

education — that has resulted in significantly reduced rates of senseless death and injury; and Whereas, the United Church of Christ as reaffirmed many times its longstanding commitments to both social justice and public health,

**Therefore, be it resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges the recognition of gun violence as a public health emergency with gun deaths (including homicide, suicide, and unintentional shootings) estimated to have reached 35,000 by the end of 2016;

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod encourages the Congress of the United States to allocate federal funding for scientific research of gun violence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health and to openly debate methods to improve gun safety, training and storage to reduce gun deaths;

**Be it finally resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges members and other settings of the United Church of Christ to actively speak out against restrictive legislation that seeks to silence or stifle the scientific and medical community from providing sound methods to save and improve the lives of all of God's people.

**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.

**8. RESOLUTION OF WITNESS IN SUPPORT OF ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.**

Moderator Artt called on Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan, (IK) to introduce the Resolution of Witness in Support of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan introduced the resolution and indicated that there were three substantive changes, which were reviewed with the delegates. Sarah Frische-Louri Hannigan then asked the delegates to approve the motion and also spoke to the motion.

Discussion:

Allison Betts (SC) Spoke in Favor  
Nathaniel Mulder (PNW) Spoke in Favor  
Brody Huwer (SD) Spoke in Favor  
Colie Bettivia (WISC) In Support of Resolution

Gabriel McKelvey (WISC) Called the Question  
Kevin Mundell (WISC) Seconded

**17-GS-38 VOTED:** The Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to end discussion on the motion.  
98%; 1% 0%

Moderator Artt indicated the delegates would now vote on the original resolution.

**17-GS-39 VOTED:** The Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution Of Witness in Support of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse and Neglect.  
98% 2%; 0%

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ADULT SURVIVORS**  
**OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas,** Jesus declared in Matthew 25:40, “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me”;

**Whereas,** Jesus asked in Matthew 7:9, “What man is there of you, whom if his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone?”;

**Whereas,** Jesus says in Matthew 18: 6-7, “But who so shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea”;

**Whereas,** one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually assaulted before they reach the age of eighteen;

**Whereas,** the incidence rate of child abuse and neglect is 10 times as high (40 children per 1,000 children per year) as the incidence rate for all forms of cancer (3.9 individuals per 1,000 individuals per year),

**Whereas,** children in their first year have the highest rate of victimization (24.4 children per 1,000 children) among individuals in respect to any one-year span in the national population;

**Whereas,** 80% of perpetrators are parents;

**Whereas,** Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), or the various forms of abuse and neglect (e.g., psychological, physical, sexual) that children experience often as a result of household dysfunction (e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness), are the most preventable causes of serious mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse in women, and high-risk behavior (e.g., IV drugs, promiscuity) for HIV, as well as significant contributors to the leading causes of death in the general population (heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and suicide);

**Whereas,** ACES have a negative impact on child development, as manifested in adverse neurobiological effects (e.g., brain abnormalities, stress hormone dysregulation), deleterious

psychosocial consequences (e.g., poor attachment, poor socialization, poor self-efficacy), and significant health-risk behaviors (e.g., smoking, obesity, substance abuse, promiscuity);

**Whereas**, ACES also have significant long-term consequences, including the occurrence and recurrence of various diseases, dysfunctional coping and disabilities (e.g., major depression, suicide, PTSD, drug and alcohol abuse, heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, sexually transmitted diseases, intergenerational transmission of abuse), and assorted social problems (e.g., homelessness, prostitution, criminal behavior, dysfunctional parenting, inordinate utilization of health and social services), often resulting in shortened lifespans;

**Whereas**, the estimated total lifetime financial costs associated with all confirmed cases of child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological abuse and neglect) is approximately \$124 billion for every year of maltreatment;

**Whereas**, arbitrary statutes of limitations deny most adult survivors of child abuse and neglect some means of just recompense for the crimes committed against them as children, as it is very common for survivors to struggle for decades (and long after the expiry of such statutes) before properly making the connection between childhood abuse and the struggles they often experience;

**Whereas**, eliminating such statutes of limitations will provide many such survivors the opportunity to gain just recompense from their perpetrators and/or the organizations that failed to protect them (e.g., schools, daycare centers, religious associations, sports clubs, activity clubs);

**Whereas**, many survivors of child abuse and neglect often experience spiritual struggles in the course of healing, trying to come closer to God as they question how God could allow such abuse and neglect to happen in the first place. Indeed, trauma can shake people's faith in a natural or divine order and cast them into a state of existential crisis whereby they begin to lose trust in an all-powerful and good God, assume that their world is anything but safe and well-ordered, and believe that they themselves are wicked and deserving of bad outcomes;

**Whereas**, for some survivors, the loss of positive religious beliefs (e.g., in the goodness of others, in spiritual and faith traditions, in a beneficent God) or the learning of negative religious beliefs (e.g., that bad things happen because of divine sanction or retribution for individual sin or sins) that often accompanies traumatization can be debilitating. Indeed, such loss or learning can fuel the shame, guilt, despair, and hopelessness that undergird suicidality and harmful risk taking, as well as adversely impact the ability and desire to show love to others.

