of the United Church of Christ Board shall be elected ~~and~~ or  
418 ~~serve ex officio~~ appointed and shall serve as provided in the Bylaws of the United Church of  
419 Christ.

420

#### 421 **ARTICLE XI. COVENANTED MINISTRIES**

422 58 The United Church of Christ recognizes the call to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in  
423 word and deed through the work of Local Churches; Associations; Conferences; national  
424 expressions; and global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships. The United Church of Christ is  
425 and seeks to be an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural church, accessible to all, engaging in  
426 ministries of justice, witness, healing, teaching, and preaching. There are three Covenanted  
427 Ministries ~~as defined and set forth in the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of~~  
428 ~~Christ~~. Local Church Ministries, Wider Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries. A  
429 Covenanted Ministry may retain or secure its own charter and adopt its own bylaws and other  
430 rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this Constitution and  
431 the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ and in accordance with advice and counsel given from  
432 time to time by the General Synod.

433

#### 434 **Powers and Responsibilities of Covenanted Ministries**

435 59 Each Covenanted Ministry shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

436

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

440

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

443

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

446

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

448

449 e) To participate in the Mission Planning Council;

450

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

452

453 g) To organize itself as it deems necessary to carry out its programmatic work, including the  
454 fulfillment of historical mandates, which shall be carried out in accordance with this Constitution  
455 and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, through the United Church of Christ Board;  
456  
457 h) To determine its budget to be submitted to the United Church of Christ Board in accordance  
458 with the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;  
459  
460 i) To adopt its own charter, bylaws, and rules of procedure which it deems essential to its own  
461 welfare, not inconsistent with the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;  
462  
463 j) To hold in highest regard actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General  
464 Synod, the United Church of Christ Board, another Covenanted Ministry, a Conference, an  
465 Association, or a Local Church.  
466  
467 60 Each Covenanted Ministry shall be incorporated in order to fulfill its mandates; fulfill all  
468 normal, lawful purposes; and receive, hold, manage, and distribute real and personal property,  
469 endowments, and restricted funds in compliance with the terms, conditions, and requirements of  
470 said funds. The voting membership of each Covenanted Ministry shall be the members of that  
471 corporation's Board of Directors.  
472  
473 61 The corporation documents of Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, and  
474 Wider Church Ministries shall reflect their covenantal relationship with the General Synod and  
475 shall provide:  
476  
477 a) that the members of the United Church of Christ Board comprise the Board of Directors of the  
478 Covenanted Ministry;  
479  
480 ~~b) that the Covenanted Ministry shall vest the General Synod with the power to call by election~~  
481 ~~the Executive Minister of the Covenanted Ministry;~~  
482  
483 c) that any modification of the provisions or powers in a ~~or b~~ above shall be authorized  
484 only after consultation with the ~~Collegium of~~ Officers and the United Church of Christ Board and  
485 after presentation to the General Synod, and shall require an affirmative vote of not  
486 less than two-thirds of all voting members of the Covenanted Ministry;  
487  
488 d) that the Covenanted Ministry must approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or  
489 other property;  
490  
491 e) that dissolution of the Covenanted Ministry shall occur only with an affirmative vote of not  
492 less than two-thirds of all members of the Covenanted Ministry, after advice and consultation  
493 with the General Synod, and only with provision for the transfer of the ownership, management,  
494 and control of its assets and funds to a successor corporation that is legally obligated and  
495 empowered to own and carry out the obligations, terms, conditions, and requirements of said  
496 assets and funds, as the Board of Directors shall determine. In keeping with the covenantal basis  
497 of the United Church of Christ, such successor corporation shall be related to the United Church  
498 of Christ whenever legally permissible and appropriate, all as determined by the Board of  
499 Directors of the Covenanted Ministry.  
500  
501 62 The General Synod, in covenant with a Covenanted Ministry, may, from time to time, delegate  
502 or assign to a Covenanted Ministry such responsibilities as fall within that Covenanted Ministry's

503 purpose and mission as set forth in the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of  
504 Christ and in that Covenanted Ministry's corporate documents.

505  
506 63 Each Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ shall report its finances annually to  
507 the United Church of Christ Board and to each regular meeting of the General Synod. Each  
508 Covenanted Ministry shall submit to the United Church of Christ Board, acting as the Budget  
509 Committee of the General Synod, a detailed request for support of its work through funds  
510 allocated from the biennial income goal to be recommended to the General Synod.

511  
512 **Incorporation of Existing and Prior Agencies**

513 64 The Covenanted Ministries ~~listed in paragraph 58 above~~, acting as successors to and agents for  
514 all predecessor bodies related to the United Church of Christ, continue the work, mandates, and  
515 legacies previously carried on by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,  
516 the Board of International Missions, the Commission on World Service, the Congregational  
517 Christian Service Committee, the United Church Board for World Ministries, Board of National  
518 Missions, Board of Christian Education and Publication, Board of Business Management, Board  
519 of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the U. S., the American Missionary Association,  
520 Congregational Church Building Society, Congregational Education Society, Congregational  
521 Home Missionary Society, Congregational Publishing Society, The Congregational Sunday  
522 School Extension Society, the Congregational Women's Home Missionary Federation, the United  
523 Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society,  
524 Commission for Racial Justice, Office for Church Life and Leadership, Office for Church in  
525 Society, Stewardship Council, and Office of Communication.

