

Church as location of covenant:

Covenant is an essential part of the Church's theological understanding. Just as God initiated a compact of mutual promise and obligation with Israel, and just as Christ is the promise and bond of obligation for Christians, so the Church is organized as a community built upon mutual promises and obligations among diverse people. Covenant is also a way of describing relationships within the whole created order between nature and humanity, nature and God. These covenants are expressed sacramentally through Baptism and Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper.

Dialogue continually renews covenant. It is in dialogue with one another and with God that we are able to comprehend our constantly changing world. As the UCC Constitution makes clear, each generation of the Church is responsible for making its historic faith its own. This means that the Church is always in dialogue -- among its members in a wide variety of meetings, with God in worship and prayer, and with the wider community within which it lives. A Church that is called to be the servant of all finds its ministry in dialogue with all.

Practical decision making in the United Church of Christ brings together the principles of freedom and responsibility with the practices of covenant and dialogue.

<http://www.ucc.org/aboutus/family.htm>

Each congregation or local church is free to act in accordance with the collective decision of its members, guided by the working of the Spirit in the light of the scriptures. But it also is called to live in a covenantal relationship with other congregations for the sharing of insights and for cooperative action under the authority of Christ.

Likewise, associations of churches, conferences, the General Synod and the churchwide "covenanted ministries" of the United Church of Christ are free to act in their particular spheres of responsibility. Yet all are constrained by love to live in a covenantal relationship with one another and with the local churches in order to make manifest the unity of the body of Christ and thus to carry out God's mission in the world more effectively.

(<http://www.ucc.org/aboutus/whatis.htm>)

Constitution of the UCC

ARTICLE III. COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

6 Within the United Church of Christ, the various expressions of the church relate to each other in a covenantal manner. Each expression of the church has responsibilities and rights in relation to the others, to the end that the whole church will seek God's will and be faithful to God's mission.

Decisions are made in consultation and collaboration among the various parts of the structure. As members of the Body of Christ, each expression of the church is called to honor and respect the work and ministry of each other part. Each expression of the church listens, hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In this covenant, the various expressions of the United Church of Christ seek to walk together in all God's ways.

ARTICLE V. LOCAL CHURCHES

17 The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for that Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the well-being and needs and aspirations of its Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.

19 Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General Synod, a Conference or an Association, should be held in the highest regard by every Local Church.

<http://www.ucc.org/aboutus/constitution.htm>