**Whereas**, insofar as the retention or acquirement of authentic religious beliefs and a salubrious spirituality protects some survivors against suicide or contributes more generally to their process of healing, the traumatized may also come to a point in their recovery when they benefit by giving service back to others, both within and outside their religious community. Finding ways that survivors can serve others or contribute to a higher cause can help them find meaning and purpose in what they have experienced and in their lives. Often the survivors' religious community can facilitate this kind of service, helping them to take down the walls they have put

up to protect themselves.

**Whereas**, abused children normally do not tell anyone about their abuse; and even when they become adults, they either never tell anyone or wait for years/decades before disclosing their abuse because of the fear of negative responses from others;

**Whereas**, in United States history, not one President or member of Congress has ever put the plight of adult survivors of child abuse on the national agenda;

**Whereas**, the media has been complicit in the fact that there has never been a national discussion about the plight of adult survivors of child abuse and neglect; and

**Whereas**, there is no national database to report accurately on the number of adult survivors of child abuse and neglect in the United States, thus negatively impacting the capacity to provide adequate services for survivors;

**Therefore Be It Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ not only reaffirms and supports past General Synod resolutions advocating for the welfare of children but also now calls upon the various settings of the UCC to address publicly the healing needs of adult survivors of child abuse, - neglect, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) by reinforcing the truth that survivors are not to blame for their victimization and that the United Church of Christ welcomes them in experiencing God's love and compassion within its community of radical inclusivity; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages each Association and congregation of the United Church of Christ to have Authorized Ministers and other leaders of the church understand the importance of the issue this resolution addresses and learn alongside participants of the church that adult survivors are, for the most part, invisible because of the compulsion they have felt since childhood not to self-disclose, as well as to train its participants to respond positively to those who are ready to self-disclose (probably for the first time) through words and deeds that are accepting, validating, non-judgmental, and non-pressuring; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ asks the UCC's National Setting to assist in such educating and training by creating and disseminating a study guide that can be used by churches, Authorized Ministers and other leaders of the church as they seek to minister compassionately and effectively to adult survivors of child abuse, neglect, and Adverse Childhood Experiences; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the various settings of the UCC to work with state and federal representatives to strengthen the Americans with Disabilities Act so that mental disabilities are accommodated just as much as physical disabilities in the workplace; to encourage state and federal lawmakers to develop a standardized method of reporting child mental, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and/or child neglect by clinicians, criminal justice organizations, social service providers, healthcare organizations, insurance companies, researchers, and public policy makers; to encourage state and federal lawmakers to eliminate statutes of limitations for child abuse and neglect, as such

statutes infringe upon the procedural due process rights of adult survivors of child abuse and neglect by denying them access to the courts and thereby to legal justice; and to work with the media and state and federal legislators to focus strongly on the need to support adult survivors of child abuse and neglect.

**Funding:**

The 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.

**9. JOHN DORHAUER – MISSION INTENSIVES**

Moderator Artt called on John Dorhauer, President and General Minister of the United Church of Christ to speak about a new mission of the church.

“Over the last few years, the United Church of Christ has engaged in a variety of mission initiatives. When Mission One launched, we worked to end hunger. When Mission 4/1 Earth was birthed, we did what we could to save the planet. In each instance, we worked together to change the world for the better.

Today, we call the United Church of Christ to a new, shared Mission: Three Great Loves. Three Great Loves will seek to engage the entire denomination in a calling to commit fully to living into our missional directive to seek justice for all. Three Great Loves will invite the entire United Church of Christ to pull together and create deep and lasting impact. Three Great Loves will span the biennium between this gathering in Baltimore, and our coming together in Milwaukee two years from now, at which time we will give a full report of the impact we will have created together. We will Be able to tell the story of how the United Church of Christ is working toward a just world for all.

What is Three Great Loves?

It is a call to the love of children, ... to the love of neighbor, ... and to the love of creation.

During the next biennium, we want to discover what an entire denomination committed to Three Great Loves can do to change the world. During the next biennium, we want your setting for ministry to explore new ways to embody commitments to care for the child, the neighbor, and the Earth. During the next Biennium, there will be three significant requests of you: three occasions in which we invite us all to participate as one in a collective effort. Each of the Three Great Loves will have a dedicated call to action with three components: an invitation to give; to act; and to connect.

In the winter of 2017 we will do a denomination-wide drive to provide basic human needs items to shelters housing refugees or the homeless. In the fall of 2018 we will do a denomination-wide