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**MINUTES  
OF THE  
THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SYNOD  
OF THE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**SPECIAL EDITION  
JULY 11-JULY 18, 2021**

**KAREN GEORGIA THOMPSON, ADMINISTRATOR  
THE THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SYNOD**

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**MINUTES  
OF THE  
THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SYNOD  
OF THE  
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**“ROOTED IN LOVE”**

**SPECIAL EDITION  
July 11 – July 18, 2021**

**Sunday Evening, July 11, 2021  
First Plenary Session**

**1. GENERAL SYNOD CALL TO ORDER**

Moderator Penny Lowes introduced herself and Assistant Moderator Bob Sandman, called the first business session of the Thirty-third General Synod to order at 6:40 pm, and welcomed delegates, visitors, and guests.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL SYNOD ADMINISTRATOR KAREN GEORGIA THOMPSON AND REFLECTION/MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Moderator Lowes introduced the Administrator of General Synod, Associate General Minister, Karen Georgia Thompson. Karen Georgia Thompson shared a brief reflection and called for a moment of silent prayer.

**3. INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL SYNOD LEADERSHIP**

Moderator Lowes introduced Corey Larson of the Iowa Conference as the Agenda Coordinator; Reginald Brantley of the New York Conference and Derek Ritenour of the Central Atlantic Conference as parliamentarians, and David Anderson and Kevin Peterson, both from the Pacific Northwest Conference, as leaders of the Committee Process Team. Moderator Lowes explained the committee process and the composition and role of the Agenda Coordinating Committee.

**4. REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

Moderator Lowes introduced Libby Tigner, Chair of the Credentials Committee, to bring its report.

The Credentials Committee found that the Delegation as a Whole is in compliance with the bylaws for General Synod Thirty-three.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-01 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the report of the Credentials Committee by consensus.

**5. QUORUM DECLARED**

Moderator Lowes indicated that the Registrar of the General Synod, Shameerah Lemon, reports 638 Conference Delegates, 48 UCCB Delegates, 33 HUGS Delegates, and 85 Associate Delegates, 20 Youth, and 1562 Guests registered for the meeting. In compliance with the Constitution of the United Church of Christ and Bylaws paragraphs 194, 195, 196, and 197, Moderator Lowes declared a quorum present and empowered General Synod to act upon the business of General Synod.

**6. INTRODUCTION OF NATHAN YOUNG, TECHNICAL COORDINATOR FOR GENERAL SYNOD AND INTRODUCTION TO MEET.UCC.**

Moderator Lowes called on Nathan Young to provide information on the use of meet.ucc to conduct business for this Special Edition Synod. Nathan indicated that all delegates were required to complete training on the use of meet.ucc prior to the start of General Synod and indicated that technical or process help would be available by phone, email, and via chat in Session Sync for the entirety of each plenary.

**7. ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD AGENDA**

Moderator Lowes indicated that Bylaw 235 provides that the United Church of Christ Board shall serve as the Business Committee and Committee of Reference of the General Synod during its sessions, and as such is responsible for the agenda and schedule of all meetings of the General Synod and recommending changes therein during sessions.

Moderator Lowes called on Yvette Wynn of the New York Conference and Chair of the United Church of Christ Board to move several procedural motions.

Yvette Wynn moved the adoption of the Agenda for the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ as available for review on the General Synod website since May 1, 2020, and at meet.ucc, and authorization for the Agenda Committee to make any necessary adjustments during sessions.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-02 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the agenda as included in the Report of the Board and authorized the Agenda Committee to make any necessary adjustments.

(Vote: Approved by Consent)

**8. ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD STANDING RULES**

Yvette Wynn, on behalf of the Business Committee of United Church of Christ Board, moved for the adoption of the Standing Rules. The Rules spell out how the membership of the General Synod is constituted and lays out the framework for how business will be conducted as the body. The Standing Rules were adopted by the Board of Directors on May 1, 2020, and posted on the General Synod website.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-03 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Standing Rules for the Thirty-third General Synod.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 480 Yes; 0 No; 3 Abstain)

**9. GRANTING VOICE WITHOUT VOTE TO RESOURCE PERSONS**

Yvette Wynn, on behalf of the Business Committee, moved that voice without vote be granted to resource persons approved by the Business Committee who will be asked to make reports and speak to certain issues. The Synod Administrator's office prepared a listing of those people as follows:

David Anderson	Committee Process Team
Kevin Peterson	Committee Process Team
Suzi Townsley	Committee Process Team
Roy Mosley	Committee Process Team
Dennis Frische-Mouri	Committee Process Team
Caroline Belsom	Committee Process Team
Maria Brace	Committee Chair
Rebecca David	Committee Chair
Andria M. Davis	Committee Chair
Marilyn Kendrix	Committee Chair
Cheryl Lindsay	Committee Chair
Crystal McCormick	Committee Chair
Elliott Munn	Committee Chair
Michael Vollbrecht	Committee Chair
Valerie Smith	Associate GS Administrator
Corey Larson	Agenda Coordinator
Derek B. Ritenour	Parliamentarian
Reginald Brantley	Parliamentarian
Heather Kimmel	General Counsel
Ken Medema	Theological Reflector
Tami Marinella	Chief Financial Officer
Shameerah Lemon	GS Registrar
Nathan Young	meet.ucc
Julie Yarborough	Association of United Church Educators
Thom Bower	Association of United Church Educators

**21-GS-04 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ granted voice without vote to the above resource persons approved by the Business Committee.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 494 Yes; 1 No; 0 Abstain)

**10. INITIAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS INCLUDING INTRODUCTION OF THE SLATE FOR THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE.**

Chair Yvette Wynn highlighted the work of the Board who together with the gifted officers and

amazing staff sprang into action to lead the church through uncertain times initiated by COVID-19 and a worldwide pandemic. The board addressed its routine matters of approving the National Setting & General Synod budget, Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) allocations, Investment & Endowment draw, and audit reports, and looked at marketing and development resources to help our church connect with new people. The General Minister and President (GMP) & Associate General Ministers (AGM) worked closely with the financial ministry team to develop a 5-year plan to address financial trends. The Governance Committee proposed diversity language amendments, and new conversations opened up for the board's engagement including calling ourselves and the National Setting to work towards becoming an anti-racist church.

Chair Wynn introduced the slate of candidates for election to the General Synod Nominating Committee Class of 2027. The names and biographies of these candidates have been posted since early July on the General Synod website and they are Lynn Jones, Laura Migarone, Thomas Mitchell, Warren Orikasa, and Sue Shear. The vote on their election will take place in the Fourth Plenary.

**11. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Moderator Lowes indicated that the General Synod Nominating Committee's Chair, Jean Avison of the Central Pacific Conference, would give the report of the Nominating Committee.

Jean Avison reported on the process, encouraged delegates to attend a hearing on the nominating process on Saturday, July 17, and also asked for potential nominees for future board positions. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Jean submitted to the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ the First and Second Reports of the Nominating Committee as posted on the General Synod website and urged the election of the nominees by the delegates to the Thirty-third General Synod.

**12. COMMITTEE ON DISPOSITION REPORT/EMPOWERING BUSINESS COMMITTEE TO MAKE REFERRALS OF NEW BUSINESS FOR ACTION.**

Moderator Lowes called on Marsha Williams of the New York Conference and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Disposition.

Marsha Williams indicated that the Sub-Committee on Disposition's recommendations appear on the General Synod website under Business, then under Reports to the General Synod as the Report of the Committee on Disposition. A total of eleven proposed resolutions were received and forwarded for consideration. No proposed resolutions were submitted at the May 31 deadline. The committee recommends designating one resolution as a "Prudential Resolution," requiring a majority vote to pass at a plenary, and 10 resolutions as Resolutions of Witness, requiring a 2/3 majority to pass at a plenary.

Seven of the resolutions are recommended for referral to committees of the General Synod and three directly to a plenary session. One resolution, Protecting Church Workers, is recommended for referral to the United Church of Christ Board. The Committee on Disposition believes that the issues this resolution raises are significant and broad, and therefore believes the best body to fully discern it and research the topics involved is the UCCB. This referral will place that resolution on the agenda at their fall 2021 board meeting to further discuss the issues raised.

If further resolutions are introduced in this plenary as new business, the Committee on Disposition will review them this evening and formulate recommendations. On behalf of the Committee on Disposition, Marsha Williams recommended that the Business Committee be delegated the task of assigning final disposition of any new business.

Marsha Williams presented the motion as follows: The Thirty-third General Synod adopts the Report of the Committee on Disposition and delegates to the Business Committee the referral of new business submitted during the first plenary of this General Synod.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-05 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the Report of the Committee on Disposition and delegated any new business to the Business Committee.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 485 Yes; 2 No; 11 Abstain)

**13. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS (BY TITLE ONLY)**

Moderator Lowes stated that in accordance with the Standing Rules, this is the only time in the agenda when delegates may introduce New Business and the New Business would be introduced by Title Only.

Moderator Lowes indicated that there is no new business to be referred to the Business Committee for recommended action.

**14. INTRODUCTION OF HONORED GUESTS**

Moderator Lowes welcomed the following honored guests:

Former General Minister and Presidents Paul Sherry and Mary Sherry, John Thomas and Lydia Veliko, and Geoffrey Black.

The following past Officers of the United Church of Christ:

Former Associate General Minister, Edith Guffey.

Former Treasurer of the United Church of Christ, Doris Powell.

Former Wider Church Ministries Executive Minister Olivia Masih White and her husband Terry White.

Former Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries Linda Jaramillo.

Former Executive Minister of Justice Witness Ministries, Bernice Powell Jackson.

Former Executive Minister of Local Church Ministries, Ben Guess.

Several former Moderators of the General Synod:

The Moderator of the Fifteenth General Synod, John Krueger.



The Moderator of the Eighteenth General Synod, Charlotte Gosselink.  
The Moderator of the Twenty-second General Synod, Denise Page Hood.  
The Moderator of the Twenty-third General Synod, Nancy Taylor.  
The Moderator of the Twenty-sixth General Synod, Merlyn Lawrence.  
The Moderator of the Twenty-seventh General Synod, Marvin Morgan.  
The Moderator of the Twenty-ninth General Synod Libby Tigner.  
The Moderator of the Thirtieth General Synod, Brian Holeman.  
The Moderator of the Thirty-first General Synod, Sue Artt.  
The Moderator of the Thirty-second General Synod, Norman Williams.

Former Instrumentality Executives:

The former Executive Vice President of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Thomas Dipko.  
The former Executive of the Office of Communication, Art Cribbs, Jr.  
The former Executive of the Office of Communications, Bob Chase.  
The former Executive of the Office for Church in Society, Yvonne Delk.  
The former Executive of the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, Mary Susan Gast.  
The former Executive of the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, Loey Powell.

Also, welcome Don Hart, former President and CEO of United Church Funds.

Moderator Lowes gave thanks for these saints and with acclamation of the General Synod declared that the honored guests were granted voice in the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

**21-GS-06 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ granted voice to the honored guests by consensus.

## **15. INTRODUCTION OF ECUMENICAL GUESTS**

Moderator Lowes welcomed Mark Pettis, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Manager for the United Church of Christ, to introduce colleagues from the Full Communion Agreement, ecumenical partner churches, and interfaith organizations. He presented a video and asked the General Synod to join in welcoming the following:

From the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President, and also from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Rev. Paul Tche, President for Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministries.

From the Presbyterian Church (USA), Dr. Dianna Wright, Director of Ecumenical Relations.

From the Reformed Church in America, the Rev. Eddy Aleman, General Secretary.

From the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Kathryn Lohre, Executive for Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

From The United Church of Canada, the Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, Moderator, and also from the United Church of Canada, the Rev. Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Executive Minister, Antler River Watershed, Western Ontario Waterways, and Horseshoe Falls Regional Councils.

From the United Methodist Church, Bishop Tracy Malone, Bishop of the East Ohio Annual Conference.

From the Unitarian Universalist Association, Jessica York, Director of Congregational Life.

From the National Council of Churches, Rev. Jim Winkler, President and General Secretary.

From the World Council of Churches, Ryan Smith, Ecumenical Program Executive in the United Nations Office.

From the World Communion of Reformed Churches, Rev. Chris Ferguson, Secretary General.

From Christian Churches Together, Rev. Carlos Malave, Executive Director.

From Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, Executive Director.

Moderator Lowes thanked Mark and welcomed all of the ecumenical and interfaith partners and with acclamation of the General Synod declared that without objection these guests are granted voice at the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

**21-GS-07 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ granted voice to the ecumenical partners by consensus.

## **16. INTRODUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL GUESTS AND MISSION CO-WORKERS**

Moderator Lowes called on Karen Georgia Thompson, Associate General Minister for Wider Church Ministries and Operations, and Co-Executive for Global Ministries to introduce the international guests.

Karen Georgia Thompson indicated that Global Ministries nurtures relationships with almost 300 churches, Christian organizations, agencies, and faith-based institutions in more than 90 countries around the world on behalf of the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ to promote the values of Presence, Mutuality, Community, Justice and Peace. Via a pre-recorded video the following international guests and mission co-workers were introduced:

### From Africa:

Ms. Joyce Steiner, Director of Programs and Advocacy, Christian Council of Ghana.

### From East Asia and the Pacific:

The Rev. Joram Calimutan, Program Coordinator, Faith Partnership and Solidarity, with the Interfaith Network for the Rights of Migrants of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants, based in

Hong Kong; and the Rev. Tafue Lusama, an ordained minister of the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu, or Christian Church of Tuvalu.

From Europe:

The Rev. Dr. Albrecht Philipps, Coordinator for Kirchengemeinschaft of the Higher Church Council, Union of Evangelical Churches in the Evangelical Church in Germany.

From Latin America and the Caribbean:

The Rev. Lisania Sustaita Martínez, Educational Coordinator of the “Mesa Conjunta para la Misión en México” or Common Table for Mission in Mexico, a common witness of the Congregational and Disciples of Christ Churches in Mexico.

From the Middle East:

Nidal L Abu Zuluf, Manager of the Joint Advocacy Initiative of the East Jerusalem YMCA and the YWCA of Palestine.

From Southern Asia:

The Rev. Rohaan Preman Ranjan, Director for the Peace and Justice Commission of the Church of the American Ceylon Mission.

Karen Georgia Thompson introduced Joyce Steiner, Director of Programs and Advocacy, Christian Council of Ghana to offer a word of greeting on behalf of the global partners.

Moderator Lowes thanked Karen Georgia Thompson and with acclamation of the General Synod declared that without objection these esteemed International Partners are granted voice at the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

**21-GS-08 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ granted voice to our esteemed international partners in mission by consensus.

**17. THREE GREAT LOVES CAMPAIGN SUMMARY**

Moderator Lowes introduced David Sigmund and Kim Whisler-Vasko to share a video summary of the Three Great Loves Campaign.

**18. PENSION BOARDS/NATIONAL SETTING MINSTERS FINANCIAL VITALITY INITIATIVE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

Moderator Lowes introduced a video addressing issues of personal indebtedness and financial security facing many who serve the church indicating that the Pension Boards and the National Setting have embarked upon a unique partnership that will directly address the changes. The video introduced the “Securing the Future: Financial Justice for Ministers” campaign and the moderator called on each one to participate in advancing the quality of life for those who serve.

**19. RACE AUDIT**

Moderator Lowes introduced Yvette Wynn, of the New York Conference and Chair of the United Church of Christ Board, Gordon Rankin, of the New Hampshire Conference and Chair of the Council of Conference Ministers, and Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister, to share

their collective intention of a racial diversity, equity, and inclusion audit in the National Setting and the United Church of Christ Board, toward becoming an anti-racist church. In addition to their report, they indicated that during this General Synod Join the Movement has launched and attendees are invited to join the movement by registering for updates and sharing their stories at [www.jointhemovementucc.org](http://www.jointhemovementucc.org).

**20. BECOMING A CHURCH OF CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION**

Moderator Lowes indicated that the next item of business was a resolution coming directly to floor of General Synod. The General Synod Standing Rules give this as an option for resolutions deemed noncontroversial and not needing time in a General Synod Committee for discussion and refinement.

This does not mean that these resolutions are any less important or worthy of the General Synod's full consideration. It does mean that the Business Committee has determined that the topic is likely to receive widespread delegate support and the resolution is written to clearly articulate the desired outcomes.

The title of the resolution is Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action and was submitted by thirteen Local Churches of the United Church of Christ. It is a Resolution of Witness and requires a 2/3 vote for adoption.

Moderator Lowes called on Yvette Wynn, of the New York Conference and Chair of the Business Committee, to bring the Motion regarding Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action. On behalf of the Business Committee, Yvette Wynn moved that the 33rd General Synod adopt the Resolution on Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action. Yvette yielded her time to speak to the motion to Matthew Carriker and Denison Staples, proponents of the resolution.

Moderator Lowes without objection granted voice to Matthew Carriker and Denison Staples for the purpose of addressing the resolution.

**21-GS-09 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ granted voice to Matthew Carriker and Denison Staples by consensus.

Discussion:

Haley Hudler (Southern New England Conference) spoke in favor

**21-GS-10 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the resolution Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 464 Yes; 19 No; 16 Abstain)

**BECOMING A CHURCH OF CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION  
A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** the 21st century has seen a resurgence of Christian spiritual and contemplative practices, yet many churchgoers have not heard of or engaged in these practices in church;

**WHEREAS** people who leave church often find a scarcity of spiritual food there to nourish their souls, and are frequently unfamiliar with practices that cultivate self-care and love of God; and have turned to other spiritual and secular communities and organizations to fulfill this need;

**WHEREAS** there is a wide diversity of spiritual practices in the Christian tradition, and we aim to honor the diversity of each of these practices as they serve to build up the body of Christ;

**WHEREAS** with the crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, and the financial fallout causing greater need than ever for work for social justice, the church is called to model and share expressions of activism modeled in the contemplative spirit of Jesus;

**WHEREAS** Jesus said “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit” (John 15: 5), and Christian contemplative practices hold the goal of abiding more deeply in Christ;

**WHEREAS** if we look at the “Tree of Contemplative Practices” as but one example of this diversity, we see that the myriad of spiritual disciplines far surpasses what the Church universal and the UCC in particular have offered to church members. As Barbara Holmes says, “Contemplative practices can be silent or evocative, still or embodied in dance or shout. Always, contemplation requires attentiveness to the Spirit of God.”;

**WHEREAS** being “transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Romans 12: 2) begins with honest self-examination, reflective introspection and dialogue, and intentions and commitments to change, through God’s grace;

**WHEREAS** the UCC is rooted in the “Three Great Loves” of neighbor, children, and creation, and authentic contemplative practices expand our capacity and commitment to love and justice, so that we might be clearer channels for God’s love to shine through and might more fully “come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” (Ephesians 4: 13)

**WHEREAS** the UCC is often identified as a progressive church for activists, whereas what makes the church unique is its spiritual grounding in the love and wholeness of God,

**WHEREAS** the church’s foundation of divine love grounds and informs communal life in the body of Christ, as well as provides the reason for why the church expresses its witness in active forms of justice, peace, and service in the world;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages local churches to become churches of “contemplatives in action,” remembering the essential disciplines modeled by Jesus of silent prayer, meditation, and practices to commune with the Divine Mother-Father, and letting contemplative depth inspire our forming and sustaining of life-giving, spiritually-generative community and our church’s

action in the world through works of charity, social justice, peacemaking, earth-stewardship, and making disciples on the path of God’s unconditional, agape love;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages training of future clergy and lay leaders in the ways of contemplation, spiritual practice, and Christian mysticism, providing experiential grounding for the sustained life of faith; living into our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ and as children of God to see the Divine in everyone and everything in all creation, beginning with ourselves and expanding our love into ever-widening circles;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod invites local churches to commit to being a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” church- a church that prioritizes contemplation, spending time communing with God in various forms of prayer; and a church of activism that seeks to make God’s love and justice real in the world; thus a church of both contemplation and action—a church of “contemplatives in action” where our love of God through contemplative practices informs how we live and act in the world, and where our interior and exterior spiritual practices complement, ground, and inspire one another.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod calls upon all settings of the United Church of Christ to invest in curriculum and resources to support Conferences, Associations, local churches, clergy, lay leaders, General Synod and seminaries in practicing and teaching a foundational life of spiritual practices, as modeled in the life of Jesus. In this resourcing, all settings are called to remain committed to the UCC’s diversity as a Multicultural, Multiracial, and Anti-racist church, thus honoring the diversity of spiritual and contemplative practices and teachers from many and varied cultures through whom the spirit works in different ways;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod encourages all settings of the UCC seek to live out the foundation of contemplative practices in the ministry of God’s work in the world—making inclusive, participatory spiritual practices and teachings that cultivate being, introspection, reflection and growth an integral part of National gatherings, including committee work, children’s, youth and adult ministries, ecumenical partnerships, and General Synod;

**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 of other entities with the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

**21. A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE AND RESPOND TO RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

Moderator Lowes indicated that the next item of business is a resolution also coming directly to the floor of General Synod: A Resolution to Declare and Respond to Racism as a Public Health Crisis. The resolution was submitted by The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries and the Council on Racial and Ethnic Ministries. Moderator Lowes called on Yvette Wynn to

make the motion. Yvette Wynn moved that the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the resolution, A Resolution to Declare and Respond to Racism as a Public Health Crisis, and recommended its approval. Yvette yielded her time to speak to the motion to Elyse Berry and Zillah Wesley, proponents of the resolution.

**21-GS-11 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ granted voice to Elyse Berry and Zillah Wesley by consensus.

Discussion:

Andrew Roblyer (South Central) spoke in favor

Brigit Stevens (Conference Minister for Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota) spoke in favor

Marvin Morgan (Past Moderator) spoke in favor

Mike Readinger (United Church of Christ Board member) spoke in favor

**21-GS-12 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution to Declare and Respond to Racism as a Public Health Crisis.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 494 Yes; 11 No; 7 Abstain)

## **A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE AND RESPOND TO RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

#### **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** “racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities,” in the words of Ibram X. Kendi.

**WHEREAS** without exception and across generations, racial inequities persist in every system of society—as evidenced through health care access, education, criminal justice, employment, housing, access to food and clean water, services to youth, older adults, and persons with disabilities, organizational leadership, governmental office, voting, and immigration, among many others—and thus a specific anti-racist lens is required for health equity and broader systemic change.

**WHEREAS** inequities based on race also intersect with other dimensions of identity—such as income, sex, gender, sexuality, citizenship and incarceration status, geographic location and housing status, ability, education, language proficiency, etc.— and thus racial justice is a necessary method from which to respond to other intersecting oppressions impacting health and equity overall.

**WHEREAS** public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities and environments in which they live, learn, work and play.

**WHEREAS** the word *crisis*, comes from the ancient Greek word that means “turning point,” and

comes from the verb meaning “to decide”—thus connoting a call to change and action.

**WHEREAS** framing racism as an issue of public health rallies and compels faith communities, organizations, and the government to address the crisis through systemic change, in the same way other threats to public health have been addressed, such as through policies, practices, enforcement, education, and support services.

**WHEREAS** for over thirty-five years, research has shown how racism undermines the physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational health and wellbeing of People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color, as evidenced by *The Report of the Secretary’s Task Force on Black and Minority Health (Heckler Report)*.

**WHEREAS** Healthy People 2020, the federal government’s prevention agenda for building a healthier nation continues to name the achievement of health equity, the elimination of disparities, and the improvement the health of all groups as the nation’s overarching goal.

**WHEREAS** social determinants of health—the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age—have a profound impact on the health of People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color; as the effects of trauma, poverty, and environmental devastation due to structural racism cannot be overstated in this regard; as the majority of changeable contributors to healthy outcomes are found in these social determinants; as these inequities are avoidable and able to be changed through policy and the redistribution of money, power, and resources; and as this is evident nationally and globally.

**WHEREAS** research shows that racial discrimination and the impact of implicit bias continues to persist in medicine and remains a fundamental cause of health disparities, which can also be remedied through changes in policy and education.

**WHEREAS** health disparities for People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color remain at unacceptable rates and breadth—as evidenced by lower life expectancy, higher infant and maternal mortality, poorer treatment for pain, cancer, cardiovascular conditions, mental health and end-of-life care, and inadequate access to and quality of health care, among many others.

**WHEREAS** the joint forces of racism and ableism have constructed an inaccessible society and an understanding of disability as an inherently undesirable, devalued, and diminished life experience, which has resulted in abuse, neglect, incarceration, institutionalization, and social exclusion across generations of disabled People of Color, in particular.

**WHEREAS** the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the devastating reality of these racial health disparities and the social and political conditions that created them; as structural racism has been proven to be a barrier to COVID-19 treatment and prevention; as Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities have a COVID-19 mortality rate of more than 2.7 times the rate of People of European Decent; as the Navajo Nation’s infection rate has been the highest in the country; as disparities in economic stability and health care access have been linked to infection rates and death; as Communities of Color are more likely to live in multigenerational homes; as workers of African Descent are more likely to be in jobs deemed essential; and as



one in five state and federal prisoners had COVID-19.

**WHEREAS** police violence, state-sanctioned terror, and the systems that uphold and condone them are an integral part of this public health crisis; as People of African Descent are three times more likely to be killed by police (and are nearly one and a half times more likely to be unarmed in those killings) than those of European Descent; as research shows that the presence of high use of force by police in Communities of Color is associated with an increased risk in poorer health, high blood pressure, and diabetes, among other health concerns; as 98.3 percent of killings by police from 2013-2020 have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime; as poor data collection by law enforcement has contributed to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women; and as People of African Descent are overrepresented on death row and are more likely to die by state execution.

