

A SYNOPSIS OF GENERAL SYNOD ACTIONS 1957 - 1999

June 25-27, 1957

Uniting General Synod

Cleveland, Ohio

adopted Basis of Union

elected Interim Officers

established: Executive Council

Commission to create the Constitution

Commission to create the Statement of Faith

Interim Headquarters in New York City

Process for election of General Synod Delegates

Agencies: American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions

Board for Home Missions

Council for Christian Social Action

June 1959

General Synod II

Oberlin, Ohio

Adopted draft of Statement of Faith for submitting to Synods, Conferences, Associations and local churches for approval and use

Received draft of Constitution and Bylaws

Affirmed publication of United Church News

Adjourned Synod to 1960 to receive feedback on Constitution and Bylaws

July 1960

Adjourned General Synod II

Cleveland, Ohio

Received revised draft of Constitution

Voted that ratification would require affirmation by 2/3 of the E&R Synods and 2/3 of the CC congregations - by June 6, 1961

July 1961

General Synod III

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Declared the Constitution and Bylaws to be in force (32 E & R Synods [all but Magyar] approved; 3,547 out of 3889 congregations approved)

Theological Commission established "as an instrument of counsel and study on all theological issues arising in the life of the Church or deriving from ecumenical sources."

Established a list of acting Conferences and Associations with realignment study to continue

Resolution in support of Conscientious Objectors

Requested ecumenical bodies to recognize the UCC and set in motion ecumenical conversations for "developing further union"

Elected: Rev. Ben Herbst as 1st President

Charles Lockyear as Treasurer and Fred Buschmeyer as Secretary

July 1963

General Synod IV

Denver, Colorado

Watershed Synod - moved away from organizational matters and tackled the UCC response to the racial crisis
Adopted a statement on racism, calling on the members of the UCC "to uproot intolerance, bigotry and prejudice within our own living and to replace them with good will and the determination to strike down immediately the barriers which divide men on account of race."
Established the Committee on Racial Justice Now and challenged people of the UCC to bring an emergency special offering of funds to cover the cost of the program and authorized the Executive Council to borrow on these offerings up to \$100,000
Authorized a delegation to COCU to join in developing a plan of union
Established permanent Headquarters in New York City and urged all Instrumentalities to locate there
Celebration of the Quatrocentennial of the Heidelberg Catechism
Established Conference boundaries
Received and dedicated the United Church Curriculum

July 1965

General Synod V

Chicago, Illinois

Established the Historical Commission
Adopted "A Call to Action to Fulfill Racial Justice Now", calling upon members, churches and related agencies to move toward racial justice by:
- opening church membership
- witnessing for inclusiveness
- providing equal opportunity for service
- providing equal opportunity for leadership
- establishing Open Door policies
- implementing Fair Employment Practices
- providing financial support
Voted two all church offerings yearly - Spring, OGHS -- Fall, Justice oriented
Major address by Martin Luther King, Jr. - "Man in a Revolutionary World"
Established Conversations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

June 1967

General Synod VI

Cincinnati, Ohio

From here on, more emphasis on theology and justice
Voted to support sanctions in South Africa
Voted a pronouncement on poverty: a Manifesto for American Action in the Struggle against World Poverty
Voted to recognize the right of conscientious objection
Adopted a resolution on Justice and Peace in Vietnam

June 1969

General Synod VII

Boston, Massachusetts

James Forman's speech on behalf of the national Black Economic Development Conference and objected to the court injunction which prevented his entering the offices of UCBWM. Defense given by BWM - their work must be able to continue without constant threat of interruption harassment. Synod voted to ask BWM to withdraw its participation in the restraining order

Commission for Racial Justice established

Adopted Crisis in the Nation program adopted (addressing concerns of Racial Justice) and established as the priority for the next biennium

Resolution in support of "Young People in the Armed Forces"

Resolution to abolish Capital Punishment

Voted action proposal - "Amnesty for War Objectors"

