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4 A Proposal for Unified Governance of the National Setting
5 of the United Church of Christ:
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8 Introduction
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10 In service to the mission of God in the world through the Church of Jesus Christ;
11 grounded in prayer, worship, and thoughtful reflection on God’s call as the Creator,
12 Redeemer, and Sustainer of our common life; and in response to the General Synod and
13 the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ, the Unified Governance Working
14 Group proposes the United Church of Christ Board.
15

16 The purpose of the United Church of Christ Board shall be the responsible governance of
17 the national setting of the United Church of Christ in faithful service to God. Toward
18 that end, the membership of the Board shall include the diversity of God’s children. The
19 Board is elected by and accountable to the General Synod.
20

21 The Board members are to be called to their positions because of their demonstrated
22 skills, competencies, and particular experiences, as well as their diversity, to meet the
23 current and future governance needs of the United Church of Christ. Such governance
24 shall provide leadership for policy setting and strategic direction and shall empower
25 increased engagement in mission.
26

27 The background theological documents for the current structure of the national setting,
28 including the paper, “*Missio Dei*,” called into question the continued separation of church
29 and mission structures. Mission belongs to God, not to societies or churches in isolation.
30 The whole church is called to participate together in God’s mission. This new proposal
31 calls for the separate mission boards to be integrated as the United Church of Christ
32 Board, accountable to the General Synod and following the best practices of good
33 governance, to enable the mission of the church. This proposal further calls for broad
34 and robust opportunities for all the settings of the church to engage in mission together.
35

36 The United Church of Christ Board shall act for the General Synod, ad interim, and
37 replace the Executive Council. The Board will also serve as the Board of each of the
38 continuing, separately incorporated Covenanted Ministries: Local Church Ministries,
39 Justice and Witness Ministries, and Wider Church Ministries.¹ (Consultation with the
40 General Synod is required prior to a decision to dissolve any of the current Covenanted
41 Ministry Boards, should such be proposed at any time.) The Board will be responsible to
42 provide the United Church of Christ with accountable, strategic leadership. The Board

¹ The Office of General Ministries will be dissolved and oversight of its areas of responsibility will be continued by the United Church of Christ Board.

43 will relate covenantally to all settings of the Church, including the Associated and
44 Affiliated Ministries, Conferences, Associations, Local Churches, seminaries, colleges,
45 health and human service ministries, and other bodies.
46

47 Initially, all Board members will serve on one of three Ministry Committees within the
48 Board: Justice and Witness, Local Church, and Wider Church. Ministry Committee
49 members will bring expertise and passion to carry forward the historic commitments and
50 relationships of the current Covenanted Ministries and of the General Synod, including
51 Common Global Ministries, to honor the diversity of the commitments of the UCC, to
52 work in covenant with one another, to support ecumenical relationships, and to keep the
53 vision alive. Ministry Committees will formulate program recommendations for the full
54 Board's approval and monitor their implementation, but they are not separate decision-
55 making bodies. The Board will be open to future reconfiguration of the Ministry
56 Committees.
57

58 Ministry Committees will be accountable to one another within the Board, thus providing
59 attention to the mission of the whole church, to responsible stewardship of all resources,
60 and especially to effective witness in God's world and in the church itself. Along with
61 accountability to the General Synod, the diversity of Board membership, the covenantal
62 relationships of the Board and other church settings, the Ministry Committees serve as
63 one of the "checks and balances" within this proposed unified governance structure.
64

65 The United Church of Christ Board and the national setting will continue to be led by a
66 Collegium of Officers. There shall be four, a General Minister and President and three
67 Executive Ministers. These Officers of the Church, will be accountable to the United
68 Church of Christ Board.²
69

70 Honoring the calls, gifts, and experiences of the members of the United Church of Christ
71 participating in God's mission, the Unified Governance Working Group strongly affirms
72 the need to continue Sacred Conversations on Race that we might honor and care for one
73 another as children of God and members of the Body of Christ.
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² The position of Associate General Minister as an elected officer and member of the Collegium is eliminated in this proposal. Many functions currently assigned to that position may be assigned to a staff position of Chief Administrative Officer.