**WHEREAS** mass incarceration and the inherently racist war on people who use drugs have targeted and ravaged Communities of Color through every measure and expression of health; as 60 percent of the 2.2 million Americans incarcerated are of African Descent or Latinx; as People of African Descent are nearly six times more likely to be incarcerated for drug-related offenses than their counterparts of European Descent, despite equal substance usage rates; as 72,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2019; as the opioid overdose crisis is fueled by socioeconomic inequities, trauma, and hopelessness, in addition to harmful prescribing practices; and as numerous governmental laws and organizational policies refuse to adopt life-saving harm reduction strategies.

**WHEREAS** immigration status directly influences health outcomes; as migrant detention centers have a long history of medical neglect and abuse, including preventable deaths of children; and as family separation has long-term damaging psychological and health consequences for children, families, and communities.

**WHEREAS** a tool of white supremacy and capitalism is to inflame and sustain racial tension and hatred in order to prevent People of European Descent, particularly those who are low-income, and People of Color from uniting as a collective force to dismantle these oppressive systems, and is also wielded in such a way, where upholding racist beliefs becomes more important than—and at the expense of—the health of European Americans that would also be improved, if not saved, by anti-racist policies.

**WHEREAS** the answers, strategies, and practices that have come from many People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color use public health perspectives to guide their life-saving work.

**WHEREAS** voting and protecting voting rights are essential for advancing health equity; as there exists a correlation between voting behaviors and poor health; and as voting establishes the policy makers who will make decisions on a systemic level.

**WHEREAS** there is reason to have hope; where although the magnitude and overwhelming reality of racism can evoke a sense of powerlessness, addressing social determinants of health is a practical way to move forward together on the path to justice. The church, in all of its expressions, can be a vessel for that hope to come alive. The church can be a place of trust,

connection, and collaboration with the wisdom already present in communities working for transformation; as Christ modeled that the work of the Good News is shared and can start today; and as each member of the Body has their own unique role to play, gift to give, and worth to claim.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ declares racism a public health crisis.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the national setting of the United Church of Christ to enable and encourage local churches, conferences, and organizations to develop methods to:

- a. Raise the church's consciousness of racism as a public health crisis from theological, bioethical, and public health perspectives.
- b. Monitor and advocate for public policies that work towards health equity by addressing social determinants of health and divest in those that cause harm, violence, and death.
- c. Discover ways in which current ministries and mission connect with and can address racism as a public health crisis and explore new ways of incorporating this lens into the life of the church.
- d. Examine, in radical honesty, past and current organizational policies and practices in how they contribute or create barriers to health equity and racial justice.
- e. Identify current and potential relationships with members of CHHSM, COREM, other health and human service organizations, advocacy groups, faith and community-based organizations, and academic institutions to collaborate on responding to racism as a public health crisis.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the U. S. Congress and state legislatures to pass legislation that would address social determinants of health, such as The Anti-Racism in Public Health Act, which would create a “Center on Anti-Racism in Health” at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and to establish a “Law Enforcement Violence Prevention Program” at the CDC.

**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.

**22. A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT (2015-2024)**

Moderator Lowes indicated the next item of business is a resolution coming directly to the floor, submitted by the New Hampshire Conference and the Southwest Conference, entitled A Resolution to Recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). It is a Resolution of Witness and requires a 2/3 vote for adoption. Yvette Wynn moved that the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the resolution recommended its approval. Yvette yielded her time to speak to the motion to Harriet Ward and Andrew Ponder Williams, proponents of the resolution.

**21-GS-13 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ granted voice to Harriet Ward and Andrew Ponder Williams to speak to the motion by consensus.

Discussion:

Haley Hudler (Southern New England Conference) offered a friendly amendment to correct grammar which Moderator Lowes accepted.

**21-GS-14 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution to Recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024).

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 483 Yes; 13 No; 16 Abstain)

**A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT (2015-2024)**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** the human rights of African descendant people globally and in the United States continue to be challenged by the presence of racism and the legacy of whiteness, and

**WHEREAS** a myriad of social issues are byproducts of the racial inequities stemming from prejudice, bigotry, White privilege, White fragility, and White supremacy, and

**WHEREAS** the numbers of incarcerated people of African descent in the Americas continues to grow, and

**WHEREAS** disparities in healthcare, housing, education, the plight of women and girls, and a myriad of interconnected issues point to the need for addressing racism and calling attention to the need to protect the human rights of African descendant people.

**WHEREAS** in many countries, while African descendant people attained civil rights, the human rights guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly continue to be elusive, and

**WHEREAS** data show that police have continued killing Black men and women at disproportionate rates, even after the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor sparked international protests against racism and police brutality, with a total of 164 Black men and women who were killed by police from January 1 to August 31, 2020, and

**WHEREAS** in June of 2020 four black men, Malcolm Harsch, Robert Fuller, Dominique Alexander, and an unidentified Black teenager were found hanged to death, all reported by authorities to have committed suicide, a claim disputed by their family members and many other people, and

**WHEREAS** the Bible and Christian theology affirm *imago dei* – that all people are created in the image of God; and

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has consistently shown leadership in advocacy and for the rights of African descendant people in the United States and globally; and

**WHEREAS** the United Nations declaration of the Decade calls for the promotion and protection of the rights of people of African descent; and

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ passed several resolutions that address the unfair treatment of people of African descent, that call for legislation and action to address injustices perpetuated against African descendant people and continues to decry the systems that support and perpetuate white privilege and white supremacy as tools that produce racism and racial inequality;

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ continues to advocate for the dismantling of racism and racist institutions through education and policy;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 - 2024);

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the Church to increase awareness of the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and work ecumenically to promote the Decade;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the Church to utilize this Decade to intentionally address the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the Church to adopt the Decade themes of recognition, justice and development as frameworks for its advocacy, commitments and engagement in the fight for the rights of People of African Descent.

**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.

### **23. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

Moderator Lowes called on Yvette Wynn, John Dorhauer and Cameron Barr to share an update on Strategic Priorities.

Yvette Wynn, John Dorhauer and Cameron Barr presented the priorities in a pre-recorded video.

### **24. NOMINATION AND SPEECH OF AGM CANDIDATE**

Moderator Lowes invited Davida Foy Crabtree, retired Conference Minister, to introduce Traci Blackmon.

Davida Foy Crabtree gave the nominating speech for Traci Blackmon indicating support for Traci's candidacy in continued leadership as Associate General Minister for Local Church Ministries and for Justice and Witness Ministries. Davida indicated that Traci embodies the following virtues: closeness to God, which is authentic and real; the integrity of life; and the courage to lead.

Traci Blackmon accepted the nomination and indicated her desire is to continue to serve God and the church through her role as Associate General Minister in the United Church of Christ, giving her best to whatever task is placed before her. Traci promised to ask what is God up to in every place the UCC is found...and doing all to make certain WE show up to be involved in whatever God is up to...wherever WE are found.

Moderator Lowes declared that the nomination of Traci Blackmon was now before the Thirty-third General Synod and that the election would be held at the plenary on July 18.

### **25. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Moderator Lowes invited Karen Georgia Thompson to offer some closing remarks and announcements and introduce our Theological Reflection.

Karen Georgia Thompson encouraged all to stay for the Theological Reflection presented by the youth, to visit the Virtual Exhibit Hall, check out the workshops available and Educational Intensives, Optional Events, and Keynote Speaker events listed in meet.ucc, and to sign up for Speak-Out.

## **26. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS**

The Youth Provided a Pre-Recorded Theological Reflection

## **27. RECESS**

Moderator Lowes declared the Thirty-third General Synod to be in recess until 4:00 P.M. Friday afternoon.

**Friday, July 16, 2021**

**4:00 p.m.**

**Second Plenary Session**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Moderator Lowes called the Second Plenary Session to order at 4:00 p.m. The Moderator started with a thank you to Edith Guffey of Kansas-Oklahoma Conference and Ginny Brown-Daniels of the Missouri Mid-South Conference for their contribution in the planning of the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Synod, prior to the start of COVID-19. The Moderator then opened the Second Plenary with the Four Directions prayer.

The Moderator indicated that while the committees have been working diligently, none were ready to report out their work yesterday. Therefore, due to the requirement that the General Synod have at least one-half day to review any changes to resolutions coming out of committee, there would not be any committee reports during this plenary as originally scheduled. Several non-business items from the Fourth Plenary Session would be moved to the Second Plenary Session Committee Block to allow for more time for business on Sunday afternoon.

The Moderator further indicated that as committees complete their work, the updated versions of the resolution will be posted to meet.ucc and requested that delegates log in and review the changes; those considering offering any amendments or other formal motions on any resolution should submit via the meet.ucc.org website. Moderator Lowes provided detailed information to complete this procedure.

### **2. SPEAK OUT!**

Moderator Lowes indicated we would begin plenary with the first of several Speak Outs! Speak Outs! provide an opportunity for delegates and visitors to address the General Synod for up to one minute on a topic of their choosing.

Brian Lapis, Southern New England Conference (UCC Office of Communications)

Katie Howe, Southern New England Conference (Millennials Ministries)

Elizabeth Findley Hazel, Wisconsin Conference (Value everyone)

Sonya Varn, (Pathways Theological Education)

Julie Yarborough, Central Atlantic Conference (Association of United Church Educators)

Paul Ramsey, Pension Board (Thanks for contribution to the Christmas Fund)  
Angie Staniszewski, New York Conference (MJP 2033, anti-racism)  
Dakota Roberts, Indiana Kentucky Conference (Lack of Accountability of Synod Resolutions)

The Moderator thanked the Speak Out! participants and provided information for Speak Out! sign-ups for future Plenaries.

**3. DEVELOPMENT AND OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION BASIC SUPPORT**

Moderator Lowes presented Kent Siladi, the Director of Philanthropy from the Office of Philanthropy, Technology, Identity and Communications, for a presentation on Our Church's Wider Mission.

Pre-recorded videos were shown.

The Moderator thanked Kent and reminded churches that their support is key to the success of Our Church's Wider Mission.

**4. NEW CENTER FOR ANALYTICS, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DATA**

Moderator Lowes introduced Erica Dollhopf, the Director of the Center for Analytics, Research and Development Data.

Erica Dollhopf shared some of the work of churches in their adaptability and resilience in the wake of COVID-19.

The Moderator thanked Erica for her insightful report and again indicated that since there were no committee reports coming to plenary, reports that would have followed later in the program would be presented at this time, after a word from a couple of General Synod sponsors.

**5. NEW CHURCH PARADE/CHURCHES NEW TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Moderator Lowes indicated it is time to celebrate the newest members of the United Church of Christ family. Moderator introduced Aaron Wade, Minister for Congregational Granting, for this much-anticipated event each General Synod. Aaron presented some of the newest ministries of the United Church of Christ via a video entitled New Churches.

The Moderator thanked Aaron and welcomed the new churches to the United Church of Christ.

**6. RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL STAFF**

Moderator Lowes indicated it was time to recognize the talented and devoted people who make up the National Staff of the United Church of Christ. John Dorhauer enumerated some of the accomplishments and thanked the staff, and also announced that the United Church of Christ National Office was recognized as one of the top workplaces for 2021, a place where employees have voice, where their voice matters and makes a difference. Yvette Wynn and Cameron Barr as well Penny Lowes also thanked the National Staff for their dedication and commitment.

**7. RECOGNITION OF NEW AND RETIRING CONFERENCE MINISTERS**

Moderator Lowes introduced Gordon Rankin, Conference Minister of the New Hampshire and Chair of the Counsel of Conference Ministers, to recognize new and retiring Conference Ministers.

Gordon Rankin recognized new and retiring Conference Ministers and also indicated a special recognition would be held to celebrate the ministry of Keith Mills, deceased.

Moderator Lowes thanked Gordon Rankin.

## **8. JUST WORLD**

Moderator Lowes indicated that the United Church of Christ continues to work toward being a just and inviting church. The United Church of Christ is unique in its witness and commitment to a just world and invited General Synod to hear a word on how Local Churches might get even more involved in this important work.

The Just World video was played.

Moderator Lowes encouraged everyone to see how they and their church can embrace the Just World Covenant.

## **9. 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES**

Moderator Lowes indicated that there are many incredible ministries to lift up in the United Church of Christ and introduced Global Ministries. She expressed our happiness in joining together in celebrating 25 tremendous years of God's work around the world.

The Global Ministries video was played.

Moderator Lowes thanked Global Ministries and all partners around the world.

Sponsor Videos:

Church Building and Loan Fund

Pension Boards

United Church Funds

## **10. MUSIC STRETCH BREAK**

Moderator Lowes indicated that General Synod always provides some wonderful take-aways and this year's General Synod has given us some incredible musical offerings. The moderator introduced "Rooted in Love" by Natalie Cerna, and thereafter thanked Natalie and the worship team for bringing this beautiful music.

## **11. NCC PRESENTATION ON NRSVUE**

The Moderator called on John Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and Board President of the National Council of Churches to make an exciting announcement. John Dorhauer announced that on November 18, 2021, there will be a new edition of the New Revised Standard Version Bible, the NRSVue (that is, updated edition) and indicated that e-copies of the latest translation can be pre-ordered.



The Moderator thanked John Dorhauer.

## **12. SEMINARY PRESENTATIONS**

Moderator Lowes invited all to see what our seminaries and seminarians are doing throughout the United Church of Christ.

Seminary Videos were played.

The Moderator indicated that the United Church of Christ's seminaries have a bright and bold future and wished our seminarians God's Blessing as they embark upon their ministries in and on behalf of this beloved church.

## **13. JOIN THE MOVEMENT**

Moderator Lowes invited everyone to become involved in a time of opportunity, conversation, and action and to Join the Movement.

Join the Movement was played and Invitation to Join the Movement was extended.

Moderator Lowes indicated we have a story to broadcast to the world and thanked everyone for the great reminder of who we are and who we can be as a church.

## **14. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Moderator Lowes invited Karen Georgia Thompson to give the Announcements.

Announcements by Karen Georgia Thompson:

1. Committees will continue their work on Saturday between from 1 – 2 pm
2. Implementation Conversations are available on meet.ucc
3. Sign up for Speak Out! on meet.ucc and follow instructions for same
4. Videos of worship, keynotes, workshops will be available after July 19
5. The exhibit hall is open 24 hours, though not always staffed
6. Worship Bulletins and other resources are available on UCC.org
7. Keynote speaker, Rev. Adam Russell this evening at 8:00 pm

## **15. RECESS**

Moderator Lowes declared the Second Plenary Session of the Special Edition General Synod to be in recess until Saturday at 4:00 p.m.

### **Saturday, July 17, 2021 Third Plenary Session**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Assistant Moderator Sandman called the Third Plenary Session of the Thirty-third General Synod to order at 4:00 p.m. Moderator Sandman reviewed instructions for submitting motions.

#### **2. SPEAK OUT!**

Assistant Moderator Sandman indicated we would begin this plenary with the second Speak Out!

Kearstin Bailey, South Central Conference (Volunteer Program)  
Rev. Charing Wei-Jen Chen, Illinois Conference (Queer of God)  
Paul Fogle, Penn Central Conference (Dying with Dignity)  
Emma Brewer-Wallin, UCC Board Member (Behavioral Covenant – Exhibit Hall)  
Chad Abbott, Conference Minister, Indiana Kentucky Conf. (DACA)  
Brooks Berndt, UCC Minister, Environmental Justice (Green New Deal)

Assistant Moderator Sandman thanked the participants provided information for Speak Outs! for tomorrow's plenary.

### **3. STATE OF THE CHURCH**

Moderator Lowes invited the General Minister and President to bring the "State of the Church address.

John Dorhauer spoke on the State of the Church.

Assistant Moderator Sandman thanked John for his challenging yet hope-filled words.

### **4. BREAK**

### **5. A RESOLUTION TO ADVOCATE AND ACT TO CHANGE THE CASH BAIL BOND SYSTEM TO ELIMINATE RACIAL AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES INHERENT IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM**

Assistant Moderator Sandmen asked Moderator Lowes to open with prayer prior to beginning with committee reports.

The next item of business is a resolution entitled A Resolution to Advocate and Act to Change the Cash Bail Bond System to Eliminate Racial and Social Injustices in the Present System, submitted by the Southern Conference. Moderator Sandman called on Maria Brace of the Penn Northeast Conference to present the recommended action.

Moderator Sandman then called on Tyler Ung, a delegate from the Southeast Conference, to make the motion. Tyler Ung moved on behalf of Committee Two that the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the Resolution to Advocate and Act to Change the Cash Bail Bond System to Eliminate Racial and Social Injustices Inherent in the Present System, as amended. Maria Brace spoke to the motion.

Discussion:

Tanya Sadagopan (Wisconsin Conference) spoke in favor  
Charlotte Frantz (Minnesota Conference) spoke in favor  
Maddie Furman (Southern Conference) questioned the role of the church in this matter

### **Motion to Amend**

Andrew Roblyer (South Central Conference) moved to amend the resolution to change

“encourage” to “strongly urges” in line 163.  
Motion was seconded by Dixie Laube, (Iowa Conference).

Moderator called for discussion on the motion to amend.

No additional discussion.

**Proposed Amendment:**

That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ ~~encourages~~ **strongly urges** the reform of the bail bond systems within individual states and the United States in order to eliminate the racial and social injustices in the present cash bail bond systems,

**Vote on Amendment**

**21-GS-15 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 494 Yes; 54 No; 13 Abstain)

No further discussion.

**Vote on Main Motion**

**21-GS-16 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the resolution, A Resolution to Advocate and Act to Change the Cash Bail Bond System to Eliminate Racial and Social Injustices Inherent in the Present System, as amended.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 551 Yes; 10 No; 3 Abstain)

**A RESOLUTION TO ADVOCATE AND ACT TO CHANGE THE CASH BAIL BOND SYSTEM TO ELIMINATE RACIAL AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES INHERENT IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** the U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and African Americans, Latinos, Latinas, and indigenous peoples are disproportionately incarcerated in the United States;

**WHEREAS** since 2000, the vast majority of the jail population increase was caused by the detention of individuals prior to trial (pretrial) of which 60 to 70% were classified nonviolent minimum-security;

**WHEREAS** cash bail bonding is an over 2-billion-dollar industry;

**WHEREAS** the inability to make cash bail extracts an untold human cost on the accused due to their loss of employment, housing and, often times, family support;

**WHEREAS** there are proven instances of inadequate health care for incarcerated persons, death

and injury suffered by incarcerated persons ;

**WHEREAS** at least 70% of inmates in local jails are not convicted of any crime;

**WHEREAS** persons who cannot make bail are poor and four times more likely to receive jail time with sentences three times longer than those who do make bail;

**WHEREAS** bail set for people of color exceeds that for whites by 35% and Latinos by 19%;

**WHEREAS** three out of four criminal cases in state trial courts are for misdemeanors that, if proved, would result in fines and/or less than a year in jail;

**WHEREAS** political contributions made by the Bail Industry in between 2002 and 2016 exceeded \$5,000,000;

**WHEREAS** money-based systems release nearly half of the most dangerous defendants with little to no meaningful supervision;

**WHEREAS** the US is the only nation besides the Philippines to have a legal commercial bail bond industry;

**WHEREAS** corporate and/or systemic structures, or individuals which derive profit from the imprisonment of human beings serve to perpetuate the legacy of slavery, oppression and heartless greed which the United Church of Christ has long sought to expose and correct;

**WHEREAS** we are admonished as followers of Christ to "Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured;" (Hebrews 13:3)

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

- a. That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the reform of the bail bond systems within individual states and the United States in order to eliminate the racial and social injustices in the present cash bail bond systems;
- b. That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ strongly urges the individual states and the United States to institute alternatives to cash bail bond systems;
- c. That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church to raise their consciousness of the theological, social, racial, ethnic and economic inequities which make possible the existence of the unfair and unjust bail bond systems;
- d. That, to accomplish these goals, the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church to seek partnerships with other

organizations also working toward the goals.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the U.S. Congress and state legislatures to reform the cash bail bond systems to be more just and humane.

**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.

**6. A COMMITMENT TO GENDER SAFETY AND EQUITY IN MINISTRY SETTINGS**

This resolution was submitted by the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ. Assistant Moderator Sandman called on the Committee Four Chair, Cheryl Lindsey of the Heartland Conference, to speak to the committee's recommendations. Gary Barraco, a delegate from Penn Northeast Conference and member of Committee Four, moved that the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the resolution A Commitment to Gender Safety and Equity in Ministry and recommended approval, as amended. Cheryl spoke to the motion.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-17 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the resolution A Commitment to Gender Safety and Equity in Ministry.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 544 Yes; 12 No; 3 Abstain)

**A COMMITMENT TO GENDER SAFETY & EQUITY IN MINISTRY SETTINGS  
A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** The General Synod of the United Church of Christ has taken a firm, unyielding stance for the human rights and safety of women, refuses to condone any form of violence against vulnerable people, and strongly encourages clergy and laity to support survivors of sexual violence; and

**WHEREAS** The majority of women, both cisgender and transgender, whether they identify as women or as non-binary, are objectified and subjected to the violence and degradation of sexual assault and unwanted sexual advance; and

**WHEREAS** Sexual harassment and gender discrimination, including attacking, undermining

and dismissing women and non-binary persons' leadership, is a form of violence; and occurs within a national context of escalating violence against women in positions of public leadership; and

**WHEREAS** Women and non-binary persons risk further discrimination, violence, loss of employment, ostracism or death in daring to say no or confront the harasser, and penalty of being silenced or not believed when they dare to report; and

**WHEREAS** Gender expression continues to be a minefield for women and non-binary persons, who are pressured to exude the amount of femininity that makes others comfortable – “too feminine” is seen as helpless or intentionally seductive, but “too masculine” is considered confrontational and disrespectful - and women are still judged on their appearance, rather than on their skills, ideas, achievements, or other non sexual/non-gendered attributes; and

**WHEREAS** Women are still subject to economic violence, primarily in that they are paid less than men for the same or similar work, and this lower pay in turn reduces their pension, retirement benefits and Social Security payments; they are overcharged for “women’s products” and penalized for carrying out the responsibilities of home and family; and

**WHEREAS** These experiences of bias, discrimination and violence occur in ministry settings, and are experienced by clergy and lay women and non-binary persons holding positions of leadership within the Church; and

**WHEREAS** Such discrimination is founded in misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and racism, which are antithetical to the way of Jesus; and

**WHEREAS** Our society is in the midst of a cultural transformation, with the #metoo movement empowering survivors to break the silence and share their stories of rape, abuse, and sexual harassment, and women and non-binary persons have begun sharing their #churchtoo stories of how this occurs within the Church; and

**WHEREAS** Clergy, chaplains and faith leaders are called upon to provide pastoral care to those navigating gender discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, some of which occurs within our ministry settings; and

**WHEREAS** The United Church of Christ Ministerial Code of Ethics requires ministers to “not use my position, power, or authority to exploit any person”;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ, confesses its complicity, active participation with, and passive acceptance of systems of sexism, misogyny, transphobia, and gender oppression that inhibit and limit leadership; directs the United Church of Christ Board and urges all other settings of the United Church of Christ – including (but not limited to) local congregations, Committees on Ministry, and Justice and Local Church Ministries Teams – to explore ways to promote gender safety, to empower women, transgender, gender-expansive, nonbinary, genderqueer, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, and two-spirit persons (hereinafter referred to as “Included Persons”), both lay and authorized

ministers, and to raise issues regarding sexism and discrimination, reinforcing the covenants and standards of behavior which bind us together as conferences, associations, congregations, authorized ministers, lay leaders and members; and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms the physical and sexual autonomy of Included Persons: the right not to have any other person invade their personal space without permission; the right not to be touched, or abused, either emotionally or physically, in any way by another person; the right to express gender in the ways they choose; the right to communicate autonomously, without reproach or censure based on sexism, misogyny, transphobia and gender oppression; the right to expect that any such action will in no way be held against them for any reason in the workplace, including all ministry settings, or in any social situation; and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ directs the UCCB and urges all settings of the UCC to commit to gender equity and address inequities (e.g., compensation, benefits, senior leadership roles, other employment opportunities, hiring, promotion, and termination, etc.) for all Included Persons, both authorized ministers and laity who serve the Church; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-third General Synod asserts that this work must simultaneously address the threats and realities of violence that result from racism, heterosexism, classism, xenophobia, immigration status (real and assumed), ableism, and other intersectional oppressions impose on the daily life and leadership of Included Persons in the Church.

**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.

7. **A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING TO END 128 YEARS OF WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM**

This Resolution was submitted by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches. Assistant Moderator Sandman called on Marilyn Kendrix of the Southern New England Conference to present the recommended action from Committee Five. Marilyn Kendrix yielded to Dakota Roberts to make the motion. Dakota Roberts, a delegate from the Indiana Kentucky Conference on behalf of Committee, moved the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the resolution A Resolution Encouraging to End 128 Years of War Between the United States of America and the Hawaiian Kingdom, as amended. Marilyn spoke to the resolution.

Discussion:

Kerisa Carmelo (Hawaii Conference) spoke in favor

David Jennys (South Dakota Conference) spoke in favor

William Bowens (Indiana-Kentucky Conference) spoke against

Kyle Lovett (Hawaii Conference) spoke against

**Motion to Amend**

Neil MacPherson (Hawaii Conference) moved to amend the second Be It Resolved clause. Seconded by Kerisa Carmelo (Hawaii Conference).

**Proposed Amendment:**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the United Church of Christ's General Counsel's office to listen to and consider recommendations from the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches, ~~other Native Hawaiian organizations, and Native Hawaiian voices~~ **[(and the member churches it represents)]** drafting communications to local, national and international leaders and organizations calling for compliance with international humanitarian law and an end to the illegal occupation of the Hawaiian islands.

