

## **STANDING RULES OF THE THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SYNOD**

As approved by the United Church of Christ Board May 1, 2020

### **THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**

1. The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ and is composed of delegates chosen by the Conferences, from among the members of its Local Churches, the 52 members of the United Church of Christ Board, and 40 delegates, four each, from the Historically Underrepresented Groups: Council for American Indian Ministry, Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries, Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice, Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries, United Black Christians, UCC Disabilities Ministries, Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries, the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ, United Samoan Ministries, and the UCC Mental Health Network; these shall constitute the Voting Delegates. There are also Associate Delegates who have voice without vote (United Church of Christ Constitution, paragraph 59, and Bylaws 199).

### **ACCREDITATION AND SEATING OF VOTING DELEGATES AND ASSOCIATE DELEGATES**

2. Delegates will be accredited by the General Synod Registrar or the Assistant Registrar or their agents at the registration desk upon presentation of proper credentials.
3. Conference Ministers are responsible for certifying substitutes to fill vacancies in the Conference's delegation. These persons shall be registered by the Registrar or Assistant Registrar and accredited as delegates. A delegate vacancy is created by illness requiring the delegate to be unable to attend meetings of the General Synod or a family or vocational emergency requiring a delegate to leave the General Synod. A delegate intentionally planning to leave the General Synod for any other reason does not constitute a delegate vacancy; there shall be no sharing of delegate status. Once a vacancy is deemed to exist and a replacement delegate certified the new delegate will hold that status through the conclusion of the General Synod.
4. Composition of delegations can be challenged by Voting or Associate delegates only. Delegate seats that are contested will remain vacant until the General Synod Credentials Committee (Bylaw 212) makes a recommendation to the General Synod and a decision is made by majority vote of the General Synod.
  - A. A challenge of a delegation shall be made to the Credentials Committee at least 30 days prior to the General Synod for appropriate consideration and recommendation to the General Synod.
  - B. In the event of a challenge to the composition of a delegation the Credentials Committee shall resolve, within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the challenge, the matter on the basis of, the (1) provisions of the Conference for electing its General Synod delegates and, (2) the provisions as described in paragraph 195 of

the Bylaws for the composition of the Conference delegations.

5. Voting delegates (Bylaws 194-198) wearing the proper badge will be seated in the specifically designated delegate section. Conference Delegates will be seated with their Conference delegation. Conference Ministers who serve on the United Church of Christ Board will be seated with the Board but shall also have a seat with their Conference delegation and may sit with the Conference delegation when needed. No Conference employee or other substitute may at any time occupy a vacant Conference delegation seat intended for use by the Conference Minister who is seated with the Board.
6. Associate Delegates (Bylaws 199-200) wearing the proper badge will be seated in the specifically designated Associate Delegate section, except the Chairperson of the governing board and the Chief Executive Officer(s) of each Conference who may be seated with their Conference delegation. Associate Delegates to General Synod have voice without vote in all aspects and functions of the General Synod, including committees.
7. No other person will be allowed in the delegate section except non-delegates having voice without vote as described below, and persons designated by the General Synod Administrator as General Synod staff, and national staff liaisons. All Delegates, Associate Delegates, non-delegates having voice without vote and other persons mentioned in this paragraph must have appropriate credentials from the General Synod Registrar.

#### **ACCREDITATION AND SEATING OF NON-DELEGATES HAVING VOICE WITHOUT VOTE**

8. When the interests of their respective institutions or groups are before the General Synod, the Chief Executive Officers of the institutions related to the Council for Higher Education shall have the privilege of voice without vote.
9. A group composed of at least 25 members of the United Church of Christ which has come together as a particular constituency or is interested in a specific issue may have voice without vote under the following conditions:
  - A. The General Synod may vote, on recommendation of the Business Committee, to grant to not more than two non-delegate representatives of a group the privilege of voice without vote and of seating with the Associate Delegates, if the group meets the following criteria:
    1. The group must consist of at least 25 members of the United Church of Christ and more than one Conference must be represented in its membership.
    2. The group must show cause to the Business Committee why elected Delegates cannot effectively represent its cause or concern to the General Synod.