79 The Proposal: The United Church of Christ Board

80

81 1. The General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board

82 We affirm the General Synod as the gathering of a faith community representative of the
83 wider church to listen for and discern the call of God to the United Church of Christ.

- 84 1. The General Synod deliberates, discerns, and identifies the mission of the wider
85 church of the United Church of Christ in God's world and receives and offers
86 suggestions, invitations, challenges, and assistance in covenant with Local
87 Churches, Conferences, and other settings as they engage in mission together.
- 88 2. The United Church of Christ Board oversees the implementation and management
89 of the UCC's mission in the national setting as discerned by the General Synod.
- 90 3. Officers of the Church and members of the United Church Board are elected by
91 and responsible to the General Synod
- 92 4. General Synod will be composed of delegates from Conferences (as current
93 practice), the Officers of the Church, members of the United Church Board, and
94 four delegates from each of these groups: Council for American Indian
95 Ministries Ministry, Council for Hispanic Ministries, Coalition for Lesbian, Gay,
96 Bisexual and Transgender Concerns, Council for Youth and Young Adult
97 Ministries, United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries, Ministers for Racial,
98 Social, and Economic Justice, Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries,
99 and United Black Christians. All these are Synod delegates with voice and vote.
100 Their expenses are the responsibility of the sending groups.
- 101 5. Synod delegates and leadership will be selected with attention to diversity as
102 affirmed in UCC values and commitments.
- 103 6. All settings of the United Church of Christ will be invited to participate in mission
104 discernment and speak to each Synod of the call of God to mission as heard in
105 their context(s), of their engagement in mission, and of the ways in which that
106 mission might be shared throughout the Church. The discernment processes are
107 to be designed and refined under the leadership of the United Church of Christ
108 Board. All settings will also be encouraged to initiate their own processes of
109 discernment and engagement with one another.
- 110 7. Synod will receive the results of discernment processes and include them in its
111 own discernment as delegates (and other attendees) join in conversation and
112 deliberation.
- 113 8. General Synod Standing Rules will be revised to enable Synod to meet its
114 responsibility as a primary setting for the discernment and establishment of the
115 mission of the United Church of Christ. The Rules will
- 116 a. Provide for all delegates to participate in discernment and to bring that
117 discernment to its goal of shaping the mission of the United Church of
118 Christ
- 119 b. Offer ways for all settings of the Church to share ideas, invitation, and
120 concerns and to participate in mission discernment for the whole Church
121 toward the goals of enlisting all who are called by God in responding

122 faithfully to that call and of inspiring Local Churches and all other UCC
123 settings to engage in best practices of witnessing effectively to God's love
124 in the world.

125

126 2. The United Church of Christ Board

127 The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible for the governance of the
128 national setting of the Church between meetings of the General Synod. The Board shall
129 be rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, honor the Statement of Faith and the Preamble to
130 the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, and be faithful to the Constitution of the
131 United Church of Christ as well as to the historical, covenantal, and legal commitments
132 of the United Church of Christ and its related mission bodies.

133 The membership of the Board shall be diverse, as expressed in the Constitution, and
134 members shall bring the necessary skills, competencies and experiences required to fulfill
135 their responsibilities.

136 The United Church of Christ Board shall

- 137 1. Provide responsible governance of the national setting of the United Church of
138 Christ in faithful service to God
- 139 2. Serve as the Corporate Board of the national setting and of each of the
140 Covenanted Ministries: Local Church, Justice and Witness, and Wider Church
- 141 3. Provide for visioning and strategic planning, including the development and
142 articulation of comprehensive, integrated strategies and goals for the national
143 setting
- 144 4. Provide fiduciary oversight and monitoring for the national setting of the United
145 Church of Christ and provide for developing and acquiring resources to advance
146 God's mission for the church.
- 147 5. Provide for the continuing evaluation of policy, program, and governance
- 148 6. Provide for the continuing participation of the United Church of Christ as a
149 partner in ministry with the Christian Church Disciples of Christ, including the
150 Common Global Ministries Board.³
- 151 7. Continue and honor the role of the United Church of Christ as a united and
152 uniting church.