Discussion on the Motion to Amend

Kyle Lovett (Hawaii Conference) spoke against

Tanya Sadagopan (Wisconsin Conference) spoke against

**Vote on Motion to Amend:**

**21-GS-18 VOTED:**

MOTION FAILED (Vote: 56 Yes; 453 No; 46 Abstain)

**Motion to Postpone Indefinitely**

Kyle Lovett (Hawaii Conference) Moved to Postpone the Resolution Indefinitely.

Seconded by Jess Chancey (Minnesota Conference).

Discussion on Motion to Postpone Indefinitely:

Florentino Cordova (Hawaii Conference) spoke in favor

Andrea Vassell (Central Atlantic Conference) spoke in favor

Dakota Roberts (Indiana-Kentucky Conference) spoke against

Terry Yasuko Ogawa (Southern New England Conference) spoke against

**Vote on the Motion to Postpone Indefinitely**

**21-GS-19 VOTED:**

MOTION FAILED (Vote: 213 Yes; 298 No; 40 Abstain)

**Motion to Extend Debate**

Thomas Gregory Gray (Southern New England Conference) moved to extend the plenary by one hour.

Seconded by Matthew Hogue Smith (Heartland Conference).

**Vote on the Motion to Extend Plenary by One Hour**

**21-GS-20 VOTED:**

MOTION FAILED (Vote: 221 Yes; 305 No; 35 Abstain)

**Vote on Main Motion**

**21-GS-21 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to



adopt A Resolution Encouraging to End 128 Years of War Between the United States of America and the Hawaiian Kingdom.

MOTION FAILED; DID NOT PASS BY REQUIRED 2/3 (Vote: 291 Yes; 188 No; 74 Abstain)\*

\*The Thirty-third General Synod voted to reconsider this resolution in the Fourth Plenary Session and subsequently passed the resolution.

John Dorhauer led the body in prayer.

## **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Assistant Moderator Sandman called on Karen Georgia Thompson for announcements.

1. Karen Georgia shared the following numbers.
  - 2755 Registration
  - 108 Volunteers
  - 50 Workshops
  - 3 Worships
  - 2 Keynote
  - 11 resolutions
  - 10 Implementation Conversations-If the room is full for these go to another room
2. One more Speak Out! on Sunday. Make your video.
3. Workshops available until August 31.
4. Worship will follow tomorrow's plenary

Karen Georgia Thompson thanked all who worked together to put this virtual General Synod together.

## **9. RECESS**

Assistant Moderator Sandman declared the Third Plenary of the Special Edition General Synod to be in recess until Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

**Sunday, July 18, 2021**  
**Fourth Plenary Session**  
**2:30 p.m.**

## **1. CALL TO ORDER AND SPONSOR RECOGNITION**

Moderator Lowes called the Fourth Plenary of the Thirty-third General Synod to order at 2:30 p.m. and provided the agenda for the day and other announcements regarding time.

## **2. SPEAK OUT!**

The Moderator indicated the plenary this afternoon would begin with our final Speak Outs!

Allyson Abrams, Central Atlantic Conference (UCC Mental Health Network – WISE)

Kearstin Bailey, South Central Conference and UCCB (Lean into Healthy Conflict)  
Anthony White, New York Conference (Thank you to UCC and Shout out to UCC Board of Directors and Yvette Wynn)  
Lakota Iron Rope, Indiana Kentucky Conference (Prayer of silence for indigenous children betrayed by the church)

The Moderator thanked all who participated in Speak Out!

**3. MOTION TO MOVE COMMITTEE BLOCK C TO FOLLOW SPEAK OUT!**

Moderator Lowes indicated that there was a Motion on the floor and she called on Zayna Thomley, Wisconsin Conference.

**Motion to Amend Agenda**

Zayna Thomley moved to Amend the Fourth Plenary Agenda by moving Committee Block C in its entirety to immediately follow Speak Out!

Seconded by Hank Fairman (Illinois Conference).

Discussion:

David Holston (Illinois Conference) spoke in favor

Jeffrey Dodson (Wisconsin Conference) spoke in favor

Tanya Sadagopan (Wisconsin Conference) spoke in favor

Jason Minnich (Penn Central Conference) spoke against

**21-GS-22 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to amend the Agenda to move Committee Block C to immediately follow Speak Out!

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 425 Yes; 77; No; 23 Abstain)

Moderator Lowes indicated that as soon as the Agenda could be revised the delegates would consider Committee Block C in its entirety.

**4. BYLAWS AMENDMENTS**

The Moderator indicated the next order of business would be the proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Bylaws and she called on Carla Gregg-Kearns, Chair of the UCCB Governance Committee, to speak to the proposed amendments and bring the motion.

Carla provided an overview and indicated that the proposed amendments were shared on February 24. Carla Gregg-Kearns, on behalf of the United Church of Christ Board, moved to adopt the proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Bylaws.

**Motion to Divide**

Eric Anderson, Hawaii Conference, moved to divide the motion into two votes, Part One, Paragraph 191, lines 481-485; and Part Two, the remaining Amendments to the Bylaws.

Seconded by Josiah Accola (Illinois South Conference).

**21-GS-23 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 252 Yes; 198 No; 78 Abstain)

**Motion to Amend Part One**

Motion to approve the deletion in Paragraph 191, lines 481-485, from the Bylaws.

Discussion:

Libby Tigner (California-S/Nevada Conference) spoke in favor

Eric Anderson (Hawaii Conference) spoke against

John Prain (Illinois Conference) spoke against

**21-GS-24 VOTED:**

MOTION DID NOT PASS (Vote: 273 Yes; 225 No; 53 Abstain)

**Motion to Amend Part Two**

Motion to approve the remaining proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Bylaws as previously presented.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-25 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 510 Yes; 23 No; 20 Abstain)

**5. THE ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST REQUEST TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FORMAL GROUP**

This Resolution was submitted by the Iowa Conference, Nebraska Conference, New Hampshire Conference and the South Dakota Conference. Moderator Lowes called on Andria Davis of the South Central Conference to present the recommended action regarding the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers. Emma Brewer-Wallin, a delegate from the Central Pacific Conference and member of the United Church of Christ Board, on behalf of Committee One moved the Thirty-third General Synod to adopt the resolution The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ Request to Be Recognized as a Formal Group and recommended its approval. Andria Davis spoke to the motion.

Moderator Lowes indicated it was a Prudential Resolution and requires a Majority Vote for adoption.

Discussion:

Mollie Ronge (South Dakota Conference) spoke in favor

Hillary Coleman (Pacific Northwest Conference) spoke in favor

Brigit Stevens (Conference Minister for Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences) spoke in favor

Matthew Redrich (California-S/Nevada Conference) spoke in favor

Courtney Stange-Tregear (Pacific Northwest Conference) spoke in favor  
Janese Murray (Central Atlantic Conference) spoke in favor  
Terry Yasuko Ogawa (South New England Conference) spoke in favor  
Erik Graefe (Kansas-Oklahoma Conference) spoke against

**Motion to Refer**

Diane Weible (UCCB) moved to refer this motion to the UCCB.  
Seconded by Kim Williams (California-N/Nevada Conference).

Discussion on Motion to Refer:

Mary Nelson (Missouri Mid-South Conference) spoke in favor  
Brigit Stevens (Conference Minister of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences) spoke  
against  
Darrell Goodwin (UCCB) spoke against

**Vote on Motion to Refer**

**21-GS-26 VOTED:**

MOTION FAILED (Vote: 168 Yes; 370 No; 12 Abstain)

**Motion to Call the Question**

Josiah Accola (Illinois South Conference) moved to call the question and end debate.  
Seconded by Dakota Roberts (Indiana-Kentucky Conference).

**Vote on Motion to Call the Question**

**21-GS-27 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 495 Yes; 45 No; 13 Abstain)

**Vote on Main Motion**

**21-GS-28 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to  
adopt the resolution The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers of  
the United Church of Christ Request to be Recognized as a Formal Group.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 456 Yes; 90 No; 13 Abstain)

**THE ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST REQUEST TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FORMAL GROUP  
A Prudential Resolution**

**TEXT OF MOTION**

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ takes seriously our individual Christian covenant with  
God as the primal covenant from which our human covenants are derived and by which they are  
shaped.

**WHEREAS** in the above view it is “the covenantal relationship with God that creates the church  
and, in turn created a covenantal relationship among the people who are the church.”

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ holds seriously the call to be an open and welcoming faith community, accepting into the church body and leadership all facets of expression found in God's people, creating a rich diversity of expression, background, culture, sexual and gender identity and expression.

**WHEREAS** the work of conference ministry and associate conference ministry places those doing the work at the intersection of church life, between the Local Church and the National Setting, including associations where those exist calling for "keeping communication flowing in all directions, nurturing relationships, articulating and supporting covenantal relationships."

**WHEREAS** in response to "[t]he Proposal for Action adopted by the Twentieth General Synod called upon local churches, conferences and associations, those called and employed by the church, and various national bodies to act in a variety of ways in support of the fair and just compensation of all persons called and employed by the church" the AACM states it provides resources and advocacy to support ACMs in their positions.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the establishment of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers, a Self-Created Group serving to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers be identified as related in covenant to the United Church of Christ, through a primary relationship as a Self-Created Group with the United Church of Christ Board.

**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, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other 37 entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

**6. DECLARATION FOR A JUST PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**

Submitted by various churches. Moderator Lowes called on Elliott Munn (Vermont Conference) to present the recommended action. Elliott Munn called on Kay Albright, (Heartland Conference) to speak to the motion, and Kay Albright moved that the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the resolution Declaration For a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel, as amended. Elliott Munn spoke to the motion.

**Motion to Amend**

David Grishaw-Jones (New Hampshire Conference) moved to strike the words "systemic economic and political segregation of the Palestinian people" and add in their place "apartheid system of laws and legal procedures."

Seconded by Matthew Hogue-Smith (Heartland Conference).

Proposed Amendment:

*We affirm* that all people living in Palestine and Israel are created in the image of God and that this bestows ultimate dignity and sacredness to all;

*Therefore, we reject* any laws and legal procedures which are used by one race or religion or political entity to enshrine one people in a privileged legal position at the expense of another, including Israel's ~~systematic economic and political segregation of the Palestinian people~~ **[apartheid system of laws and legal procedures.]**

Discussion:

Diane Weible (UCCB) spoke in favor

Andrew Roblyer (South Central Conference) spoke in favor

Hawley Brown (Southern New England Conference) spoke in favor

Billie Grace Berry (California-S/Nevada Conference) spoke in favor

Maddie Furman (Southern Conference) spoke in favor

Karen Bruno (Heartland Conference) spoke against

Barbara Hesse (Southern New England Conference) spoke against

Jeff Lukens (Southern New England Conference) spoke against

Kay Albright (Heartland Conference) spoke against

### **Vote on Motion to Amend the Resolution**

#### **21-GS-29 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 324 Yes; 224 No; 13 Abstain)

The Moderator indicated discussion continues on the original Motion on the floor.

Further discussion:

Dawn Sorensen (Southern New England) spoke in favor

Paul Karch (Wisconsin Conference) spoke against

### **Motion to Amend**

Shari Prestemon (UCCB) moved to amend the resolution by adding the word “sin in” in after the word “a” in line 174 of the resolution.

Seconded by David Grishaw Jones (New Hampshire Conference).

Shari Prestemon spoke to the Motion.

Proposed Amendment:

1. We affirm that the continued oppression of the Palestinian people remains, after more than five decades of oppression of the Palestinian people, a matter of theological urgency and represents a **[sin in]** violation of the message of the biblical prophets and the Gospel, and that all efforts to defend or legitimate the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word, or deed by the Christian community, represent a fundamental denial of the Gospel.

Discussion:

James Ross II, (Southern New England Conference) spoke in favor

Jes Kast (Penn Central Conference) spoke in favor  
Neal MacPherson (Hawaii Conference) spoke in favor  
Guy S. Johnson (MRSEJ and Heartland Conference) spoke in favor  
Venson Jordan (South New England Conference) spoke in favor  
Josiah Accola (Illinois South Conference) spoke against

**Motion to Call the Question on Motion to Amend**

Dixie Laube (Iowa Conference) moved to call the question on the motion to amend.  
Seconded by Susan Steinmiller (Illinois Conference).

**Vote on Motion to Call the Question**

**21-GS-30 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 519 Yes; 21 No; 12 Abstain)

**Vote on Motion to Amend**

**21-GS-31 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 398 Yes; 139 No; 14 Abstain)

Moderator Lowes indicated the discussion would now continue on the Resolution with the two amendments added.

**Motion to Call the Question on Main Motion**

Dixie Laube (Iowa Conference) moved to call the question on the resolution.  
Seconded by Susan Steinmiller (Illinois Conference).

**Vote on Motion to Call the Question**

**21-GS-32 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 519 Yes; 29 No; 8 Abstain)

**Vote on Main Motion, as amended**

**21-GS-33 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel, as amended.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 462 Yes; 78 No; 8 Abstain)

**DECLARATION FOR A JUST PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL  
A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** for over seventy years Palestinian people have faced dispossession of their land, displacement from their homes, a harsh military occupation, severe restrictions on travel, the military detention of their children, home demolitions – over 120,000 to date and the constant threat of more – and vast inequities in access to natural, economic, and medical resources when

compared to that enjoyed by Israeli citizens living in illegal West Bank settlements, and also on a daily basis face severe restrictions on access to their olive groves, farms, and holy sites; and

**WHEREAS** there are more than 5.6 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Administration representing a global displacement of Palestinian people dating back to 1948 whose future status remains unresolved; and

**WHEREAS** the Israeli government has maintained an illegal military occupation of Palestinian territories since 1967 that includes the establishment of illegal Jewish-only settlements throughout the West Bank and more recently has enacted formal discrimination against its Arab citizens through the passage of the Nation State Law in 2018; and

**WHEREAS** provocative actions under the Trump administration, including moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, the suspension of humanitarian aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Administration, and support for Israel's proposed illegal annexation of land in the occupied West Bank have further injured the Palestinian community and imposed serious road blocks to peace; and

**WHEREAS** the Trump Administration's Department of Education has issued a rule labeling any criticism of the State of Israel as an antisemitic act in order to suppress advocacy for Palestinian rights on university campuses, and has joined many state governments in further suppressing freedom of speech in support of Palestinian civil society's call for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions; and

**WHEREAS** actions by Israel, with tacit and overt support from the United States government, have established conditions comparable to those in force under Jim Crow in the United States south between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement, with segregation laws that enshrined systematic domination and oppression by whites over blacks. Israel's acts of domination and oppression include, but are not limited to adoption of the Nation State Law in 2018, the building of the separation barrier, implementation of a restrictive pass system for Palestinians, the creation of Israeli-only highways through the West Bank, and imposed military detention of Palestinian children accused of crimes; and

**WHEREAS** the General Synod of the United Church of Christ and its officers have for over fifty years advocated for a negotiated process leading to a just peace between Israel and Palestine marked by adherence to international law and international standards of human rights and honoring the principle of self-determination and the rights of Palestinian refugees; and

**WHEREAS**, reminiscent of historical examples such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Southern Africa, Israel exhibits a current-day form of settler colonialism, actively engaged in the removal and erasure of the indigenous Palestinian population, through a matrix of control that includes: the imposition of a harsh military occupation; the de facto annexation of Palestinian lands and threats of further annexation; the expansion of illegal Jewish only settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank; the contraction of Palestinian-controlled land; and the restriction of travel for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza;



**WHEREAS** Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action issued by Palestinian Christian leaders and theologians in July, 2020, states that “the very being of the church, the integrity of the Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake. We declare that support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin. We assert that Christian support for Zionism as a theology and an ideology that legitimize the right of one people to deny the human rights of another is incompatible with the Christian faith and a grave misuse of the Bible”;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopts the following Declaration:

1. We affirm that the continued oppression of the Palestinian people remains, after more than five decades of oppression of the Palestinian people, a matter of theological urgency and represents a sin in violation of the message of the biblical prophets and the Gospel, and that all efforts to defend or legitimate the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word, or deed by the Christian community, represent a fundamental denial of the Gospel.

Therefore, we reject the notion that Israel’s occupation of Palestine is a purely political problem outside the concern of the church or that the oppression of the Palestinian people is an inevitable consequence of global or regional geopolitical interests.

2. We affirm that the biblical narrative beginning with creation and extending through the calling of the Israelites, the corrective admonitions of the prophets, the incarnation and ministry of Jesus and the witness of the apostles to the “ends of the earth” . . . speaks of God's blessing extending to “all the families of the earth.” (Genesis 12.3)

Therefore, we reject any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism, Supercessionism, antisemitism or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or exclude any one nation, race, culture, or religion within God’s universal economy of grace.

3. We affirm that all people living in Palestine and Israel are created in the image of God and that this bestows ultimate dignity and sacredness to all;

Therefore, we reject any laws and legal procedures which are used by one race or religion or political entity to enshrine one people in a privileged legal position at the expense of another, including Israel’s apartheid system of laws and legal procedures.

4. We affirm that all peoples have the right to self-determination and to their aspirations for sovereignty and statehood in the shaping of their corporate religious, cultural, and political life, free from manipulation or pressure from outside powers, and that a just resolution of conflicting claims is only achieved through the equal protection of civil rights, the fair and just sharing of land and resources, and peaceful negotiation based on international law and UN resolutions.

Therefore, we reject the use of Scripture to claim a divine right to the land as the rationale for Israel’s illegal seizure and annexation of Palestinian land as well as the imposition of so-called

peace agreements by Israel or the United States through the exercise of political and military domination that leaves Palestinians without equal rights, full citizenship, and the opportunity to thrive religiously, culturally, politically, and economically.

5. We affirm the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes if they so choose or to be compensated for their loss of property, consistent with UN General Assembly resolution 194 (1948).

Therefore, we reject the denial of this right, just as we reject efforts to manipulate internationally-agreed upon definitions of refugees to attempt to erase this right which extends across generations.

6. We affirm the First Amendment constitutional right to freedom of speech and assembly to protest the actions of the State of Israel and to uphold the rights of Palestinians, including the use of economic measures to support justice as a First Amendment right and joining the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement by individuals, institutions, corporations, and religious bodies that advocate peace with justice or participate in any aspect of the use of economic measures to support justice.

Therefore, we reject the idea that any criticism of policies of the State of Israel is inherently antisemitic, in confession that some criticism is antisemitic in intent or impact, and we oppose the efforts of U.S. federal and state governments to limit free speech on university campuses and to restrict or ban support of the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that national setting of the United Church of Christ send the text of this Declaration to Local Churches, Associations and Conferences; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that all settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to receive this Declaration as a prophetic call for renewed and continued advocacy for a just peace in Palestine and Israel and use it as a plumblineline for taking action, including, for example:

a. Committing to hearing the voices of Palestinians regarding their situation, including the voices of Palestinian Christians through the study of Palestine Liberation Theology, attention to statements and appeals such as *Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth* (2009) and *a Cry for Hope* (2020), participation in travel seminars that expose visitors to the Palestinian community, and use of resources from Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

b. Implementing the calls of prior General Synod resolutions, including the 2015 Resolution, “A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” and the 2017 Resolution, “A Call for the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation.”

c. Examining critically our use and interpretations of Scripture as well as liturgies and hymns that equate ancient Biblical Israel with the modern state in ways that promote settler colonialism and the dispossession of Palestinian land, rights, and cultural expressions.

d. Offering support and encouragement to college students and faculty members as well as the human rights groups (including Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace, American Muslims for Palestine, and many other allied groups), whose freedom to speak, witness and advocate on university campuses is threatened in any way by state or local governments, or by college administrators.

e. Advocating for the cessation of U.S. military aid to Israel until such time that Palestinian human rights, civil rights, and self-determination are fully realized and protected in compliance with international law, US laws on foreign military assistance, and the principles of human rights.

f. Supporting the full restoration of US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency which carries out critical services by and for Palestinian refugees, and encouraging continued support for UCC partners which serve Palestinian refugees.

g. Demanding that the plight of Palestinian refugees be addressed by Israel and the international community based on United Nations Resolution 194 guaranteeing that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.”

**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.

## **7. A RESOLUTION TO BAN THE PRACTICE OF CONVERSION THERAPY**

This Resolution was submitted by the Open and Affirming Coalition and Mental Health Network. Moderator Lowes introduced Crystal Silva McCormick (South Central Conference) and Crystal Silva McCormick indicated the changes that were made in the resolution. The resolution to Ban the Practice of Conversion Therapy, as amended was moved by Jamie Lee Sprague Ballou (Southern California-Nevada Conference) moved that the Resolution to Ban the Practice of Conversion Therapy, as amended be adopted by the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ. Crystal Silva McCormick spoke to the resolution.

Discussion:

Izzy Harbin (Indiana-Kentucky Conference) spoke in support

Tyler Connoley (Conference Minister for the Central Pacific Conference) spoke in support

### **Motion to Call the Question**

Josiah Accola (Illinois South Conference) moved to call the question.

The motion was seconded.

**Vote on Motion to Call the Question**

**21-GS-34 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 519 Yes: 24 No: 3 Abstain)

**Vote on Main Motion**

**21-GS-35 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution to Ban the Practice of Conversion Therapy.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 547 Yes; 5 No; 1 Abstain)

**A RESOLUTION TO BAN THE PRACTICE OF CONVERSION THERAPY**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** the medical practice known as “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” regards LGBTQ+1 persons as abnormal or defective, and attempts to change or “repair” non-conforming sexual orientation or gender identity through widely-discredited therapeutic practices; and

**WHEREAS** conversion therapy for adults is legal in 50 states and all U.S. territories, while conversion therapy for youth and children is still legal in 30 states; and **WHEREAS** many studies have shown that attempts to change or “repair” sexual orientation or gender identity are associated with compromised mental health including, among other harms, lifelong suffering as the result of internalized shame, increased risk of suicide, and difficulty in forming stable and lasting relationships; and

**WHEREAS** a survey of at-risk LGBTQ+ youth published by the Trevor Project in 2020 showed that 42 percent who were subjected to conversion therapy had attempted suicide, while the attempted suicide rate of transgender and non-binary youth during or after conversion therapy was even higher at 57 percent; and

**WHEREAS** virtually every professional association in the health care industry has declared that conversion therapy is ineffective, unethical or harmful, including the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, and the National Association of Social Workers; and

**WHEREAS** in December 2020 UCC denominational leaders joined Archbishop Desmond Tutu and more than 400 other Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu faith leaders as signatories of the statement “Declaring the Sanctity of life and the Dignity of All” which called “for all attempts to change, suppress or erase a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression—commonly known as ‘conversion therapy’—to end, and for these harmful practices to be banned”;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ, affirming the dignity and worth of all people, deplors the practice of “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” that denies LGBTQ+ youth, children, and adults the opportunity to experience the blessings of love and human integrity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges parents and guardians, caregivers, and authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ to protect those in their care from any practice or program that purports to “cure” their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges congregations and all other settings of the church to advocate for state and federal laws protecting youth, children, and adults from “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” by banning the practice; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod encourages congregations and other settings of the church to work with ecumenical and interfaith partners to raise awareness of the harms of “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” and to advocate for banning the practice; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges congregations and other settings to strengthen their efforts to reach their LGBTQ+ neighbors, especially youth and children, with the Good News that their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression are gifts from God.

**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.

**8. “WHO WILL SPEAK FOR THE TREES?” A RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHTS OF NATURE**

This Resolution was submitted by the New Hampshire Conference. Moderator Lowes called on Michael Vollbrecht (Kansas-Oklahoma Conference) to introduce the resolution Who Will Speak for the Trees?, a Resolution on the Rights of Nature, as amended. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green (Penn Southeast) moved that the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the Resolution Who Will Speak for the Trees? and recommended its approval as amended. Michael Vollbrecht spoke to the Resolution.

