

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

PREAMBLE

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

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

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

ARTICLE I. NAME

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

ARTICLE II. STRUCTURE

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

ARTICLE III. COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

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

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

7 The Officers of the United Church of Christ shall be a General Minister and President, an Executive Minister for Local Church Ministries, an Executive Minister for Wider Church Ministries, an Executive Minister for Justice and Witness Ministries, and such other officers as the General Synod may from time to time determine. They shall be responsible to and called by election of the General Synod as officers of the United Church of Christ.

Collegium of Officers

8 Composed of the Officers of the United Church of Christ meeting as peers, the Collegium of Officers is responsible for providing leadership for the mission programming of the United Church of Christ and for the implementation of General Synod actions. The General Minister and President is the presiding officer of the Collegium. The Collegium shall attend to the quality of relationships among the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries and foster

a climate of respect, collaboration, and collegiality among various expressions of the church. The Collegium provides a setting for mutual accountability, for mutual reporting, and for assessing the ongoing programs of the United Church of Christ. It shall reflect the commitment of the United Church of Christ to be an inclusive church.

ARTICLE V. LOCAL CHURCHES

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

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

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

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

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

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

- a) The Local Churches of the Evangelical and Reformed Church;
- b) The Local Churches of the Congregational Christian fellowship which vote to become a part of the United Church of Christ, or which vote to approve this Constitution;
- c) Any Congregational Christian Local Church which, although it has not voted to become a part of the United Church of Christ, or to approve this Constitution, votes to join the United Church of Christ after this Constitution is declared in force;
- d) Any Local Church which, after this Constitution is declared in force, is accepted, on any basis other than that described in paragraph 16, into an Association, or Conference, of the United Church of Christ;
- e) The Local Churches of any denomination which, after this Constitution is declared in force, unites with the United Church of Christ; and
- f) Any Local Church in a category not otherwise defined in this article, received upon its request, subject to such provisions as in consultation with the Conference may be specified by the Association within whose bounds it is located, and which are not inconsistent with this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

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

16 An Association or a Conference of the United Church of Christ may, under such provisions as it deems wise, admit, or continue to fellowship with, any Congregational Christian Local Church which is not part of the United Church of Christ. The names and statistics of such churches shall be kept separately; their members shall not be counted in determining the number of delegates which the Conference is entitled to send to the General Synod or hold elective office in that body, except that no ordained minister who has full standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in the United Church of Christ shall be ineligible to be a delegate to the General Synod or to hold elective office in that body. No direct or indirect participation by any such Local Church in, or support of, the work of the United Church of Christ, or of any of its Covenanted Ministries, The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ, United Church Funds, or of any Conference or Association, shall be construed as making it a church of the United Church of Christ.

17 The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for that Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the wellbeing and needs and aspirations of its

Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.

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

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

ARTICLE VI. THE MINISTRY

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

21 The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required. Recognizing God's call, the ecclesiastical authorization is granted by an Association through the rite of ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either ordained ministerial standing or ordained ministerial partner standing and other acts of authorization.

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

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

24 Ordained ministerial standing is an ongoing covenant of mutual accountability, as described in Paragraph 25, which recognizes and continues the authorization of that person to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry. Ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ is granted by and held in an Association in cooperation with a local church and confers voting membership in the Association.

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

26 Commissioning is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an

Association, in cooperation with a person and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to a specific church-related ministry which is recognized by that Association, but not requiring ordination or licensing. By this act the status of Commissioned Minister is conferred and authorization granted to perform duties necessary to and for the specific ministry, and voting membership in that Association is granted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

33 The designations "Ordained Ministerial Partner" and "ordained ministerial partner standing" manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition and reconciliation of the ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

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

35 Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

36 Ordained ministerial partner standing is authorization granted to an Ordained Minister with ordained ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who has a call to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ. This authorization assumes knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ. Ordained ministerial partner standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE VIII. ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFERENCES

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

Associations

38 An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in that Association.

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

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

41 An Association is that body which grants authorization that is required for various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the Church. Such authorization is granted through the rite of ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either ordained ministerial standing or ordained ministerial partner standing and other acts of authorization. Such authorization may be terminated by the Association.

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

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

44 When an Association meets, its voting membership includes the lay delegates selected by and representing the Local Churches of that Association, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers of that Association.

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

Conferences

46 A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations.

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

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

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

50 When a Conference meets, its voting membership includes lay delegates selected by and representing the Local Churches of that Conference, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers and Licensed Ministers in its Associations.

