

6. Dan Hatch (HI) called for the General Synod to remember the history of the United Church of Christ and continue the mandates and reparations.
7. Susan Waldron (CT) announced that the next New England Women's Celebration would be held March 17-19 in Burlington, Vermont.
8. Charles Buck (HI) extended an invitation to have the 2009 General Synod in Hawaii in the new Convention Center.
9. Kim Wells (FLA) extended birthday wishes to Florida Conference Minister, Doug Borko. The assembly sang "Happy Birthday" to Rev. Borko.
10. Zack Lewis (RI) announced that five hundred youth had come to participate in the Twenty-fourth General Synod and that between four and five thousand would participate at the National Youth Event which will be held July 22-26, 2004 in Knoxville, Tennessee.
11. Jennifer Gingras (CONN) called upon participants to support eighteen to thirty-year-olds who are considering ministry. She announced that, currently, only seven percent of pastors are under forty years of age and suggested that young "maybe" ministry groups be brought to the 2005 General Synod.
12. Sue Latourette (CONN) lifted up the ministry of Valerie Tutson, story-teller from Rhode Island.

Assistant Moderator Smith asked that Gail Benson (CANV,S) be held in prayer. Her daughter Kristin, had gone into labor while Gail was at General Synod.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS

Moderator Nate Lewis asked for a moment of prayer for all nominees. The Moderator then announced the results of elections for the

General Synod Nominating Committee Class of 2009:

Lay Persons

Nancy Klingeman - Central Pacific Conference
Carmen Flores Rance - Illinois Conference
Carol J. Shipley - Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference

Clergy Persons

Jane L. Ellefson - Nebraska Conference
Melinda Quellhorst Lacefield - Ohio Conference
Logologo Sa'au - Pacific Northwest Conference

Clifford Johns - United Black Christians
Diane Darling - Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns
Hattie Walker - Council for American Indian Ministry

5. REAFFIRMING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST'S DENOUNCEMENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIAN AND GAY PEOPLE AND CALLING FOR THE INCLUSION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE WITHIN THAT ANTIVIOLENCE STATEMENT

Committee Chairperson, Lisa Alston, (SE) moved the adoption of the Resolution "Reaffirming the United Church of Christ's Denouncement of Violence Against Lesbian and Gay People and Calling for the Inclusion of Transgender People Within that Antiviolence Statement." She expressed the support of Committee Six, and stated that transgender people know that Jesus loves them and that it was time they know the United Church of Christ loves them also.

Voice without vote privilege was granted to Rev. Pat Conover, Legislative Director for Public Life and Social Policy, Justice and Witness Ministries. Rev. Conover asked that when this resolution gets taken home, that General Synod participants be welcoming and loving. He reminded the General Synod that transgender persons need to know they are welcome in the local church and that there are resources available for education, if they are needed, from the Coalition for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Concerns.

There was some discussion about bringing this resolution to more conservative churches than those in California where it originated. Several persons related encouraging stories of people and congregations that had already accepted transgender persons into their communities. Others asked for continued support on this issue.

03-GS-38 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution “Reaffirming the United Church of Christ’s Denouncement of Violence Against Lesbian and Gay People and Calling for the Inclusion of Transgender People Within That Antiviolence Statement.”

REAFFIRMING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST’S DENOUNCEMENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIAN AND GAY PEOPLE AND CALLING FOR THE INCLUSION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE WITHIN THAT ANTI-VIOLENCE STATEMENT

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Council for Christian Social Action first issued a policy statement concerning justice for same gender-oriented people over thirty years ago; and

WHEREAS, the Tenth General Synod in 1975 issued the pronouncement, “Civil Liberties without Discrimination Related to Affectional and Sexual Preference,” and similar national statements have been issued in 1969, 1973, and at every General Synod since 1975; and