Discussion:

Edwin Perez, Jr. (Southern New England Conference and HUGS delegate) spoke in support  
Alison Buttrick Patton (Southern New England Conference) spoke in support

**21-GS-36 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution Who Will Speak for the Trees? A Resolution on the Rights of Nature.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 518 Yes; 18 No; 1 Abstain)

**“WHO WILL SPEAK FOR THE TREES?”  
A RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHTS OF NATURE  
A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** all rights, human and the more than human lives, depend on the flourishing and vital natural cycles of life, and healthy Earth living systems. We are all interconnected to all living beings, and when we diminish or fail to recognize the rights of the natural world, we diminish our own life. Humanity and nature are interconnected, The Rights of Nature recognizes a reciprocal and responsible human relationship with Nature;

**WHEREAS** The UCC has a long history of creation-care, starting with the recognition of environmental racism in the 1980s, its studies on toxic pollution (1987, 2007, 2020), responsibly and the campaign of the Three Great Loves: Neighbor, Children, and Creation (2017), programs on Green and Creation Justice Churches, and the formation of Environmental Justice Teams. The United Church of Christ Synod has passed resolutions that directly express concerns for Earthcare;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ boldly proclaims in the public square that:

- Humans need a dramatic shift from the point of view that the Earth and all her resources are available for our sole benefit.
- Nature is not ours for enslavement but was created as a mutually sustaining ecosystem, which is not to be destroyed or abused. People of faith are stewards of the land in our care. We proclaim publicly, “The Earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it” (PS. 24:1).
- The Earth is an original gift to sustain all life.
- We are indebted to the leadership and witness of Indigenous Peoples and the labor of generations of those who have actively been engaged in the conservancy and stewardship of the earth as central to their being.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ listens to the cries of the Earth, adopts this “Rights of Nature” resolution, and takes the following prophetic actions:

- Promote compassionate care, foster love, and co-live responsibly with the Earth Community of Life. Safeguard the common goods, space and shared resources of the Earth, for humanity and biokind. Uphold the rights of ecological integrity, biodiversity, and healthy bioregions. Advocate intergenerational responsibility for the biotic community of the Earth and gratitude of the natural world as divine gift. Promote the value of interdependence of humans and Nature as fundamental to sustainable life on Earth. Affirm that co-living with Nature involves distributive justice, a fair sharing and responsible participation of natural resources.
- Uphold the ecological principle that the Rights of Nature supersedes harmful and destructive property rights, for the balanced cycles of the natural world must be protected as a common good for the present and future generations of human life and biokind. Advocate for EPA regulations and protections that promote the Rights of Nature. Promote economies of life rather than unregulated extractive economies that exploit resources. Seek financial reparations and restoration to the habitats when corporations and/or government projects harm and damage habitats.
- Support the Earth Charter, the Nature Rights movement, and the movement of Indigenous Peoples to grant legal standing to nature. Urge all corporate and/or governmental land and water projects to perform environmental impact studies on minimizing damage to habitats (waterways, lands, atmosphere) and wildlife. Promote the right of local communities or environmental organizations to represent the unheard voices and cries of Nature.
- Foster respect and gratitude for Nature as a divine gift. Combat attitudes that relegate Nature to mere capital for profit or a dumping ground for toxic waste.
- Promote the Rights of Nature to be free from human harm, including the right to healthy habitats, the right to species flourishing, the right to a fair share of the bio-region and its goods, and the right to fulfil their ecological potential without human infringements.
- Prioritize renewable energies over fossil fuels and prioritize the economies of life - such as the Green New Deal - over extractive and unbridled economies that pollute and damage the Earth.
- Encourage organic farming and regenerative agriculture. Encourage the reduction of pesticides and insecticides that negatively impact the soil, aquifers, and other life. Support family farming and local farmers' markets. Work for food justice and security for all people.
- Support the upholding of all treaties with indigenous nations, respecting their lands and kinship natural relations. Ally with and support Indigenous Peoples in their de-colonization of Nature, protecting their kinship rights and access to sacred lands.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on all settings of the church to respond to the Rights of Nature by taking intentional actions such as:

- Participating in the Season of Creation for September Sundays; incorporating creation care into each liturgical season (Tenebrae, Easter sunrise service outdoors, and Earth Day); preaching often on Earth Justice; celebrating outdoors or bringing the outdoors into the church.
- Ritualizing environmental grief by observing occasions such as International Day for Biological Diversity (May 22), Remembrance Day for Lost Species (November 30); starting environmental grief support groups.
- Fostering love of God’s creation, organizing walks in botanical gardens and wilderness areas, planting trees, taking nature hikes, and attending summer camps.
- Studying and implementing “A Kairos Call to Action”, a 10- year mobilization plan on climate change and inequality.
- Becoming a Creation Justice Church and green church.
- Subscribing to the UCC Environmental Justice newsletters and environmental newsletters, sharing webinars, and reading and studying about creation care and climate change, as spiritual practices to equip us for creation care.
- Working for the Green New Deal (the transition to renewable energies) and the Blue New Deal (protection and restoration of oceans and waterways); advocating for the Rights of Nature and taking part in climate strikes and non-violent protests.
- Organizing locally by partnering and building community networks with conservationist and environmental groups, and finding common ground to restore damaged environments.
- Being creative and imaginative in defense of the Rights of Nature.

**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.

## **9. FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Moderator called upon the Chief Financial Operator, Tami Marinella, to offer our financial report.

The Financial Report is included in the Appendix of these minutes.



The Moderator called on Cameron Barr, Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, to present the Motions regarding our National Basic Support Allocation Base and the Percentage Allocation of Denominational Support. Cameron Barr moved to adopt the National Basic Support Allocation base of \$4.210 million for the budget year 2022 and \$3.873 million for the budget year 2023. Cameron Barr spoke to the Motion.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-37 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the adopt Motion regarding the National Basic Support Allocation base of \$4.210 million for the budget year 2022 and \$3.873 million for the budget year 2023.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 509 Yes; 5 No; 15 Abstain)

The Moderator called on Cameron Barr to make further recommendations from the Finance and Budget Committee of the General Synod. Cameron moved to delegate the determination of the percentage allocation of denominational support for the 2022-2023 biennium to the United Church of Christ Board. Cameron spoke to the Motion.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-38 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Motion to Delegate the Determination of the Percentage Allocation of Denominational Support for the 2022-2023 biennium to the United Church of Christ Board.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 505 Yes; 7 No; 13 Abstain)

**10. ANTIONETTE BROWN AWARD**

Bishop Yvette A, Flunder, Catalyst Award; the Rev. Linda Jaramillo, the Trailblazer's Award; and Rev. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Trailblazer Award.

**11. BYLAWS CLARIFYING VOTE**

Moderator clarified that we were now voting on the addition to language to the Bylaws, as in the earlier vote on Part One we noted we were voting on the deletion of language. It is Paragraph 191 and designated as Part 1(b) and it reads "a provision is added explicitly allowing electronic meetings of the General Synod as long as delegates can communicate contemporaneously with one and another."

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

**21-GS-39 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the language in the Bylaws in Paragraph 191 explicitly allowing electronic meetings of the General Synod as long as delegates can communicate contemporaneously with one and another.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 477 Yes; 2 No; 18 Abstain)

**12. ELECTION OF OFFICER AND RECOGNITION**

The Moderator indicated that we would now vote on the re-nomination of Traci Blackmon, as Associate General Minister.

The motion is to elect Rev. Traci Blackmon to an additional four-year term as Associate General Minister of the United Church of Christ.

Discussion:

Cameron Barr (United Church of Christ Board) spoke in favor

**21-GS-40 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ approved the election of Rev. Traci Blackmon as Associate General Minister of the United Church of Christ.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 502 Yes; 15 No; 6 Abstain)

Moderator Lowes congratulated Traci and offered a prayer of gratitude.

**13. ELECTION OF UNITED CHURCH BOARD/ELECTION OF GENERAL SYNOD XXXIV MODERATOR AND ASSISTANT MODERATOR/ELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Moderator indicated that we will now move into the elections for various offices of the Church.

First, the election of members to the United Church of Christ Board.

The motion is to elect the twelve individuals identified in the Report of the General Synod Nominating Committee to the United Church of Christ Board Class of 2027.

**21-GS-41 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ approved the election of the twelve individuals identified in the Report of the General Synod Nominating Committee to the United Church of Christ Board Class of 2027.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 497 Yes; 7 No; 10 Abstain)

The Moderator congratulated the individuals elected.

The Moderator indicated we would now vote on the motion is to elect the five identified individuals identified to the General Synod Nominating Committee.

**21-GS-42 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ approved the election of the five individuals identified to serve on the General Synod Nominating Committee.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 490 Yes; 11 No; 12 Abstain)

The slate for the nominating committee is elected. Congratulations to all who have been elected.

The Moderator indicated we would now elect the Moderator of the Thirty-fourth General Synod. The motion is to elect Robert Sandman as Moderator of the Thirty-fourth General Synod.

**21-GS-43 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ approved the election Robert Sandman as the Moderator of the Thirty-fourth General Synod.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 402 Yes; 77 No; 27 Abstain)

The Moderator indicated that we would now move to the election of the Assistant Moderator. The motion is to elect A. Rushan Sinnaduray as Assistant Moderator of the Thirty-fourth General Synod.

**21-GS-44 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ approved the election A. Rushan Sinnaduray as the Assistant Moderator of the Thirty-fourth General Synod.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 479 yes; 11 No; 9 Abstain)

Congratulations Rushan and thank you to all who have agreed to serve in these important leadership roles within the church!

#### **14. MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO KEITH MILLS**

The Moderator introduced Gordon Rankin to help us celebrate and remember the Rev. Keith Mills, Conference Minister of the Northern Plains Conference, who died earlier this year.

A video was played.

Thank you, Gordon. Keith's witness and desire to serve should be an inspiration to all of us.

#### **15. MOTION TO RECONSIDER HAWAII RESOLUTION**

##### **Motion to Reconsider**

Guy Johnson (HUGS Delegate) moved to reconsider the Hawaii Resolution which was defeated last night.

Seconded by Matthew Redrich (California-S/Nevada Conference).

Discussion:

Matthew Hogue Smith (Heartland Conference) spoke in favor

Emma Brewer-Wallin (United Church of Christ Board) spoke in favor

Kelly Shiflett (Penn Central Conference) spoke against

### **Motion to Call the Question**

Josiah Accola (Illinois South Conference) moved to call the question and end debate on the motion to reconsider.

Seconded by Samuel McCurry (Minnesota Conference).

### **Vote on Motion to Call the Question on Motion to Reconsider**

**21-GS-45 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 411 Yes; 70 No; 15 Abstain)

The Moderator indicated we would now vote on the Motion to Reconsider the Hawaii Resolution.

### **Vote on Motion to Reconsider**

**21-GS-46 VOTED:**

MOTION FAILED (Vote: 312 Yes; 175 No; 17 Abstain) (62%)\*

\*The Moderator ruled a supermajority vote was required to reconsider the resolution and that the motion to reconsider failed; however, that ruling was overturned in subsequent proceedings (see below).

## **16. MOVEMENT MAKER AWARD**

The Moderator indicated we now have the opportunity to recognize this year's recipients of the Movement Maker Award and to celebrate the impact they have made in their churches, communities, and in the world.

(1) Elaina Ramsey – Executive Director, Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Columbus Ohio.

(2) Vivian Lucas – Executive Director, Franklinton Center at Bricks, Whitakers, North Carolina

(3) Jamesetta Ferguson – President and CEO, MOLO Village CDC, Louisville, Kentucky

(4) Rebecca Turner – Pastor, Christ Church UCC, Maplewood, Missouri

A video was played.

Moderator: Congratulations to each of our Movement Makers recipients. May God continue to bless and strengthen you for faithful service.

## **17. INVITATION TO THE THIRTY-FOURTH GENERAL SYNOD**

Moderator: Introduced Invitation to the 34<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 2023, to be held in Indianapolis, IN.

A video was played.

Thank you from the Moderator to the Indiana-Kentucky Conference for their invitation.

**18. MOTION TO RECONSIDER HAWAII RESOLUTION**

The Moderator called on Derek Ritenour (General Synod Parliamentarian) to speak to the Motion to Reconsider a vote on Resolution 5 regarding the Hawaii Resolution.

Derek Ritenour ruled that the vote to reconsider the Hawaii Resolution did pass, as a motion to reconsider requires a majority, not a supermajority.

[This is the correct record for 21-GS-46:

**Vote on Motion to Reconsider**

**21-GS-46 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 312 Yes; 175 No; 17 Abstain)]

The Moderator ruled that the Hawaii resolution would now be reconsidered and discussion was open.

Continued Discussion:

Carmen Danz (Wisconsin Conference) spoke in favor

**Motion to Amend**

Neil MacPherson (Hawaii Conference) moved to amend the resolution; the motion was ruled out of order as it was defeated when the resolution was considered previously.

Discussion Continued:

Gloria-Ann Muraki (Hawaii Conference) spoke in favor

Kyle Lovett (Hawaii Conference) spoke against

**Motion to Call the Question**

Allyson Abrams (HUGS Delegate) moved to call the question and end debate.

The motion was seconded.

**Vote on Motion to Call the Question**

**21-GS-47 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 326 Yes; 135 No; 11 Abstain)

Moderator Lowes offered a prayer.

**Vote on Main Motion**

**21-GS-48 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution Encouraging to End 128 Years of War Between the

United States of America and the Hawaiian Kingdom.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 328 Yes; 122 No; 34 Abstain) (72.9%)

**A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING TO END 128 YEARS OF WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM**  
A Resolution of Witness

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** Henry Opukahaia is known as the missionary from the Hawaiian Kingdom that encouraged American missionaries to arrive in Hawaii; and

**WHEREAS** the first Christian nation in the Pacific, the Hawaiian Kingdom constitution in 1840 began with a quote from the Bible "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth in unity and blessedness"; and

**WHEREAS** on December 19, 1842, United States President John Tyler agreed to recognize the independence of the Hawaiian Kingdom; and

**WHEREAS** the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom through treaties with friendly nations around the world, successfully modernized Hawaiian self-governance at the time to prosper in peace, trade and friendship through treaties with friendly nations around the world for fifty years; and

**WHEREAS** Rev. Rufus Anderson, the author of the three-self method (self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating) and the long-term secretary of the ABCFM (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission) arrived in Hawai'i in 1863 to tell the missionaries to create self-reliant, self-governing churches and "to devolve upon it (the Hawaiian churches) the responsibilities of self-government in ecclesiastical matters"; and

**WHEREAS** Rev. Anderson's advice was not followed and the government of the Hawaiian Kingdom was overthrown on January 17, 1893; and

**WHEREAS** on December 18, 1893, President Grover Cleveland's executive agreement to restore the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom was signed by Liliuokalani and received by U.S. ambassador Albert Willis; and

**WHEREAS** in 1991, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ directed President Paul Sherry to issue an apology on the 100th anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy for the complicity of the church in the overthrow; and

**WHEREAS** in 1993 President Clinton, with senators and representatives from Hawaii, signed Public Law 103-150 apologizing for the United States role in the illegal occupation; and

**WHEREAS** the National Lawyers Guild recommended to the Governor of the State of Hawaii “to begin to comply with international humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Islands”; and

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has historically stressed the importance of Justice as a key faith component for the Church; and

**WHEREAS** the correction of injustices depends upon correct history based upon factual matters, and history is often based upon who writes the history and factual information available; and

**WHEREAS** the information included in this resolution will be available at <https://ahccchurch.weebly.com/> about the founding of the Hawaiian Kingdom to correct false history about the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom; and

**WHEREAS** various General Synods of the United Church of Christ have taken proactive stands on Justice; and

**WHEREAS** justice depends upon action, not just stating what is true and just and right (pono in Hawaiian);

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church, denomination officers, conferences, associations, and congregations to live into the 1993 Apology of the United Church of Christ delivered to the Native Hawaiian People by President Paul Sherry;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we call upon the United Church of Christ’s General Counsel’s office to listen to and consider recommendations from the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches, other Native Hawaiian organizations, and Native Hawaiian voices drafting communications to local, national and international leaders and organizations calling for compliance with international humanitarian law and an end to the illegal occupation of the Hawaiian islands;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirm its commitment to stand alongside and in support of the efforts of Native Hawaiians to seek redress and restitution for the war crimes of the US against the Hawaiian Kingdom including, but not limited to, the crime of denationalization;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the United Church of Christ Board will provide the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ with a written and oral update on the progress on the implementation of this resolution.

**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.

**19. INSTALLATION OF GENERAL SYNOD XXXIV MODERATOR AND ASSISTANT MODERATOR**

**20. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

**21. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THANKS TO GENERAL SYNOD STAFF**

**22. ADJOURNMENT**

Moderator Lowes, declared, without objection and acclamation that the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ is adjourned at the conclusion of our Closing Worship, which begins immediately following this plenary. Thank you all!

**21-GS-49 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adjourn at the conclusion of the evening worship service.

Moderator Lowes gave the final business session of the Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ to a close.

**23. WORSHIP**

**LIST OF DELEGATES**

**California-N Nevada**

Yolanda Austin  
Hope Alexia Hilton  
Theron Jones  
Selulo Lagoo  
Bladimer Paeste  
Rajeev Rambob  
Karen Routt  
Melissa Tumaneng  
Marvin K. White  
Kim Williams

**California-S Nevada**

Julio Agbon  
Sarah Averette-Phillips  
Billie Berry  
Kevin Chapman  
Francine Franks  
Leo Lynch

**California-S/Nevada  
(con't)**

Megan Menard  
Kate Nam  
James Penner  
Matthew Redrich  
Chrissy Siva  
Jamie Lee Sprague-Ballou  
Libby Tigner  
Pat Whitacre

**Central Atlantic**

Cliff Barr  
Alice Batcher  
Terri Bright  
Sam Chamelin  
Hannah Eastman  
Anne Findlay-Chamberlain  
Bethany Fuss

**Central Atlantic (con't)**

Ronald Hopson  
Maeba Jonas  
Dorothy King  
David Lindsey  
Amanda Middleton  
Janese Murray  
Lauren Rodgers  
Edd Sewell  
Trish Sheffield  
John Shillingburg  
Rebecca Shillingburg  
Andrea Vassell

**Central Pacific**

Rick Davis  
Valerie Garrick  
Averyn Payne  
Lynne Smouse Lopez



**Central Pacific (con't)**

Tara Wilkins

**Florida**

Vonshelle Beneby

Daniel D Best

Michelle Carter

Karen Curtis-Weakley

Dyanne Edds

Michael Ford

Sheila Harvey Guillaume

Kate Howe

Sumner Hutcheson III

Lynn Jones

Brad Lutz

Chance Martinez-Colon

**Hawaii**

Eric Anderson

Kerisa Carmelo

Florentino Cordova

Clyde Fujikawa

Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto

Kyle Lovett

Neal MacPherson

Miguel Morales

John Narruhn

Charlene Taketa

Kristen Young

**Heartland**

Kay Albright

Phillip Balla

Jan Bechtel

Arik Borstad

Karen Bruno

Brian Burke

Dan Busch

Joni Christian

Douglas Court

Joanna D'Agostino

Jessica Dakos

Beau Dansizen

Tina Davis

Jacquelyn Dean

Jill DeiCas

**Heartland (con't)**

Olivia Dudash

Marla Flewellen

Kendra Fullen

Heather Giffen

Marti Godby

Halldor Gudmundsson

Tom Hathaway

Ed Heilman

Matthew Hogue Smith

Kristen Horvath-Broda

Leila Jindra

Imani Jones

Dominique Jones

Mark Katrick

Jerry Kruse

Susan Langner

David Long-Higgins

Adam Marquette

Scott May

Keith McDevitt

Rachel McDonald

Michael Melfi

Darla Metz

Jo Anne Nay

Jackie Nehls

Katie Peterson Madden

Stephanie Phillips

David Plant

John Pottmeyer

Amber Pottmeyer

Doug Ricci

Carl Robinson

Earl Rogers

Ryan Shields

Delmarshae Sledge

Will Smith

Jason Thompson

Kelsey Turner

Ashley Vaughn

Brenda Waddell

Valerie Walker

Jeremey Wanton

Melody Ward

Maureen Webber

Dale Webber

**Heartland (con't)**

Claire Weihe

Becky Weihe

Gail Wells

Michelle Wilkey

Bertrice Wood

Lisa Zellner

**Illinois**

Carla Banks

Benna Bell

Khalil Bentley

Selena Blackwell

Darcey Carter

Wei-Jen Chen

Jana Chwalisz

Brian Cope

Chandler Drahn

Ted Engelsdorfer

Catherine Erwin

Hank Fairman

Daryn Ferriera

Jim Fisher

Joycelin Fowler

Nancy Fraley

Regena Glenn-Caldwell

Julie Glover

Sue Harrington

Marietta Hebert-Davis

Laurie Hill

Charlene Hinckley

Alfred (David) Holston

Mark Jacobs

Muriel Jahn

Dan Jares

Michael Jones

Judy Kennedy

Rachel Kirk

Gwendolyn Kirkland

Jennifer Larson

Kyle Meers

Ted Michalsen

Steven Mund

Mary Newcomb

Stephanie Perdew

Charley Poor

**Illinois (con't)**

Santina Poor  
Jon Prain  
Christine Raap  
Bill Riegle  
David Robberts-Mosser  
Jagan Samuvelraj  
Sally Scheib  
Brandyn Simmons  
Susan Steinmiller  
Hannah Sundwall  
Mary Swick  
Lori J. Taylor  
Robin Thomas  
Renita Ward  
Dan Watermann  
Ken Webster

**Illinois South**

Josiah Accola  
Debbie Jo Atkins  
Craig Bielke  
Clyde Donovan  
Roger Harris  
Kim Magwire  
David Newfarmer  
Madaline Ruez  
Priscilla Self  
Tarrah Vaupel  
Don Wagner  
Andrew Wilson

**Indiana-Kentucky**

Rose Austin  
Daniel Beasley  
Lori Bievenour  
William Bowens  
Deborah Dewey  
Michael Erwin  
Kent Gilbert  
Izzy Harbin  
Kyle Ingram  
Lakota Iron Rope  
Stephanie Johnson  
Lauren Jones Mayfield  
Dakota Roberts

**Indiana-Kentucky (con't)**

Nicole Shaw  
January Simpson  
Joyce Smidley  
Tim Strueh  
Bob Wilkins

**Iowa**

Ellis Arnold  
Craig Blaufuss  
David Boogerd  
Jacqueline Burnett  
Lillian Daniel  
Shonda Deranleau  
Tad Dorsey  
Abbie Greene  
Stephanie Hill  
Noah Jensen Tabor  
John Kiernan  
Kiahra King  
Dixie Laube  
Brian Leckrone  
Kendy Miller  
Seth Robinson  
Matt Schneider-Adams  
Janet Secor  
Maxine Tone  
Jared Walter  
Kate West  
Martha Wolf  
Laura Wright

**Kansas-Oklahoma**

Kayla Bonewell  
Steven Christofferson  
Gage Church  
Erik Graefe  
Helena Lord  
Ellen Neufeld

**Maine**

Patricia Boyle-Wight  
Joshua Brobst  
Susan Burgess  
David Farrington  
Alexis Fuller Wright

**Maine (con't)**

Linette George  
Beth Hoffman  
Cindy Huggins  
TJ Mack  
Holly Morrison  
Roy Scribner

**Michigan**

Robert Bond  
Marian Brooks Bryant  
Chris Clark  
Deborah Graizer  
Susan Greenwood  
Elizabeth Hoy  
Jeffrey Hubers  
Angela Jamison  
Wes Jamison  
Alana Kelley  
Ashley Lewis  
Mary Ann Martin  
Laura Miller-Purrenhage  
Jessica Rozga-DeBoni  
Salvatore Sapienza  
Sandra Swayman  
Lily Tinker Fortel  
Jeremiah Wheeler

**Minnesota**

Ava Adams-Morris  
Kristina Felbeck  
Benjamin Fena  
Charlotte Frantz  
Kathy Itzin  
Claire Klein  
Ash Koncar  
Gary Kwong  
Anna Larson  
Tracy Lyons  
Chris McArdle  
Samuel McCurry  
Shawn Nuebel  
Ole Olson  
Jean Ostrom  
Justin Sabia-Tanis  
Adam Thompson

**Minnesota (con't)**

Jill Warner

**Missouri Mid-South**

Karen Aitkens  
 Andrea Asselmeier  
 Eddy DeLong  
 Tim Fairley  
 Nate Fulk  
 John Gandy  
 Betsy Happel  
 Ron Hill  
 Leslie Kemp  
 Tammy Linningham  
 Hannah Rice  
 Joe Rowley  
 Brittany Scaringello  
 Cayden Stephens  
 Allison Summers  
 Elaine Tebbenkamp  
 Christi Tennyson  
 Rob Van Ess  
 Camille Watkins  
 Jimmy Watson  
 Bella Winters

**Montana-N. Wyoming**

Laura Folkwein  
 Danielle Rogers  
 Lynne Spencer-Smith

**Nebraska**

Beverly Hays  
 Karen Hemmerling  
 Deborah Kirwan  
 Adam Lassen  
 Coral Parmenter  
 Beth Peterson

**Nebraska (con't)**

Scott Pigsley  
 Alex Ritter  
 Randy Sanders  
 Sue Shear  
 Alex Wolf

**New Hampshire****New Hampshire (con't)**

Sharon Clough  
 David Grishaw-Jones  
 Carlos Jauhola-Straight  
 William Jones  
 Bruce Kinney  
 Stacey Kullgren  
 Amanda Lape-Freeburg  
 Adaeze Okorie  
 Sandra Pontoh  
 Patrick Quinn  
 Gretchen Smith  
 Tanya Stormo Rasmussen  
 Lydia Tucker

**New York**

Pierre Albrecht-Carrie  
 Jamani Blair  
 Sophia Bosworth Viscuso  
 Lynnette Colden  
 JJ Flag  
 Brittany Hanlin  
 Theresa Harris-Tigg  
 Lauran Heidenreich  
 Andrew Hinman  
 Philip Hobson  
 Elizabeth Pixley  
 Valerie Ross  
 Stanley Skinner  
 Michael Sloan  
 Beth Stowe  
 Michael Vanacore  
 Melva Victorino  
 Kris Watson  
 Anthony White  
 Curtis Whitman

**Northern Plains**

Jo Cassiday-Maloney  
 Barbara Koenig  
 Rick Steele

**Pacific Northwest**

Jerry Chang  
 Hillary Coleman  
 Mike Denton

**Pacific Northwest (con't)**

Danette Koloj  
 Hana Reinhardt  
 Courtney Stange-Tregear

**Penn Central**

Terry Black  
 Andrew Boyer  
 Kathy Brown  
 Ed Dickel  
 Tiffany Dickel  
 Tony Fields  
 Paul Fogle  
 Sterling Fritz  
 Cindy Garis  
 Keegan Gill  
 Jes Kast  
 Shirley Keith Knox  
 JoAnn Kreeger  
 Phillip Landers  
 Gail Landers  
 Terry McGarry  
 Jason Minnich  
 John Pierce  
 Charlotte Pinnette  
 Irene Pouliot  
 Alice Rauch  
 Susan Rudy  
 Kelly Shiflett  
 Jerry Thomason  
 Kristin Vines

**Penn Northeast**

Gary Barraco  
 Christian Creyer  
 Stephanie Creyer  
 Gregory Edwards  
 Rachel Eichman  
 Kayli Freeman  
 James Gottwald  
 Brenda Hobson  
 Patti Hoyt  
 Kendra Kemp  
 Josh Knappenberger  
 Joyce Kohler  
 Douglas Lander