The two non-delegate representatives given voice without vote must hold membership in a Local Church of the United Church of Christ.

- B. Any request for voice without vote privileges at the Thirty-third General Synod must be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President via Karen Georgia Thompson, General Synod Administrator, at thompsonk@ucc.org, **on or before January 31, 2021**. A list of at least 25 current members including verifiable Local Church membership reflecting membership in more than one Conference must accompany all requests.
  - C. For groups not formally related to the United Church of Christ, privilege of voice without vote ends with the adjournment of the General Synod.
10. The 14 members of the Nominating Committee elected by the General Synod, Honored Guests, Former Officers of the United Church of Christ, Moderators of past General Synods, Chief Executive Officers of formerly Recognized and Established Instrumentalities, and the Commission for Racial Justice, and Ecumenical Guests who are not Associate Delegates may be accorded the privilege of voice without vote and of seating with the Associate Delegates by vote of the General Synod.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATING AND CONSIDERING FORMAL MOTIONS**

11. Matters of concern to members of the United Church of Christ may be presented in the form of Formal Motions for consideration by the General Synod. Formal Motions are Proposed Pronouncements, Proposals for Action, and Resolutions and Other Formal Motions. All matters submitted by a Conference or Association shall be considered by the General Synod (Bylaws 175 and 180). All Formal Motions must be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President via electronic mailing to Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at petersonk@ucc.org. The United Church of Christ Board, acting as the Business Committee, will propose recommendations regarding the disposition of these proposals and report these recommendations to the General Synod.
- A. Items that are expected to be routine, non-controversial, or dealt with in a special hearing will be reported directly to the plenary session by the Business Committee. This might include, but is not limited to, such items as the budget, amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws, statements of commendation, recognition, and celebration, and certain Resolutions. The Business Committee may place some of these items on a Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda will be approved by delegates in the opening plenary of the General Synod. Proponents of Resolutions placed on the Consent Agenda will have two minutes to speak to their Resolution before the Consent Agenda is moved. Items may be removed from the Consent Agenda by a majority vote of the General Synod. If a

Resolution is removed from the Consent Agenda, it will be assigned to a committee or considered in a plenary session of the General Synod.

- B. All proposed pronouncements and proposals for action shall be assigned to committee.
- C. Items that are complicated or controversial that require background discussion and study, that merit and need a hearing process, or that have a system-wide impact will be assigned to a committee. The proposer shall supply a resource person to the committee.
- D. Any proposed business item that reiterates or reaffirms previous action shall normally be referred by the General Synod to the body or bodies implementing such action. A referral for implementation is, in itself, a statement that the General Synod is already on record with the intent of the business item and that the policy base for implementation is already in existence.
- E. Items addressing issues addressed by one of the two preceding General Synods shall be referred by the General Synod to implementing bodies.
- F. If a proposed motion differs significantly from previous policy or action of the two preceding General Synods, it shall be assigned to a committee. The burden of proof is on those submitting the proposal to explain how it is different.
- G. Definitions, Procedures, and Format

### 1. Proposed Pronouncement

- a) Definition: A Pronouncement is a statement of Christian conviction on a matter of moral or social principle that has been adopted by two-thirds vote of a General Synod. It is based on biblical, theological and ethical grounds. Until adopted, the statement presented for consideration by a General Synod is a Proposed Pronouncement. Proposals for Action shall not be included in Proposed Pronouncements. (See **2. Proposals for Action**, below.)
- b) Sources: A Proposed Pronouncement may be submitted only by:
  - i) a General Synod Delegate or Delegate-elect with the written concurrence of at least ten additional General Synod Delegates or Delegates-elect from two or more Conferences;
  - ii) a Local Church, with the written concurrence of at least five Local Churches of the United Church of Christ;

