

**Proposed Vote to Affirm UCC Constitutional Changes**  
**Presented to the 212th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.**  
**Recommended by the Board of Directors**

1 The 28th General Synod in 2009 voted changes to the constitution of the United Church of Christ. These changes out-  
 2 line multiple paths to ministry and other changes to the ministerial formation process. Per the bylaws of the United Church  
 3 of Christ, the changes have already been ratified by twenty-six Conferences and are thus legally in effect. However, the  
 4 Board of Directors thinks it appropriate for the Massachusetts Conference to act on these changes as well.

5 The Board of Directors recommends to the 212th Annual Meeting:

6 *The 212th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ affirms the changes to the*  
 7 *Constitution of the United Church of Christ as passed by General Synod 27 and ratified by at least twenty-six Conferences*  
 8 *of the United Church of Christ.*

9 The ratified constitutional changes are as follows. They may be found in the context of the full UCC constitution at:  
 10 <http://www.ucc.org/ministry-issues/Revised-Constitution-with-GS27-Amendments-to-Conferences.pdf>

11 **ARTICLE VI. THE MINISTRY**

12  
 13 20. The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole Church and every member to participate in and  
 14 extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and society. The United Church of Christ seeks  
 15 to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service.

16  
 17 21. The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry in and  
 18 on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required. Recognizing God’s call, the ecclesiastical author-  
 19 ization is granted by an Association through the rite of ordination, through commissioning, licensing, granting either  
 20 ordained ministerial standing or ordained ministerial partner standing and other acts of authorization.

21  
 22 22. Ordination is the rite whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in cooperation with the person  
 23 and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to  
 24 ordained ministry, and sets that person apart by prayer and the laying on of hands. By this rite ordained ministerial stand-  
 25 ing 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.

26  
 27 23. An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been called by God and  
 28 ordained to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the Church, and to exercise pastoral care  
 and leadership.

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

36  
 37 25. The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to a Local Church establishes a covenantal rela-  
 38 tionship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the Local Church, and the United Church of Christ  
 39 as represented by an Association ~~or a Conference~~. The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to  
 40 other forms of ministry recognized by an Association ~~or Conference~~ of the United Church of Christ establishes a covenantal  
 41 relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the calling body, the United Church of Christ  
 42 as represented by an Association ~~or Conference~~ and the Local Church where the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial  
 Partner is a member.

43 ~~26 A Student in Care of Association is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by God and who,~~  
 44 ~~under the care of the member’s Association, is preparing for the ordained Christian ministry.~~

45  
 46 26. Commissioning is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in cooperation with a per-  
 47 son and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to a  
 48 specific church-related ministry which is recognized by that Association, but not requiring ordination or licensing. By this  
 49 act the status of Commissioned Minister is conferred and authorization granted to perform duties necessary to and for the  
 50 specific ministry, and voting membership in that Association is granted.

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

53 28. Licensing is the act whereby the United Church of Christ through an Association, in cooperation with a person and  
54 a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to perform  
55 specified duties in a designated Local Church or within that Association, mainly preaching and conducting services of wor-  
56 ship, for a designated time ~~under the supervision and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed. Voting~~  
57 ~~membership in that Association may be granted.~~ *within a covenant of mutual accountability that includes appropriate*  
58 *supervision and guidance of that Association. The license may be renewed. Voting membership in that Association is grant -*  
59 *ed.*

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

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

## 69 ARTICLE VIII. ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFERENCES

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

### 73 Associations

74 38. An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local  
75 Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing therein,  
76 all Commissioned Ministers ~~of that Association~~, and ~~those~~ Licensed Ministers ~~who have been granted voting membership~~  
77 in that Association.

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

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

84 41. An Association is that body which grants, certifies to, transfers and terminates ordained ministerial standing or  
85 ordained ministerial partner standing in the United Church of Christ.

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

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

90 44. When an Association meets, its voting membership includes the lay delegates selected by and representing the Local  
91 Churches of that Association, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing therein, all  
92 Commissioned Ministers ~~of that Association~~ and ~~those~~ Licensed Ministers ~~who have been granted voting membership~~  
93 in of that Association.

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

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101 **Conferences**

102 46. A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local Churches in a geograph-  
103 ical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in its Associations or in the  
104 Conference itself when acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers ~~in its Associations~~, and ~~those~~ Licensed  
105 Ministers ~~who have been granted voting membership~~ in its Associations.

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

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

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

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

118 **The Bylaws**

119 75. Amendments to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ may be proposed by an Association, a Conference, the  
120 General Synod, or the Executive Council. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the General Minister  
121 and President of the United Church of Christ at least three months prior to the meeting of the General Synod to which they  
122 are to be presented. At least two months prior to the meeting of the General Synod, the General Minister and President shall  
123 transmit such proposed amendments to the delegates, to the Conferences and to the Local Churches. Any Bylaw that is con-  
124 tingent upon a  
125

126 Constitutional provision shall not be effective until after the Constitutional provision is ratified and declared in force.  
127 Adoption of an amendment to the Bylaws shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting in the  
128 General Synod, and shall be effective upon adoption unless otherwise set forth in the vote.

129 ~~'The General Synod declared the original Constitution of the United Church of Christ in force June, 1961, upon ratifi-~~  
130 ~~cation of 2/3 of the Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and by 2/3 of the Congregational Christian churches~~  
131 ~~voting. The amendments incorporated herein will become effective upon ratification by 2/3 of the Conferences and accept-~~  
132 ~~ance by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the United Church Board for World Ministries, concurrence~~  
133 ~~by The Pension Boards United Church of Christ and United Church Foundation, and the declaration of the General Synod~~  
134 ~~at a date to be determined by the General Synod.~~

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