

2. SPEAK OUT

3. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Moderator Williams welcomed the final Theological Reflector: Musician and composer Sandy Champion.

4. STEWARDSHIP OF EXHIBIT SPACE (CONTINUED)

Discussion continued.

A motion was made and seconded to table the resolution. After making the motion to table the resolution, the delegate making the motion spoke to the motion and asked that after the resolution was tabled, that the United Church of Christ Board create a behavioral covenant to govern the Exhibit Hall space.

19-GS-29 VOTED: The Thirty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ tables the resolution Stewardship of Exhibit Space.

(Vote: 375 Yes; 228 No; 20 Abstentions – 623 electronic submissions registered)

5. RESOLUTION REGARDING THE USE OF PLASTIC FOAM (i.e. Styrofoam®)

Moderator Williams called on Diane Johnson of the Northern California Nevada Conference to present the recommended actions from Committee #5.

Diane Johnson moved, on behalf of Committee #5, to recommend that the Resolution Regarding the Use of Plastic Foam be approved as amended by Committee. Diane Johnson spoke to the motion.

Moderator Williams 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.

Moderator Williams, 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:

Three spoke in favor of the resolution.

19-GS-30 VOTED: The Thirty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopts Resolution Regarding the Use of Plastic Foam.

(Vote: 665 Yes; 5 No; 3 Abstentions – 673 electronic submissions registered)

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE USE OF PLASTIC FOAM (i.e. Styrofoam®)

A Resolution of Witness

Text of the Resolution

Whereas, Styrofoam (a registered trademark by Dow Chemical so “Styrofoam” will be replaced with plastic foam) is made of expanded polystyrene foam, and

Whereas, polystyrene is made by linking styrene molecules into a polymer (American Chemistry Council) and “polymer” is defined by Merriam-Webster as a chemical compound or mixture of compounds that is formed by combination of smaller molecules and consists basically of repeating structural units, and

Whereas, plastic foam is used in many applications, including food service (Clean Water Action, 2011), and

Whereas, it takes 500 years for plastic foam to decompose (Sims, 2016), and

Whereas, landfill contents are 25-30% plastic, which includes plastic foam (Sims, 2016), and

Whereas, styrene and benzene are used in the production of plastic foam, and styrene is a probable carcinogen in humans (Aarhus University, 2018), and benzene is a known carcinogen in humans (American Cancer Society), and

Whereas, plastic foam containers leach styrene when they come into contact with warm food or drink, alcohol, oils, and acidic foods such as fruit juice (Sims, 2016), and

Whereas, microwaving food in plastic foam containers increases styrene leaching into food and is considered a health risk (Earth Resource Foundation), and

Whereas, in 1986 the EPA listed polystyrene manufacturing as the 5th largest hazardous waste contributor in the United States and polystyrene is manufactured with petroleum which is non-sustaining and heavily polluting (Sims, 2016), and

Whereas, the United Nations Environment Programs estimated in 2006 that 46,000 pieces of plastic, including plastic foam, float in every square mile of ocean (Sims, 2016), because plastic foam is lightweight and floats readily so it travels easily down storm drains and runs off into waterways, and

Whereas, plastic from urban runoff is the primary source of plastic ocean debris world-wide (Sims, 2016), and

Whereas, as plastics enter the waterways and oceans, they break down into smaller and smaller pieces, which are then ingested by marine life, causing harm or death, which has potential

impacts on seafood fish populations (Monterey Bay Aquarium, 2018), and

Whereas, in 2010 the United Nations estimated that 37% of the global population lives along the coastline (United Nations Goal 14, 2016), and

Whereas, seafood makes up 90% of protein in the diet of persons living in some parts of the world (Monterey Bay Aquarium, 2018), and

Whereas, a study of beach debris in Orange County, California found plastic foam to be the second most abundant form of beach debris (Moore et al. 1998), and

Whereas, a study of microplastics in the Chesapeake Bay found microplastics in 98% of samples (Marine Debris Program, 2018)

Whereas, 100% of human fatty tissues sampled in 1972, 1976, and 1982 contained levels of styrene. A 1988 survey found levels of styrene in fatty tissue to be 8 to 350 nanograms of styrene per gram of tissue (ng/g). 350 ng/g is 1/3 the level of styrene that is toxic to nerves or nervous tissue (Sims, 2016), and

Whereas, research on the effects of plastic pollution and chemical effects on the food web and human health is currently inadequate (Monterey Bay Aquarium, 2018), and

Whereas, non-plastic foam food packaging products are available online at the following websites (this list is NOT all-inclusive – there are others, and users are encouraged and expected to do their own research for quality and price): and

Whereas, the United Church of Christ is committed to Environmental Justice, and the third of the “3 Great Loves” initiative is Love of Creation,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Thirty-second General Synod encourages Conferences, Associations, Congregations, CHHSM Agencies and individuals to avoid the use of plastic foam in food packaging and other activities within their church and church-related facilities; the freedom of implementation belongs to all settings of the United Church of Christ, and

Be it further resolved that Thirty-second General Synod encourages Conferences, Associations, Congregations, and CHHSM Agencies to educate their members about plastic foam and that they encourage the use of alternatives such as paper products or, better yet, ceramic or other dishwasher-safe products.

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.