- iii) an Association;
  - iv) a Conference;
  - v) a Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated Ministry, or other body as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ; and
  - vi) the United Church of Christ Board.
- c) Procedures for Considering Proposed Pronouncements are:
- i) A copy of the Proposed Pronouncement must be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President via electronic mailing to Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at [petersonk@ucc.org](mailto:petersonk@ucc.org) **on or before October 21, 2020.**
  - ii) The Office of the General Minister and President will send the Proposed Pronouncement with instructions for further circulation to the Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and delegates **on or before January 2, 2021**. It shall be labeled “Proposed Pronouncement—Circulated for Discussion and Comments.”
  - iii) The Business Committee shall designate a committee or other group to review the Proposed Pronouncement and make recommendations to the General Synod. The initiator(s) of the Proposed Pronouncement shall designate a person to support the Proposed Pronouncement before the committee or group designated by the Business Committee. Additional persons may provide support or opposition.
  - iv) The Office of the General Minister and President will receive via electronic mailing to Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at [petersonk@ucc.org](mailto:petersonk@ucc.org), responses to the Proposed Pronouncement from Local Churches, Delegates, Delegates-elect, Associations, Conferences, Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated Ministries, or other bodies as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ including the record of any votes taken. The Office of the General Minister and President will provide one copy of each response to the committee or group designated to review the Proposed Pronouncement, retaining one copy in the Office of the General Minister and President. A report shall be made to the General Synod of the volume and character received.

- v) The committee or group designated by the Business Committee to review the Proposed Pronouncement shall have the following duties:
  - a. to coordinate the response received;
  - b. to hold open hearing(s) after proper notice; and
  - c. to present, after such hearing(s), to a plenary session of the General Synod its recommendations for action. Such action may be approved, disapproved, amended, consolidated, referred or no action may be recommended. A substitute motion or other amendment that radically alters the basic intent or direction of the original Proposed Pronouncement, however, shall be ruled out of order.
  
- vi) The Proposed Pronouncement and the recommendations of the committee or group reviewing the Proposed Pronouncement must be made available to the delegates on the General Synod website before action can be taken.
  
- vii) If adopted, the Pronouncement shall be communicated throughout the United Church of Christ and to the public.
  
- d) Format: A Proposed Pronouncement and its supporting materials shall be submitted and circulated in the following format: (Proposed Pronouncements and supporting materials that do not follow this format will be returned for revision.)
  - i) A brief Title with an information sheet indicating the source of the Proposed Pronouncement, date of submission, and any other information pertinent to the Proposed Pronouncement.
  - ii) A brief Summary (an abstract).
  - iii) Biblical, Theological and Historical Grounding: describe how this action reflects the historic roots of the United Church of Christ and connect it to current identity and theology, noting the current engagement of various settings of the Church.
  - iv) The Statement of Christian Conviction upon which the General Synod will vote.
    - a. The Statement of Christian Conviction is the only portion of the Proposed Pronouncement that will be voted on by the General

Synod. Committees functioning for the General Synod, however, shall consider and may amend any portion of the Proposed Pronouncement.

## 2. Proposals for Action

- a) Definition: A Proposal for Action is a recommendation for specific directional statements and goals implementing a Pronouncement. A Proposal for Action requires a 2/3 affirmative vote for adoption. A Proposal for Action normally accompanies a Pronouncement. Additional Proposals for Action may also be considered at a later date. (A Proposal for Action may be submitted and circulated in anticipation of the adoption of a Proposed Pronouncement.)
- b) Source: Proposals for Action may be submitted only by
  - i) a General Synod Delegate or Delegate-elect, with the written concurrence of at least ten additional General Synod Delegates or Delegates-elect, from two or more Conferences;
  - ii) a Local Church, with the written concurrence of at least five other Local Churches of the United Church of Christ;
  - iii) an Association;
  - iv) a Conference;
  - v) a Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated Ministry or other body as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ; and
  - vi) the United Church of Christ Board.
- c) Procedures for Considering Proposal for Action are:
  - i) A copy of the Proposal for Action may be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President via electronic mailing to Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at [petersonk@ucc.org](mailto:petersonk@ucc.org) **on or before October 21, 2020**.
  - ii) The Office of the General Minister and President will send the Proposal for Action to the Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, proposed implementer(s), and Delegates **on or before January 2, 2021**. It shall be labeled "Proposal for Action—Circulated for Discussion and

Comments.”