³ The United Church of Christ will continue to provide the same number of representatives (currently 20) to the Common Global Ministries Board as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Because of the unique covenantal commitments embodied by the CGMB, additional care must be given to nurturing the partnership. Because of the number of meetings required by those serving on the CGMB, the United Church of Christ Board may select representatives from among its own members and/or representatives from the broader church to serve on the CGMB.

- 153 8. Facilitate the identification of, and attend to, concerns and ideas related to
154 communication, identity, fund development, strategic planning, evangelism, and
155 other issues critical for the life of the whole church
156 9. Be accountable to the General Synod.

157 Initially, all Board members will serve on one of three Ministry Committees: Justice and
158 Witness, Local Church, and Wider Church. Ministry Committee members will bring
159 expertise and passion to carry forward the historic commitments and relationships of the
160 current Covenanted Ministries and of the General Synod, including Common Global
161 Ministries, to honor the diversity of the commitments of the UCC, to work in covenant
162 with one another, to support ecumenical relationships, and to keep the distinctive United
163 Church of Christ core values alive. Ministry Committees of the United Church of Christ
164 Board will formulate recommendations for the full Board's approval and monitor their
165 implementation. The Ministry Committees will be open to future reconfiguration to
166 address mission priorities discerned and adopted by General Synods.

167

168 3. Membership of the United Church of Christ Board

169 The United Church of Christ Board shall have 52 members, all of whom are elected by
170 the General Synod. 36 members serve in "at-large" positions, others are ex-officio. All
171 members shall have voice and vote.

172 3.A. At-Large Members of the United Church of Christ Board

- 173 1. Fifty percent (50%), or more, shall be persons of color
174 2. Fifty percent (50%), or more, shall be women
175 3. One-third (1/3) shall be persons with ordained ministerial standing or ordained
176 ministerial partner standing
177 4. One-third (1/3) shall be laymen
178 5. One-third (1/3) shall be laywomen.
179 6. Twenty percent (20%) shall be under 30 years of age at the time of election. To
180 the extent possible, the under-30 members shall include both youth of high school
181 age and young adults. All have full voice and vote, except as legally proscribed.
182 7. At least one member shall be a person who self-identifies as having a disability
183 8. At least one member shall be a person who self-identifies as gay, lesbian,
184 bisexual, or transgender
185 9. Members at large shall serve for one term of six years, with a class of 12 being
186 elected at each General Synod. A member-at-large who has served more than
187 one-half of a full term may not be nominated to serve again until at least two

188 years have passed. In the first election, the 36 at-large members shall be elected
189 as follows:⁴

- 190 a. Twelve (12) for a term of two years, to include two (2) members each
191 from the current Office of General Ministries Board, Local Church
192 Ministries Board, Wider Church Ministries Board, Justice and Witness
193 Ministries Board, and the Executive Council, and two (2) members from
194 among the Historically Under-Represented Groups.
195 b. Twelve (12) for one term of four years
196 c. Twelve (12) for one term of six years

197 10. Nominations for the at-large positions will be solicited from all entities and
198 organizations within the United Church of Christ. There shall be not more than
199 three at-large members from any one conference at the time of an individual's
200 election. The nominating Committee shall be strongly encouraged to ensure that,
201 over time, every conference has one or more members serving on the Board with
202 no more than six years intervening without such participation.

203 3.B. Ex-Officio Members of the United Church of Christ Board

204 The following will serve as members of the United Church of Christ Board, ex-officio,
205 with voice and vote, in these three categories:

206

207 *Elected by the General Synod*

208 Four Members of the Collegium/Officers of the Church
209 The Moderator and Vice Moderator of the General Synod⁵

210

211 *Conference Ministers Recommended by the Council of Conference Ministers*

212 Six Conference Ministers, one from each of the Regions

213

214 *Other Ex-Officio*

215 The Executive of the Pension Boards, UCC
216 The Executive of United Church Funds
217 The Executive of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries
218 One Member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

219 4 The General Synod Nominating Committee

220 The General Synod Nominating Committee shall bring the slate of candidates to serve as
221 members of the United Church of Christ Board to the General Synod for an uncontested
222 election. Composition of the slate shall provide for the diversity of Board membership as
223 described above.

