

Wanda Scott (PNW) – Pacific School of Religion

Debra Blood (ME) – Dean of Pride Camp/Queer Camp at Gardner Lodge in Maine.

Moderator Artt announced that the next Speakout! will be at the start of the next business meeting and the sign-up would immediately follow Plenary.

4. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Moderator Artt indicated that each plenary would begin and end with a time of theological reflection. The first of the two theological reflectors Damaris D. Whittaker, was introduced.

Damaris Whittaker has served as Minister at Center Church – First Church of Christ in Hartford, CT, since 2012. Previously, Damaris served as the Director of Marketing and Development at the Christian Activities Council of Hartford and Co-Pastor at Iglesia Cristiana Nueva Esperanza UCC, also in Hartford. An active speaker and advocate on issues of domestic violence, women's leadership and health care, Damaris Whittaker has worked in grassroots organizations that provide pastoral and substance abuse counseling, and holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from New York Theological Seminary.

Damaris Whittaker – The New Birth and new life of combined conferences is to be a movement that is being the spirit of God. May the flowing of the rain give us courage to move from being an institution to a movement of peace.

4. ON ENHANCED SUPPORT OF AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION FOUNDED CHURCHES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE MERGER FORMING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Moderator Artt introduced the Committee reporting process.

Moderator Artt indicated that, as a rule, Committees are allocated approximately 15 minutes in which to report to the General Synod. Moderator Artt reminded delegates of the microphone layout and function.

Moderator Artt thanked the Committee Process Team that included facilitators Roy Mosley (CA NV, N.), Dennis Frische-Mouri (IK), and Susan Townsley (CONN), and was staffed by David Anderson (PNW).

Moderator Artt called on Richard Edens (SOC) to present the recommended actions from Committee #1.

Richard Edens introduced the resolution on enhanced support of American Missionary Association Founded Churches that participated in the merger forming the United Church of Christ and noted that minor changes had been made to the original resolution.

Richard Edens noted the changes and, on behalf of Committee #1, moved that the Resolution entitled On Enhanced Support of the American Mission Churches that Participated in the Merger forming the United Church of Christ be passed by the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ and then spoke to the resolution.

There was No Discussion

17-GS-09 VOTED: The Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the resolution, as amended by committee, On Enhanced Support of American Missionary Association Founded Churches that Participated in the Merger forming the United Church of Christ.

**ON ENHANCED SUPPORT OF AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION FOUNDED
CHURCHES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE MERGER FORMING THE UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Text of the Motion:

Whereas, the recent murder of the Charleston Nine by Dillon Roof, and the extrajudicial killings of persons of color at the hands of police, such as Gregory Gunn, Akiel Denkins, Walter Scott,

and Keith Scott, demonstrate that the words W.E.B. Dubois spoke in an earlier time still ring true. A major problem in American life is the issue of race. While we have, by order of law, come to physically share many public and private spaces, not enough people have come to the point of sharing hearts, minds, and spirits around a uniting vision of freedom, justice, and equality.

Whereas, if the color line in America is to be fully broken, there must be a change in understanding and attitude. That will be a work of capacity building that moves individuals where they live; in areas and communities where these historic American Missionary Association (AMA) founded African American churches are located, such as Montgomery, Alabama and Charlotte, NC. If these churches are given more resources and attention aimed at vitality and excellence, they can be the needed impact to move people and communities along a spectrum of empathy that begins with cognition and develops into compassion and prophetic social action; and

Whereas, the United Church of Christ, as a denomination has numerous entities and agencies that are capable of providing focused and enhanced support of these small - to medium - sized congregations with low to no cost options within a comprehensive denominational initiative. Among these are: UCC Building and Loan, UCC Insurance Board, Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, Local Church Ministries, and Justice and Witness Ministries; and

Whereas, once strengthened by this enhanced support, these churches are then empowered to begin or increase giving to Our Churches Wider Mission through financial contribution and more active participation, which would be a measurable and quantifiable outcome.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ commits itself to bringing the resources of the various agencies and expressions of our church to an enhanced and focused program of supporting the life and mission of the churches and institutions that were founded as a result of the anti-racism work of the American Missionary Association, and the Afro Christian Churches who are currently affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

Be it further resolved that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the United Church of Christ to seek ways to understand the needs of, to provide aid and assistance to, and to work in partnership with these churches and institutions by framing local initiatives that advance the purposes for which they were founded;

Be it further resolved that the national setting of the United Church of Christ provide, with appropriate representation and input from each setting, both the human and capital resources necessary to coordinate, prioritize and promote this initiative;

Be it finally resolved that all members and settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to continue our historic anti-racism work by joining and/or partnering with Ministers for Racial, Social, and Economic Justice as they speak out against and seek to remedy racially motivated hatred, violence and actions, and systemic injustices such as gerrymandering, voter disenfranchisement, police brutality, and regressive public policies when and where they occur.

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. ON BECOMING AN IMMIGRANT WELCOMING CHURCH.

Moderator Artt invited Cheryl Lindsay (OHIO) to the podium to present the Resolution On Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Church.

Cheryl Lindsay introduced the resolution, noted the changes and made a motion on behalf of Committee #7 that the resolution, as amended, On Becoming An Immigrant Welcoming Church be adopted by the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ. Cheryl Lindsay also spoke to the resolution.

Discussion:

Beth Donaldson (MINN) Spoke in favor of the motion.

Bryn Smallwood-Garcia (CONN) Spoke in favor.

Paul Lance (MICH) Spoke in favor.

Sue Joiner (SW) Spoke in favor.

Kerri Parker (WIS) Spoke in favor.

Tara Wilkins (CCP) Spoke in favor.

Felix Villanueva (SC NV) Spoke in favor.

Marc Stewart (MONT, NO, WY) Spoke in favor.

17-GS-10 VOTED: The Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the resolution as amended On Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Church.