

2010: National UCC Constitution Changes Resolution

(As approved by SWC Annual Meeting, April 23, 2010)

From the Ministry Issues Implementation Committee

Changes to the UCC Constitution voted by the Twenty-seventh General Synod, relating to the Pronouncement, “Ministry Issues: Forming and Preparing Pastoral Leaders for God’s Church,” adopted by the Twenty-fifth General Synod.

November 9, 2009

Calling forth and equipping leadership for God’s Church is central to the mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ. After many years of study across the Church, the Pronouncement, “Ministry Issues: Forming and Preparing Pastoral Leaders for God’s Church” and accompanying Proposals for Action were adopted by the Twenty-fifth General Synod in Atlanta, Georgia. A diverse group of UCC laity and clergy were asked to guide implementation of the Pronouncement. As part of their work, and in conjunction with Parish Life and Leadership and Local Church Ministries, suggested revisions to both the UCC Constitution and By-laws were presented to and approved by the Twenty-seventh General Synod in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The proposed Constitutional amendments are now returned to Conferences for ratification before being declared effective. Several themes included in the Ministry Issues project are reflected in the proposed changes:

- **Emphasis on authorized ministry as the way to identify the ordering of ministry in the United Church of Christ:** All Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ-ordained, commissioned, licensed-serve on behalf of the whole Church and are to be regarded by the Church and by each other with mutual respect and care.
- **Emphasis on on-going covenants of mutual accountability:** All Authorized Ministers serving on behalf of the Church are in mutually accountable covenantal relationships with an Association and a Local Church of the United Church of Christ. These on-going covenants include encouraging life long learning as well as offering on-going support from and to all settings of the Church.
- **Emphasis on the various settings of the Church as covenant partners throughout the process of discernment:** The Local Church and the Association continue to be the primary covenant partners for members discerning a call to authorized ministry in, and on behalf of, the United Church of Christ.
- **Change in terminology:** As the discernment of call is an ongoing, communal activity, and not all who are potential candidates for authorization are currently “student,” the term “Member in Discernment” replaces “Student in Care” to denote a UCC member in covenant with a Local Church and Association, considering authorized ministry.

Additional information regarding the Ministry Issues Project, including the text of the Pronouncement, is available at: <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/ministry-issues-project/>. To review the work of the Implementation Committee, see especially the “Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ” and, for a fuller report, Ministry Issues, Draft 3.1. The work continues, including preparation of resources for all settings of the Church and training for members of Committees on the Ministry.