- iii) The Business Committee may designate a committee or other group to review the Proposal for Action and make recommendations to the General Synod, or the Business Committee may present the Proposal for Action with its own recommendation to the General Synod. The initiator(s) of the Proposal for Action shall designate a person to support the Proposal for Action before the committee or group designated by the Business Committee. Additional persons may provide support or opposition.
  - iv) The Office of the General Minister and President will receive responses to the Proposal for Action from Local Churches, Delegates, Delegates-elect, Associations, Conferences, Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated Ministries and other bodies as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ including the record of any votes taken via electronic mailing to Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at [petersonk@ucc.org](mailto:petersonk@ucc.org). The Office of the General Minister and President will provide one copy of each response to the committee or group that may have been named by the Business Committee to review the Proposals for Action, and one copy to the initiator(s) of the Proposals for Action, retaining one copy in the Office of the General Minister and President. A report shall be made to the General Synod of the volume and character of the responses received.
  - v) The proposed implementer(s) shall be required to provide to the General Synod a statement of feasibility and an estimate of the financial implications for the Church at the national level of the Proposal of Action.
  - vi) Copies of the Proposal for Action and the recommendations pertaining to it, including a statement of financial implications, must be made available to the Delegates on the General Synod website before action can be taken.
  - vii) If adopted, the Proposal for Action shall be communicated throughout the United Church of Christ, to the public and to those named as implementer(s).
- d) Format: A Proposal for Action shall include the following: (Proposals for Action and supporting materials that do not follow this format will be returned for revision.)



- i) A brief Title with an information sheet indicating the source of the Proposal for Action, date of submission, and any other information pertinent to the Proposal for Action.
  - ii) A brief Summary (an abstract).
  - iii) Background Statement indicating the Pronouncement(s) or the Proposed Pronouncement(s) on which it is based, the Synod(s) at which it was adopted or is proposed, and the rationale for the Proposal for Action.
  - iv) The Directional Statements and Goals upon which the General Synod will vote.
  - v) The statement, *The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.* The implementing body is responsible for developing the strategy and program of the directional statements and goals.
  - vii) The statement, *The funding for the implementation of the Proposal for Action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.*
- e) The Directional Statements and Goals are the only portions of the Proposal for Action that will be voted on by the General Synod. Committees functioning for the General Synod, however, shall consider and may amend any portion of the Proposal for Action.

### 3. Resolution Review Team; Resolutions and Other Formal Motions

- a) Resolution Review Team: Submitters and drafters of resolutions are encouraged to be in conversation with the General Synod staff to the Resolution and Committee Process as soon as possible, even before draft resolutions are completed, in order to ensure resolutions meet all requirements to pass the Committee on Disposition and be addressed by the General Synod. Each resolution will be reviewed by a Resolution Review Team, appointed by the Business Committee, which may include non-board members with special expertise. **All proposed resolutions must be submitted to the Resolution Review Team, prior to being sent to the Office of the General Minister and President,** via electronic mailing to Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at [petersonk@ucc.org](mailto:petersonk@ucc.org). The function of the Resolution Review Team is:

- i) to review the proposed resolution for matters of polity and compliance with the United Church of Christ Constitution and Bylaws and the General Synod Standing Rules;
  - ii) to determine whether the subject of the proposed resolution was addressed by one of the two preceding meetings of the General Synod;
  - iii) to determine whether an Implementation Conversation [see Section 11.G.3(f)] will be required; and
  - iv) to provide assistance in drafting.
  - v) The Resolution Review Team shall not function as a gatekeeper for the subject matter of the resolution, except to the extent that matters of polity or previous General Synod resolutions are implicated.
- b) Definitions:
- i) **Resolution of Witness:** A Resolution of Witness is an expression of the General Synod concerning a moral, ethical or religious matter confronting the Church, the nation, or the world, adopted for the guidance of the Officers, Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated Ministries, or other bodies as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ; the consideration of Local Churches, Associations, Conferences and other bodies related to the United Church of Christ; and for a Christian witness to the world. It represents agreement by at least two-thirds of the delegates voting that the view expressed is based on Christian conviction and is a part of their witness to Jesus Christ. The text of the proposed resolution should be so phrased as not to bring into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree.
  - ii) **Prudential Resolutions:** A Prudential Resolution establishes policy, institutes or revises structure or procedures, authorizes programs, approves directions or requests actions by majority vote.
  - iii) **Other Formal Motions** include actions other than those provided for above by majority vote and include, but are not limited to, elections by Synod, matters of tribute or commendation or matters of condemnation, budget approval and the like and are not bound by the format provisions of this rule. Formal Motions, such as tributes and commendations, are subject to the deadline provisions of this rule. Elections and other Formal Motions covered in the Bylaws are subject to any deadline provisions included there.