⁴ All recommendations here are based upon General Synod continuing to meet once every two years. Should that pattern be changed, terms of office will need to be adjusted. However, terms shall be determined so that there will always be some persons with experience continuing to serve as new members begin and no at-large member serves a term of more than eight years.

224 The General Synod Nomination Committee shall in its membership and in its function
225 emphasize the church's values and commitments to be a radically welcoming community.
226 Members of the Committee must demonstrate a thorough understanding of what it means
227 to be a multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming, and accessible to all church.

228 The General Synod Nominating Committee shall select candidates who will bring to the
229 United Church of Christ Board the knowledge, competencies, skills and experiences
230 needed to serve effectively and faithfully.

231 The General Synod Nominating Committee shall consist of 16 members elected by the
232 General Synod.

233

234 Of these 16 members

- 235 1. ten (10) shall be chosen from a pool of nominees submitted by Conferences;
236 2. four (4) shall be chosen from a pool of nominees submitted by Historically Under-
237 | Represented Groups (including the Council for American Indian ~~Ministries~~ Ministry, the
238 Council for Hispanic Ministries, the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries, the
239 United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries, the Ministers for Racial, Social, and
240 Economic Justice, the Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries, the United Black
241 Christians and the United Church of Christ Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and
242 Transgender Concerns;
243 3. and two (2) shall be chosen from among the members of the United Church of Christ
244 Board.

245 The diversity of the Nominating Committee shall reflect the diversity of the Board. See
246 section 3A.

247 The General Synod Nominating Committee shall

- 248 1. recommend a process to the Board to approve for receiving names from
249 conferences, underrepresented groups, educational institutions, health and human
250 service ministries, ministry partners and settings and individual members of the
251 United Church of Christ;
252 2. actively search for candidates for nomination and
253 3. develop a form to identify candidate's background, knowledge, experience, skills,
254 and competencies.

255 The General Synod Nominating Committee shall consider, but not be limited to, such
256 attributes as candidates' leadership, a wide range of life experience and background
257 including socio-economic, cultural competency, financial knowledge, fund raising
258 experience, community building skills, commitment to justice, and understanding of good
259 governance.

260 All candidates considered for nomination to the United Church of Christ Board, and all
261 members of the Board, shall provide the Nominating Committee with appropriate

262 information about themselves, including their local church membership, their experience
263 in the United Church of Christ, their personal demographic background, and the skills,
264 knowledge, experiences and competencies they would bring to the Board.

265

266 5. The Collegium of Officers

267 The United Church of Christ shall continue to be led by a Collegium of Officers, the
268 General Minister and President and three Executive Ministers, who will oversee the work
269 of the Covenanted Ministries (Justice and Witness, Wider Church, and Local Church).

270 The Officers of the Church (Collegium) shall be nominated by the United Church of
271 Christ Board and elected by the General Synod. They shall be accountable to the United
272 Church of Christ Board and through the Board to the General Synod. They shall function
273 as a team of peers, modeling mutual accountability, collegiality, coordination,
274 collaboration, open communication, transparency, and support. They will reflect the
275 commitment of the United Church of Christ to be inclusive and diverse.

276 5.A. The General Minister and President

277 The General Minister and President shall be the spiritual leader and pastor of the church,
278 charged with the care and nurture of the spiritual life of the church

279 The General Minister and President shall be the principle leader in interpreting the
280 theological perspectives and values of the United Church of Christ as guided by the
281 General Synod and in consultation with the Collegium.

282 The General Minister and President shall be the chief representative of the United Church
283 of Christ in the public square and at ecumenical, interdenominational, and interfaith
284 tables.

285 The General Minister and President shall convene and preside at meetings of the
286 Collegium. S/he shall be responsible for coordinated communication, fund raising, and
287 planning in collaboration with the Executive Ministers.

288 The General Minister and President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the General
289 Synod and is its principle spokesperson. The General Minister and President shall serve
290 as the president and chief executive officer of the corporation of the United Church of
291 Christ Board and as president of each of the continuing Covenanted Ministries and other
292 corporations within the national setting.