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

Conferences Acting as Associations

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

ARTICLE IX. THE GENERAL SYNOD

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

Powers and Responsibilities of General Synod

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

- a) To carry on, directly and through the United Church of Christ Board, as well as through the Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries and other bodies, the work of the United Church of Christ, and to provide for the financial support of this work;
- b) To create such bodies, temporary or permanent, incorporated or unincorporated, suitable for the discharge of its responsibilities;
- c) To organize as required for the transaction of business;
- d) To call and elect Officers of the United Church of Christ who shall be chosen from the membership of the United Church of Christ and who shall serve as Officers of the General Synod;
- e) To elect all members of the United Church of Christ Board, which shall act as the General Synod ad interim and carry out the United Church of Christ Board's other responsibilities as described in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;
- f) To establish and maintain national headquarters for the United Church of Christ;
- g) To establish a Treasury, which shall receive funds contributed to the General Synod for the support of the United Church of Christ and for its Covenanted Ministries;
- h) To determine the relationships of the United Church of Christ with ecumenical organizations, world confessional bodies, interfaith and other interdenominational agencies;
- i) To encourage conversations with other communions and when appropriate to authorize and guide negotiations with them, looking toward formal union;
- j) To amend this Constitution as hereinafter provided; and
- k) To adopt Bylaws for the United Church of Christ and, as hereinafter provided, to amend them.

Meetings of the General Synod

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

Correlation

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

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

ARTICLE X. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD

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

ARTICLE XI. COVENANTED MINISTRIES

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

Powers and Responsibilities of Covenanted Ministries

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

- a) To carry out the Covenanted Ministry's programmatic work, including the historical mandates of its predecessor bodies, as set forth in its Charter and Bylaws, or referred from the General Synod, or as set forth in the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ;
- b) To retain responsibility for all legacies and other property received, maintained or held by it, and to approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or other property;
- c) To work in covenantal relationship with the General Synod, the United Church of Christ Board, and other Ministries to fulfill its mandates;
- d) To participate through its Executive Minister in the Collegium of Officers;
- e) To participate in the Mission Planning Council;
- f) To nominate and elect its Executive Minister as set forth in paragraph 61b;
- g) To organize itself as it deems necessary to carry out its programmatic work, including the fulfillment of historical mandates, which shall be carried out in accordance with this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, through the United Church of Christ Board;

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

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

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

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

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

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

b) that the Covenanted Ministry shall vest the General Synod with the power to call by election the Executive Minister of the Covenanted Ministry;

c) that any modification of the provisions or powers in a or b above shall be authorized only after consultation with the Collegium of Officers and the United Church of Christ Board and after presentation to the General Synod, and shall require an affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of all voting members of the Covenanted Ministry;

d) that the Covenanted Ministry must approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or other property;

e) that dissolution of the Covenanted Ministry shall occur only with an affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of all members of the Covenanted Ministry, after advice and consultation with the General Synod, and only with provision for the transfer of the ownership, management, and control of its assets and funds to a successor corporation that is legally obligated and empowered to own and carry out the obligations, terms, conditions, and requirements of said assets and funds, as the Board of Directors shall determine. In keeping with the covenantal basis of the United Church of Christ, such successor corporation shall be related to the United Church of Christ whenever legally permissible and appropriate, all as determined by the Board of Directors of the Covenanted Ministry.

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

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

Incorporation of Existing and Prior Agencies

64 The Covenanted Ministries listed in paragraph 58 above, acting as successors to and agents for all predecessor bodies related to the United Church of Christ, continue the work, mandates, and legacies previously carried on by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Board of International Missions, the Commission on World Service, the Congregational Christian Service Committee, the United Church Board for World Ministries, Board of National Missions, Board of Christian Education and Publication, Board of Business Management, Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the U. S., the American Missionary Association,

Congregational Church Building Society, Congregational Education Society, Congregational Home Missionary Society, Congregational Publishing Society, The Congregational Sunday School Extension Society, the Congregational Women's Home Missionary Federation, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, Commission for Racial Justice, Office for Church Life and Leadership, Office for Church in Society, Stewardship Council, and Office of Communication.

Local Church Ministries

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

Justice and Witness Ministries

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

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 non-profit 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 non-profit 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. 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

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

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

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

The Constitution

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

The Bylaws

75 Amendments to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ may be proposed by an Association, a Conference, the General Synod, or the United Church of Christ Board. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the General Minister and President of the

United Church of Christ at least three months prior to the meeting of the General Synod to which they are to be presented. At least two months prior to the meeting of the General Synod, the General Minister and President shall transmit such proposed amendments to the delegates, to the Conferences and to the Local Churches. Any Bylaw that is contingent upon a Constitutional provision shall not be effective until after the Constitutional provision is ratified and declared in force. Adoption of an amendment to the Bylaws shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting in the General Synod, and shall be effective upon adoption unless otherwise set forth in the vote.

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