- iv) The Business Committee will make the final determination on the classification of a proposed resolution and has the authority to change the classification of a resolution. If the Business Committee determines that a proposed resolution has elements of a Resolution of Witness and of a Prudential Resolution, the proposed resolution will be classified as a Resolution of Witness and will be subject to the supermajority vote.
- c) Sources: A Resolution or Other Formal Motion may be submitted by:
- i) General Synod Delegate or Delegate-elect with the written concurrence of at least ten additional General Synod Delegates or Delegates-elect from two or more Conferences;
  - ii) a Local Church with the written concurrence of at least five other Local Churches of the United Church of Christ;
  - iii) an Association;
  - iv) a Conference;
  - v) a Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated Ministry or other body as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ; and
  - vi) the United Church of Christ Board.
- d) Procedures for Considering Resolutions and Other Formal Motions are:
- i) Proposed Resolutions must be approved by the Resolution Review Team prior to submission to the Office of General Minister and President, regardless of the operative deadline for the resolution. Proposed Resolutions must be submitted to the Resolution Review Team on or before October 31, 2020 to meet the January 2, 2021 deadline. It is not necessary that the resolution be final before submitting to the Resolution Review Team. Submitters are encouraged to provide resolutions in draft form to the Resolution Review Team as early as possible (but no later than the deadlines below), even before the resolution is passed by the Conference or Local Church annual meeting, to reduce the risk of the submitter needing to make changes for a compliant resolution after it has been approved by its setting. For later applicable deadlines, the submitter should be in touch with the Resolution Review Team as soon as the submitter is aware a resolution will be submitted late. Resolutions should be submitted to the Resolution Review Team via Kevin Peterson,

staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at  
petersonk@ucc.org.

- ii) Proposed Resolutions and Other Formal Motions shall be submitted before the following deadlines. A co-sponsor of a Resolution or Other Formal Motion may only be added before the applicable deadline:
  - a. A copy of the Resolution or Other Formal Motion must be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President via Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at petersonk@ucc.org, **on or before January 2, 2021**. A submitter shall include an outline of an Implementation Conversation, if required. See [section]. The Office of the General Minister and President shall make copies available to delegates **on or before April 5, 2021**.
  - b. A Resolution or Other Formal Motion that could not have been anticipated or submitted in conformance with the above deadline must be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President, via Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at petersonk@ucc.org, **on or before May 31, 2021**.
  - c. A Resolution or Other Formal Motion that could not have been anticipated or submitted before May 31, 2021 may be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President via Kevin Peterson, staff to the Resolution and Committee Process Team, at petersonk@ucc.org, during that time, and introduced by title only by a voting Delegate to the Business Committee at a designated point in the agenda of General Synod where new business may be introduced. Unless the reason that the submission could not be made prior to May 31, 2021 is that the submitting Conference or Association annual meeting took place on or after May 31, 2021, the presenter must be accompanied by two other Delegates, at least one of whom must be from a second Conference, and must provide at least 15 copies of the proposed Resolution or Other Formal Motion for distribution to the Committee on Disposition. The Resolution or Other Formal Motion must also be provided on a portable electronic device.
- iii) Every Resolution or Other Formal Motion received prior to the General Synod shall be referred to the Business Committee. The Business Committee shall, in respect of each proposal, either (1) present its own recommendations to the General Synod or (2) assign it to a committee or other group for review and recommendation to the General Synod. Such

recommendations may include approval, disapproval, amendment, consolidation, referral, or no action. The Business Committee may also send any Resolution directly to the United Church of Christ Board for action, except for Resolutions submitted by the United Church of Christ Board. The standards for adoption by the Board shall be the same as those required for adoption by the General Synod.

