

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 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 mission.
40 Decisions are made in consultation and collaboration among the various parts of the structure. As
41 members of the Body of Christ, each expression of the Church is called to honor and respect the
42 work and ministry of each other part. Each expression of the Church listens, hears, and carefully
43 considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In this covenant, the various expressions of
44 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, the
48 Associate General Ministers, and such other Officers as the General Synod may from time to time
49 determine. They shall be responsible to and called by election of the General Synod as Officers of
50 the United Church of Christ.
51

52 8 Officers of the United Church of Christ shall attend to the quality of relationships among the
53 United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries. The General Minister and
54 President is the presiding Officer. The Officers of the United Church of Christ support and
55 consult with the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries in carrying out
56 their work in a spirit of coordination and cooperation. Led by the General Minister and President,
57 the Officers of the United Church of Christ are responsible for providing leadership for the
58 mission programming of the United Church of Christ and for the proper implementation of
59 General Synod actions. The Officers of the United Church of Christ coordinate research, long-
60 range planning, program evaluation, and report on the ongoing programs of the United Church of
61 Christ. The election of Officers of the United Church of Christ shall reflect the commitment of
62 the United Church of Christ to be an inclusive church.
63

64 **ARTICLE V. LOCAL CHURCHES**

65 9 The basic unit of the life and organization of the United Church of Christ is the Local Church.
66

67 10 A Local Church is composed of persons who, believing in the triune God, accepting Jesus
68 Christ as Lord and Savior, and depending on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are organized for
69 Christian worship, for the furtherance of Christian fellowship, and for the ongoing work of
70 Christian witness.
71

72 11 In accordance with the custom and usage of a Local Church, persons become members by (a)
73 baptism and either confirmation or profession of faith in Jesus
74 Christ as Lord and Savior; (b) reaffirmation or reprofession of faith; or (c) letter of transfer or
75 certification from other Christian churches.
76

77 12 All persons who are or shall become members of a Local Church of the
78 United Church of Christ are thereby members of the United Church of Christ.
79

80 13 Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed
81 Church unite in the United Church of Christ without break in their respective historic continuities
82 and traditions.
83

84 14 The following Local Churches compose the United Church of Christ:
85

- 86 a) The Local Churches of the Evangelical and Reformed Church;
- 87
- 88 b) The Local Churches of the Congregational Christian fellowship which vote to become a part of
89 the United Church of Christ, or which vote to approve this Constitution;
- 90
- 91 c) Any Congregational Christian Local Church which, although it has not voted to become a part
92 of the United Church of Christ, or to approve this Constitution, votes to join the United Church of
93 Christ after this Constitution is declared in force;
- 94
- 95 d) Any Local Church which, after this Constitution is declared in force, is accepted, on any basis
96 other than that described in paragraph 16, into an Association, or Conference, of the United
97 Church of Christ;
- 98
- 99 e) The Local Churches of any denomination which, after this Constitution is declared in force,
100 unites with the United Church of Christ; and
101

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

106
107 15 Local Churches of the United Church of Christ are represented in the General Synod by the
108 delegates from the Conferences to which they belong.

109
110 16 An Association or a Conference of the United Church of Christ may, under such provisions as
111 it deems wise, admit, or continue to fellowship with, any Congregational Christian local church
112 which is not part of the United Church of Christ. The names and statistics of such churches shall
113 be kept separately; their members shall not be counted in determining the number of delegates
114 which the Conference is entitled to send to the General Synod or hold elective office in that body,
115 except that no Ordained Minister who has full Standing or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
116 in the United Church of Christ shall be ineligible to be a delegate to the General Synod or to hold
117 elective office in that body. No direct or indirect participation by any such local church in, or
118 support of, the work of the United Church of Christ, or of any of its Covenanted Ministries, The
119 Pension Boards—United Church of Christ, United Church Funds, or of any Conference or
120 Association, shall be construed as making it a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.

121
122 17 The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given
123 responsibility for that Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ
124 has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the wellbeing and needs and aspirations of its
125 Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the
126 Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.

127
128 18 The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing
129 in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right
130 of each Local Church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as
131 giving to the General Synod, or to any Conference or Association now, or at any future time, the
132 power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any Local Church in the management of its own
133 affairs, which affairs include, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of
134 organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its
135 own constitution and bylaws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit
136 members in its own way and to provide for their discipline or dismissal; to call or dismiss its
137 pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire, own, manage and dispose of
138 property and funds; to control its own benevolences; and to withdraw by its own decision from
139 the United Church of Christ at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or
140 personal property owned by it.

