

28 05-GS-52 VOTED: The Twenty-fifth General Synod adopts the pronouncement “Ministry Issues: Forming and
29 Preparing Pastoral Leaders for God’s Church,” as amended.

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31 **MINISTRY ISSUES: FORMING AND PREPARING PASTORAL LEADERS FOR GOD’S CHURCH**

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33 **STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN CONVICTION**

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35 The Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms that our baptism calls us all to minister in
36 Christ’s name. Within the church, some are called to particular leadership roles in order to “equip the saints for the
37 work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12, NRSV).

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39 The Twenty-fifth General Synod affirms the current forms of authorized ministry: ordained, licensed, and
40 commissioned. We believe that Christ’s Church needs well-prepared and faithful servants to engage in God’s
41 mission.

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43 The Twenty-fifth General Synod believes that the United Church of Christ, along with the whole Christian church
44 and every individual Christian, is called into God’s mission in the world. We believe that in this mission, uniquely
45 ours in Jesus Christ, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit. We believe that God’s mission requires all the gifts and
46 graces given by God to its members and to the church itself. We believe that the church requires faithful and
47 effective leadership in order to respond to Jesus’ call. We believe that each generation must be ready to change its
48 practices of church life in response to the Spirit’s call for each generation.

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50 The Twenty-fifth General Synod celebrates and gives thanks for the gifts of God and the call of Christ to the United
51 Church of Christ and its members. Those gifts include a diversity of faith communities, a resolution to welcome
52 fully all of God’s children, a rich and diverse heritage, countless faithful leaders, and openness to Christ’s call to
53 faithfully witness to God’s love in ways appropriate for new times and situations.

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55 The Twenty-fifth General Synod invites all in the United Church of Christ to join in repentance of those actions and
56 practices which have prevented the leadership of some of its members from being effectively recognized,
1 encouraged and authorized. As repentance requires change, we pledge ourselves and invite others to join in
2 developing new patterns of calling forth leaders, of equipping them for service, and of authorizing and supporting
3 their ministries on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

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5 The Twenty-fifth General Synod recognizes that in a church with many diversities, there must also be many patterns
6 of leadership and, therefore, of discernment of call, preparation, authorization, and continuing covenantal
7 relationships. At the same time, we affirm that we are called to be one church and, therefore, we will continue to
8 develop common understandings of ministry and leadership and live together into faithfulness by the power of
9 God’s Spirit.

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11 **THEREFORE**, the Twenty-fifth General Synod commits itself and calls upon all members and settings of the United
12 Church of Christ to:

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- 14 • Listen for God’s call to mission and respond in faith;
 - 15 • Participate actively in the discernment of call of particular persons to become authorized ministers of the church;
 - 16 • Participate actively with called persons in discerning the appropriate ministerial vocation;
 - 17 • Develop, support and engage in multiple patterns of preparation for authorized ministers, recognizing that preparation must be appropriate for the individual, the particular faith community, the United Church of Christ, and the ministry for which authorization is requested;
 - 18 • Enter and live in continuing covenantal relationship with those authorized for ministry on behalf of the United Church of Christ, honoring and supporting all - commissioned, ordained, and licensed;
 - 19 • Expect and encourage all authorized ministers to be lifelong learners, accountable to one another and the church for their learning and their ministry;
 - 20 • Repent of all that has prevented us from faithfulness in the past, while continuing to give thanks for those whose leadership has brought us to this time and those who beckon us forward.
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