Elected Rev. Robert V. Moss as the 2nd President. In closing address: *"The urgency of the world's agenda has pressed in upon us. And we have addressed ourselves to the real issues of our day, giving no more time than was absolutely necessary to matters concerning the internal life of the church."*

June 1971

General Synod VIII

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Priorities adopted: Faith Crisis - how to recover and renew a living experience of God's promise for humankind
Strengthen the Local Church in life and mission
Racial Justice - seeking liberation, justice and empowerment for the racially oppressed
Peace and United States Power - enabling US power to serve Christian and human ends and assure world peace

Created: Task Force on Leadership Development to "inquire into ways by which the UCC can better assist local churches in develop leadership"
Task Force on Status of Women in Church and Society
Council for Christian Social Action "Churchmanship Award" to MACUCC

Voted: Resolution on Reverence for Life and the Freedom of Choice
Resolution on courage and witness of Philip and Daniel Berrigan

June 1973

General Synod IX

St. Louis, Missouri

Sent delegation of 95 from Synod to Coachella, CA in response to request from UFW

Established OCLL, combining functions of: Council for Church and Ministry, Council for Lay Life and Work, Theological Commission, Worship Commission and Committee for Theological Education. Task: "To combine in one nationwide office the policy making, operational and administrative function for leadership development in the UCC."

Established: 17/76 Achievement Fund
Martin Luther King Sunday as 3rd Sunday in January
Provision for making bond available for Wilmington X
Mutual Recognition of members and ministers of other Christian churches, particularly those in COCU

Affirmed: Closely related seminaries
Ecumenical agenda through work of COCU

June 1975

General Synod X

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Adopted Pronouncement on Civil Liberties without discrimination in regard to sexual or affectional preference
Council on Christian Unity renamed Council for Ecumenism
Created an Advisory Commission on Women in Church and Society
First presentation of Antoinette Brown Award
PSE Conference requests an "Altar Service Book"

June 1977

General Synod XI

Washington, DC

OCLL established as permanent agency
Requested OCLL to develop a Book of Worship using inclusive language
Rev. Avery Post elected 4th President (Robert Moss died in 1976, Rev. Joseph Evans appointed 3rd President until GS XI)
Adopted the Robert Moss version of the Statement of Faith

June 1979

General Synod XII

Indianapolis, Indiana

CCW established for four year interim
Covenant with Christian Church to work and study together:
- Theology and practice of Baptism
- Nature, task and equipping of lay and ordained ministry
- Appropriate forms of mission for today
Adopted: Priority Process
Hunger Action Program
New Initiatives in Church Development
Initiated a study of National Office location
Voted to support the ratification of the ERA
Adopted report on Human Sexuality (birthed the UCPBW with alternate report)
Resolution on the Church and Persons With Handicaps

June 1981

General Synod XIII

Rochester, New York

Received and referred Meaning of Ministry Bylaw Amendments
Voted to establish a Partnership with the ECU
Wide support for ERA candlelight vigil
Voted that GS XIV must be totally accessible to the handicapped
Affirmed Freedom of Choice
Established the Office of Church in Society
Resolution on Affirmative Action in Church and Society

June 1983

General Synod XIV

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Reaffirmed support of ERA
Suspended publication of AD
Voted resolution against Homophobia in church and society
UCPBW highly visible and proactive
Established: Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministry: PAAM, CHM
Youth and Young Adults as Priority
Rev. Carol Joyce Brun elected Secretary (first woman elected to major position)
Resolution in support of those suffering with AIDS

June 1985

General Synod XV

Ames, Iowa

Established: Council for Health and Human Service Ministries
Partnership in Mission with the Pentecostal Church of Chile
Spiritual Renewal & Justice and Peace as Priorities
Ecumenical Partnership with the Christian Church, especially in:
- Shared Mission
- Growing Theological understanding
- Worship
Affirmed full participation of persons with disabilities
Voted: Divestment in South Africa
To be Open and Affirming
To be a Just Peace Church