**Penn Northeast (con't)**

Helena Lindquist  
Teresa Martin  
Tom Moyer  
Mandy Muschett  
Janet Newett  
Anthony Newett  
Laura Oesterle  
Jackson Pyne  
Grace Quinn  
Rebecca Sausser  
Suzanne Schaeffer  
Bruce Stevenson  
Douglas Taylor

**Penn West**

Theresa Cook  
Matthew Fox  
Lisa Griffin  
Douglas Hearn  
Donna Jarrell  
Chelsea Lightbourn  
Soren Thomas  
Tara Thompson  
Judith Tobias

**Penn Southeast**

Kim Adamson  
Robert Ames  
Edward Bibic  
Liz Brunton  
Mary Butash  
Frances Chester  
Deborah Rahn Clemens  
Margaret Ernst  
Selina Hamilton  
Paul Hightower  
Robin Hightower  
Nichole Jackson  
Cean James  
Cathy Jones  
Linda Kozlowski  
Butch Kuykendall  
Samuel Marutholi  
Ken McDowell  
Dwayne Mosier

**Penn Southeast (con't)**

Suzanne Schwarz-Green  
Peg Schwarz-Green  
William Scott  
Ruth Sheets  
Cora Shenk  
Sharell Shippen  
Maxwell Staley  
Jennie Strauch  
Shawn Van Dyke

**Rocky Mountain**

Judy Bailie  
Gaye Bosley-Mitchell  
Marcus Frye  
Vickie Golobic  
Anthony Scott  
Allyson Stauffer  
Karen Winkel  
Jan Zans

**South Central**

Peter Bauer  
Philip Brocket  
Ken Ehrke  
Joshua Lawrence  
Jan Nuun  
Andrew Roblyer  
Athena Self  
Renee Thompson

**South Dakota**

Samanta Houser  
Lorah Houser Jankord  
David Jennys  
Emily Munger  
Becky Pagone  
Mollie Ronge

**Southeast**

Grant Carodine  
Kriss Choi  
Edward Colf  
Haley Lerner  
Joseph Thornton  
Tyler Ung

**Southeast**

Ugena Whitlock

**Southern**

Yolanda Adams  
Bruce Adams  
Mary Anne Biggs  
Tuere Brown  
LaVerne Cofield  
Maddie Furman  
Barbara Harvey  
Elizabeth Horton  
Brenda James  
Gary Leath  
Gloria Lengel  
Virginia Mattocks Ballard  
Neil Rostick  
Irwin Smallwood  
Gary Smith  
Roy Stokes  
Kristin Vaughn  
Dannie T. Williams  
Dorion Winstead  
Rose Wright Scott  
Meghan Young

**Southern New England**

Sean Amato  
Augustine Angba  
Joseph Aoude  
Olivia Arsenault  
Patti Babcock  
Robin Bartlett  
Kentavis Brice  
Hawley Brown  
Amelia Bruso  
Christine Burns  
Alison Buttrick Patton  
Jennifer Campbell  
Emily Carle  
Matthew Carriker  
Garrison Case  
Heidi Champagne  
Lily Clark  
Patrick Collins  
Judith Cooke

**S. New England (con't)**

Michele Davis  
 Amy Destine  
 Mark Diters  
 Chris Doktor  
 Jonathan Drury  
 Caryne Eskridge  
 Christopher Farrington  
 David Fielder  
 Connor Filkins  
 Julio Filomeno  
 Erika Foster Senteio  
 Colleen Freeman  
 Abby Gackenheimer  
 Wayne Gage  
 Jocelyn Gardner Spencer  
 Thomas Gregory Gray  
 Jacquelyn Hall  
 George Harris  
 Roberta Harris  
 Barbara Hesse  
 Debra Holmes  
 Haley Hudler  
 John Hudson  
 Alan Hurst  
 Emily Johnson  
 Venson Jordan  
 Tristan Jordan  
 Deborah Kirk  
 Patty Kogut  
 Dan Krhla  
 Brian Lapis  
 Isaac Lawson  
 Jeff Lukens  
 Jenn Macy  
 Andrew McKinnis  
 Wendy Miller Olapade  
 Frances Munro  
 William Nelson  
 Paul Nesbit  
 Jane Newall  
 Sara Ofner-Seals  
 Terry Yasuko Ogawa  
 Aaron Olapade  
 Theodore Olsson  
 Katie Omberg

**S. New England (con't)**

Kate Ostertag  
 Mary Perry  
 David Peters  
 Lindsey Peterson  
 Audrey Price  
 Nena Radtke  
 James Ross II  
 Ruth Shaver  
 David Shaw  
 Christine Sima  
 Taj Smith  
 David Sonnemann  
 Dawn Sorensen  
 Jacob Sorensen  
 Denson Staples  
 David Story  
 Megan Strouse  
 John Taylor  
 Miriam Theodore  
 Paul Thomas  
 Graham Van Keuren  
 Stephen Varga  
 Albert Whitaker  
 Micaiah Wiggins  
 Marcellus Wiggins  
 Maya Wright

**Southwest**

Cydne Bolton  
 Rock Fremont  
 Carson Hawks  
 Andrew Ponder Williams  
 Christine Sternberg

**Vermont**

Cheri Ann Broadhurst  
 Doug Carter  
 Abigail Diehl-Noble  
 KellyAnn Donahue  
 Lucia Jackson  
 Alice Kitchel  
 James Mills  
 Josh Simon

**Wisconsin****Wisconsin (con't)**

Cathy Benjamin  
 Kythie Boyd  
 Carmen Danz  
 Jeffrey Dodson  
 Ted Drewsen  
 Julie Eklund  
 Elizabeth Findley-Hazel  
 Linda Forray  
 David Gaeth  
 Casey Gott  
 Sonny Graves  
 Sue Kaiser  
 Paul Karch  
 Tom Kolb  
 Olivia Metz  
 Phil Milam  
 Ron Roloff  
 Tanya Sadagopan  
 Laura Stalder  
 Patti Steevens  
 Sandy Stuttgen  
 Nancy A. Taylor  
 Zayna Thomley  
 Alan Timm

**HUGS Delegates**

Allyson Abrams  
 Imani Allen  
 Rebekah Anderson  
 Deborah Dee Brayton  
 Jason Carson Wilson  
 Jess Chancey  
 Christopher Faulk  
 John Gage  
 Mimi Goodwin  
 Ruth Harvey  
 Luther Holland  
 Richard (Dick) Hom  
 Zillah Jackson Wesley  
 Guy Johnson  
 Marty Kuchma  
 Aaron Lauer  
 Jo Deen           Lowe  
 Marilyn Pagán-Banks  
 Edwin Pérez Jr.

**HUGS Delegates (con't)**

Amy Petre Hill  
Mitchi Reyes  
Yinessa Romero  
Megan Snell  
Daniel Su'a  
Uamuli Sua  
Sana Sunia  
Foai Tanuvasa  
Leaoga Lee Tanuvasa  
Malaki Tauiliili  
Derek Terry  
Jacob Thomas  
Kevin Tindell  
Zillah Frances Wesley II

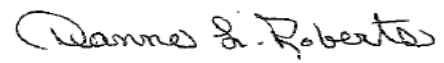
**United Church of Christ  
Board of Directors**

Faufau Alaelua  
Kearstin Bailey  
Cameron Barr  
Traci Blackmon  
Brian Bodager  
Emma Brewer-Wallin  
Charles Buck  
Carrie Call  
Rachel Chapman  
Eleanore Chong  
Dennis Coy  
Hannah Cranbury  
John Dorhauer  
Mark Dutell  
Shernell J. Edney Stilley  
Derrick Elliott  
Thaddaeus Elliott  
John Folk  
Julia Gaughan  
Kevin Graham  
Carla Gregg-Kearns  
Darrell Goodwin  
Tim Hachfeld  
Richard Harter  
Alice Hunt  
Eric Jackson  
Onyx Kuthuru  
Penny Lowes

**UCCB (con't)**

Gloria-Ann Muraki  
David J Nelson  
Shari Prestemon  
Gordon Rankin  
Michael Readinger  
Inez Reid  
Franz Rigert  
Bob Sandman  
D'Angelo Smith  
Kylie Steever  
Paul Tch e  
Karen Georgia Thompson  
John Vertigan  
Harriet Ward  
Diane Weible  
Marsha Williams  
Bill Worley  
Yvette Wynn  
Jeanette Zaragoza-De Leon  
Lewis Zeidner

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dianne & Joyce Bathke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dianne Roberts and Joyce  
Bathke

Heather Kimmel, Secretary  
of the Board

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

BY LIBBY TIGNER

GENERAL SYNOD 33, JULY 11, 2021

The committee is comprised of 10 delegates, and our job is to monitor the composition of the Conference Delegations to the General Synod, for compliance with the diversity requirements set forth in the UCC Bylaws, specifically, bylaw 195 which calls for a delegation that is 20% youth and young adults, at least 50% persons who identify as female, at least 50% lay persons, and as a whole is reflective of the UCC's commitment to racial and ethnic diversity.

It's important to note that this bylaw is not rigid. It was written in a way that reflects our aspirational goals of diversity and inclusion, and provides grace for the times that we don't quite reach the desired numbers. The bylaw does not require "exact compliance" but rather "substantial" compliance, and in challenging years such as this one, we rely on that grace while remaining committed to always doing better.

From our experiences with our own Conference delegations, and from conversations with colleagues around the UCC, we realized that there was an unusually high amount of attrition of delegates this year, and recruiting new delegates to replace them was more difficult than expected.

This was particularly true when trying to hold onto or recruit new delegates under the age of 30. We suspect that COVID-related computer and Zoom fatigue is driving this reality, but I also think that the relative freedom and availability of summertime opportunities this year after a year of lockdown has made recruiting youth and young adults even more challenging.

Our committee first met via Zoom on June 16, and reviewed the delegation data that was available at that time. Because the registration for this General Synod took place a little later in the year, at that point only 461 of a potential 679 conference delegates had registered, so



our evaluation at that point was really quite preliminary. We did note that there opportunities for the delegation-as-a-whole to more fully reflect the diversity requirements of the bylaws.

Letters for each Conference Minister were prepared by the Office of General Counsel and signed by me, which encouraged each conference to strive for closer adherence to the bylaws as they recruited their final delegates and got them registered. Several Conference Ministers responded to the letters and further emphasized the challenges of recruiting full and fully compliant delegations in this COVID year, despite their good-faith efforts to do so.

Nevertheless, when our committee met again last week, we noted that there was improvement in the overall diversity of the conference delegation-as-a-whole. The committee unanimously agreed that the delegation-as-a-whole is in substantial compliance with bylaw 195.

The final numbers, as reported on July 8, reveal that the delegation-as-a-whole is just under 13% youth and young adult, 57% persons who identify as female, 46% lay persons, and significantly reflective of the UCC commitment to racial and ethnic diversity.

Therefore, the Credentials Committee has found, and it is my pleasure to report, that the Delegation-As-A-Whole is in compliance with our bylaws for this General Synod 33.

**THE FIRST REPORT OF  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD  
TO THE THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SYNOD**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-01**

To approve the Agenda.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-02**

To approve Consent Agenda Items UCCB-19-10-02a-g which includes the following items of business:

**UCCB-19-10-02a:**

Grant voice without vote to the following staff and others making presentation to the Board of Directors: Wayne Cherry, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Nick Katzakis, Heather Kimmel, Cheryl Williams.

**UCCB-19-10-02b:**

Grant voice without vote to Non-Director Committee Members with Special Expertise: Lawrence Bashe.

**UCCB-19-10-02c:**

To adopt the Finance and Budget Committee’s recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board approve that the Clergy Housing Allowance under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations promulgated thereunder (“Section 107”) during calendar year 2020 for each ordained minister in good standing with his or her respective denomination and any other “Minister of the gospel” within the meaning of Section 107, who is in the employ of a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), shall be a sum equal to such employee’s good faith estimate of the amount which will be excludible under Section 107 with respect to the providing of a home by such employee for such year; however, unless and until such employee shall provide in writing the estimate described above, the amount of said Clergy Housing Allowance for such employee shall be a sum equal to one third of such employee’s gross salary compensation.

- UCCB-19-10-02d:** To adopt the Governance Committee’s recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board elects Libby Tigner as Chair of the Credentials Committee of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ for a term of two years, concluding with the current biennium and Libby Tigner’s term as a member of the Credentials Committee.
- UCCB-19-10-02e:** To adopt the Governance Committee’s recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board adopts the distribution for conference delegates to the Thirty-third General Synod, totaling 679.
- UCCB-19-10-02f:** To adopt the Governance Committee’s recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board adopts the recommended amendments to the United Church of Christ Board Standing Rule #8.
- UCCB-19-10-02g:** To receive the reports from the following task forces and committees: Church Building & Loan Fund Ad Hoc Committee, Council of Conference Ministers Task Force, Financial Health in Ministry Task Force, Personnel Committee, Southern Conference Task Force and the UCCB Evaluation Committee.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2019 UCCB MEETING**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-03** To approve the minutes of the June 2019 UCCB Meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 32<sup>ND</sup> GENERAL SYNOD**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-04** To approve the minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Synod.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: LITIGATION UPDATE AND EXECUTIVE SESSION  
MINUTE APPROVAL**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-14** To move into Executive session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-15** To return to Regular session.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-16** To approve the Executive Session Minutes from June 20, 2019.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-19** To move into Executive session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-20** To return to Regular session.

**MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-22** To adjourn.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-03-01** To approve the Agenda.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-03-02** To approve Consent Agenda Items UCCB-20-10-02a-e which includes the following items of business:

**UCCB-20-03-02a:** Grant voice without vote to the following staff: Cindy Bailie, Wayne Cherry, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Nick Katzakis, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Dianne Roberts, Cheryl Williams.

**UCCB-20-03-02b:** Grant voice without vote to Non-Director Committee Members with Special Expertise: Ron Patterson.

**UCCB-20-03-02c:** Grant voice without vote to the following special guest: Jennifer Givens, Compensation Consultant, Findley Davies, Inc. (The contribution of Jennifer Givens was determined not to be needed therefore she did not attend the meeting.)

**UCCB-20-03-02d:** To adopt the Group Exemption Compliance Report.

**UCCB-20-03-02e:** To receive the reports and agendas from the following task forces and committees as their reports to the United Church of Christ Board of their ongoing work: Audit Committee, Church Building & Loan Fund Task Force, Development Committee, Development Committee Implementation Task Force, Development Committee Legacy Giving Task Force, Finance & Budget Committee, Investment & Endowment Committee, Marketing Committee, UCCB Evaluation Committee.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2019 UCCB MEETING**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-03-03** To approve the minutes of the October 2019 UCCB Meeting.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-03-06** To move into Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-03-07** To return to Regular Session.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-03-08** To adopt the Executive Compensation Policy effective August 31, 2020.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-05-01** To approve the Agenda.

**GRANT VOICE WITHOUT VOTE**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-05-02** To grant voice without vote to: Cindy Bailie, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Nick Katzakis, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Dianne Roberts, Valerie Smith, and Cheryl Williams.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE UCCB MARCH 2020 MEETING**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-05-03** To approve the minutes of the March 27, 2020 meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-06-01** To approve the Agenda (*Supporting Document UCCB-20-06-01 Agenda 5.21.2020*).

**GRANT VOICE WITHOUT VOTE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-06-02**

To grant voice without vote to Cindy Bailie, Larry Bashe, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Nick Katzakis, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Ron Patterson, Dianne Roberts, and Cheryl Williams.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE UCCB MAY 2020 MEETING**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-06-03**

To approve the minutes of the May 1, 2020 meeting of the United Church of Christ Board (*Supporting Document UCCB-20-06-02 Minutes 05.01.2020*).

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-08-01**

To approve the Agenda (*Supporting Document UCCB-20-08-01 Agenda*).

**GRANT VOICE WITHOUT VOTE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-08-02**

To grant voice without vote to Nick Katzakis, Heather Kimmel, Dianne Roberts, Cheryl Williams.

**APPROVAL OF UCCB JUNE 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-08-03**

To approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020 Special Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board (*Supporting Document UCCB-20-08-02 Minutes 06.02.2020*).

**ELECTION OF MARK DUTELL TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-08-04**

To elect Mark Dutell to the United Church of Christ Board Class of 2021, on the nomination of the General Synod Nominating Committee, to fill an unexpired term vacated by the resignation of Doug McClelland. (*Supporting Document UCCB-20-08-03 Mark Dutell Biography*).

## CONSIDERATION OF BANKING AUTHORITY RESOLUTIONS

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-08-05** To adopt the resolutions relating to granting banking authority to the Chief Financial Officer for United Church of Christ Board, Justice and Witness Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), and Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ) as shown on the following Supporting Documents:

- i. UCCB-20-08-04 UCCB Banking Authority;*
- ii. UCCB-20-08-05 JWM Banking Authority;*
- iii. UCCB-20-08-06 LCM Banking Authority; and*
- iv. UCCB-20-08-07 WCM Banking Authority.*

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-01:** To approve the Agenda.

## APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-02:** To approve Consent Agenda Items UCCB-19-10-02a-g which includes the following items of business:

**UCCB-20-10-02a:** Grant voice without vote to the following staff and others making presentations to the UCCB: Cindy Bailie, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Dianne Roberts, Kent Siladi, Brian Tracy, Cheryl Williams.

**UCCB-20-10-02b:** Grant voice without vote to Non-Director Committee Members with Special Expertise: Lawrence Bashe, Ron Patterson.

**UCCB-20-10-02c:** Appoint Brian Tracy, Acting Chief Financial Officer of the United Church of Christ, as Treasurer for the United Church of Christ Board, Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), Justice and Witness Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), and Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ).

**UCCB-20-10-02d:** Receive the Group Exemption Compliance Report.

- UCCB-20-10-02e:** Authorize the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards-United Church of Christ to provide supplementation of small annuities, effective January 1, 2021 based on an income level of \$34,800 with three-fourths of that amount, \$26,100, as the level applicable in determining supplementation for a deceased member's surviving spouse/partner.
- UCCB-20-10-02f:** Approve that the Clergy Housing Allowance under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations promulgated thereunder ("Section 107") during calendar year 2021 for each ordained minister in good standing with their respective denomination and any other "Minister of the gospel" within the meaning of Section 107, who is in the employ of a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ, shall be a sum equal to such employee's good faith estimate of the amount which will be excludible under Section 107 with respect to the providing of a home by such employee for such year; however, unless and until such employee shall provide in writing the estimate described above, the amount of said Clergy Housing Allowance for such employee shall be a sum equal to one third of such employee's gross salary compensation.
- UCCB-20-10-02g:** To receive the minutes and written reports from the following Task Forces and Committees: CCM/UCCB Task Force, Development Committee, Living Together as One Task Force, Ministry Committee and the UCCB Evaluation Committee.

#### **APPROVAL OF UCCB AUGUST 2020 MINUTES**

- It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-03:** To approve the minutes of the August 13, 2020 Special Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

- It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-04** To move into Executive Session.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-05** To return to Regular Session.

- It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-12** To move into Executive Session.



**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-13** To return to Regular Session.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-20** To go into Executive Session for a litigation update and executive session minute approval.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-21** To return to Regular Session.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-22** To approve the October 26, 2019 UCCB Executive Session minutes.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-23** To go into Executive Session. The Officers were recused.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-24** To return to Regular Session.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-25** To approve the October 27, 2019 UCCB executive session minutes and the March 27, 2020 executive session minutes.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-12-01** To approve the Agenda.

**GRANT VOICE WITHOUT VOTE**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 20-12-02** to grant voice without vote to Cindy Bailie, Cynthia Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Dianne Roberts, Brian Tracy, Cheryl Williams.

**APPROVAL OF UCCB OCTOBER 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 20-12-03** To approve the minutes of the October 2, 2020 Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-12-06** By acclamation, the body moved into Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-12-07** To return to Regular Session.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-02-01** To approve the Agenda.

**GRANT VOICE WITHOUT VOTE**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-02-02** To grant voice without vote to Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Dianne Roberts, Brian Tracy, Cheryl Williams.

**APPROVAL OF UCCB DECEMBER 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-02-03** To approve the minutes of the December 14, 2020 Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-02-04** To move into Executive Session.  
  
Officers and staff excused for remainder of meeting; Alisa Lewis and Heather Kimmel to remain.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-02-05** To return to open session.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-02-07** To move into executive session.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-02-08** To return to open session.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-02-09** To approve the Executive Session minutes of the 12.14.2020 Meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-03-01** To approve the Agenda.

### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-03-02** To approve Consent Agenda Items UCCB-21-03-02a-e which includes the following items of business:

**UCCB-21-03-02a:** Grant voice without vote to the following staff and guests, including Quanita Roberson and Tenneson Woolf and others making presentation to the UCCB: David Anderson, Donyale Copeland, Patrick Duggan, Cynthia Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Kevin Peterson, Dianne Roberts, Kent Siladi, Brian Tracy, Cheryl Williams.

**UCCB-21-03-02b:** To adopt the Governance Committee's recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board elect the following people to the General Synod Credentials Committee, each for a term commencing on the date of election and ending at the conclusion of General Synod 2023: Cynthia Borrego-Hogan, Jeffrey A. Dodson, Thomas Kolb, Hannah Rice, and Tyler Ung.  
*Supporting Document: UCCB 21-03-GOV-03 Credential Comm Nominee Bios 02.22.21*

**UCCB-21-03-02c:** To adopt the Governance Committee's recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board approve the election of Sivia Sasa, Brenda V. Smith, and Cameron Trimble to the Board of Directors of the United Church of Christ Church Building and Loan Fund.  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-02-GOV-04 Sivia Sasa Bio 02-16-21;*  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-02-GOV-05 Brenda V. Smith Bio 02-16-21;*  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-02-GOV-06 Cameron Trimble Bio 02-16-21*

**UCCB-21-03-02d:** To adopt the Governance Committee’s recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board approve Angel Cepeda Velazquez to be eligible for election to the Board of Trustees of The Pension Boards –United Church of Christ, Inc. when a vacancy occurs.  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-02-GOV-07 Angel Cepeda Velazquez Memo 02-16-21; Supporting Document: UCCB-21-02-GOV-08 Angel Cepeda Velazquez Resume 02-16-21*

**UCCB-21-03-02e:** To adopt the Governance Committee’s recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board elect Robert F.R. Peters, Jr., Rochelle A. Stackhouse, and Laura J. Thomson to the UCC Historical Council, each for a first term of six years commencing on the date of election, and Carolyn Call and K. Ray Hill each for a second term of six years commencing on the date of election.  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-02-GOV-11 Historical Council Nominee Bios 02-22-21*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 5, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-03-03** To approve the minutes of the February 5, 2021 meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-03-09** To move into Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-03-10** To return to Regular Session.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-03-11** To approve the Executive Session minutes from October 2 and 3, 2020.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-03-12** To move into Executive Session with Officers excused.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-21-03-13** To approve the executive session minutes from the February 5, 2021 meeting with noted changes to attendance.

**ASSOCIATE GENERAL MINISTER  
RENOMINATION COMMITTEE**

**ASSOCIATE GENERAL MINISTER RENOMINATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-06**

To nominate Rev. Traci Blackmon for election by General Synod as Associate General Minister.

*Supporting document: UCCB-20-10-AGM\_Renom\_01\_Final\_Report*

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-11**

To recommend that the United Church of Christ Board receive the Combined Financial Report of The United Church of Christ Board and Certain Affiliated Entities dated December 31, 2019.

*Supporting documents:*

*UCCB-20-08-AU-03\_2019\_Audited\_Financial\_Statements*

*UCCB-20-08-AU-04\_Financial\_Overview*

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-14**

To accept the report of the Audit Committee and General Counsel's recommendations regarding the Conflict of Interest report.

**CHURCH BUILDING AND LOAN FUND TASK FORCE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-10-18**

To accept the recommendation of the Church Building and Loan Fund Task Force as set forth in the Task Force report.

*Supporting document: UCCB-20-10-CBLF-Task October 2020 Summary Report*

**ACTIONS BY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**CONSIDERATION OF HAWAII CONFERENCE RESOLUTION**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-03-09**

To adopt the resolution submitted by the Hawaii Conference on commemorating the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Hawaiian Islands and celebrating the ongoing relationship between the United Church of Christ and the Hawaiian host culture.

**CANCELATION OF IN-PERSON GENERAL SYNOD 2021**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-06-04**

The in-person General Synod 2021 is canceled and will be a virtual General Synod instead.

**CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT, TRAINING, AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY**

**It was VOTED  
UCCB-20-08-06**

To approve the Request for Proposal for Institutional Equity Assessment, Training, and Recommendations Regarding Racial Justice and Equity. *(Supporting Documents UCCB-20-08-08 Background for RFP on Institutional Equity Assessment; UCCB-20-08-09 RFP on Institutional Equity Assessment)*

## CREATION OF GMP COMPENSATION AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB 21-03-04**

To create a GMP Compensation and Evaluation Committee, which will oversee the GMP's compensation and the annual evaluation of the GMP; the Personnel Committee and the GMP Evaluation Committee are dissolved; the Governance Committee shall recommend amendments to the UCCB Standing Rules in accordance with this vote at the next UCCB meeting.

## CLOSING HARVEST

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-21-03-14**

To celebrate the continued work with the Strategic Priorities of the National Setting in the biennium 2019-2021 and receive the summary Review of the work as a resource for continuity to those who will follow in the next biennium.

*Supporting Document UCCB Strategic Priorities Review*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-09**

The United Church of Christ Board approves the resolution permitting the General Minister & President to delegate authority to enter into contracts.

