

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests the Collegium of Officers of the United Church of Christ to develop a plan and an implementation schedule for an annual all- church offering or other possible funding initiatives to provide tuition assistance for theological education for members in discernment with associations of the United Church of Christ.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ recommends that the Collegium of Officers of the United Church of Christ explore the feasibility of offering low-interest loans to United Church of Christ members in discernment with a report delivered to the Thirtieth General Synod.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Collegium be requested to present an actionable plan as quickly as possible and no later than the Thirtieth General Synod in 2015.

FUNDING

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

IMPLEMENTATION

The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

In compliance with the Standing Rules the following Minority Report was voted in Plenary 8.

MINORITY REPORT ON THE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN ALL CHURCH OFFERING FOR SUPPORTING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES OF MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT PREPARING FOR AUTHORIZED MINISTRY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Many who opposed the resolution from Committee 5 did so because we desired a stronger response to the problem of seminarian debt, including a special offering. We call on all expressions of the United Church of Christ to faithfully engage this issue.

4. POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Norman Jackson (former Moderator) requested the United Church of Christ find resources for the development of American Indian pastors.

5. RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF OUTDOOR MINISTRIES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Moderator Tigner called on Ms. Penny Lowes, Chairperson of the Executive Council, to introduce the resolution In Support of Outdoor Ministries of the United Church of Christ. On behalf of the Executive Council, Ms. Lowes moved adoption of the resolution In Support of Outdoor Ministries of the United Church of Christ and yielded her time to Ms. Ann Hughes (CONN) to speak to the resolution.

Scott Reeder (NY) reminded the moderator to please read the total number of votes for the resolutions.

Discussion:

Rebecca Kesting (WISC) lifted up the benefits of outdoor ministries.

Julia LeBrell (MICH) spoke in support of the resolution.

13-GS-46 VOTED: The Twenty-ninth General Synods votes to adopt the resolution In Support of Outdoor Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

IN SUPPORT OF OUTDOOR MINISTRIES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHEREAS, we affirm the crucial support in the past from our national UCC and from many Conferences in both proclaiming and celebrating the vital and visible outdoor ministry to our youth, our churches and the wider church, and

WHEREAS, we recognize the power of Outdoor Ministry sites in promoting wider church/conference financial appeals, including capital campaigns and Our Church's Wider Mission; and further we affirm the crucial support in the past from the national UCC setting and from many conferences, and

WHEREAS, we honor the foresight of founding mothers and fathers of the faith to purchase, develop and invest in Outdoor Ministry camp and retreat sites for the UCC's faith journeys and to grow and raise up leadership in every generation, and

WHEREAS, we celebrate further investments in the infrastructure and improvements to our Outdoor Ministry sites, and

WHEREAS, the UCC, in recognition of the significant number of ordained ministers who claim their Outdoor Ministry experience as foundational to their hearing and heeding of the Call (for example, over 200 clergy credit their experience at Silver Lake Conference Center with hearing the Call), and

WHEREAS, for over 50 years, our outdoor ministries have been developing leaders who live their faith in every walk of life and consider their experiences there as major touchstones in their lives as they make ethical and professional decisions, and

WHEREAS, we further name and recognize the correlation between the alarming closing of Outdoor Ministry sites (from over 65 in 1995 to 35 current member sites) and the lost opportunity for raising up young seminarians, and faith leaders of the Church and Conferences, and for future generations of youth to experience this unique ministry of Jesus, and

WHEREAS, since OMA's inception, we've lost Blakes Grove (IA), Atkinson Center, VT; Deer Hill Conference Center NY; Camp Laurent, NY; Camp Fernbrook PA; Pilgrim Haven, MI; Pleasant Valley Outdoor Center IL; Lake, Camp Western Hills MO; Dillon, RMC; Pilgrim Park,

ND; Deering Conference Center NH (BHM); Pilgrim Haven, MI; Warner Farm, MA; Ingraham House, CT; Rockcraft Lodge, ME; Dillon Hi Country, Rocky Mountain Central Conference and Pilgrim's Playground, AZ, and more recently, Lake Byrd, Florida; Camp Fernbrook PA SE, Lani Kamaha'o, Oahu Association, HI; Bows Lake Camp and Conference Center, MI Conference, and many others,

In recognition that Camps have closed and been sold by our UCC Conferences and Associations across the country; and in recognition of current sites in distress even now, (Mensch Mill Conference and Retreat Center, PSE) and in light of the disturbing trend of closings of faith-based camps across the country,

AND WHEREAS, it would not be inappropriate to describe the state of Outdoor Ministry in the UCC as the 'Canary in the Coalmine' for our denominational lifecycle,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Twenty-Ninth General Synod of the UCC gathered in Long Beach, CA declares its advocacy and support of the Outdoor Ministries Association (OMA), and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-Ninth General Synod requests that the conferences, associations and other settings of the wider church, prayerfully discerning the long term consequences to the youth and future leaders of the church when considering the ramifications of closing a camp or center, seek the counsel of the OMA, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Twenty-Ninth General Synod, requests that the conferences, associations and other settings of the wider church provide timely notification to OMA in the event of impending Outdoor Ministry site or program closing so OMA may have the opportunity to provide resources, support and consultation to the distressed body and to programs at risk.

FUNDING

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

IMPLEMENTATION

The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

6. PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE COLLEGIUM ON GUN VIOLENCE CONCERNING DEFEAT OF SB 649

Moderator Tigner called on Ms. Penny Lowes for additional items of business brought by the Executive Council. Ms. Lowes introduced the Pastoral Letter from the Collegium on Gun Violence concerning the defeat of SB 649 and urged affirmation.

Ron Patterson (FLA) urged affirmation and stated that the tragedy in Connecticut touched everyone.