

1 **Definition of Local Church:**

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3 Remembering the stories of Jesus who gathered disciples to share in a way of life
4 together and drawing upon the denomination’s foundational documents, the Manual on
5 Church defines a Local Church by the way a gathered community lives in relationship to
6 God, one another, and the world.

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8 In the United Church of Christ, a Local Church is any community of people within the
9 United Church of Christ, consistent with Article V of the UCC Constitution, that

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- 11 a) Gathers to explore faith, hope, and love through worship, learning, and service;
- 12 b) Finds theological resonance in conversation with the UCC’s Statement of Faith
13 and seeks to be in conversation with every generation to make the faith its own;
- 14 c) Demonstrates an ongoing commitment to covenantal relationship with the UCC
15 through Congregational Standing as described in the Congregational Code;
- 16 d) Practices ongoing spiritual growth and congregational health as described in the
17 Marks for Faithful and Vital Local Churches;
- 18 e) Engages in discernment, seeks to be recognized as a Local Church by the
19 Association (or Conference acting as an Association), is granted Congregational
20 Standing with the denomination, and maintains Congregational Standing; and
- 21 f) Fulfills the responsibility of congregational autonomy by discerning God’s call for
22 the congregation, setting missional priorities, organizing the gathered
23 community, and attending to the corporate and legal responsibilities of being an
24 organization.