141
142 19 Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General Synod, a Conference or an
143 Association, should be held in the highest regard by every Local Church.

144
145 **ARTICLE VI. THE MINISTRY**

146 20 The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole Church and every member to
147 participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and
148 society. The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing
149 faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service.

150
151 21 The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms
152 of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required.

153 Recognizing God’s call, the ecclesiastical authorization is granted by an Association through the
154 rite of ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either Ordained Ministerial
155 Standing or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and other acts of authorization.

156
157 22 Ordination is the rite whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in
158 cooperation with the person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and
159 authorizes that member whom God has called to ordained ministry, and sets that person apart by
160 prayer and the laying on of hands. By this rite Ordained Ministerial Standing and recognition as
161 an Ordained Ministerial Partner is conferred and authorization given to perform the duties and
162 exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

163
164 23 An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been
165 called by God and ordained to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites
166 of the Church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.

167
168 24 Ordained Ministerial Standing is an ongoing covenant of mutual accountability, as described
169 herein, which recognizes and continues the authorization of that person to perform the duties and
170 exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry. Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United
171 Church of Christ is granted by and held in an Association in cooperation with a Local Church and
172 confers voting membership in the Association.

173
174 25 The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to a Local Church
175 establishes a covenantal relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial
176 Partner, the Local Church, and the United Church of Christ as represented by an Association. The
177 Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to other forms of ministry
178 recognized by an Association of the United Church of Christ establishes a covenantal relationship
179 among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the calling body, the United
180 Church of Christ as represented by an Association and the Local Church where the Ordained
181 Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner is a member.

182
183 26 Commissioning is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in
184 cooperation with a person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and
185 authorizes that member whom God has called to a specific church-related ministry which is
186 recognized by that Association, but not requiring ordination or licensing. By this act the standing
187 of Commissioned Minister is conferred and authorization granted to perform duties necessary to
188 and for the specific ministry, and voting membership in that Association is granted.

189
190 27 A Commissioned Minister in the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been
191 called by God and commissioned for a specific church-related ministry.

192
193 28 Licensing is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in
194 cooperation with a person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and
195 authorizes that member whom God has called to perform specified duties in a designated Local
196 Church or within that Association, mainly preaching and conducting services of worship, for a
197 designated time within a covenant of mutual accountability that includes appropriate supervision
198 and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed. Voting membership in that
199 Association is granted.

200
201 29 A Licensed Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members whom God has
202 called and who has been recognized and authorized by an Association to perform specified duties
203 in a designated Local Church or within that Association, mainly preaching and conducting

204 services of worship, for a designated time within a covenant of mutual accountability that
205 includes appropriate supervision and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed.
206

207 30 A Member in Discernment is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by
208 God and who is, in covenant with that member's Local Church and Association, engaging in a
209 time of discernment of that call and preparation for the potential of authorized ministry in
210 response to that call.

211
212 **ARTICLE VII. RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION OF THE ORDAINED**
213 **MINISTRIES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN**
214 **CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

215 31 The United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognize the
216 ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that church
217 and these ministries to be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ.
218

219 32 The ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of
220 Christ) are reconciled. An ordained minister with ordained ministerial standing in one church may
221 function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an ordained minister to the
222 other.
223

224 33 The designations "Ordained Ministerial Partner" and "Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing"
225 manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition and reconciliation of the ordained
226 ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
227

228 34 Each member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds ordained ministerial
229 standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the
230 United Church of Christ.
231

232 35 Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained Ministerial Standing in the
233 United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of
234 Christ).
235

236 36 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is authorization granted to an ordained minister with
237 ordained ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who has a call to
238 perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of
239 Christ. This authorization assumes knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and
240 practices of the United Church of Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing
241 ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained
242 ministry in the United Church of Christ.
243

244 **VIII. RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRIES OF**
245 **THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

246 37 The United Church of Christ and The United Church of Canada recognize the ordained
247 ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that church and these
248 ministries to be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ.
249

250 38 The ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and The United Church of Canada are
251 reconciled. An ordained minister with ordained ministerial standing in one church may function,
252 whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an ordained minister to the other.
253

254 39 The designations “Ordained Ministerial Partner” and “Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing”
255 manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition and reconciliation of the ordained
256 ministries of the United Church of Christ and The United Church of Canada.
257

258 40 Each member of The United Church of Canada who holds ordained ministerial standing in
259 The United Church of Canada is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the United Church of Christ.
260

261 41 Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained Ministerial Standing in the
262 United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of The United Church of Canada.
263

