

## GS34 - 2023 Resolutions Overview

Hi! We are Kevin Peterson and David Anderson and serve as staff to the resolution and committee process for General Synod. Along with the entire national setting of the United Church of Christ we're excited you will be part of the upcoming General Synod.

Some of the business that comes before General Synod is in the form of resolutions, and we are the folks designated to shepherd that process. Resolutions are addressed by the General Synod Standing Rules, specifically rules 12-14, starting on the bottom of page 3. [Click here for a copy of the Standing Rules.](#)

There are two types of resolutions: first are Prudential Resolutions, which address policy, polity, and/or procedure within the denomination; second are Resolutions of Witness, which offer a moral and theological statement of the General Synod. Prudential Resolutions require a simple majority for adoption, while Resolutions of Witness require a two-thirds supermajority.

The Standing Rules state **who may submit a resolution**. Resolutions are most commonly submitted by a conference or association, but may also be submitted by:

- A General Synod delegate or delegate-elect, with the written concurrence of at least ten other delegates or delegates-elect from at least two different conferences;
- A local church, with the written concurrence of at least five other local churches;
- The UCC Board of Directors, or
- A Covenanted, Associated, or Affiliated Ministry, as defined in Article 6 of the UCC Bylaws. [Click here for a copy of the Constitution & Bylaws.](#)

The Standing Rules now clarify that a body submitting a resolution must be an entire setting (such as a conference, association, or congregational meeting). Council or board meetings do not suffice. Therefore, bodies submitting a resolution will also need to submit a copy of the minutes of the meeting at which the resolution was approved for submission to the General Synod.

If you would like to submit a resolution to General Synod we ask that you be in conversation with us as early as possible! **The first deadline for resolutions is October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.** By that date we need to have a rough draft or outline of your resolution so that the Resolution Review Team can give you feedback prior to the **hard submission deadline of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.** The Review Team will ensure your resolution is formatted correctly, does not have polity conflicts, has not been addressed by the past two General Synods, and will look for any formatting or other concerns. The Review Team is not a gatekeeper on the topic of resolutions. If the Review Team finds any issues you will have time to make edits prior to the final deadline of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

The most common edits required to resolutions are in the "Therefore be it resolved" clauses:

1. In the UCC's polity, the General Synod speaks for itself, not for other settings of the UCC. It speaks "to, but not for" the wider United Church of Christ. Therefore, a resolution saying "The United Church of Christ declares..." would instead need to read "The 34<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ declares..."

2. Resolutions may *call upon, urge, affirm, support, invite, recommend, request, ask,* and *encourage* various settings of the Church, but may not *direct* them. The only bodies a General Synod resolution may direct are the UCC Board of Directors and the Covenanted Ministries of the National Setting.
3. Another common edit requested is the addition of footnotes for any quotes and statistics cited in a resolution.

[Click here for some useful verbs for wording motions and a lexicon of UCC organizational terms.](#)

The format your resolution needs to follow is outlined on page 8 of the Standing Rules. Your resolution must include

1. A brief title
2. A brief summary
3. A statement of biblical, theological, and historic grounding
4. The text of the resolution (“whereas...” and “therefor be it resolved” clauses), and
5. Some required boilerplate language at the end.

[Click here for a sample resolution.](#)

Again, the hard deadline for submitting resolutions is January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. Unless the subject addressed by the resolution could not have been anticipated by that date, resolutions received after January 2<sup>nd</sup> *will not be accepted*.

After that date, resolutions are reviewed by the General Synod Committee on Disposition, which is comprised of members of the UCC Board of Directors. The Committee on Disposition will recommend a course of action for each resolution. Resolutions may be sent to a committee at Synod, referred to a plenary session of Synod, put in a consent agenda, sent directly to implementing bodies, or referred to the UCC Board of Directors. While the UCC Board of Directors will vote whether to affirm the suggested disposition of each resolution, the General Synod will also vote whether to affirm those recommendations at its opening plenary.

If your resolution is referred to a General Synod committee you will need to provide a resource person to speak to it and answer questions during committee time at Synod. Also, if your resolution is deemed a Resolution of Witness and calls upon local churches, associations, or conferences to consider some kind of action, you will be expected to lead an Implementation Conversation, which is a brief workshop and networking opportunity at Synod for anyone interested in the topic of your resolution. The expense and logistics for both of these requirements are borne by the submitters of the resolution.

That’s about it for the resolution process! We know that may sound convoluted, but it’s all spelled out in the Standing Rules, and we are here to help you and guide you through the process. To summarize, read the Standing Rules carefully and be in early and frequent communication with us through the whole process to ensure you meet all the requirements and deadlines. You can reach us at any time by emailing us at [peterstonk@ucc.org](mailto:peterstonk@ucc.org) and [andersond@ucc.org](mailto:andersond@ucc.org);

Thank you for your participation in General Synod and the life of the United Church of Christ!

## ***Some Useful Verbs for Wording Motions***

The Thirty-Fourth General Synod . . .

receives and affirms the statement on . . .

declares . . .

calls upon the United Church Funds . . .

urges advocacy . . .

urges conferences, associations, and local churches . . .

requests . . .

supports continued protection . . .

invites the UCC Pension Boards . . .

recommends . . .

requests the United Church Board . . .

calls upon the President of the United States . . .

commends the action of . . .

celebrates its global partnership . . .

affirms Wider Church Ministries . . .

recognizes a growing relationship . . .

gratefully acknowledges . . .

reaffirms its support . . .

directs the United Church Board . . .

