For the past four years, there has been a renewed effort to review the form, function, and frequency of General Synod. Motivations for this review include:

(1) **Sustainable Resource Use**: As financial and staff resources at the national setting have declined over the last decade, the portion of the remaining resources devoted to General Synod has increased, particularly in relation to staff time. A smaller national staff (about 75 full-time and 30-ish part-time) has meant that up to two-thirds of staff time has to be devoted to planning and preparation in Synod years. As a result, staff cannot devote themselves to the deep engagement with the wider church as is expected. Furthermore, other settings of the UCC, including conferences, have expressed strain on financial and staff resources due to the current General Synod model. [Staff resources was our leading concern in writing the proposal, not financial resources, although those figure in, especially for Conferences.]

(2) **Environmental Stewardship**: General Synod has a significant environmental impact, especially with thousands of people traveling from around the country and around the world. At a time when the effects of climate change are growing clearer, the need to make changes to better steward earthly resources is undeniable.

(3) **Accessibility**: General Synod has been life changing for so many who have had the opportunity to attend. However, for many others who do not have the time, finances, or ability to travel, the blessings of Synod have been out of reach. Just access to General Synod is essential.

In considerations of the above motivations, ***the General Synod review committee has recommended, and the UCC Board of Directors has affirmed, that General Synod be held every three years in a hybrid format, allowing in person and virtual participation.***

While we realize this potential change would come with grief from less frequent gathering, we also see the potential of this change to bring opportunities relating to the above motivations.

(1) A less frequent General Synod will free national setting resources to engage in newer and deeper ways with the other settings of the church and beyond. Also, the strain on the resources of other settings would be eased.

(2) Less travel reduces the UCC carbon footprint and sets an example for more responsible stewardship of Creation.

(3) A hybrid model allows for greater accessibility and a broader impact for those unable to participate in the physical gathering.

Logistics:

- The change in frequency will require a bylaws change to be voted on by General Synod in 2023.

- The suggested frequency bylaws change will include adjustments to terms for elected positions.

- Hybrid options do not require a vote and can be implemented by the planning team of the UCCB.

- The first Synod impacted by this change would be the shift from 2027 to 2028 because the planning team must book locations well in advance.