264 42 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is authorization granted to an ordained minister with
265 ordained ministerial standing in The United Church of Canada who has a call to perform the
266 duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ. This
267 authorization assumes knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the
268 United Church of Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical
269 authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the
270 United Church of Christ.
271

272 **ARTICLE IX. ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFERENCES**

273 43 Associations and Conferences are bodies organized on a territorial basis to perform functions
274 in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of
275 Christ.
276

277 **Associations**

278 44 An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is
279 composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing
280 or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed
281 Ministers in that Association.
282

283 45 The boundaries of any new Association, or any adjustment of boundaries between
284 Associations, shall be determined by the Associations concerned with the approval of the
285 Conference or Conferences involved. The standing of an Association as a body of the United
286 Church of Christ is determined by the Conference in which it is located.
287

288 46 An Association is that body which determines, confers, and certifies to the standing of the
289 Local Churches of the United Church of Christ within its area.
290

291 47 An Association is that body which grants authorization that is required for various forms of
292 ministry in and on behalf of the Church. Such authorization is granted through the rite of
293 ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either Ordained Ministerial Standing or
294 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and other acts of authorization. Such authorization may be
295 terminated by the Association.
296

297 48 An Association may retain or secure its own charter, and adopt its own constitution, bylaws
298 and other rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this
299 Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
300

301 49 An Association is related to the General Synod through its Conference.
302

303 50 When an Association meets, its voting membership includes the lay delegates selected by and
304 representing the Local Churches of that Association, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or

305 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed
306 Ministers of that Association, and such additional members as may be specified by the
307 Association in its constitution or bylaws.

308
309 51 Meetings of the Association are held annually and at such other times as may be necessary for
310 the discharge of its responsibilities.

311
312 **Conferences**

313 52 A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local
314 Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or Ordained Ministerial
315 Partner Standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association, all
316 Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations.

317
318 53 The boundaries of any new Conference, or any adjustment of boundaries between
319 Conferences, shall be determined by the Conferences concerned with the approval of the General
320 Synod. The standing of a Conference as a body of the United Church of Christ is determined by
321 the General Synod.

322
323 54 A Conference may retain or secure its own charter, and adopt its own constitution, bylaws and
324 other rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this Constitution
325 and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

326
327 55 A Conference is related to the General Synod as described in the Bylaws of the United Church
328 of Christ.

329
330 56 When a Conference meets, its voting membership includes lay delegates selected by and
331 representing the Local Churches of that Conference, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or
332 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting
333 as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations, and
334 such additional members as may be specified by the Conference.

335
336 57 Meetings of the Conference are held annually and at such other times as may be necessary for
337 the discharge of its responsibilities.

338
339 **Conferences Acting as Associations**

340 58 A Conference may exercise the functions of an Association when they are delegated to it by an
341 Association or where no Association exists.

342
343 **ARTICLE X. THE GENERAL SYNOD**

344 59 The General Synod is the gathering of a faith community representative of the wider church to
345 listen for and discern the call of God to the United Church of Christ. The General Synod
346 deliberates, discerns, and identifies the mission of the wider church of the United Church of
347 Christ in God's world and receives and offers suggestions, invitations, challenges, and assistance
348 in covenant with Local Churches, Conferences, and other settings as they engage in mission
349 together. The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ and is
350 composed of voting delegates, as described in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ. A
351 quorum for the conduct of business shall consist of one-third of the voting delegates, provided
352 that in this number at least two-thirds of the Conferences are represented by at least one delegate
353 each. There shall also be associate delegates and ecumenical delegates, without vote, as
354 determined by the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ or action of the General Synod.

355

356 **Powers and Responsibilities of the General Synod**

357 60 The General Synod has the following powers and responsibilities, provided, however, that no
358 power vested in the General Synod shall invade the autonomy of Conferences, Associations, and
359 Local Churches, or impair their right to acquire, own, manage, and dispose of property and funds:

- 360
361 a) To carry on, directly and through the United Church of Christ Board, as well as through the
362 Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries and other bodies, the work of the United
363 Church of Christ, and to provide for the financial support of this work;
364
365 b) To create such bodies, temporary or permanent, incorporated or unincorporated, suitable for
366 the discharge of its responsibilities;
367
368 c) To organize as required for the transaction of business;
369
370 d) To call and elect Officers of the United Church of Christ who shall be chosen from the
371 membership of the United Church of Christ and who shall serve as Officers of the General Synod;
372
373 e) To elect all the at-large members of the United Church of Christ Board, which shall act as the
374 General Synod ad interim and carry out the United Church of Christ Board's other responsibilities
375 as described in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;
376
377 f) To establish and maintain national headquarters for the United Church of Christ;
378
379 g) To establish a Treasury, which shall receive funds contributed to the General Synod for the
380 support of the United Church of Christ and for its Covenanted Ministries;
381
382 h) To determine the relationships of the United Church of Christ with ecumenical organizations,
383 world confessional bodies, interfaith and other interdenominational agencies;
384
385 i) To encourage conversations with other communions and when appropriate to authorize and
386 guide negotiations with them, looking toward formal union;
387
388 j) To amend this Constitution as hereinafter provided; and
389
390 k) To adopt Bylaws for the United Church of Christ and, as hereinafter provided, to amend them.