293 The General Minister and President shall oversee the administration of the national
294 setting of the United Church of Christ and shall select a Chief Administrative Officer and
295 Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Collegium. The Administrative Officer

296 and the Financial Officer are accountable to the General Minister and President, and
297 through that office, to the United Church of Christ Board. The Chief Financial Officer
298 shall serve as Treasurer of all corporations.

299 The General Minister and President shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Boards of
300 the Associated Ministries and Affiliated Ministries of the United Church of Christ as
301 determined by their bylaws.⁵ S/he shall have voice, but not vote, in the meetings of all
302 Commissions, Councils, and Committees of the United Church of Christ.

303 5.B. The Executive Ministers

304 The Executive Ministers shall oversee the programs of the Ministries (Justice and
305 Witness, Wider Church, Local Church). Responsibilities shall include program
306 development and implementation, financial management, and personnel. Executive
307 Ministers shall have other responsibilities as required to provide leadership for the
308 national setting in response to God's call to mission. With the General Minister and
309 President, they will participate in visioning and planning, communications, development
310 and management of budgets, development and leadership of staff, and implementation of
311 policies adopted by the General Synod and the United Church of Christ Board.

312 Each Executive Ministers shall serve as the chief executive officer of a continuing
313 Covenanted Ministry corporation.

314

315 6. Committees of the United Church of Christ Board

316 There shall be three Ministry Committees of the United Church of Christ Board as
317 described above.

318 There shall be at least four standing committees of the United Church of Christ Board:
319 Executive, Finance and Budget, Investment and Endowment, and Audit. The Board may
320 create other standing committees and special committees as needed, and each may draw
321 on expertise beyond the Board if necessary.

322 6.A .The Executive Committee

323 The Executive Committee of the United Church of Christ Board may act on behalf of the
324 full Board when necessary and in accordance with the standing rules of the United
325 Church of Christ Board.

⁵ The Unified Governance Working Group recommends that all Associated and Affiliated Ministries provide for the President and General Minister to serve as an ex-officio member of their boards, with voice and vote.

326 The authority of the Executive Committee shall be governed by the standing rules of the
327 United Church of Christ Board as adopted by the Board.

328 Members of the Executive Committee shall be members of the United Church of Christ
329 Board. The Executive Committee shall include twelve (12) positions:

- 330 1. The Chair and Vice Chair of the United Church of Christ Board, elected by the
331 Board.
- 332 2. One representative from each of the three Ministry Committees.
- 333 3. Four Officers of the Church (Collegium)
- 334 4. One Conference Minister
- 335 5. One member of the Budget & Finance Committee
- 336 6. One additional member

337 6.B. The Finance and Budget Committee

338 The Finance and Budget Committee of the United Church of Christ Board shall
339 recommend and oversee financial policy. The Committee shall

- 340 1. Review the annual available resources and be responsible for financial planning
- 341 2. Review the proposed Annual Budget recommended by the Collegium in
342 consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and other key staff and mission
343 partners, including the Common Global Ministries Board
- 344 3. Recommend an Annual Budget to the United Church of Christ Board
- 345 4. Receive and review regular and comprehensive financial reports

346 Members of the Finance and Budget Committee shall be members of the United Church
347 of Christ Board. There shall be up to twelve (12) members of the Committee, including:

- 348 1. The Chair or Vice Chair of the United Church of Christ Board
- 349 2. Two (2) representatives with financial expertise from each of the Ministry
350 Committees
- 351 3. The General Minister and President

352 6.C. The Investment and Endowment Committee

353 The Investment and Endowment Committee shall assure that the legacy and historic
354 restrictions on the use of funds, and the intended use of the unrestricted funds of each of
355 the historic ministries related to the United Church of Christ through its Covenanted
356 Ministries are faithfully maintained, monitored, accounted for, and reported out to the
357 United Church of Christ Board and through the Board to the General Synod and the
358 church.