- iv) Copies of each Resolution or Other Formal Motion and the recommendation pertaining to it **must be distributed to Delegates at least one-half day before action can be taken.**
- e) Format: Resolutions shall include the following information in the following format sections.
  - i) A brief Title with information providing the source of the Resolution, the date of submission and any other information pertinent to the Resolution. The title must accurately reflect the intent of the proposed motion. If presented at General Synod, the names and Conferences of the Delegates presenting the Resolution shall be included.
  - ii) A brief Summary that accurately reflects the content of the Resolution.
  - iii) Biblical, Theological and Historical Grounding: describe how this action reflects the historic roots of the United Church of Christ and connect it to current identity and theology, noting the current engagement of various settings of the Church.
  - iv) The text of the motion.
  - v) The statement, *The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.* There is no financial guarantee of any kind other than the annual budget determined by the United Church of Christ Board of Directors (73 GS 81).
 

The statement, *The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.* The implementing body is responsible for developing the strategy and program designed to implement the Resolution.
- f) Implementation Conversation Requirement: A submitter of a Resolution of Witness that calls upon Local Churches, Conferences, and/or individual members of the United Church of Christ to take particular action is required

to lead an Implementation Conversation during the General Synod meeting. The Implementation Conversation is a [time length] presentation and discussion outlining the ways that Conferences and Local Churches may live out the elements of the resolution. Submitters will be assigned a time and location for the Implementation Conversation at the General Synod meeting. The Implementation Conversation may take place prior to or after the General Synod has considered the item of business.

- i) An Implementation Conversation will be required for all Resolutions of Witness meeting the criteria above regardless of whether the resolutions are passed by the General Synod.
  - ii) An Implementation Conversation does not advocate for the General Synod to approve the resolution or reiterate the background or theological grounding but provides practical ways to take action on the resolution in the local setting.
  - iii) An Implementation Conversation is not required for Resolutions of Witness that call upon only the National Setting and/or the United Church of Christ Board to take action.
  - iv) The Business Committee may determine that particular resolutions are so similar that submitters of these resolutions should present a joint Implementation Conversation and will notify those submitters.
12. No more than three Proposed Pronouncements, Proposal for Action, Resolutions, and other formal motions may be admitted to the agenda from any single source.
13. Reports to be made to succeeding General Synods on a Pronouncement, Proposal for Action, Resolution or Other Formal Motion may be requested for no more than the two General Synods immediately following that General Synod.

#### **REPORTS TO THE GENERAL SYNOD**

14. Reports to the General Synod with no action required shall be placed on file. Reports required by previous General Synod action and Reports from Councils must be sent to the Office of the General Minister and President via Karen Georgia Thompson, General Synod Administrator, at [thompsonk@ucc.org](mailto:thompsonk@ucc.org), **on or before April 5, 2021**. All reports made within the context of the meeting shall be contained in the official minutes of the meeting.

**CONDUCT OF THE BUSINESS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**

15. A quorum for the conduct of business at General Synod 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 (United Church of Christ Constitution, paragraph 59).
16. All proceedings of the General Synod shall, unless otherwise provided for, be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order (United Church of Christ Bylaw 191).
17. Main motions not in distributed materials and substantive amendments shall be presented to the Moderator in writing, signed by the maker and seconder. Only voting Delegates may make motions.
18. When a matter has been referred to a committee or group during the General Synod for review prior to its presentation to a plenary session for debate and action, the recommendation made to a plenary session by such committee or group shall be considered an original main motion fully open to amendment by the General Synod, except a recommendation that radically alters the basic intent or direction of the original matter referred to a committee or group, as determined by a consultation between the Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Chair of the Committee on Disposition, who may consult others in making their decision. Such recommendations shall be regarded as a substitute motion requiring a majority vote of the General Synod for consideration.
19. The agenda as adopted by the General Synod may be changed by two-thirds vote or general consent upon recommendation of the Business Committee or motion from the floor.
20. Debate shall conform to the following provisions:
  - A. Delegates and others wishing to be recognized shall obtain use of a microphone, address the Moderator and identify themselves by name and Conference or other represented body.
  - B. Pro and con microphones may be designated by the Moderator.
  - C. A Delegate may not speak on an issue and conclude by moving the previous question.
  - D. A Delegate may not present a combined motion to close debate on an amendment to a motion and the main motion.
  - E. No one may speak to the same debatable motion more than twice except to answer questions from the floor or the Moderator.
  - F. Unless brought by a committee of the General Synod, a maximum of two minutes for the first speech is allowed the maker of the motion. The maker of a motion coming from a

General Synod committee will have three minutes for the presentation. Subsequent speakers are limited to one minute each.