391
392 **Meetings of the General Synod**

393 61 The General Synod shall hold meetings at regular intervals as provided in the Bylaws of the
394 United Church of Christ. Special meetings may be called in the manner provided in those Bylaws.

395
396 **Correlation**

397 62 a) The General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board shall consider the work of all
398 Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries. It shall also correlate their work, publicity and
399 promotion, preventing duplication and effecting economies of administration, so as to secure
400 maximum effectiveness and efficiency through careful stewardship of personnel and financial
401 resources.

402
403 b) The General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board and each of the Board of Directors
404 of all Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries shall assure that due protection shall be
405 given to all assets, trust funds, including pension funds so that the legacy/historic restrictions on
406 the use of restricted funds and the intended use restrictions of the unrestricted funds of each of the

407 historic ministries are monitored, accounted for, maintained and reported to the United Church of
408 Christ Board to assure that the use of all such assets and funds will be allocated and used based
409 on donor intent, whenever that can be determined.

410

411 **ARTICLE XI. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD**

412 63 The United Church of Christ Board is the successor to and agent for the Executive Council
413 and the Office of General Ministries (including its predecessor offices and bodies: President,
414 Secretary, and Director of Finance and Treasurer of the United Church of Christ; Commission on
415 Development; Stewardship Council; Office of Communication; and ministries of research
416 formerly conducted by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries), and as such continues
417 the work, mandates and legacies of these predecessor bodies and offices. The members of the
418 United Church of Christ Board shall serve as the directors of each of the Covenanted Ministries.
419 The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible for strategic planning and policymaking.
420 The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible, with the General Minister and President,
421 for the ecumenical and interfaith relationships of the United Church of Christ in the national
422 setting. In all its work, the United Church of Christ Board shall be guided by the policies
423 established by the General Synod. The United Church of Christ Board shall be incorporated in
424 order to carry out its mandates and responsibilities, including without limitation, performing all
425 legal functions of the General Synod, as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the United
426 Church of Christ. The members of the United Church of Christ Board shall be elected or
427 appointed and shall serve as provided in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

428

429 **ARTICLE XII. COVENANTED MINISTRIES**

430 64 The United Church of Christ recognizes the call to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in
431 word and deed through the work of Local Churches; Associations; Conferences; national
432 expressions; and global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships. The United Church of Christ is
433 and seeks to be an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural church, accessible to all, engaging in
434 ministries of justice, witness, healing, teaching, and preaching. There are three Covenanted
435 Ministries: Local Church Ministries, Wider Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries. A
436 Covenanted Ministry may retain or secure its own charter and adopt its own bylaws and other
437 rules which it deems essential to its own welfare and not inconsistent with this Constitution and
438 the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ and in accordance with advice and counsel given from
439 time to time by the General Synod.

440

441 **Powers and Responsibilities of Covenanted Ministries**

442 65 Each Covenanted Ministry shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

443

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

447

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

450

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

453

454 d) To participate in the Mission Planning Council;

455

456 e) To organize itself as it deems necessary to carry out its programmatic work, including the
457 fulfillment of historical mandates, which shall be carried out in accordance with this Constitution
458 and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, through the United Church of Christ Board;
459

460 f) To determine its budget to be submitted to the United Church of Christ Board in accordance
461 with the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;
462

463 g) To adopt its own charter, bylaws, and rules of procedure which it deems essential to its own
464 welfare, not inconsistent with the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;
465

466 h) To hold in highest regard actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General
467 Synod, the United Church of Christ Board, another Covenanted Ministry, a Conference, an
468 Association, or a Local Church.
469

470 66 Each Covenanted Ministry shall be incorporated in order to fulfill its mandates; fulfill all
471 normal, lawful purposes; and receive, hold, manage, and distribute real and personal property,
472 endowments, and restricted funds in compliance with the terms, conditions, and requirements of
473 said funds. The voting membership of each Covenanted Ministry shall be the members of that
474 corporation's Board of Directors.
475

