

Rev. Dr. Dorhauer introduced Rev. Dr. Paul Sherry, Rev. Dr. John Thomas, and Rev. Geoffrey Black, and indicated that Rev. Avery Post was unable to be present but sent well wishes and love to all. Rev. Dr. Dorhauer presented the a specially commissioned medallion to each as a family keepsake and heirloom: “The medallion bears the logo of the UCC on the front and has the title of office, name, and years of tenure on the back. It is a small but heartfelt expression of deep appreciation for the remarkable leaders.”

10. MOVEMENT MAKERS PRESENTATION

Assistant Moderator Lowes called upon the Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries, the Rev. Traci Blackmon, to present the Movement Makers.

Traci Blackmon introduced the Movement Makers.

Assistant Moderator Lowes thanked the presenters and the award recipients for their tireless and faithful work.

11. PROTECTION OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Assistant Moderator Lowes indicated that the Business Committee of the Thirty-second General Synod has recommended this proposed resolution be sent to a plenary of the General Synod. The General Synod Standing Rules gives this as an option for resolutions deemed noncontroversial and not in need of time in a General Synod Committee for discussing and refining the resolution.

Assistant Moderator Lowes indicated that the resolution was submitted by the Illinois Conference.

Yvette Wynn moved, on behalf of the Business Committee, that the Thirty-second General Synod adopt the resolution, and called on Rev. Dr. Marilyn Pagan-Banks of the Illinois Conference to speak to the resolution.

Assistant Moderator Lowes granted, without objection, voice to Rev. Dr. Marilyn Pagan-Banks for the purposing of addressing the resolution.

Rev. Dr. Marilyn Pagan-Banks spoke on behalf of the resolution.

Assistant Moderator Lowes indicated that the General Synod Program and Planning Committee made the decision to allow young people to take a few moments to present a youth perspective on the issues as a part of the deliberations. The resolution before the house is one of the resolutions to which the youth have decided to speak.

Assistant Moderator Lowes, without objection, respectfully requested that the General Synod suspend the Standing Rules to allow the body to hear a three-minute presentation from the Youth at Synod as the General Synod prepares to debate and take action upon the current motion.

All of the youth spoke in favor of the resolution.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

19-GS-07 VOTED: The Thirty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopts the resolution Protection of Immigrant Children and their Families.

(Vote: 612 Yes; 10 No; 8 Abstentions – 630 electronic submissions registered)

PROTECTION OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES
A Resolution of Witness

Text of the Resolution

Whereas, Jesus proclaimed the importance of children, how can we do otherwise? “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” (Matthew 18:5)

Whereas, we have ample evidence that the cumulative effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress cause lifelong detrimental results for many individuals by changing their brain architecture so that they may have permanent difficulty in their ability to learn and may develop maladaptive behaviors, experience stress related chronic diseases and engage in destructive habits as adults. (1,2) As a nation, we cannot justify deliberately placing children on this path.

Whereas, multiple national and regional organizations concerned with child welfare have written a letter (Jan. 16, 2018) to Kirsten M. Nielsen, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, urging the Department “to abandon any plans to systemically separate children from their families absent evidence that a specific parent posed a threat to the safety and well-being of his or her child, as required by the laws of all 50 states.”

Whereas, the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child include Principle 2 “The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities by law and other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity...” and Principle 6 “The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, whenever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents....” (3)

Whereas, the history of the United States demonstrates that the forced and government-sanctioned separation of children from their parents, as often occurred to African American children during the era of slavery and also to Native American children who at one time were compelled to live away from their families in boarding schools, results in a multigenerational legacy of trauma.

Whereas, as the United Church of Christ, we believe that we must be servants in the service of others and must follow the teaching of Jesus to love one another.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Thirty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the United Church of Christ to advocate for the Department of Homeland

Security, the Department of Justice, and other applicable governmental departments and agencies to immediately end the practice of separating minor children from their parents, except for the rare cases when the parents pose a threat to their own children, and that minor children who already have been taken from their parents be quickly reunited with them.

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

12. WELCOMING NEW CHURCHES

Assistant Moderator Lowes invited Rev. Dr. Chris Davies, team leader for the Faith Education, Innovation and Formation team in Justice and Local Church Ministries, to help welcome churches new to the United Church of Christ since the last General Synod.

Rev. Dr. Chris Davies introduced a video and invited those participating in the processional to celebrate.

13. MATTHEW DESMOND KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Assistant Moderator Lowes introduced Troy VanAken, President of Elmhurst College, to introduce Matthew Desmond, Keynote Speaker.

Troy VanAken introduced Professor Matthew Desmond, who gave a talk on housing and eviction, followed by a question and answer period.

14. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTORS

Assistant Moderator Lowes indicated an important part of the General Synod in recent years has been the insightful commentary of our theological reflectors and indicated that at this General Synod three artists were invited to share their commentary through their art. The first theological reflector for the General Synod, Tia Richardson, has been painting on the Artist Stage since the opening service of worship yesterday. Her colorful artistry has graced our presence. Assistant Moderator invited Tia to say a few words about the canvas she created and how it reflects her experience with the General Synod.

Tia Richardson recapped many of the events of the past two days and explained how she had incorporated the people, the images, the music, the children, the colors, and the light into her painting. Tia indicated that the title of her piece was “Everything Can Bring Liberation Through Love.”

Assistant Moderator Lowes thanked Tia for sharing, not only her art, but also her thoughtful words and indicated we were blessed by her presence.