June 1987

General Synod XVI

Cleveland, Ohio

Celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the UCC
Established: Youth and Young Adults & Ministry to the Homeless as Priorities
CCW as a permanent agency
Partnership in Mission with the United Church in the Philippines
Hispanics, feeling that they were ignored, walked out
Affirmed that "God's covenant with the Jewish people has not been abrogated"
Voted resolution -- "Sexuality and Abortion: A Faithful Response"

June 1989

General Synod XVII

Fort Worth, Texas

Rev. Paul Sherry elected as 5th President

Celebrated 150th anniversary of Amistad Event

Voted: Evangelism and Membership Growth & Integrity of Creation & Justice and Peace as
Priorities

Cleveland as the new National Headquarters

Resolution on "The Church and Reproductive Technologies"

Resolution "In Response to AIDS"

Resolution on "Sexual Harassment in the Church"

Commitment to the use of Inclusive Language

To take Partnership with the Christian Church another step

- Common confession of Christ
- Mutual recognition of members
- Common celebration of the Lord's Supper
- Mutual recognition and reconciliation of ordained ministers
- Common commitment to mission

June 1991

General Synod XVIII

Norfolk, Virginia

Pronouncements on: Sexual Harassment and Abuse

Economic Justice

Healthcare Access for All

Quality of Public Education

Accessible Universal Health Care System

Resolutions on: The Rights of the Child

Established: Make a Difference Campaign

A Structures Committee

Elected Edith Guffey as Secretary

A transition Synod - retirements of Shelby Rooks, Carol Joyce Brun, Marilyn Breitling, ushering in
the 3rd generation of leadership

June 1993

General Synod XIX

St. Louis, Missouri

Joint Synod and General Assembly - a first

Hymnal debate over inclusive language - focusing on "Lord"

Resolutions on: Children and Communion

Metropolitan Community Churches

June 1995

General Synod XX

Oakland, California

Dedication of the New Century Hymnal
Reaffirmed our commitment to COCU and approved Communion with 8 denominations
Accepted the Report and Recommendation of the Structures Committee
Voted the Reconciliation of Ministries with the Christian Church
Resolutions on: Violence in the Media
 50th Anniversary of the United Nations
Pronouncement on: Fair and Just Compensation - The Church as Employer

July 1997

General Synod XXI

Columbus, Ohio

Voted The Formula of Agreement, declaring full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (USA)
Approved a new national structure creating four ministry units from the present nine
Supported a comprehensive global ban on landmines
Recommended working toward partnership with the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
Condemned the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform Act as unconscionable
Directed OCLL to develop a plan of financial relief for seminarians
Voted a resolution advocating the cessation of female genital mutilation
Reaffirmed fidelity in "marriage and in other covenanted relationships, or singleness, and in all relationships of life"

July 1999

General Synod XXII

Providence, Rhode Island

Issued call for support of Jubilee 2000, international effort to erase debt of 41 nations
Called for official apology to people of Marshall Islands and full redress for damages from atomic and nuclear testing
Opened 2 year dialogue with Alliance of baptists, a progressive denomination of 60,000
Urged US government to use financial aid to deter development of Israeli settlements in Palestinian areas and to rebuild infrastructure for the Palestinian people
Reaffirmed UCC's commitment to accessibility for all and asked for programs to help address discrimination against clergy with disabilities
Voted down a FL Conference initiative calling for open enrollment in health insurance plan so that more young pastors and lay workers could join
Charged national setting to help local churches revive men's ministry
Urged intentional work with the ecumenical community to produce statement on Interfaith Relations for GS 23
Reduced number of special offerings from 6 to 4 (OGHS, NIN, STC, CF)
Developed feedback mechanism so that local church comments on resolutions would be given to delegates before deliberation on issues as future General Synods
Overwhelmingly opposed the death penalty (again)
Adopted proposed ammendments to the Bylaws (Constitution approved in 1997), thus ending 12 year effort to restructure national setting
Voted to remove "Acting" before titles of GM&P and Executive Minister of LCM