Text of Resolution:

Whereas, pursuant to United Church of Christ Bylaws paragraph 217(d), the General Minister & President oversees the administration of the National Setting offices; and

Whereas, pursuant to the United Church of Christ Bylaws paragraph 217(d), the General Minister & President may from time to time delegate administrative responsibilities as the needs of the Church and good judgment dictate; and

Whereas, the General Minister & President, as President of the United Church of Christ Board corporation and of the Covenanted Ministries, is empowered under the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ Board corporation and the Covenanted Ministries<sup>1</sup> to sign all deeds, mortgages, bonds, agreements, notes, and other instruments requiring the President's signature; and

Whereas, the United Church of Christ Board as the board of directors for the United Church of Christ Board corporation and the Covenanted Ministries, is empowered to assign other such powers and duties to the President from time to time<sup>2</sup>; and

Whereas, the efficient administration of the National Setting occasionally requires the General Minister & President to delegate signing authority to additional individuals for contracts, agreements, and purchases entered into by the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries in the ordinary course of business; and

Whereas the delegation of such authority is expressly contemplated by the United Church of Christ Bylaws;

Therefore, be it resolved that the United Church of Christ Board, acting on behalf of the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries, assigns to the President the power to delegate signing authority for contracts, agreements, and purchases entered into by the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries to National Setting employees, pursuant to a written grant of authority by the President to such employee, consistent with the needs of the Church and good judgment.

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n1: United Church of Christ Board corporation Bylaws Art. III(B)(3); Justice & Witness Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ) Art. III(C)(2); Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ) Bylaws Art. III(C)(2); Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ) Bylaws Art. III(C)(2).

n2: *Id.*

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-03-04**

To adopt the recommendation that the United Church of Christ Board, as the board of directors for Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), successor to the American Missionary Association, approve the request of Fisk University, a historically related university, to release the use restriction on a parcel of property donated to the University by the American Missionary Association in 1908, as further described in the Supporting Documents, and to authorize Heather Kimmel, General Counsel and Secretary to Local Church Ministries, to take all steps necessary to effectuate the release.

**FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE**



**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-06**

The United Church of Christ Board approves the National Basic Support allocation base of \$5,126,202 for 2020 and the funding to the Office of the General Minister & President, the Covenanted Ministries and the Pension Boards allocation as follows: Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP) \$3,345,621 or 65.25%, Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) \$863,511 or 16.85%, Local Church Ministries (LCM) \$186,000 or 3.63%, Wider Church Ministries (WCM) \$435,000 or 8.49% and The Pension Board \$296,080 or 5.78%.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-07**

The United Church of Christ Board approves the proposed 2020 Combined Unrestricted Funds Budget with a total of \$19,278,894 in Revenues and \$19,278,894 in Expenses for the Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP), Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), Local Church Ministries (LCM), and Wider Church Ministries (WCM).

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-08**

The United Church of Christ Board authorizes the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards-United Church of Christ to provide supplementation of small annuities, effective February 1, 2020 based on an income level of \$33,700 with three-fourths of that amount, \$25,275, as the level applicable in determining supplementation for a deceased member's surviving spouse/partner.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-05-07**

To approve the General Synod Budget.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-05-08**

To adopt the following rates by zone to be used in calculation for the 2021 Conference Delegate travel pool as follows:

1. 0 – 499 Miles \$.05
2. 500 – 999 Miles \$.06
3. 1,000 – miles \$.07
4. Hawaii Conference \$1,273 per voting delegate

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-05-09**

To adopt the recommendation of the Finance and Budget Committee for General Synod 2021 registration fees as follows:

Early Bird registration	remove early bird
Delegates, National Staff, Conf. staff, Ecum, etc.	\$300.00 based on 1716 reg.
Youth 13-18 years	\$175.00
Youth 6-12 years	\$ 65.00
Youth 5 and, Conference Volunteers	\$ 70.00
Single Day (Fri, Mon, or Tues)	\$100.00
Saturday only (can only charge if added programs)	\$125.00
Three Day Registration (Fri-Sun; Sat-Mon; or Sun-Tues)	\$200.00
Exhibitor (Vendors only)	\$125.00
Seminarians	\$175.00

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-16** To recommend that the United Church of Christ Board approve the proposed 2021 Combined Unrestricted Funds Budget with a total Revenues of \$18,501,915 and total Expenses of \$18,501,915 for the Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP), Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), Local Church Ministries (LCM), and Wider Church Ministries (WCM).

*Supporting documents:*

*UCCB-20-09-FB-03 Combined IS BS--2020-08-31*

*UCCB-20-09-FB-04 2021 Combined Budget*

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-17** To recommend that the United Church of Christ Board approve the National Basic Support allocation base of \$4,576,173 for 2021 and the funding to the Office of the General Minister & President, the Covenanted Ministries and the Pension Boards allocation as follows: Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP) \$2,933,172 or 64.1%, Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) \$980,000 or 21.4%, Local Church Ministries (LCM) \$100,000 or 2.2%, Wider Church Ministries (WCM) \$300,000 or 6.6% and The Pension Board \$263,001 or 5.7%.

*Supporting document: UCCB-20-09-FB-05 2021 NBS Allocation*

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-20-10-26** To reappropriate \$95,525 from the UCCB 2020 Governance budget to provide a year-end bonus distributed equally to staff of the NS in gratitude for their service through the difficulties and disruptions caused by COVID-19.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 20-12-04** To approve three tiers of registration for the 2021 General Synod: Delegates, \$175; Visitors, \$100; Youth, \$150.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 20-12-05** To approve the 2021 General Synod Budget as proposed, with total Revenues of \$925,000 and total Expenses of \$718,500. *(Supporting Document UCCB-20-12-FB-03 General Synod 2021 Budget)*

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-03-07** To receive the preliminary and unaudited Combined Operating Income Statement and Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2020, as presented. *(Supporting Document UCCB 31-03-FB-03 Combined IS & BS.pdf)*

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-03-08** To adopt and recommend to General Synod for adoption: 1) A projected National Basic Support allocation of \$4.210 million for the budget year 2022 and \$3873 million for the budget year 2023; and 2) That the percentage allocations for 2022 and 2023 be based on the recommendation of the United Church of Christ Board. *(Supporting Document UCCB-21-03-FB-04 OCWM NBS 2022-2023.pdf)*

**FINANCIAL HEALTH IN MINISTRY TASK FORCE**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-20-10-19** To recognize that the Pension Boards is the best vehicle for addressing clergy indebtedness and to dissolve the task force. *(Supporting document: UCCB-20-10-FinHealthTF-01\_Final\_Report)*

**GMP EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB-19-10-21** To approve a \$20,000 increase in compensation for the General Minister and President and request that the Personnel Committee bring an executive compensation policy for review at the spring UCCB meeting.

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-05**

Acting as General Synod ad interim, to elect Faufau Alaelua, as nominated by the General Synod Nominating Committee, to the 2025 class of the United Church of Christ Board.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-10**

To approve the following people eligible for election to the Board of Trustees of The Pension Boards – United Church of Christ, Inc. when vacancies occur: Kenneth Makuakane, Charmaine Penn Johnson, and Scott G. Young.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-11**

To elect the following people (new members) to the Office of Communication, Inc. Board, each for a term of three years commencing on the date of election and ending upon the election of a successor at the October 2022 meeting of the UCC Board: Lawrence T. Richardson and Jessie Palatucci.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-12**

To designate the Special Committee on Development as a Standing Committee of the United Church of Christ Board, and to authorize the Secretary of the United Church of Christ Board to amend the United Church of Christ Board Standing Rules to reflect this designation.

**It was VOTED:**

**UCCB-19-10-13**

To release or continue to hold as confidential the following Executive Session Minutes as indicated below:

March 8 and 9, 2018 Executive Session Minutes—Hotel:

Release the minutes and hold the attachment confidential per the terms of agreement with a third party.

March 8, 2018 Executive Session Minutes—Legal:

Hold the minutes confidential and review in the future due to ongoing legal matters.

March 8, 2018 Executive Committee Executive Session Minutes:

Hold confidential permanently due to personnel issues.

June 2018 Special Meeting Executive Session Minutes:

Release the minutes.

October 19, 2018 2nd and 3rd Business Session Executive Session Minutes:

Hold confidential permanently due to personnel issues.

October 20, 2018 4th Business Session Executive Session Minutes:

Release the minutes.

October 20, 2018 5th Business Session Executive Session Minutes:

Hold confidential permanently per the terms of agreement with a third party.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-03-05**

To table the proposed amendments to the Standing Rules of the United Church of Christ Thirty-third General Synod.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-05-04**

To take the motion to approve the General Synod Standing Rules amendments off the table.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-05-05**

To adopt the proposed amendments to the Standing Rules of the United Church of Christ Thirty-third General Synod as shown on Supporting Document UCCB-20-03-GOV-04.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-05-06**

To adopt the proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Board Standing Rules as shown on Supporting Document UCCB-20-03-GOV-06.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-10-07**

To elect the following people to the Office of Communication, Inc. Board of Directors, each for a term of three years commencing on the date of election and ending upon the election of a successor at the October 2023 meeting of the UCC Board of Directors: Cynthia Bailie, Mike Denton, Sara Fitzgerald, Hyo-Jung Kim, Brian Lapis, Marti Weston, and Earl Williams.

*Supporting documents:*

*UCCB-20-09-GOV-05 (OC Nominee Bios) Rev 09-04-20*

*UCCB-20-09-GOV-06 (OC Board Demographics) 09-04-20*

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-10-08**

To recommend the proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Bylaws to the General Synod.

*Supporting documents:*

*UCCB-20-09-GOV-04 (Sept 8 2020 Draft UCC Bylaws - Redline) 09-10-20*

*UCCB-20-09-GOV-07 (Sept 9 2020 Memo-UCC Bylaws Amendments) 09-10-20*

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-10-09**

To hold confidential the March 7, 2019 executive session minutes related to litigation update and release the June 20, 2019 executive session minutes related to the resolved legal issue involving Minnie's Seaside Rest.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-10-10**

To hold confidential in perpetuity the March 8, 2019 executive session minutes related to a personnel matter.

<p><b>INVESTMENT &amp; ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE</b></p>
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**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-17**

To approve the draw rate of 4.75% on the unrestricted investment portfolio of the based on the average balance of the preceding 20 quarters.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-20-10-15**

To recommend that the UCCB approve a draw rate of 4.75% on the unrestricted investment portfolio based on the average balance of the preceding 20 quarters for the year 2021.

*Supporting document: UCCB 20-09-IE-03 UCF REPORT*

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-03-06**

To approve the recommendation of the Investment and Endowment Committee to liquidate the holdings now managed by SASCO and transfer those funds to United Church Funds.

**MINISTRY COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-19-10-18**

To approve the Governance Committee and the Ministry Committee forming a joint subcommittee to hold conversations with stakeholders regarding the issues raised in Resolution 8 about the Exhibit Hall.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-02-06**

To accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to set the salary of the General Minister and President at \$203,000, which it finds to be reasonable, competitive, and not excessive in compliance with the UCCB Executive Compensation Policy. *(Supporting Document: UCCB-20-03-PER-01 Executive Compensation Policy)*

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISPOSITION COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-03-05**

To adopt the amended Report of the Subcommittee on Disposition. *(Supporting Document: UCCB-21-03-SoD-01 – Amended Report of Subcommittee on Disposition)*

**ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AS UNITED CHURCH OF  
CHRIST BOARD AD INTERIM**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:**

**21-04-ExComm-01:** To approve the Agenda.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 3, 2020 MINUTES**

**It was VOTED:**

**21-04-ExComm-02:** To approve the October 3, 2020 Executive Committee Minutes.

**APPOINTMENT OF TAMI MARINELLA AS TREASURER**

**It was VOTED:**

**21-04-ExComm-03** To appoint Chief Financial Officer Tami Marinella as Treasurer of Justice and Witness Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ); Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ); United Church of Christ Board corporation; and Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ).

**BANKING AUTHORITY RESOLUTIONS**

**It was VOTED:**

**21-04-ExComm-04** To approve the banking authority resolution for Justice and Witness Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ) as set forth in Supporting Document UCCB-21-04-ExCom-03\_JWM\_Banking\_Authority\_Resolution.

**It was VOTED:**

**21-04-ExComm-05** To approve the banking authority resolution for Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ) as set forth in the Supporting Document UCCB-21-04-ExCom-05\_LCM\_Banking\_Authority\_Resolution.

**It was VOTED:**

**21-04-ExComm-06** To approve the banking authority resolution for United Church of Christ Board corporation as set forth in the Supporting Document UCCB-21-04-ExCom-07\_UCCB\_Banking\_Authority\_Resolution.



**It was VOTED:**

**21-04-ExComm-07** To approve the banking authority resolution Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ) as set forth in Supporting Document UCCB-21-04-ExCom-09\_WCM\_Banking\_Authority.

## **Moderator/Assistant Moderator Nominees**

### **Moderator**

**Robert (Bob) Sandman** is a lay member of Lakeview UCC in Maineville, Ohio. Bob has an MBA and a Master's Degree in economics. He is a retired professor of business and economics. In addition, he has held positions in printing and publishing at the American Baptist Board of Educational Ministries and as a textbook editor at South-Western Publishing. Bob was previously the moderator of Collenbrook United Church, Lakeview UCC, North Windham Union Church UCC, and the Southwest Ohio Northern Kentucky Association. He taught History and Polity for SONKA. He has been Treasurer of the Maine Conference, a member of the Maine Anti-Racism Resource Team, a General Synod Delegate Committee Chair, a corporate member of the Board for Homeland Ministries, a delegate to the Executive Council, and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Office of General Ministries. His skills include strategic thinking, public speaking, analysis of business and economic data, publishing, and project management.

**Man, 60+, Layperson, Hispanic/Latino/Latin**

### **Assistant Moderator**

**A. Rushan Sinnaduray** is the Founding and Lead Pastor of The Oasis United Church of Christ in Jefferson City, Missouri. Within the Missouri Mid-South Conference, he serves on the Western Association Committee on Ministry and has served on the Associate Conference Minister Search Committee for the Conference. Rushan was born and raised in Sri Lanka and has lived and worked in New Zealand, Canada and the USA. He was ordained in 2008 and has served churches in New Hampshire, Connecticut and Missouri. He is passionate about church planting, church vitality, youth ministry and music. Rushan and his spouse, Arushini, have two children: Aran (10) and Alisha (7).

**Man, 40-49, Holds Ministerial Standing, Asian/Asian American (Sri Lankan Tamil)**

## **At Large Class of 2027 Nominees**

**Joyce Bathke** is a member of Faith United Church of Christ in Wentzville, MO. Joyce is a retired Chief Operating Officer for the St. Louis Regional Chapter of the American Red Cross. Joyce served Wider Church Ministries Board under the former governance structure and completed her last two years serving on the new UCCB Finance Committee. Joyce currently serves on the Missouri Mid-South Conference Council and chairs the Personnel Committee. As a member of the Eastern Association, she serves on the Committee on Ministry. Joyce attended Washington University with a BS-Liberal Arts.

**Woman, 60+, Layperson, White/Europe American**

**Jasmine Coleman Quinerly** is the Houston Association Minister in the South Central Conference. She is also Minister of Missions at Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ, Houston, Texas. She serves the United Church of Christ as member of the Committee of Ministry of the Houston Association and Settegast Heights Apartment Complex Board of Directors. She has served six years on the Board of Directors of Back Bay Mission, in Biloxi, Mississippi including one term as board president. This mission project follows international mission work in Mexico and Guatemala. Jasmine has provided leadership with the Southern Regional Women's Retreat, AAWIM, CHHSM and AM 21.

Jasmine provides worship to an assistant living facility and enjoys providing birthday parties for the residents since being ordained. At Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Houston, she supports the weekly worship, pastoral visits and plans mission projects for the church and community.

Jasmine is bi-vocational and practices commercial and residential real estate sales and appraisals. Presently she is an instructor of real estate sales, appraisal ethics for both local and national organizations. Jasmine provided leadership on the national examination development for the real estate appraisal industry, peer review for the State of Texas, and has developed a real estate appraisal curriculum.

Rev. Quinerly is the proud mother of Verrene Quinerly of Dallas, Texas and Reggie Quinerly of California and has 2 granddaughters.

**Woman, 60+, Holds Ministerial Standing, Black/African American, HUGS**

**Tom Croner** is a life-long member of Trinity United Church of Christ in Berlin, PA, serving there in numerous capacities along with the Penn West Conference board and committees. He feels blessed to be the 7<sup>th</sup> generation caretaker of the family farm dating back to 1780, working with his son in preparation for the 9<sup>th</sup> generation. His BS degree from Penn State in Ag Economics and Rural Sociology has allowed him to serve farmer owned food production, and manufacturing organizations by building consensus and envisioning the future through respectful conversations. He is anxiously awaiting God's next assignments.

**Man, 60+, Layperson, White/European American**

**Courtney Dobbins** is a current Doctor of Pharmacy candidate at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. She works as a Pharmacy Intern and a Peer Coach and holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical and Biological Engineering from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Courtney grew up at the United Church of Christ in Longmont, CO where she was inspired to be involved with youth trips and summer camps. Her favorite place to be is LaForet, the UCC camp owned by the Rocky Mountain Conference. Courtney has served four years on the Rocky Mountain Conference Board of Directors - two as the Youth Representative and two as the Finance Committee Chair. Now, Courtney enjoys teaching Sunday School to the middle school aged group and counseling summer camps at LaForet!

**Woman, 19-29, Layperson, White/European American, LGBTQAI+**

**Mark Dutell** is a retired Human Resource Executive with 35 years of diversified experience in all areas of Human Resources. Mark career includes 30 years of progressive responsibility at Gates Corporation, a global automotive and industrial rubber manufacturer with over \$3 billion annual revenues and 60 plus locations in 20 countries.

As a member of the executive team, Mark participated in the development of overall company strategy including growth strategies, budgets, capital investments, new products and service development.

As the Senior Vice President of Global Human Resources he led the organization objective to improve financial performance through a Human Capital Strategy that emphasized associate learning and involvement. Specific competencies include: talent management, positive associate relations, compensation and benefits, human resource information systems, health safety and environment, and policy development.

Since retiring in 2010, Mark has pursued a retirement objective to “keep my exposure to the world growing rather than shrinking” through community enrichment classes at Denver University, travel, and volunteer work.

Mark currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Rocky Mountain Conference UCC as the Chair of the Personnel Committee. He has served on the Board of Directors of a local YMCA and local bank. In 17 years as a member of his local congregation, the Kirk of Bonnie Brae in Denver Colorado, he has served as Moderator, Council member, and Capital Campaign Chair. He has also served on a variety of committees including, mission, open and affirming, social justice, property, pastor search, and COVID response.

**Man, 60+, Layperson, White European American, Disability**

**Richard (Dick) Hom** is currently serving his second term as the Moderator of the Pacific Islander & Asian American Ministries (PAAM) of the United Church of Christ. As Moderator, Dick was instrumental in implementing many policies and procedures to update PAAM such as a financial policies & procedures, funding for youth and young adult programming, leadership training and providing grants to address racism and racial disparities to all six regions of PAAM. Dick is also a member of the Council of Racial & Ethnic Ministries (COREM) of the UCC.

Dick is a strong supporter of the Northern California Nevada Conference and is a former moderator and current Association board member and has been instrumental in helping to raise over \$40K for disaster relief for the Conference.

As a retired small business owner, Dick has served on the Board of Directors of the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce and served as a trustee for the Pacific School of Religion.

As a long-time active member of the Chinese Congregational Church in San Francisco, Dick has served in many capacities such as moderator of the church council, chairperson of the Board of Deacons and many various committees. His biggest legacy is as the co-founder of the Summer Adventure Camp for Kids (SACK) day camp program for low-income kids in the Chinatown area. Founded in 1969, the program is still active today.

**Man, 60+, Layperson, Asian/Asian American (Chinese), HUGS**

**Tracy Keene** is an active lay leader at Old South Church in Boston, where he has been a member since 2007. He currently serves on the Church Council and is the Chair of (G)RACE Speaks, a standing committee of the church that deals with all matters of race/racism. He also serves on the Ordination Discernment Committee and has served on a pastor search committee. He was previously a member of First Congregational Church in Poughkeepsie, NY. Tracy works as the Director of Theater & Facilities Operations at the Loeb Drama Center at Harvard University, overseeing the infrastructure and the day-to-day operations of facilities on campus. Prior to his arrival at Harvard, Tracy worked for 23 years in the field of performing arts management at major performing arts institutions in New York City and San Francisco. Tracy volunteers as a co-leader for his daughter's Girl Scouts Troop and serves as a regional delegate to Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts. He currently serves as president of the Campus Childcare Center, a non-profit organization that manages the childcare centers on the campus of Harvard University. He serves as President of the Massachusetts Historic Conference of the United Church of Christ and also on the Board of Directors for the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. He holds memberships with the International Facilities Management Association and the International Association of Venue Managers. Tracy holds a BA in Drama from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

**Man, 50-59, Layperson, Black/African American, LGBTQAI+**

**Kristie Nardini** earned her bachelor's degree in social work from Western New England University and her masters in Community Engagement from Merrimack College. She has served South Church in Andover, MA where she has facilitated their fellowship committee, served as a Deacon, helped lead a volunteer software management search, and currently serves as the co-lead for the Human Resources Ministry team. Professionally, Kristie works at a renowned animal hospital where she created a volunteer program from the ground up and serves as their Volunteer Coordinator. She is passionate about volunteer engagement, mental health advocacy, and program development. Kristie has a particular interest in engaging more young professionals in the UCC. She loves to write and blog in her spare time to connect with others in a meaningful way.

**Woman, 19-29, Layperson, White/European American**

**Lawrence T. Richardson** is a pastor, prophet, digital evangelist, and author. He is a graduate of St. Catherine University and Liberty Seminary, where he was trained in Sociology, Communications, Pastoral Care, Evangelism, and Christian Ministry. Rev. Richardson has also completed certifications for Antiracism Facilitator Training, Our Whole Lives Sexuality Training, Church Planting, Digital Media Strategy, and Executive Leadership Coaching.

Rev. Richardson is on staff as lead minister at Linden Hills UCC, is a media trainer for Auburn Seminary, and works as an executive clergy coach for Convergence US. Rev. Richardson also has active partnerships with the Evangelical Church of Germany, collaborating on digital ministry projects. The author of *I Know What Heaven Looks Like* and a member of the International Sociology Honors Society, Rev. Richardson writes about and advocates for LGBTQ people, people of color, and the flourishing of all; with his works appearing in *Huffington Post Religion*, *The Root*, *Believe Out Loud*, *The Salt Collective*, Rachel Murr's *Unnatural: Spiritual Resiliency in Queer Christian Women*, Austen Hartke's *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians*, and numerous national and international publications. Rev. Richardson has received awards and commendations for his service, including the Humanitarian Award from Black Transmen Inc. and the Stellar Award for his work in global communication.

When he is not ministering, researching, or writing about what he researches, Pastor Lawrence loves reading, trying different cuisine, traveling, spending time with family, and empowering people to live life from a place of joy, abundance, faith, and gratitude.

**Man, 30-39, Holds Ministerial Standing, Black/African American, HUGS, LGBTQAI+**

**Bethany Ruhl** is the Manager of Spiritual Wellness at Saint Luke's Crittenton Children's Center, which serves children experiencing mental health crisis in the Kansas City area. She is a Board-Certified Chaplain and recently graduated with a Master of Counseling Degree. During her time at Crittenton, Bethany received a grant to create a new chapel space, and she commissioned a local artist to create a series of social justice murals with Crittenton patients. Bethany chairs the Crittenton Ethics Committee and was recently named an Ethics Champion by the Center for Practical Bioethics. Bethany specializes in mental health and trauma-informed care. Bethany grew up in Lawrence, Kansas where she first found the United Church of Christ in college, and she is now a proud member of Southwood UCC in Raytown, MO, as well as the Missouri Mid-South Conference. Before entering the ministry, Bethany was a world traveler and spent time living and teaching abroad France & Germany. She speaks French and has a Master's Degree in French Literature. During her seminary career Bethany won several social justice awards for her work with women's issue and racial justice issues. A significant life experience for her was working in the drug & trauma treatment program of a women's prison during seminary. During her free time, Bethany enjoys pot-lucking with her friends, long conversations in coffeeshops and thrift stores. She also enjoys perusing farmer's markets with her Italian Greyhounds Lulu and Anubis."

**Woman, 30-39, Holds Ministerial Standing, White/European American**

**Daniel Su'a** is currently a member of the CYYAM (Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries) where he committed himself as a youth to the work of the council and to uphold the priorities of the church. He had the privilege to attend the 2019 General Synod as a delegate representing the Rocky Mountain Conference as a "Youth Delegate." His roles in life revolve around helping others, whether that is in the church or in the community. In the community, he worked for a charter school called Ascent Academy. There, Daniel was one of the teachers in the Special Education Department. He was tasked with working one on one with 12-15 students from the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade. He helped students with homework, in class support, and helped students socialize with their peers. His roles can also be translated to his own church youth; he helped his father's ministries by being the Choir Conductor and also the Sunday School Music Director. One of his goals is to become a Youth Pastor in the UCC and help the youth of tomorrow's church.

Some of Daniel's accomplishments include a Bachelor's Degree in Social and Behavior Science with an emphasis in Ethnic Studies from the University of Utah. He is currently employed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> District Court of Utah as a Judicial Assistant. In his free time, he likes to play music. Whether it's playing the bass guitar for a band or practicing his piano skills, and also reading and socializing with friends.

**Man, 19-29, Layperson, Pacific Islander (Samoan)**

**Elizabeth (Beth) Walker** has been a member of Old First Reformed UCC in Philadelphia for over 25 years. She retired from the fulltime practice of law in June 2018 to commit her time and attention to the work of building community and promoting the transformation of our court system to be one focused on restorative justice. She does this work through POWER, an interfaith organization advocating for social justice. Beth is currently serving as Moderator of the Philadelphia Association. She also serves on the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Nominating Committee and the Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Team. In the National Setting, Beth is on the Board of Directors of the Cornerstone Fund, a financial ministry affiliated with the United Church of Christ, currently serving as Chair of the Board. In addition, Beth is serving on the Manual on Church Working Group created pursuant to a Resolution of the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Synod Resolution tasked with providing clarity about Local Church covenant and autonomy, parameters for Local Church accountability and the oversight of Local Churches along with a Manual on the Local Church, akin to the Manual on Ministry. At Old First, Beth serves as Director of Community Engagement. She is involved in the Outreach Ministry to the Homeless and is on a Joint Venture Ministry Team working on the construction of permanent supportive housing for 34 previously homeless individuals on the church property.

