

1 The Executive Council recommends this proposed amendment to the Bylaws be sent to a
2 committee of the General Synod
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4 **Proposed Change to the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ**
5 **ON THE FREQUENCY OF THE MEETINGS OF GENERAL SYNOD**
6 **Proposed by the Illinois South Conference**
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9 **BACKGROUND:** The General Synod has been meeting biennially for over fifty years. The
10 costs for General Synod increased 115% between 1981 and 2003. As costs increase and
11 resources decline, these costs place a financial strain on all members, churches, regional and
12 national settings of the United Church of Christ, and prompting a number of conversations about
13 the frequency of meeting since 1981. *
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15 In addition to the cost concerns, the actions of each General Synod generate a significant amount
16 of additional work for staff in the national setting who are tasked with the implementation of
17 these action. The number of staff in the national setting has decreased by nearly 50% over the
18 past decade, significantly affecting the staff's ability to implement General Synod actions.
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20 In 2003, the Twenty-fourth General Synod, received but failed to approve a proposed
21 amendment to the UCC by-laws to change the frequency of General Synod from every two years
22 to every four years, and requested that the Executive Council appoint a committee **“to create a**
23 **new vision of the function and form of General Synod to promote the ministry and mission**
24 **of the United Church of Christ by the year 2005”**. Some work was done to address this and
25 has resulted in a “blended” Synod that attempts to provide educational and renewing experiences
26 as well as processing the business.
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28 The cultural realities facing the United Church of Christ in the 21st century are not those that our
29 predecessors and church founders faced in the 1950's, but we remain committed to the
30 empowering original vision of the unity of the Body of Christ. We believe that God is still
31 speaking to our conference and local churches in innovative ways, and advances in technology
32 offer us a variety of other ways to work together and to maintain connection across the church;
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34 **REQUESTED ACTION:** that bylaw 181 of the United Church of Christ Constitution be
35 changed as follows:

36 Strike the word “biennially”

37 Insert in its place the phrase “every three or four years”
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39 Thus the full sentence will read:

40
41 ***181 Regular meetings of the General Synod shall be held every three or four years.***
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43 *Additional data on costs will be provided