526  
527 **Local Church Ministries**

528 65 The purpose and mission of Local Church Ministries, to be carried out in accordance with the  
529 Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, shall be to encourage and support the Local Churches of  
530 the United Church of Christ in the fulfillment of God's mission. Specifically, Local Church  
531 Ministries continues the work of, and acts as agent for, the following predecessor bodies: the  
532 Office for Church Life and Leadership, the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and  
533 Society, the Stewardship Council, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and its  
534 predecessor bodies: The Board of National Missions, Board of Christian Education and  
535 Publication, Board of Business Management, Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church  
536 in the U.S., the American Missionary Association, Congregational Church Building Society,  
537 Congregational Education Society, Congregational Home Mission Society, Congregational  
538 Publishing Society, The Congregational Sunday School Extension Society, the Congregational  
539 Women's Home Missionary Federation.

540  
541 **Justice and Witness Ministries**

542 66 The purpose and mission of Justice and Witness Ministries, to be carried out in accordance  
543 with the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, shall be to enable and encourage Local  
544 Churches, Associations, Conferences, and the national expressions of the United Church of Christ  
545 to engage in God's mission globally by direct action for the integrity of creation, justice, and  
546 peace. Justice and Witness Ministries continues the work of, and acts as agent for, the following  
547 predecessor bodies: the Office for Church in Society, the Commission for Racial Justice, the  
548 Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society. It also continues the following:  
549 ministries of public policy advocacy in the area of communications formerly conducted by the  
550 Office of Communication, ministries of prophetic service and action formerly conducted by the  
551 Division of the American Missionary Association of the United Church Board for Homeland  
552 Ministries, ministries of global advocacy in the U.S.A. formerly conducted by the United Church  
553 Board for World Ministries.

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**Wider Church Ministries**

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

**ARTICLE XII. AFFILIATED AND ASSOCIATED MINISTRIES**

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

69 An Associated Ministry of the United Church of Christ Board of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ is a nonprofit corporation which provides services to or for the United Church of Christ, and whose corporate membership is nominated and elected by the United Church of Christ Board, and which was recognized previously as an Instrumentality by the General Synod.

**Pension and Relief Activities**

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

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

**United Church Funds**

604 72 The United Church Funds, Inc., is designated as an Associated Ministry of the United Church  
605 of Christ Board of the United Church of Christ to receive gifts from individuals and  
606 organizations, to hold such funds and property as may be entrusted or conveyed to it by the  
607 General Synod and other organizations, and administer, invest, and reinvest the same and other  
608 funds in trust or otherwise, as set forth in the Bylaws.  
609

610 73 The United Church Funds shall report its program and finances annually to the United Church  
611 of Christ Board and to each regular meeting of the General Synod, and shall submit to the United  
612 Church of Christ Board, acting as the Budget Committee of the General Synod, a detailed request  
613 for support of its work through funds allocated from the ~~biennial~~ income goal to be recommended  
614 to the General Synod.  
615

### 616 **ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS**

#### 617 **The Constitution**

618 74 Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by a Conference, the General Synod or the  
619 United Church of Christ Board. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the  
620 General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ at least three months prior to a  
621 meeting of the General Synod to which they are to be presented. At least two months prior to the  
622 meeting of the General Synod, the General Minister and President shall transmit such proposed  
623 amendments to the delegates, to the Conferences and to the Local Churches. Adoption of an  
624 amendment to the Constitution shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and  
625 voting in the General Synod and, before the next regular meeting of the General Synod, an  
626 affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Conferences. If so approved the General Synod, if in session,  
627 or the United Church of Christ Board, shall declare the amendment adopted and in force.<sup>1</sup>  
628

#### 629 **The Bylaws**

630 75 Amendments to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ may be proposed by an  
631 Association, a Conference, the General Synod, or the United Church of Christ Board. Such  
632 proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the General Minister and President of the  
633 United Church of Christ at least three months prior to the meeting of the General Synod to which  
634 they are to be presented. At least two months prior to the meeting of the General Synod, the  
635 General Minister and President shall transmit such proposed amendments to the delegates, to the  
636 Conferences and to the Local Churches. Any Bylaw that is contingent upon a  
637 Constitutional provision shall not be effective until after the Constitutional provision is ratified  
638 and declared in force. Adoption of an amendment to the Bylaws shall require a two-thirds  
639 affirmative vote of those present and voting in the General Synod, and shall be effective upon  
640 adoption unless otherwise set forth in the vote.  
641

642 <sup>1</sup>The General Synod declared the original Constitution of the United Church of Christ in force June, 1961, upon  
643 ratification of 2/3 of the Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and by 2/3 of the Congregational Christian  
644 churches voting.  
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647 In effect July 2, 2015