**Woman, 60+, Layperson, White/Europe American**

**Carenina Williams** is a member of Peoples Congregational UCC in Washington, DC. Ms. Williams currently serves as a Principal of Sundance Bay, and has over 18 years of real estate investment and finance experience. She has acquired and/or asset managed over \$1.8 billion in real estate assets throughout the United States. Previously, Ms. Williams served as COO of a short opportunistic equity hedge fund that focused on generating alpha through single-name shorts in the consumer discretionary and consumer staples sectors. Previously, Ms. Williams was a Principal of Acquisitions and Asset Management at Artemis Real Estate Partners responsible for developing and implementing acquisition and asset management activities, primarily for the separate account for New York State Common Retirement Fund. Prior to Artemis, Ms. Williams served as Principal, Investments for Capri Capital Partners, LLC (“Capri”), where she was responsible for origination, investment structuring, and asset management of equity and structured finance investments for over \$1 billion in assets, across the firm’s various separate accounts and commingled funds. Ms. Williams began her career at Goldman Sachs within the Investment Banking Division’s Retail and Corporate Finance Practice Groups.

Ms. Williams graduated with honors from Harvard University (AB Economics) and has an MBA from Harvard Business School. She is a member of the Urban Land Institute – Silver Retail Counsel. She serves as a Trustee and Chair of the Investments/Finance Committee for Peoples Congregational UCC and is a Member of Leadership Now Project.

**Woman, 40-49, Layperson, Black/African American, HUGS**



UCCB-21-03-SoD-01 Amended Report of the Subcommittee on Disposition  
Adopted by UCCB on March 5, 2021

1 **Motion from the Subcommittee on Disposition**

2 March 5, 2021

3

4 The Subcommittee on Disposition moves:

5 **The United Church of Christ Board, sitting as the General Synod Committee on**  
6 **Disposition, adopts the Amended Report of the Subcommittee on Disposition.**

7

8 Report of the Subcommittee on Disposition

9 The Subcommittee on Disposition recommends:

10

11 The United Church of Christ Board, sitting as the General Synod Committee on Disposition,  
12 receives the items of business submitted to the Thirty-third General Synod and recommends  
13 disposition as follows:

14

Short Title	Full Title	Submitter	Prudential or Witness	SoD Prelim. Recommendation
Alliance of Assoc Conf Ministers <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01a</i>	THE ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST REQUEST TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FORMAL GROUP	IA, NE, NH, SD	Prudential	To a <u>Plenary Committee</u> of the General Synod
Bail Bond System <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01b</i>	A Resolution to Advocate and Act to Change the Cash Bail Bond System to Eliminate Racial and Social Injustices Inherent in the Present System	Southern	Witness	To a Committee of the General Synod
Church Workers <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01c</i>	A RESOLUTION ON PROTECTING WORKERS AT CHURCHES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS	New Jersey Assn of CAC & CAC	Witness	To the United Church of Christ Board
Contemplatives in Action <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01d</i>	Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action	Agape Spiritual Community, Waltham, MA & twelve other local churches	Witness	To a <u>Plenary</u> of the General Synod

UCCB-21-03-SoD-01 Amended Report of the Subcommittee on Disposition  
Adopted by UCCB on March 5, 2021

<b>Short Title</b>	<b>Full Title</b>	<b>Submitter</b>	<b>Prudential or Witness</b>	<b>SoD Prelim. Recommendation</b>
Conversion Therapy Ban <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01e</i>	A RESOLUTION TO BAN THE PRACTICE OF CONVERSION THERAPY	ONA Coalition and Mental Health Network	Witness	To a Committee of the General Synod
Gender Safety and Equity <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01f</i>	A COMMITMENT TO GENDER SAFETY & EQUITY IN MINISTRY SETTINGS	Central Pacific Conf	Witness	To a Committee of the General Synod
Hawaiian Self Governance <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01g</i>	A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING TO END 128 YEARS OF WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM	Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches	Witness	To a Committee of the General Synod
Palestine-Israel <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01h</i>	DECLARATION FOR A JUST PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL	Various Churches	Witness	Direct to Implementing Bodies
Racism as a public health crisis – CHHSM <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01i</i>	A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE AND RESPOND TO RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS	CHHSM & COREM	Witness	To a <u>Plenary</u> of the General Synod
Rights of Nature <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01j</i>	“Who will speak for the Trees?” A Resolution on the Rights of Nature	NH	Witness	Direct to Implementing Bodies
UN International Decade <i>UCCB-21-03-SoD-01k</i>	A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT (2015-2024)	NH / SW	Witness	To a <u>Plenary</u> of the General Synod

15  
16  
17

18 ---End of Motion---

19

20 **Background: From Standing Rules of the Thirty-Third General Synod, Paragraph XI**

21

22 **Disposition Options:**

- 23 A. Items that are expected to be routine, non-controversial, or dealt with in a special hearing  
24 will be reported directly to the plenary session by the Business Committee. This might  
25 include, but is not limited to, such items as the budget, amendments to the Constitution or  
26 Bylaws, statements of commendation, recognition, and celebration, and certain  
27 Resolutions. The Business Committee may place some of these items on a Consent  
28 Agenda. The Consent Agenda will be approved by delegates in the opening plenary of  
29 the General Synod. Proponents of Resolutions placed on the Consent Agenda will have  
30 two minutes to speak to their Resolution before the Consent Agenda is moved. Items may  
31 be removed from the Consent Agenda by a majority vote of the General Synod. If a  
32 Resolution is removed from the Consent Agenda, it will be assigned to a committee or  
33 considered in a plenary session of the General Synod.
- 34 B. All proposed pronouncements and proposals for action shall be assigned to committee.
- 35 C. Items that are complicated or controversial that require background discussion and study,  
36 that merit and need a hearing process, or that have a system-wide impact will be assigned  
37 to a committee. The proposer shall supply a resource person to the committee.
- 38 D. Any proposed business item that reiterates or reaffirms previous action shall normally be  
39 referred by the General Synod to the body or bodies implementing such action. A referral  
40 for implementation is, in itself, a statement that the General Synod is already on record  
41 with the intent of the business item and that the policy base for implementation is already  
42 in existence.
- 43 E. Items addressing issues addressed by one of the two preceding General Synods shall be  
44 referred by the General Synod to implementing bodies.
- 45 F. If a proposed motion differs significantly from previous policy or action of the two  
46 preceding General Synods, it shall be assigned to a committee. The burden of proof is on  
47 those submitting the proposal to explain how it is different.

48

49 **Definitions:**

- 50 1. Resolution of Witness: A Resolution of Witness is an expression of the General Synod  
51 concerning a moral, ethical or religious matter confronting the Church, the nation, or the  
52 world, adopted for the guidance of the Officers, Covenanted, Associated or Affiliated  
53 Ministries, or other bodies as defined in Article VI of the Bylaws of the United Church of  
54 Christ; the consideration of local churches, Associations, Conferences and other bodies  
55 related to the United Church of Christ; and for a Christian witness to the world. It  
56 represents agreement by at least two thirds of the delegates voting that the view expressed  
57 is based on Christian conviction and is a part of their witness to Jesus Christ. The text of  
58 the proposed resolution should be so phrased as not to bring into question the Christian  
59 commitment of those who do not agree.
- 60 2. Prudential Resolutions: A Prudential Resolution establishes policy, institutes or revises  
61 structure or procedures, authorizes programs, approves directions or requests actions by  
62 majority vote.

The following resolution has been received by the Office of the General Minister and President prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirty-third General Synod.

Receipt and release of this resolution for pre-Synod consideration by delegates and other interested parties should not be considered an indication it will come before the General Synod. This resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director's Subcommittee on Disposition and its staff, before consideration by the full Board of Directors in March 2021. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the General Synod Standing Rules (see Standing Rule 11). The Board of Directors will decide in March whether this resolution meets those requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

**THE ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST REQUEST TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FORMAL GROUP**

**A Prudential Resolution**

**Submitted by the:  
Iowa Conference  
Nebraska Conference  
New Hampshire Conference  
South Dakota Conference**

1 **SUMMARY**

2  
3 The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers (AACM) seeks to be recognized as a Self-  
4 Created Group according to United Church of Christ By-Laws, Article VI., existing to be a  
5 supportive expression of the Living Christ, in relationship with one another and with the Body of  
6 Christ, in all its forms. The term "Associate Conference Minister" is used ubiquitously in  
7 AACM documents to refer to all persons who serve in the role either designated as associate  
8 conference minister or all the various titles of those functioning in similar job responsibilities and  
9 expectations. AACM serves to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing  
10 conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

11  
12 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

13  
14 The fundamental biblical grounding for the proposed recognition of the Alliance of Associate  
15 Conference Ministers is found in Christ's farewell discourse in the Gospel of John, "...that all of  
16 them may be one," John 17:21 (NIV). For centuries, this has been a scriptural basis for uniting  
17 Christians throughout the world.

18  
19 In the context of the challenges of today's secularizing culture and the opportunities created by  
20 increasingly powerful means of communication, we have been inspired by the Deutero-Pauline  
21 ambition, "...that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith...and  
22 become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:12-13  
23 (NIV). To us, this means that we are called to outgrow an attitude of "going it alone" that has  
24 been prominent in our polity for more than three hundred years (since the 1648 Cambridge  
25 Platform). It means that we are called to build a stronger and larger network of covenants

26 through which we can become stronger as the body of Christ serving across the breadth of the  
27 United Church of Christ. It means that we can be much stronger by capitalizing on the many  
28 ways we are increasingly interdependent in today’s world. This means building and maintaining  
29 a covenantal and collaborative relationship with all United Church of Christ Associate  
30 Conference Ministers through the existence and support of the AACM.

31  
32 The Alliance seeks to live out its purpose of:

- 33 • Building and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with all United  
34 Church of Christ Associate Conference Ministers.
- 35 • Developing and maintaining a covenantal and collaborative relationship with the United  
36 Church of Christ Council of Conference Ministers, officers of the Church, UCC  
37 Covenantal partners, and UCC Board of Directors.
- 38 • Being a resource to share information and best practices to promote excellence in our  
39 various ministries.
- 40 • Being a collective voice of advocacy for concerns important to the role and work of the  
41 Associate Conference Minister as they relate to the life of the United Church of Christ.

42  
43 We believe that discerning God’s will and God’s call to us is best done in community, gathering,  
44 listening and sharing with one another. This we have done through meeting and sharing ideas at  
45 AM21 in 2018 and 2019 intentionally discerning a call to unite for the intention of being a  
46 resource to share support, information and best practices to promote excellence in our various  
47 ministries.

48  
49 **TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION**

50  
51 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ takes seriously our individual Christian covenant with  
52 God as the primal covenant from which our human covenants are derived and by which they are  
53 shaped. <sup>1</sup>

54  
55 **WHEREAS** in the above view it is “the covenantal relationship with God that creates the church  
56 and, in turn created a covenantal relationship among the people who are the church.”<sup>2</sup>

57  
58 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ holds seriously the call to be an open and welcoming  
59 faith community, accepting into the church body and leadership all facets of expression found in  
60 God’s people, creating a rich diversity of expression, background, culture, sexual and gender  
61 identity and expression.

62  
63 **WHEREAS** the work of conference ministry and associate conference ministry places those  
64 doing the work at the intersection of church life, between the Local Church and the National  
65 Setting, including associations where those exist calling for “keeping communication flowing in  
66 all directions, nurturing relationships, articulating and supporting covenantal relationships.”<sup>3</sup>

67  
68 **WHEREAS** in response to “[t]he Proposal for Action adopted by the Twentieth General Synod  
69 called upon local churches, conferences and associations, those called and employed by the  
70 church, and various national bodies to act in a variety of ways in support of the fair and just

71 compensation of all persons called and employed by the church”<sup>4</sup> the AACM states it provides  
72 resources and advocacy to support ACMs in their positions.

73  
74 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church  
75 of Christ recognizes the establishment of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers, a Self-  
76 Created Group serving to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing conference  
77 ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

78  
79 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers be identified as  
80 related in covenant to the United Church of Christ, through a primary relationship as a Self-  
81 Created Group with the United Church of Christ Board.

82  
83 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance  
84 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

85  
86 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other  
87 entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

88

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<sup>1</sup> Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Covenant in Our UCC Heritage. In *Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ* (pp.32). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Covenant in Our UCC Heritage. In *Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ* (pp. 33). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

<sup>3</sup> Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Our Covenant as the Wider United Church of Christ. In *Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ* (pp. 36). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

<sup>4</sup> Fair & Just Compensation A Report to the Twenty-first General Synod 97-GS-50 62-65

The following resolution has been received by the Office of the General Minister and President prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirty-third General Synod.

Receipt and release of this resolution for pre-Synod consideration by delegates and other interested parties should not be considered an indication it will come before the General Synod. This resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director’s Subcommittee on Disposition and its staff, before consideration by the full Board of Directors in March 2021. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the General Synod Standing Rules (see Standing Rule 11). The Board of Directors will decide in March whether this resolution meets those requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

**A Resolution to Advocate and Act to Change the Cash Bail Bond System to Eliminate Racial and Social Injustices Inherent in the Present System**

**Submitted by the Southern Conference**

1 **SUMMARY**

2  
3 This resolution calls on the United Church of Christ to advocate and act to change the Cash Bail  
4 Bond System in the individual states and United States of America to be more just to the  
5 economically disadvantaged.  
6

7 **BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

8  
9 Isaiah 42:5-7 “Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who  
10 spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to  
11 those who walk in it: ‘I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the  
12 hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open  
13 the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit  
14 in darkness.’”  
15

16 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me;  
17 has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the  
18 captives, and release to the prisoners . . . .”  
19

20 Matthew 25: 31-33, 41-46 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with  
21 him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will  
22 separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will  
23 put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. . . . Then he will say to those on his left,  
24 ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.  
25 For . . . I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me. They also will answer, ‘Lord,  
26 when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and  
27 did not help you? He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of  
28 these, you did not do for me.’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous  
29 to eternal life.”  
30

31 Hebrews 13:3 “Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them;  
32 those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured;”  
33

34 **HISTORICAL GROUNDING AND CONNECTION TO THE UCC**  
35

36 1. Considerable empirical evidence demonstrates that the cash bail system is corrupt, unfair  
37 and ineffective. The cash bail system requires pretrial defendants to pay hundreds to  
38 thousands of dollars to the courts, as secured through bail bondsmen, and usually requires  
39 low income individuals to agree to usurious terms for borrowing such funds. Lacking  
40 such funds, individuals are subject to incarceration prior to their trials, which then costs  
41 the state up to one hundred dollars per day for each individual. As such, several  
42 municipalities and states throughout the U.S. have successfully enacted other approaches  
43 to pretrial requirements for defendants accused of misdemeanors and some lesser felonies  
44 (1)<sup>1</sup>.  
45

46 2. The United Church of Christ has a long record of advocating reform of the cash bail bond  
47 system.

48 I. Forty-six years ago (1973), the United Church of Christ’s Advising Body of the  
49 General Synod adopted the following CRIMINAL JUSTICE-PENAL REFORM  
50 statement as amended on Excessive Bail (73-GS-38)

51 “The Ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

52 i. Denounces the practice of setting excessive bail, especially in the case of  
53 political activists

54 ii. Calls upon the Criminal Justice Priority Team of the United Church of  
55 Christ to develop viable revisions and alternatives to cash bail and  
56 transmit those to our membership, to congressmen, and legislators.

57 iii. Make available staff consultative and financial support for local programs  
58 which share this goal, and for Conferences which in cooperation with  
59 other agencies are working toward this goal; said support may come in the  
60 form of a pilot project in one or more conferences.”

61 II. Forty-eight years ago (1971), the United Church of Christ endorsed the  
62 following goals and objectives: “The Eighth General Synod adopts the  
63 following Goals and Objectives for the priority, Racial Justice. To urge  
64 enactment of state and federal laws reforming the bail system. It should be  
65 provided that those defendants who would ordinarily purchase corporate bail  
66 will deposit their money with the court and they will recover 90% of this  
67 money after the completion of their cases. The acceptance to this nominal bail  
68 or personal recognizance bonding should be encouraged, especially where the  
69 defendants are employed. The court shall give priority to the trials of all cases  
70 where the defendants have failed to post bail. No person should be held in  
71 prison without bail longer than sixty days after indictment or the termination  
72 of the first term of criminal court after his indictment.”  
73

74 3. The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina has adopted a resolution asking for cash bail  
75 bond reform:



76 The 203rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina Act 2018-  
 77 12 Resolution 203.12 “On examining the need for bail reform within the criminal  
 78 justice system: Resolved, the 203rd Annual Convention of the Diocese of North  
 79 Carolina supports actions to reform, and commits to examine, current judicial pretrial  
 80 release procedures within our own state. The consideration of current pretrial release  
 81 practices will be conducted in partnership with organizations currently engaged in the  
 82 study of the money-bail system and steps will be taken in support of needed reforms.  
 83 Pretrial-release practices will be considered for consistency with the teachings of  
 84 Jesus concerning the equitable treatment of all people. Further, this consideration of  
 85 the money-bail system of pretrial release is in keeping with the mandate of our  
 86 baptismal covenant to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the  
 87 dignity of every human being.”  
 88

- 89 4. States and jurisdictions across the country have changed or are investigating the ability to  
 90 change bail bond systems toward systems that do not punish individuals for poverty  
 91 itself. Results indicate that financial savings are available for individuals and the legal  
 92 system, and defendants continue to appear for their court days<sup>2</sup>.
  - 93 I. A recent study reports results of reform to the cash bail bond system in  
 94 Philadelphia, PA (over the 2018 year) as successful and has been outlined by  
 95 Jessica Smith, W.R. Kenyan, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Public Law and  
 96 Government at UNC School of government, on her blog posting<sup>3</sup>.
  - 97 II. In a previous posting Ms. Smith lists the need for a change to pretrial  
 98 adjudication being based on four main problems: public safety (wealthier  
 99 individuals can buy their way out of incarceration); costs to taxpayers;  
 100 fairness; and racial and ethnic disparities.  
 101
- 102 5. A comprehensive compilation of the research on pretrial alternatives to cash bail, based  
 103 on nationwide research with ensuing recommendations for states, was published in  
 104 February, 2019 by the Harvard Law School. This Guide to bail reform warns against the  
 105 use of risk assessment tests that are too general, and often have inherent racial and  
 106 economic biases. Instead, risk assessments which are validated for each location-specific  
 107 population, and which are developed by an entity who will not profit from the use of  
 108 algorithm is advised as necessary<sup>4</sup>.
  - 109 I. More than 100 civil rights, faith, labor, legal and data science groups released  
 110 a shared statement of concerns about the use risk assessments<sup>5</sup>.
- 111 6. An earlier set of cash bail guidelines for NC were published in 2016<sup>6</sup>:  
 112

113 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

114  
 115 **WHEREAS** the U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and African Americans,  
 116 Latinos, Latinas, and indigenous peoples are disproportionately incarcerated in the United  
 117 States<sup>7</sup>;

118  
 119 **WHEREAS** since 2000, the vast majority of the jail population increase was caused by the  
 120 detention of individuals prior to trial (pretrial) of which 60 to 70% were classified nonviolent  
 121 minimum-security<sup>8</sup>;

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**WHEREAS** cash bail bonding is an over 2-billion-dollar industry<sup>9</sup>;

**WHEREAS** the inability to make cash bail extracts an untold human cost on the accused due to their loss of employment, housing and, often times, family support<sup>10</sup>;

**WHEREAS** there are proven instances of inadequate health care for incarcerated persons, death and injury suffered by incarcerated persons<sup>11</sup>;

**WHEREAS** at least 70% of inmates in local jails are not convicted of any crime <sup>8,12</sup> ;

**WHEREAS** persons who cannot make bail are poor and four times more likely to receive jail time with sentences three times longer than those who do make bail<sup>13 , 14</sup>;

**WHEREAS** bail set for people of color exceeds that for whites by 35% and Latinos by 19% <sup>1,15</sup>;

**WHEREAS** three out of four criminal cases in state trial courts are for misdemeanors that, if proved, would result in fines and/or less than a year in jail<sup>16</sup>;

**WHEREAS** political contributions made by the Bail Industry in between 2002 and 2016 exceeded \$5,000,000<sup>17</sup>;

**WHEREAS** money-based systems release nearly half of the most dangerous defendants with little to no meaningful supervision<sup>18</sup>;

**WHEREAS** the US is the only nation besides the Philippines to have a legal commercial bail bond industry;

**WHEREAS** corporate and/or systemic structures, or individuals which derive profit from the imprisonment of human beings serve to perpetuate the legacy of slavery, oppression and heartless greed which the United Church of Christ has long sought to expose and correct;

**WHEREAS** we are admonished as followers of Christ to “Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured;" (Hebrews 13:3)

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**

- a) That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the reform of the bail bond systems within individual states and the United States in order to eliminate the racial and social injustices inherent in the present cash bail bond systems,
- b) That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church to raise their consciousness of the theological, social, racial, ethnic and economic inequities which make possible the existence of the unfair and unjust bail bond systems,

166 c) That, to accomplish these goals, the Thirty Third General Synod of the United Church of  
 167 Christ calls upon all settings of the church to seek partnerships with other organizations also  
 168 working toward the goals.

169

170 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
 171 Christ calls upon the U.S. Congress and state legislatures to reform the cash bail bond systems to  
 172 be more just and humane.

173

#### 174 **FUNDING**

175 The funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall  
 176 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

177

#### 178 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

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<sup>1</sup> Pretrial Justice Institute (PJI): “Why We Need Pretrial Reform.” <https://www.pretrial.org/get-involved/learn-more/why-we-need-pretrial-reform/>

<sup>2</sup> Evaluating the Impacts of Eliminating Prosecutorial Requests for Cash Bail. Aurelie Ouss and Megan T. Stevenson. George Mason Legal Studies Research Paper No. LS 19-08, 25 Feb 2019. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3335138](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3335138). Distortion of Justice: How the Inability to Pay Bail Affects Case Outcomes, Megan T Stevenson. The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization, 34, 2018, Pages 511–542. <https://academic.oup.com/jleo/article/34/4/511/5100740>. Kentucky's Pretrial System, NC Policy Watch, J. Killian, [www.ncpolicywatch.com/2018/04/24/national-pretrial-expert-reform-is-coming-to-the-broken-cash-bail-system/](http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2018/04/24/national-pretrial-expert-reform-is-coming-to-the-broken-cash-bail-system/). Jessica Smith of the UNC School of Government. <https://cjil.sog.unc.edu/files/2019/06/Bail-Reform-Options-for-Local-Jurisdictions.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> what-happens-when-prosecutors-stop-asking-for-cash-bail, Jessica Smith. 2019.

<https://nccriminallaw.sog.unc.edu/what-happens-when-prosecutors-stop-asking-for-cash-bail/>

<sup>4</sup> Bail Reform: A Guide for State and Local Policymakers. Criminal Justice Program. Harvard Law School. 2019.

<http://cjpp.law.harvard.edu/publications/bail-reform-a-guide-for-state-and-local-policymakers>

<sup>5</sup> The use of Pretrial “Risk assessment” Instruments. A Shared Statement of Civil Rights Concerns.

<http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/criminal-justice/Pretrial-Risk-Assessment-Full.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Upgrading North Carolina’s Bail System: “A Balanced Approach to Pretrial Justice. Using Legal and Evidence-based Approaches” by John Clark of the Pretrial Justice Institute; Timothy R. Schnacke, Center for Legal and Evidence Based Practices; and Sue Ferrere, Pretrial Justice Institute. <https://nccalj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Upgrading-NCs-Bail-System-PJI-2016-003.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> “Highest to Lowest - Prison Population Rate.” The Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London. [https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison\\_population\\_rate?field\\_region\\_taxonomy\\_tid=All](https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All).

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<sup>8</sup> County Jails at a Crossroads: An Examination of the Jail Population and Pretrial Release. Natalie R. Ortiz, 2015. National Association of Counties.