WHEREAS, the Seventeenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ issued a pronouncement denouncing violence against lesbian and gay people and called on “all local churches, Associations, Conferences, national agencies, instrumentalities, and other institutions to become aware of the oppressive violence against lesbian and gay people within their jurisdictions and to develop ways to put it to an end;” and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Executive Council in 1998 called for enactment of the Federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act; and

WHEREAS, violence against transgender men and women has grown significantly; with an average of more than one transgender murder per month across the United States over the past decade and escalating physical and emotional violence and harassment against those who are transgendered; and

WHEREAS, in a 1998 Pastoral Letter to the United Church of Christ, former President Paul Sherry said, “The story of our pilgrimage with our gay, lesbian, and bisexual members at times has been marked by hesitation, fear and frequent failure of nerve.” He continued, “We have sometimes failed to recognize how the Bible has been used by some to perpetuate prejudice and to justify violence against homosexual persons;”

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod denounces the continued proliferation of hate, violence, and prejudice, extending its denouncement of violence to include violence against transgender persons as well as lesbians, gays, and bisexuals; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod calls for an end of any form of hate, violence, and prejudice based on sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as violence and prejudice based on race, nationality, religion, mental or physical disability; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod reaffirms its stand against the use of scripture to generate hatred and the violation of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender persons; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod urges churches and church members to take the lead in ending discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexual, and transgender persons and to actively counter public perceptions that view the Christian community as supporting such discrimination.

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made with the overall

mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

6. AFFIRMING THE PARTICIPATION AND MINISTRY OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND SUPPORTING THEIR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Committee Six Chairperson, Lisa Alston,(SE) moved the adoption of the resolution “Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People within the United Church of Christ and Supporting Their Civil and Human Rights.” She then spoke to the resolution. She expressed her feeling that the committee should be the first to say “welcome”, and to give thanks to God that the table is becoming more inclusive. After a brief discussion, the vote was taken.

03-GS-39 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution, “Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People Within the United Church of Christ and Supporting Their Civil and Human Rights.”

AFFIRMING THE PARTICIPATION AND MINISTRY OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND SUPPORTING THEIR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

WHEREAS, God has brought forth human beings as creatures who are male, female, and sometimes dramatically or subtly a complex mix of male and female in their bodies; and

WHEREAS, human cultures have created a broad diversity of roles for men and women, and have sometimes created roles for people named as neither man nor woman often revered and respected roles; and

WHEREAS, rules of appearance in the Bible, such as in Deuteronomy 22:5, are certainly among the rules criticized by Jesus as focused on outward conformity rather than inward integrity grounded in the acceptance of God’s love; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous biblical affirmations of the goodness of creation and the

love of God for all people, including Genesis 1, Psalm 139, John 1: 1-5, and Acts 10: 34-43; and

WHEREAS, Galatians 3: 26-29 calls on those who are baptized to put on Christ like a garment and to look past human divisions to become one person in Christ; and

WHEREAS, transgender and intersexual people are currently offering valuable ministry within the United Church of Christ, both as lay people and as clergy; and

WHEREAS, transgender people are recognized within the constitution of the United Church of Christ as appropriately sharing in the guidance of the national expression of the United Church of Christ (as part of the United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Concerns); and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ in numerous program activities in all expressions of the church has affirmed the positive virtues carried by men within traditional cultures, by women within traditional cultures, while also calling for the transformation of gender roles that are oppressive of men or women, or otherwise not fully reflective of Christian values; and

WHEREAS, Christian transgender people have sometimes experienced rejection and non-acceptance within some expressions of the United Church of Christ and in other expressions of Christ’s Church, and are in need of a welcoming Christian community where they are valued as Christian people, and

WHEREAS, many settings of the United Church of Christ have little understanding of transgender people; of how to meet their needs and make them feel welcome, of how to integrate their gifts and capacities for ministry into the life of the church and of how to integrate them into liturgy and expressions of worship.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT all congregations of the United Church of Christ are encouraged to welcome transgender people