Verbs which call on various parts of the United Church of Christ must reflect our polity:

- **Affiliated Ministry** (The Pension Boards) and **Associated Ministry** (The United Church Foundation) may be *requested*, or *urged*, but never *directed*.
- **Conferences, Associations and Local Churches** may be *called upon*, *urged*, or *requested*, but never *directed*.
- General Synod may *direct* the **United Church Board** (which may in turn delegate to a covenanted ministry, collegium or national staff).

*Whereas* statements should be backed by facts and references, generally with endnotes, and supported by text in earlier sections of the resolution. Opinions or implications should be part of a *Be It Resolved* statement.

## **VERBS IN COMMON USE IN THE UCC (SELECTED DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS)**

To Collaborate	To labor as the associate of another; performing work together.
To Consult	To ask advice or opinion as a guide to one's own judgement.
To Cooperate	To work with mutual efforts to promote the objective.
To Coordinate	To bring entities into casual, complementary, parallel, or reciprocal relationships; to harmonize.
To Negotiate	To confer regarding a basis of agreement; to arrange for.

## ***United Church of Christ Lexicon***

### **ORGANIZATIONAL TERMS**

**ADVISORY COMMISSION**—A temporary body appointed by the United Church of Christ Board

**AFFILIATED MINISTRY**—A non-profit corporation which provides services to or for the United Church of Christ, whose Board of Trustees is elected by its corporate membership, and which was recognized previously as an instrumentality by the General Synod. The Pension Boards are an Affiliated Ministry.

**ASSOCIATED MINISTRY**—A non-profit corporation which provides services to or for the United Church of Christ, whose corporate membership is nominated and elected by the United Church of Christ Board, and which was recognized previously as an instrumentality by the General Synod. The United Church Foundation is an Associated Ministry.

**ASSOCIATION**—That body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all local churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing therein, all Commissioned Ministers of that Association, and those Licensed Ministers who have been granted voting membership in that Association.

**BIENNIUM**—For matters related to budgeting and programming, a biennium is the two-year period following January 1 of the year after a General Synod adjourns; for matters related to responsibility of United Church of Christ Board of Directors and others elected by General Synod, a biennium is the two-year period from General Synod to General Synod.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**—The policy making body of a Covenanted or Associated Ministry.

**BODY**—Any organized body at the national level of the United Church of Christ. The word "body" (always written with a small "b") is used in the United Church of Christ as a generic term—not in a legal meaning unless so indicated by its context. The expression "body of the United Church of Christ" refers to all organized national bodies—whether or not in the Constitution or Bylaws—whether programmatic or advisory or policy making—whether permanent or temporary—whether large or small.

**CAUCUS**—A meeting of any group often convened with the intention of influencing policy decisions of a larger, more powerful body. A caucus is an informal group called at any time as respective members of that group strategizes on a particular issue.

**CONFERENCE**—That body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all local churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding standing or ordained ministerial partner standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association, all Commissioned Ministers in its Associations, and those Licensed Ministers who have been granted voting membership in its Associations.

**COUNCIL**—A body created by the General Synod for the principal purpose of advising the Officers or the UCC Board or other bodies of the Church. A Council's areas of concern are related to those of persons with like concerns who normally compose such Councils.

**COVENANTED MINISTRY**—The covenanted ministries are defined and set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws, whose purpose is to capture the spirit as well as the substance of the relationships among the parts of the United Church of Christ in its national expression.

**INTER-MINISTRY TEAM**—People from different Covenanted, Affiliated, Associated, and/or other Ministries who meet together to address a topic of common concern.

**GENERAL SYNOD**—The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ composed of delegates chosen by the Conferences, voting members of Board of Directors of Covenanted Ministry, and ex officio delegates.

**LOCAL CHURCH**—The basic unit of the life and organization of The United Church of Christ is the local church.

**MINISTRY TEAM**—Consists of staff persons with related program responsibilities within a Covenanted Ministry, generally led by a Team Leader.

**MISSION PLANNING COUNCIL**—Provides a multi-missional setting bringing together the Officers of the United Church of Christ and principle staff, leaders, or designated representatives of the Covenanted, Associated, and Affiliated Ministries for planning coordinated ministries and for visioning over a wide range of concerns.

**SPECIAL GROUP**—Any group of persons who represent a constituency with a particular concern or specialized interest. There may or may not be formal organizational ties. In order to be granted voice without vote by General Synod, a group must meet the criteria set forth by the standing rules.

**TASK FORCE**—A body named by the General Synod or the UCC Board or anybody to perform a single precisely-defined undertaking within a given time.

## **COMMONLY USED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ABBREVIATIONS**

(Should always be spelled out the first time used in a resolution)

AUCE	Association of United Church Educators
CAIM	Council for American Indian Ministry
CCM	Council of Conference Ministers
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CHHSM	Council for Health and Human Service Ministries
CHM	Council for Hispanic Ministries
CJA	Christians for Justice Action
COREM	Council for Racial Ethnic Ministries
CYYAM	Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministry
EI	Educational Intensives
GS	General Synod
JLCM	Justice and Local Church Ministries
HC	Historical Council
HUGS	Historically Under Represented Groups
MRSEJ	Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice
NIN	Neighbors in Need
OGMP	Office of the General Minister and President
OPTIC	Office of Philanthropy, Technology, Identity and Communications
OGHS	One Great Hour of Sharing
PAAM	Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministry
PB	Pension Boards – United Church of Christ
UBC	United Black Christians
UCAN	United Church of Christ HIV & AIDS Network
UCCB LIAISON	United Church of Christ Board Liaison to a Committee
UCCDM	United Church of Christ Disability Ministries
UCCOSSN	United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network
UCF	United Church Funds
WCM	Wider Church Ministries