476 67 The corporation documents of Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, and
477 Wider Church Ministries shall reflect their covenantal relationship with the General Synod and
478 shall provide:
479

480 a) that the members of the United Church of Christ Board comprise the Board of Directors of the
481 Covenanted Ministry;
482

483 b) that any modification of the provisions or powers in a above shall be authorized
484 only after consultation with the Officers and the United Church of Christ Board and after
485 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 c) that the Covenanted Ministry must approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or
489 other property;
490

491 d) 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 68 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 69 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 70 The Covenanted Ministries, acting as successors to and agents for all predecessor bodies
514 related to the United Church of Christ, continue the work, mandates, and legacies previously
515 carried on by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Board of
516 International Missions, the Commission on World Service, the Congregational Christian Service
517 Committee, the United Church Board for World Ministries, Board of National Missions, Board of
518 Christian Education and Publication, Board of Business Management, Board of Home Missions
519 of the Reformed Church in the U. S., the American Missionary Association, Congregational
520 Church Building Society, Congregational Education Society, Congregational Home Missionary
521 Society, Congregational Publishing Society, The Congregational Sunday School Extension
522 Society, the Congregational Women's Home Missionary Federation, the United Church Board for
523 Homeland Ministries, Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, Commission for
524 Racial Justice, Office for Church Life and Leadership, Office for Church in Society, Stewardship
525 Council, and Office of Communication.
526

527 **Local Church Ministries**

528 71 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 72 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.
554

555 **Wider Church Ministries**

556 73 The purpose and mission of Wider Church Ministries, to be carried out in accordance with the
557 Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, shall be to encourage and support Local Churches,
558 Associations, Conferences, and the national expressions of the United Church of Christ to
559 participate in the global, multiracial, multicultural church, and to support United Church of Christ
560 ministries around the world and the nation. Wider Church Ministries continues the work of, and
561 acts as agent for, the following predecessor bodies: the United Church Board for World
562 Ministries, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Board of
563 International Missions, the Commission on World Service, and the Congregational Christian
564 Service Committee. It also continues the following: ministries of volunteer services formerly
565 conducted by the Division of the American Missionary Association of the United Church Board
566 for Homeland Ministries; ministries of the Health and Welfare Coordinating Council formerly
567 related to the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.
568

569 **ARTICLE XIII. AFFILIATED AND ASSOCIATED MINISTRIES**

570 74 An Affiliated Ministry of the United Church of Christ is a nonprofit corporation which
571 provides services to or for the United Church of Christ, and whose Board of Trustees is elected by
572 its corporate membership, and which was recognized previously as an Instrumentality by the
573 General Synod.
574

575 75 An Associated Ministry of the United Church of Christ Board of the General Synod of the
576 United Church of Christ is a nonprofit corporation which provides services to or for the United
577 Church of Christ, and whose corporate membership is nominated and elected by the United
578 Church of Christ Board, and which was recognized previously as an Instrumentality by the
579 General Synod.
580

581 **Pension and Relief Activities**

582 76 The pension activities of the United Church of Christ are administered by a nonprofit
583 membership corporation(s) known as The Pension Boards—United
584 Church of Christ and designated as an Affiliated Ministry of the United Church of
585 Christ. The control of each such corporation lies in its members through a Board of Trustees
586 chosen by the members from a list of persons whose names have been presented to and approved
587 by the General Synod or by the United Church of Christ Board in accordance with the Bylaws.
588 Persons for this list may be proposed by any member of the corporation(s) or by the Trustees
589 thereof. Such corporation(s) shall report its program and finance annually to its members and to
590 the United Church of Christ Board and to each regular meeting of the General Synod. The
591 General Synod shall from time to time make examination of the practices and developments of
592 such corporation(s).
593

594 77 The ministerial relief activities of the United Church of Christ, by whatever corporate bodies
595 administered, are coordinated with the pension activities of the Church through corporation(s)
596 above described. The pension and the relief corporation(s) shall submit to the United Church of
597 Christ Board, acting as the Budget Committee of the General Synod, a request for allocation of
598 sufficient funds, from the budget to be approved by the United Church of Christ Board, for the
599 payment of ministerial relief benefits and such other benefits as the United Church of Christ
600 Board may provide. Payment of such benefits shall be limited to the funds received for that
601 purpose.
602

603 **United Church Funds**

604 78 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 79 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 income goal to be recommended to the
614 General Synod.

615
616 **ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS**

617 **The Constitution**

618 80 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.¹

628
629 **The Bylaws**

630 81 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 ¹The 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.

645
646 In effect October 13, 2018.