- G. During timed floor debates and speak outs microphones will be turned off at the expiration of a speaker's time provided for in the General Synod Standing Rules.
- H. When time restrictions on speakers are required by these Standing Rules, an extension of time may be granted by the presiding Moderator to the following persons:
  1. Speakers requiring translation into English from another language (time needed for the translation shall not be counted in the time allotment) and speakers who require sign language translation;
  2. Speakers whose fluency in English is limited and for whom translation is not available;
  3. Speakers with disabilities that affect mobility and/or speech.

A request for an extension of time shall be indicated to the floor parliamentarian who shall notify the presiding Moderator.

- I. Opportunity will be provided for two Delegates speaking in favor and two Delegates speaking in opposition to a motion before an amendment can be made.
  - J. A motion to limit or extend the limits of debate is, itself, undebatable; such motion requires a second and two-thirds vote unless decided by general consent.
  - K. Non-delegates, not otherwise authorized to speak, may speak only by two-thirds vote of the General Synod.
21. Voting shall conform to the following provisions:
- A. Votes shall be decided by the Delegates present and voting. Abstentions shall not be counted in the total.
  - B. Voting shall be by electronic means, unless the Moderator, sensing a consensus of the Synod, calls for a voice vote.

### **MINORITY RESOLUTIONS**

22. Requirements: In the case where a Formal Motion, Constitution and/or Bylaw amendment or Priority is adopted by less than 75% of the votes cast, a minority resolution, expressing a minority viewpoint on the same subject matter, may be proposed at the same or the next business session of that General Synod.



23. Procedures to be followed when a minority resolution is to be considered shall conform to the following provisions:
- A. A Delegate who plans to propose a minority resolution must, at the time of the consideration of the original proposal, request of the Moderator that the percentage of votes in the affirmative be determined and recorded so that eligibility for proposing a minority resolution can be established.
  - B. A minority resolution is to be voted only by those who voted in opposition to the original proposal. Each Conference shall be responsible to determine the eligibility of its own delegates in such a vote.
  - C. To become a matter of record of General Synod, a minority resolution shall require a majority vote of those voting as designated in 23.B, above.

An adopted minority resolution shall be attached to the action to which it relates.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

- 24. The Nominating Committee shall make nominations from the platform as provided by the Constitution and Bylaws.
- 25. Biographical information on each candidate shall be made available by the Nominating Committee for those it nominates. The Nominating Committee shall submit its slate of candidates including biographical information to the General Synod not later than the opening of the business session in which the Nominating Committee reports to the General Synod.
- 26. Written consent of each nominee is required prior to election.
- 27. Members of the Nominating Committee are nominated by the United Church of Christ Board. These nominations are made from the platform by the Business Committee.
- 28. There shall not be nominations from the floor. All candidates presented by the Nominating Committee shall be elected by majority vote, a majority being based on the number of votes cast for the office. The results and number of votes cast for each candidate shall be announced to the delegates in a timely manner.
- 29. The election of the next class of the United Church of Christ Board shall be a single vote. The elections of Moderator and Assistant Moderator shall each come as separate votes thereafter.
- 30. Votes for write-in candidates and abstentions shall not be counted.

### **PROCEDURE AND CALL FOR ELECTION**

31. In the General Synod year in which the General Minister and President of the Church is to be called by election or reelection, the candidate will be presented to the General Synod by the United Church of Christ Board. A single presentation for the candidate may be made, to be no longer than 10 minutes.
32. In the General Synod year in which an Associate General Minister is to be called by election or reelection as an Officer of the Church, a candidate will be presented to the General Synod by the United Church of Christ Board. A single presentation for each candidate may be made, each to be no longer than 10 minutes.
33. Candidates for the Offices of General Minister and President and Associate General Minister may each make a speech no longer than 20 minutes prior to the call by election.
34. An affirmative vote of at least 60% of the votes cast is necessary for each candidate to be called and elected by the General Synod to serve as an Officer of the Church. The results of the vote for each candidate shall be announced to the delegates in a timely manner.

