

Mary Susan Gast, California Nevada, Northern Conference  
Karl Ludwig – Calvin Synod

Also retiring is the Cabinet of Conference Ministers' Administrative Coordinator, Robert Witham.

Ms. Coons-Torn then offered prayer for the gifts and service of all of these people. The delegates and guests then thanked these leaders for their service in the life of our beloved denomination with a standing ovation.

Moderator Robertson also thanked all incoming and retiring Conference Ministers for their service.

**12. AFFIRMING HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AUTHORIZED MINISTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Mr. Robertson called upon Mr. T. Michael Rock, Chairperson of Committee One for the presentation of the Committee.

Mr. Rock moved the adoption of the resolution "Affirming Healthcare Coverage for United Church of Christ Authorized Ministers and Their Families" as amended. He indicated the title of the resolution had been changed as well as substantial changes in the resolution itself. He then spoke to the resolution.

Mr. Dvanate Taylor (PNW) moved to amend the resolution by adding the words "We ask that this body report back to General Synod Twenty-nine" at the end of the second therefore. The motion was seconded.

**11-GS-36 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod adopts the amendment to add the words "We ask that this body report back to General Synod Twenty-nine" at the end of the second therefore.

Ms. Patti Kenney (MICH) moved to amend the resolution by reinserting the words "removed by the Committee" in lines 117 through 120. The motion was seconded.

**11-GS-37 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod adopts the amendment to reinsert the words "removed by the Committee" in lines 117 through 120.

Mr. David Stewart (ILL) moved to amend the resolution to add the words "and to educate" and encourage enrollment.

Discussion followed regarding the significant cost increases to health care premiums if this amendment passes.

Mr. Luther Holland (EC) moved to close debate. The motion was seconded.

**11-GS-38 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to close debate on the amendment.

**11-GS-39 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod adopts the amendment to add the words “and to educate” at line 120.

Discussion was held on the original resolution, as amended.

Mr. Abraham Mulberry (ILL) moved to close debate. The motion was seconded.

**11-GS-40 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to close debate on the resolution, as amended.

**11-GS-41 VOTED:** The Twenty-eighth General Synod adopts the resolution” Affirming Healthcare Coverage for United Church of Christ Authorized Ministers and Their Families,” as amended.

**AFFIRMING HEALTHCARE COVERAGE FOR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
AUTHORIZED MINISTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**WHEREAS,** General Synod adopted the resolution, “Access to Health, Dental, and Disability Insurance for United Church of Christ Clergy and Lay Employees and Their Families,” 99-GS-50.

**WHEREAS,** the Twenty-first General Synod adopted the resolution, “Reclaiming the Church’s Ministry of Health and Healing,” 97-GS-46

**WHEREAS,** the United Church of Christ has adopted a *Mission Statement on Health and Human Service* which states: “The mission of the United Church of Christ arises out of faith in God who calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and intends for us the blessing of wholeness and harmony with God, with creation, with other persons, and within ourselves. In health and human service, that mission must serve God’s intent for humankind made fully manifest in Jesus Christ, conquered sin and death and reconciled humanity, nature, and God.

In the life of Jesus and in his ministries of teaching and healing, we learn the way of discipleship.

We rejoice in the power of God to make all things new and in the gift of the Holy Spirit through which the Church is empowered to continue Jesus’ ministries of compassion, justice, and transformation, serving the well-being and wholeness of all God’s people.

The mission of the United Church of Christ in health and human service is rooted in the ministry of Jesus Christ and empowered by God’s spirit.”

**WHEREAS,** this mission statement calls us to seek justice, “thus informed by scripture, tradition, and human experience, our faith compels us to seek new ways to enable the liberation of the oppressed and reconciliation of the alienated through new acts of love and justice. When

we do so, we must answer the questions: What are the dimensions of that mission? Who is involved in that mission?"

**WHEREAS**, the process the United Church of Christ uses for pastors and churches rarely provides opportunities for pastors and their families to move from one church to the next without a break between positions, and many of our clergy cannot afford the cost of providing their own insurance through COBRA for the months between ending one position and beginning another.

**WHEREAS**, the understanding of a minister being "Self-employed" may work well for IRS purposes, in actuality ministers are employed by the church or a related organization or agency.

**WHEREAS**, the nature of interim ministry does not provide for coordination of placements by churches, conferences, national settings and related organizations agencies, and thus does not provide smooth seamless transitions from one position to the next.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms that offering adequate and equitable health, dental, and vision coverage for United Church of Christ Authorized Ministers and their families through the Pension Boards is an important justice issue, and is part of our covenant together as members of the United Church of Christ.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the Executive Council to create a Task Force including representation from the Executive Council, Conferences, The Pension Boards, Covenanted Ministries, and Affiliated and Associated Ministries to enter into conversation and address issues of providing continuity of coverage for Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ and their families as they move among churches and other settings of the United Church of Christ. We ask that this body report back to General Synod Twenty-nine.

**THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that leaders in the National setting, Conferences, Associations, and Local Churches settings shall seek to encourage the Pension Boards serving the United Church of Christ to offer to make medical coverage available to all clergy and their family members when they are called to, or begin a new position within the life of our church and to educate and encourage enrollment in the United Church of Christ health, dental, and vision plans for the purposes of keeping health care costs affordable, and to assist churches in exploring options for funding their employees' United Church of Christ health, dental, and vision plans.

#### **FUNDING**

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Executive Council, Local Church Ministries, the Conferences, Associations of the United Church of Christ, and The Pension Boards are requested to implement this resolution.