

Yale University cuts chapel's ties to UCC: Congregation oriented toward off-campus community

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As of July, say Yale University officials, the congregation at Battell Chapel on campus will no longer be affiliated with the United Church of Christ, one of the denominations stemming from historic Congregationalism.

The chapel congregation, formed in 1757 by Congregationalists and now called the Church of Christ in Yale, is said to be primarily oriented toward the off-campus community and has relatively few students in its pews, according to a *New York Times* article published April 10.

At the Cleveland headquarters of the UCC, John H. Thomas, the denomination's general minister and president, said the decision was made "without meaningful dialogue with regional or national UCC leaders" and failed to honor the historic relationships "in a respectful way." Thomas is a 1975 graduate of Yale Divinity School.

The severing of the relationship was among recommendations by a committee that was asked to look at "ways to strengthen the growing expressions of religious and spiritual life" at the New Haven, Connecticut, campus. The committee had also suggested being sensitive to the spiritual needs of non-Christian students, such as Muslim students during the fasting month of Ramadan.

The *Times* quoted Frederick J. Streets, senior pastor of the Yale chapel and university chaplain, as saying that the ecumenical Protestant services in the fall will have "hardly anything noticeably different."