### **OPERATION OF THE EXHIBIT HALL**

35. First priority for space and scheduling needs will be given to the General Synod and those activities that are supportive of its agenda, administration, and business.
36. Preference for exhibits, displays and scheduling of space and time for optional and informal events will be granted to persons representing the Covenanted, Affiliated and Associated Ministries and Other Bodies as defined by Article VI. of the Bylaws of the UCC, Conferences and Associations, Local Churches, General Synod Recognized Groups and bodies that are listed in the Yearbook of the UCC. If they are not among the officially recognized bodies, any group or individual wishing to have an exhibit or reserve space in the facilities managed by the Office of the General Minister and President may request such space.
37. Optional activities that are sponsored by officially recognized bodies, but not integral to program, administration and agenda of the General Synod shall be scheduled so as not to conflict with the General Synod.
38. Exhibits and space will be allocated on a first come, first served basis within the above criteria.
39. Exhibit space will be set aside for the Covenanted Ministries and other national bodies, so desiring, to have a common space that might be decorated with a common theme.
40. The following guidelines pertain to commercial exhibits:
  - A. The product or service that they sell or offer is of value to Local Churches of the UCC.

B. The companies are able to offer references from UCC bodies that have used their services and indicate that they are reputable firms who stand behind their products and services.

41. There will be a directory of exhibits with a description of each, and will include a map of the exhibit hall.
42. Hours when the exhibits will be open, before and during the General Synod, will be posted electronically.

### GENERAL RULES

43. Only printed matter and other matter (including commercial) that has been approved by the Business Committee may be distributed on the floor of the General Synod and within the convention center in which the General Synod is being held. Such materials must contain the identity of the originator.
44. The Business Committee will administer and announce any necessary rules pertaining to photographs being taken during the General Synod meetings.
45. Recording the proceedings of General Synod is the responsibility of the Office of the General Minister and President.
46. Demonstrations and celebrations on the floor and visitors' gallery of the General Synod plenary session must have prior approval of the Business Committee or will be ruled out of order.
47. With proper credentials, all sessions of the General Synod and its delegate committees are open to the public and the news media while the General Synod is in session.
48. The Planning Committee for the Thirty-third General Synod, in consultation with the host Conference, will determine the number of offerings to be received at the Thirty-third General Synod and **shall announce the offering(s) at the spring 2021 meeting of the United Church of Christ Board**. In the event that an exceptional need arises after the spring meeting of the United Church of Christ Board or during the General Synod itself, the Business Committee may authorize an additional offering to meet that need during the General Synod.
49. Members of the United Church of Christ Board, General Synod staff, volunteers and others seeking reimbursement for out-of-pocket General Synod expenses are required to submit those expenses along with verifiable receipts, in compliance with the United Church of Christ Board Travel Policy, to the Office of the General Synod Administrator no later than August 31, 2021. A request for reimbursement after that date will require the approval of the Finance and Budget Committee of the United Church of Christ Board at its fall meeting following General Synod.
50. Any rule(s) may be amended, rescinded, or suspended by a two-thirds vote of the General Synod.

51. When General Synod is not in session, the United Church of Christ Board, acting as General Synod ad interim, may amend the Standing Rules, as necessary, to facilitate the collection, processing and distribution of items of business for a subsequent General Synod. Notification must be sent to Local Churches, Conferences and delegates regarding such action(s) by **June 30, 2020**.
  
52. The Office of the General Minister and President will have the authority to change reference, within these rules, to specific paragraphs of the Constitution and Bylaws should paragraph numbering change in the event of Conference ratification of General Synod-adopted amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. Upon such editorial change, these rules will be recirculated in the prescribed manner. The Office of the General Minister and President will also have the authority to make minor editorial corrections to these rules, such as spelling, grammar and punctuation correction with no additional distribution required.