359 The Investment and Endowment Committee shall

- 360 1. Recommend to the United Church of Christ Board investment policies for all
361 funds, including investment screens that reflect the commitment of the United
362 Church of Christ to corporate social responsibility.
- 363 2. Manage the endowed funds and other assets, including real property, in
364 accordance with investment policies approved by the United Church of Christ
365 Board.
- 366 3. Monitor and report on the management of invested funds to the United Church of
367 Christ Board.
- 368 4. Recommend to the United Church of Christ Board the annual draw rate on
369 invested funds that may be used to carry out the mission entrusted to the
370 Covenanted Ministries.
- 371 5. Review, Monitor, and recommend to the United Church of Christ Board the
372 allocation of annual dollar amounts resulting from the application of the spending
373 rate to each of the restricted endowment funds and to each of the historic donor-
374 intended uses of unrestricted endowment funds.
- 375 6. Monitor and oversee the allocation of both restricted and unrestricted funds to
376 ensure that they will be allocated based on donor intent, whenever that can be
377 determined, and to provide the full Board an overview of all funds to encourage
378 the most effective collaborative and faithful use of those funds to further the
379 mission of the United Church of Christ.
- 380 7. Provide United Church of Christ Board representation to the Investment
381 Committee of the United Church Foundation (United Church Funds).

382 Any Investment and Endowment Committee recommendation of the annual draw rate
383 and allocation of dollar amounts from restricted and unrestricted endowment funds shall
384 not be modified by the United Church of Christ Board except upon two affirmative votes,
385 each of not less than eighty-five percent (85%) of the members present at one or more
386 meetings of the full Board, with not less than twelve (12) hours between the two
387 affirmative votes, in order to ensure adequate discernment by the full Board. This policy
388 shall be included in the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.

389 The Investment and Endowment Committee shall be members of the United Church of
390 Christ Board, except as noted below. There shall be up to 14 members, including:

- 391 1. Two (2) representative from each of the Ministry Committees, selected by each
392 Committee
- 393 2. Four Officers of the Church, the General Minister and President and the three
394 Executive Ministers
- 395 3. The Executive of the United Church Foundation (United Church Funds), voice
396 without vote
- 397 4. Up to three members of the United Church of Christ, who are not members of the
398 Board, who bring legal and/or investment expertise, may be elected to the
399 Committee by vote of the full Board. They will serve on the Committee with
400 voice and vote.

401 6.D. The Audit Committee

402 The Audit Committee of the United Church of Christ Board shall

- 403 1. Select the audit firm to perform the annual financial audit of all funds
404 2. Receive and review the report of the auditors and report to the full Board

405 The size of the Audit Committee may be determined by the United Church of Christ
406 Board. Members of the Board will comprise the majority of the members of the Audit
407 Committee. Additional members of the United Church of Christ, who are not members
408 of the Board, who bring financial and/or legal expertise, may be elected to the Committee
409 by vote of the full Board. They will serve on the Committee with voice and vote.

410

411 Additional Comments

412 The Unified Governance Working Group recognizes the need for additional opportunities
413 to engage more members and settings of the United Church of Christ in our common
414 mission with one another. That mission is initiated and engaged everywhere among us
415 and we urge all to invite one another to participate. We look forward to General Synods
416 and other gatherings (regional, national, virtual) in which we share with one another in
417 listening for God's call to us through Jesus Christ and discerning how we will respond as
418 communities and individuals in the name of the United Church of Christ.

419 We recommend renewed consideration of the meeting patterns, composition and
420 frequency of the General Synod toward further engagement in the discernment of,
421 preparation for, and participation in mission.

422 We recommend that events sponsored by the national setting, such as Leaders in
423 Koinonia (LinK), Mission Works, Justice LED (Leaders Engaging and Developing), and
424 the Congregational Vitality workshops be enhanced and increased with the specific
425 purpose of engaging United Church of Christ members in mission opportunities in
426 partnership with the national setting. We trust new opportunities and events will be
427 developed and offered.

428 The Unified Governance Working Group is grateful to the Executive Council for being
429 trusted to create this proposal. We believe we have been faithful to the mandate given to
430 us by the Executive Council and the General Synod to prepare a proposal for the unified
431 governance of the national setting of the United Church of Christ. We have been blessed
432 in discovering a new depth of community as we have worked together. We have listened
433 to one another and, we hope and trust, to the voice of God. We have not all heard the
434 same things; two of our members disagree with this proposal for unified governance.
435 The other 27 members of our diverse group offer this proposal with our strong support.

436 We pray the Holy Spirit will carry our beloved United Church of Christ; we believe that
437 will happen.