[http://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/Final%20paper\\_County%20Jails%20at%20a%20Crossroads\\_8.10.15.pdf](http://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/Final%20paper_County%20Jails%20at%20a%20Crossroads_8.10.15.pdf). Presbyterian Church (USA) "Bail Curriculum", June 5, 2018;

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/opw/2018/06/06/pcusa-bail-out-curriculum>

<sup>9</sup> When Bail Feels Less Like Freedom, More Like Extortion. The New York Times. 2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/31/us/bail-bonds-extortion.html>

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- <sup>10</sup> Who Pays? Fines, fees, Bail, and the Cost of Courts. The Yale Law School, 2018. [https://law.yale.edu/system/files/area/center/liman/document/liman\\_colloquium\\_book\\_04.20.18.pdf](https://law.yale.edu/system/files/area/center/liman/document/liman_colloquium_book_04.20.18.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> Incarceration and Health: A Family Medicine Perspective (Position Paper). American Academy of Family Physicians. <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/incarcerationandhealth.html>
- <sup>12</sup> 70% of People in Local Jails are not Convicted of Any Crime. Prison policy initiative. 2017. [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/pic2017\\_jail\\_detail.html](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/pic2017_jail_detail.html). Bail system is unfair to poor, reform advocates say. Tammy Grubb. The News and Observer 8/5/2018 <http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODN/NewsandObserver/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=NAO%2F2018%2F08%2F05&entity=Ar03600&sk=C385BCE1&mode=text>. A closer look at cash bail (and the alternatives) as NC Courts Commission prepares to review. Joe Killian, 2018. NC Policy Watch, October 2018. [www.ncpolicywatch.com/2018/10/08/monday-numbers-a-closer-look-at-cash-bail-and-the-alternatives-as-nc-courts-commission-prepares-to-review/](http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2018/10/08/monday-numbers-a-closer-look-at-cash-bail-and-the-alternatives-as-nc-courts-commission-prepares-to-review/)
- <sup>13</sup> Detaining the Poor: How money bail perpetuates an endless cycle of poverty and jail time. Bernadette Rabuy and Daniel Kopf, 2016. Prison Policy Initiative. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/incomejails.html>
- <sup>14</sup> Christopher T. Lowenkamp, Marie VanNostrand and Alexander Holsinger, "Investigating the Impact of Pretrial Detention on Sentencing Outcomes", Laura and John Arnold Foundation (November 2013). <https://university.pretrial.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=172dd7bf-96cf-aa8d-75d0-399b1a9b17e3&forceDialog=0>
- <sup>15</sup> Jonah B. Gelbach and Shawn D. Bushway, "Testing for Racial Discrimination in Bail Setting Using Nonparametric Estimation of a Parametric Model" (August 20, 2011). [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1990324](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1990324)
- <sup>16</sup> R. Schaffler, R. LaFountain, S. Strickland, K. Holt, & K. Genthon, "Examining the Work of State Courts: An Overview of 2015 State Court Caseloads", National Center for State Courts (2016). <http://www.courtstatistics.org/~media/Microsites/Files/CSP/Criminal/PDFs/EWSC-2016-CRIM-Page-2-Comp.ashx>
- <sup>17</sup> Bail Bond Businesses Buck for Bookings. Ciara O'Neill, 2018. FollowtheMoney.org <https://www.followthemoney.org/research/institute-reports/bail-bond-businesses-buck-for-bookings>
- <sup>18</sup> Developing A National Model For Pretrial Risk Assessment, Research Summary, Laura and John Arnold Foundation (November 2013). [https://craftmediabucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/PDFs/LJAF-research-summary\\_PSA-Court\\_4\\_1.pdf](https://craftmediabucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/PDFs/LJAF-research-summary_PSA-Court_4_1.pdf)

The following resolution has been received by the Office of the General Minister and President prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirty-third General Synod. Receipt and release of this resolution for pre-Synod consideration by delegates and other interested parties should not be considered an indication it will come before the General Synod. This resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director's Subcommittee on Disposition and its staff, before consideration by the full Board of Directors in March 2021. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the General Synod Standing Rules (see Standing Rule 11). The Board of Directors will decide in March whether this resolution meets those requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

**A RESOLUTION ON PROTECTING WORKERS AT CHURCHES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS**

**A Resolution of Witness**

**Submitted by the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ,  
and the New Jersey Association of the Central Atlantic Conference**

**SUMMARY**

This resolution invites United Church of Christ settings to discern and implement appropriate measures to protect their employees, and to be attentive to the ways that religious freedom, including the ministerial exception defense to legal claims of discrimination, gives churches and religious institutions wide latitude in decisions impacting their employees.

**BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be God's servants to our neighbors, and to proclaim good news, dwelling in the promises of forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, and taking courage in striving for justice and peace.<sup>1</sup> In response to our common calling, United Church of Christ members have supported the expansion of rights and recognition for historically marginalized communities in our society. At the national level, these efforts include advocacy for the Civil Rights Act,<sup>2</sup> for immigrant farmworkers,<sup>3</sup> for redress and reparations for Japanese-Americans interned during World War Two,<sup>4</sup> for communities fighting environmental racism,<sup>5</sup> for the Americans with Disabilities Act,<sup>6</sup> and for the Family and Medical Leave Act,<sup>7</sup> among many others.<sup>8</sup>

Freedom of religion is a cornerstone of American society, and United Church of Christ members and institutions are mindful that our voice in advocating for change is "one among many";<sup>9</sup> we communicate our witness in the spirit of offering, aware that our advocacy is empowered by our ability to live into the values we promote. Because of the separation of church and state, the United States has become a religious pluralism and the United Church of Christ rejoices in the religious diversity of our neighbors.<sup>10</sup>

The First Amendment celebrates individual conscience by guaranteeing the free exercise of religion.<sup>11</sup> In accordance with the First Amendment, the Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld expansive protections for the free exercise of religion.<sup>12</sup> Under the rubric of limiting

30 government involvement with religious organizations, the Supreme Court has also held that  
31 religious institutions have broad authority to manage their own internal affairs.<sup>13</sup>

32  
33 With such freedom comes great responsibility.<sup>14</sup> “For, dear brethren, you have been given  
34 freedom: not freedom to do wrong, but freedom to love and serve each other.”<sup>15</sup> The United  
35 Church of Christ values religious freedom, and recognizes the moral responsibility that  
36 comes with it. Seeking to create justice and peace within our own institutions, our faith calls  
37 us to great care in the exercise of our freedom of conscience.<sup>16</sup>

## 38 39 **HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

40  
41 The treatment of employees is a critical area of church autonomy. In 2012 the Supreme  
42 Court, following lower courts, recognized the ministerial exception which exempts religious  
43 institutions from legal liability for many if not all discrimination claims filed by ministers.<sup>17</sup>  
44 This exception applies to the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age  
45 Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act, and state-law  
46 equivalents. These laws generally protect employees from being fired, from being paid less  
47 for the same work,<sup>18</sup> and from being sexually harassed or harassed on the basis of any other  
48 protected category. These laws also protect those who advocate against discrimination in the  
49 workplace from retaliation.

50  
51 When a church or other religious institution faces a discrimination lawsuit by a ministerial  
52 employee, it may invoke the ministerial exception to dismiss the lawsuit.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the  
53 ministerial exception is primarily a legal defense.<sup>20</sup> Using the ministerial exception as a  
54 defense is also an ethical decision with moral implications, especially for a church tradition  
55 that fights for inclusion and civil rights. Churches and religious institutions can promote  
56 diversity by specifically seeking candidates of particular underrepresented backgrounds for  
57 ministerial positions, because if these practices are challenged as discriminatory, they may  
58 use the ministerial exception in their defense.

59  
60 In 2020, the Supreme Court expanded the scope of the ministerial exception to include  
61 employees with duties that can be considered religious and in furtherance of the institution’s  
62 religious mission, even if they do not exercise positions of leadership or have special training  
63 or credentials: the exception now applies to “any employee who leads a religious  
64 organization, conducts worship services or important religious ceremonies or rituals, or  
65 serves as a messenger or teacher of its faith.”<sup>21</sup> The religious institution’s own definitions of  
66 its religious purposes will be accorded considerable deference by the courts.<sup>22</sup> This applies to  
67 all religious and religious-affiliated institutions including nursing homes, hospitals,<sup>23</sup> and  
68 schools.<sup>24</sup> For example, secular teachers at a religious-affiliated school can be considered  
69 ministers if they open the day with required prayers, attend school-wide worship, and  
70 occasionally prepare students for other religious activities;<sup>25</sup> and therefore they do not have  
71 legal protections against discrimination.<sup>26</sup>

72  
73 This dissenting opinion of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, joined by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg,  
74 highlights the vast ethical implications behind this freedom and responsibility that has been  
75 given to religious institutions:  
76

77 Two employers fired their employees allegedly because one had breast cancer and the  
 78 other was elderly. Purporting to rely on this Court’s decision in *Hosanna-Tabor*  
 79 *Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. EEOC*, the majority shields those  
 80 employers from disability and age-discrimination claims. In the Court’s view, because  
 81 the employees taught short religion modules at Catholic elementary schools, they were  
 82 “ministers” of the Catholic faith and thus could be fired for any reason, whether  
 83 religious or nonreligious, benign or bigoted, without legal recourse. The Court reaches  
 84 this result even though the teachers taught primarily secular subjects, lacked substantial  
 85 religious titles and training, and were not even required to be Catholic.<sup>27</sup>

86  
 87 At churches and religious institutions throughout the country, more than one hundred  
 88 thousand people who have been hired into non-clergy positions with the understanding that  
 89 anti-discrimination legal protections would apply, may learn that they are “ministers” for  
 90 purposes of the ministerial exception, and therefore legally subject to discrimination.<sup>28</sup>

91  
 92 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

93  
 94 **WHEREAS** the exercise of religious freedom that churches have in charting their own  
 95 employment practices calls for great intentionality in protecting workers;

96  
 97 **WHEREAS** speaking in the context of religious employment, St. Paul wrote in his first letter  
 98 to the Corinthians: “we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than  
 99 put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ;”<sup>29</sup>

100  
 101 **WHEREAS** religious freedom allows churches wide latitude in managing policies and staff,  
 102 yet the ethical commitments to love our neighbors and serve the most vulnerable, require us  
 103 to inhabit the world of the marginalized and understand how the law speaks differently to  
 104 those who have the law enacted upon them;<sup>30</sup>

105  
 106 **WHEREAS** given that the law of religious freedom opens a broad gateway for religious  
 107 institutions to choose their own policies, churches must strive to follow the high standard of  
 108 righteousness that is our calling;<sup>31</sup>

109  
 110 **WHEREAS** protecting employees can come in many forms, and churches and religious  
 111 organizations can identify the forms of discrimination that their faith prohibits and, in  
 112 consultation with experts, develop anti-discrimination policies that flow from that process;

113  
 114 **WHEREAS** churches can develop personnel policies that meaningfully protect workers and  
 115 implement alternative resolution processes;

116  
 117 **WHEREAS** having the legal power to utilize the ministerial exception to preclude the  
 118 discrimination claims of those who work in our institutions does not always mean that  
 119 churches must use it, for example, churches may be able to clarify before hiring or before a  
 120 lawsuit arises which positions do not advance core religious functions and are thus not  
 121 ministerial for purposes of the ministerial exception;

123 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the  
 124 United Church of Christ encourages each Conference, each Association, each Local Church,  
 125 each Affiliated and Associated Ministry, and each affiliated and historically affiliated  
 126 organization, to study the privileges afforded to churches and religious institutions through  
 127 the First Amendment including the ministerial exception;

128  
 129 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod invites all settings of  
 130 the church and affiliated ministries to discern the extent and nature of ethical protections for  
 131 their employees consistent with their understanding of Christian faith and teaching and to  
 132 implement those measures that they deem appropriate;

133  
 134 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the national setting of the United Church of Christ send  
 135 the text of this Resolution to Local Churches, Associations and Conferences.

136  
 137 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in  
 138 accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

139  
 140 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate  
 141 ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the  
 142 implementing body.

143

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<sup>1</sup> United Church of Christ Statement of Faith

<sup>2</sup> “Civil Rights and Demonstrative Religion”, Christianity Today, April 10, 1964,  
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1964/april-10/civil-rights-and-demonstrative-religion.html>

<sup>3</sup> General Synod Resolution in Support of United Farm Workers (General Synod 12 1979);  
<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-07-25-mn-5859-story.html>.

<sup>4</sup> General Synod Resolution on Redress/Reparation to Japanese Americans (GS13 1981)  
[https://www.ucc.org/about-us\\_hidden-histories\\_sho-chiku-bai](https://www.ucc.org/about-us_hidden-histories_sho-chiku-bai).

<sup>5</sup> General Synod Resolution on Environmental Racism in East St. Louis, Illinois (GS19 1993),  
[https://www.ucc.org/a\\_movement\\_is\\_born\\_environmental\\_justice\\_and\\_the\\_ucc](https://www.ucc.org/a_movement_is_born_environmental_justice_and_the_ucc).

<sup>6</sup> “A Man Who Helped Us Think Differently about Disabilities”  
[https://www.ucc.org/ucc\\_roots\\_september\\_2016](https://www.ucc.org/ucc_roots_september_2016).

<sup>7</sup> The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993: Hearing on S. 5 Before the Subcommittee on Children, Family,  
 Drugs & Alcoholism of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 103 Cong. 44 (1993) (list of  
 endorsing organizations)  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=QUYJ0xfG2IMC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=QUYJ0xfG2IMC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>8</sup> The U.C.C. Office of Communications, “OC Inc.”, fought for the rights of individuals to have a say in Federal  
 Communications Commission proceedings. The legal right of all citizens to participate in FCC proceedings was  
 the result of advocacy by Rev. Parker and OC Inc.

<sup>9</sup> “*E pluribus unum*”

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.ucc.org/ecumenical\\_interfaith-relations](https://www.ucc.org/ecumenical_interfaith-relations).

<sup>11</sup> David A.J. Richards, Toleration and the Constitution (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>12</sup> *Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao Do Vegetal*, 546 U.S. 418 (2006); *Holt v. Hobbes* 574 U.S.  
 352 (2015); see also *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, 573 U.S. 682 (2014).

<sup>13</sup> *Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York v. Cuomo*, No. 20A87, 592 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (Nov. 25, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

<sup>15</sup> Gal. 5:13.

<sup>16</sup> General Synod Resolution Affirming and Supporting the Authorized Ministries of Under-represented Clergy  
 in Local Congregations: A Call for Greater Representation and Economic Justice (GS31 2017); General Synod  
 Resolution Calling the United Church of Christ to be an Anti-racist Church (GS24 2003); see also Auburn



Seminary: “All Faiths and None: A Guide to Protecting Religious Liberty for Everyone” (Oct. 2020) (available at: <https://lawrightsreligion.law.columbia.edu/content/all-faiths-and-none>).

<sup>17</sup> *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, 565 U.S. 171 (2012). The lower courts are divided on whether hostile work environment claims are also excluded through the ministerial exception, and the Supreme Court has not yet addressed this question.

<sup>18</sup> Deuteronomy 24:15: “You shall pay them their wages daily, before sunset...”; Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 (which amended the Civil Rights Act to strengthen enforcement of the equal pay for equal work provision).

<sup>19</sup> The church’s basis for discriminating does not need to have any relationship with its religious beliefs. The discrimination can be motivated purely by sexism, racism, ageism or homophobia – or it can be motivated by a desire to save money, by discharging sick employees.

<sup>20</sup> There are also some courts that decline to hear discrimination claims on the basis that the court does not have jurisdiction.

<sup>21</sup> *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru*, 140 S.Ct. 2049 (2020), p. 2064. This wording echoes Justice Samuel Alito’s concurring opinion in *Hosanna-Tabor*, the 2012 case (p. 199).

<sup>22</sup> *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, p. 2066; as stated by Justice Sonia Sotomayor in her dissenting opinion: “In foreclosing the teachers’ claims, the Court...collapses [the determination of who is a minister] into a single consideration: whether a church thinks its employees play an important religious role. Because that simplistic approach has no basis in law and strips thousands of schoolteachers of their legal protections, I respectfully dissent.” (p. 2072).

<sup>23</sup> The ministerial exception might even apply for institutions that used to have a religious affiliation that has since been severed (*Penn v. New York Methodist Hospital*, 884 F.3d 416 (2d Cir. 2018)).

<sup>24</sup> Justice Sotomayor’s dissent cautioned the new definition may encompass all “coaches, camp counselors, nurses, social-service workers, in-house lawyers, and media-relations personnel” in churches and other religious institutions. P. 2082.

<sup>25</sup> *Our Lady of Guadalupe* p. 2066.

<sup>26</sup> In *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, the Supreme Court held there is no legal recourse for Catholic school teachers fired on account of their age or because of having cancer (or any other legally protected category), so long as their employers show that the teachers had religious responsibilities and that these responsibilities were important to the religious mission of the school. A “friend-of-the-court” brief in support of the teachers, arguing that the ministerial exception should not apply to them, was submitted by 70 civil rights organizations including the American Association of People with Disabilities, the American Federation of Teachers, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Human Rights Campaign, and the National Organization for Women Foundation. <https://civilrights.org/edfund/2020/03/11/70-civil-rights-groups-urge-supreme-court-to-protect-rights-of-workers-at-risk-of-discrimination/>.

<sup>27</sup> Dissent of Justice Sotomayor, p. 2071-2072.

<sup>28</sup> See Dissent of Justice Sotomayor, p. 2082.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor. 9:12.

<sup>30</sup> Miguel A. de la Torre *Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004).

<sup>31</sup> *“To whomever much is given, will much be required; and to whom much was entrusted, more will be asked.”* – Luke 12:48. *“With great power there must also come -- great responsibility.”* See also Marvel Comics, *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (1962).

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## **Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

#### **Submitted by**

**Agape Spiritual Community, Waltham, MA  
Canaan Congregational Church, Canaan, MA  
First Church Williamstown, Williamstown, MA  
Sheffield United Church of Christ, Old Parish Church, Sheffield MA  
Park Congregational United Church of Christ, Toledo, OH  
Immanuel United Church of Christ of Catonsville, MD  
The First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn, IL  
South Congregational Church, Pittsfield, MA  
Christ Church United, Lowell, MA  
First Church Cambridge, Cambridge, MA  
Keene Valley Congregational Church, Keene, NY  
First Church Pittsfield, UCC, MA  
Vergennes Congregational Church, Vergennes, VT**

#### **SUMMARY**

This Resolution calls for the United Church of Christ to be a church of “contemplatives in action”. The United Church of Christ is known historically as a denomination for its bold leadership on social justice, peace, and environmental concerns. This resolution seeks the church’s integration of action for justice alongside intentional commitment to the life of prayer. Through fostering spiritual practices that deepen us in love for God, neighbors, ourselves, and all creation, this Resolution would empower the UCC to more fully root its collective life of activism for justice in the prayerful life of contemplation. By declaring its support for this resolution, the General Synod will emphasize the necessity of experiential grounding in the love of God alongside our common witness for justice and peace, while resourcing the wider church in the diversity of spiritual disciplines.

#### **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL RATIONALE**

16 The church's great commandment from Jesus is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and  
 17 strength and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus rooted his ministry of teaching,  
 18 healing, and solidarity with the marginalized through a life of prayer, solitude, silence, and  
 19 intimate relationship with God. The three synoptic gospels tell how his ministry begins with a  
 20 transformational time of solitary testing in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-  
 21 13). Periodically Jesus can be found stealing away from the busyness of the crowds to pray  
 22 (Luke 5:16). Jesus's public witness of creating inclusive community, exemplifying self-giving  
 23 love and service, forming disciples, making peace and engaging in nonviolent resistance to the  
 24 powers-that-be is all made possible because of his prayerful "union with the Father" (John  
 25 10:30). His life of integrated contemplation and action touches all aspects of Christian life  
 26 individually and communally.

27  
 28 Jesus said that we are the light of the world (Matthew 5: 14), sent to bear lasting spiritual fruit  
 29 (John 15:16), and that "the things that I do, you also will do, and even greater than these." (John  
 30 14: 12). Just as Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1: 15) made visible in  
 31 the world, the church's vocation is to incarnate Christ, in order that God's love, justice, and  
 32 peace be made manifest. Thus, as Franciscan teacher Richard Rohr writes, "like Christ, you are  
 33 an incarnation of matter and spirit operating as one. This... is how all of us continue the mystery  
 34 of incarnation in space and time."<sup>1</sup>

35  
 36 The United Church of Christ, as a denomination, has been a courageous leader in actions for  
 37 social justice, peacemaking, environmental stewardship, and solidarity with those most  
 38 marginalized. At the same time, the UCC has not historically emphasized to the greatest extent  
 39 possible the fostering of spiritual, contemplative practices to love God and ourselves, and to see  
 40 God in all things, all people, and creation.

41  
 42 The UCC affirms that "God is still speaking." To hear God's still-speaking voice, the church  
 43 must follow the contemplative exemplars of our Christian tradition in ceasing from endless  
 44 activity and stilling our individual and collective bodies so that we are willing and ready to  
 45 listen. As Thomas Merton wrote, "God is present and . . . alive and awake in the fullness and  
 46 depth and breadth of all the silences of the world."<sup>2</sup> Jesus and the Scriptures teach that the Divine  
 47 is heard first in the stillness of the soul. Jesus said that the kin-dom of God is within us (Luke  
 48 17:21). The Psalmist implored us to remember to "be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:  
 49 10) Jesus retreated from the crowds, listening to the "still, small voice" (1 Kings 19: 12) to  
 50 escape the temptations of ego, power, and acclaim. The single-minded vision of Jesus, grounded  
 51 in prayer and divine relationship, modeled putting God first above earthly concerns and riches  
 52 (Matthew 6: 25-34).

53  
 54 A contemplative consciousness changes us to become more aware of ourselves, the  
 55 interdependent nature of all life, and the presence of the Divine in our lives and world. Such a  
 56 grounding in the love of God allows us to "[receive and be] present to the moment and to the  
 57 now . . . without your ego deciding whether you like it or not. Reality does not need you to like it  
 58 in order to be reality."<sup>3</sup> This consciousness is what the broader Christian tradition affirms as  
 59 "mysticism." "Mysticism... refers to a universal and unifying view of the world. One of the  
 60 quintessential insights of the mystics through the centuries is that the entire cosmos is ...  
 61 embedded in webs of relationship that are interconnected, interdependent, and constantly being

62 co-created and reinvented.”<sup>4</sup> It is just this type of unifying perspective that is needed in our time  
63 of crisis and division.

64  
65 Contemplation without action fuels narcissism, and action without contemplation is a recipe for  
66 bitterness and spiritual depletion. As Rev. Traci Blackmon said at her talk at the Thirty Second  
67 UCC General Synod. "The reason we're having so much trouble with the work out there is  
68 because we haven't done the work in here... Jesus is not just asking us to be courageous. Jesus  
69 has a bigger ask. Jesus is asking us to be transformed... and be changed from the inside out."<sup>5</sup>  
70 Christian mystics throughout the ages report that contemplative encounters with God are restful  
71 and rejuvenating to our souls or inspiring us towards creative action. “Those caught up in the  
72 intimacy with God explain that the experience expands their knowledge, awakens palpable and  
73 actionable love, and is either a profoundly restorative resting in divine presence or a "fire shut up  
74 in the bones" that inspires action. The action can be restorative of personal relationships or  
75 proactive for the needs of the community.”<sup>6</sup>

76  
77 Contemplation is a holistic commitment to spiritual awakening. “Contemplation,” Joan Chittister  
78 says,... “brings us to see the big picture. It brings us to see beyond our own boundaries, beyond  
79 our own denominations, beyond even our own doctrines and dogmas and institutional self-  
80 interest, straight into the face of a mothering God from whose womb has come all the life that  
81 is... We become connected to everything, to everyone.... Zeal for justice consumes us. Then,  
82 action and prayer are one.”<sup>7</sup>

### 83 84 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

85  
86 **WHEREAS** the 21st century has seen a resurgence of Christian spiritual and contemplative  
87 practices, yet many churchgoers have not heard of or engaged in these practices in church;

88  
89 **WHEREAS** people who leave church often find a scarcity of spiritual food there to nourish their  
90 souls, and are frequently unfamiliar with practices that cultivate self-care and love of God; and  
91 have turned to other spiritual and secular communities and organizations to fulfill this need;

92  
93 **WHEREAS** there is a wide diversity of spiritual practices in the Christian tradition, and we aim  
94 to honor the diversity of each of these practices as they serve to build up the body of Christ;

95  
96 **WHEREAS** with the crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, and the financial  
97 fallout causing greater need than ever for work for social justice, the church is called to model  
98 and share expressions of activism modeled in the contemplative spirit of Jesus;

99  
100 **WHEREAS** Jesus said “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in  
101 them bear much fruit” (John 15: 5), and Christian contemplative practices hold the goal of  
102 abiding more deeply in Christ;

103  
104 **WHEREAS** if we look at the “Tree of Contemplative Practices”<sup>8</sup> as but one example of this  
105 diversity, we see that the myriad of spiritual disciplines far surpasses what the Church universal  
106 and the UCC in particular have offered to church members. As Barbara Holmes says,

107 "Contemplative practices can be silent or evocative, still or embodied in dance or shout. Always,  
108 contemplation requires attentiveness to the Spirit of God."<sup>9</sup>;

109

110 **WHEREAS** being “transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Romans 12: 2) begins with  
111 honest self-examination, reflective introspection and dialogue, and intentions and commitments  
112 to change, through God’s grace;

113

114 **WHEREAS** the UCC is rooted in the “Three Great Loves” of neighbor, children, and creation,  
115 and authentic contemplative practices expand our capacity and commitment to love and justice,  
116 so that we might be clearer channels for God’s love to shine through and might more fully “come  
117 to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of  
118 the full stature of Christ.” (Ephesians 4: 13)

119

120 **WHEREAS** the UCC is often identified as a progressive church for activists, whereas what  
121 makes the church unique is its spiritual grounding in the love and wholeness of God,

122

123 **WHEREAS** the church’s foundation of divine love grounds and informs communal life in the  
124 body of Christ, as well as provides the reason for why the church expresses its witness in active  
125 forms of justice, peace, and service in the world;

126

127 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church  
128 of Christ encourages local churches to become churches of “contemplatives in action,”  
129 remembering the essential disciplines modeled by Jesus of silent prayer, meditation, and  
130 practices to commune with the Divine Mother-Father, and letting contemplative depth inspire  
131 our forming and sustaining of life-giving, spiritually-generative community and our church’s  
132 action in the world through works of charity, social justice, peacemaking, earth-stewardship, and  
133 making disciples on the path of God’s unconditional, agape love;

134

135 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church  
136 of Christ encourages training of future clergy and lay leaders in the ways of contemplation,  
137 spiritual practice, and Christian mysticism, providing experiential grounding for the sustained  
138 life of faith; living into our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ and as children of God to see the  
139 Divine in everyone and everything in all creation, beginning with ourselves and expanding our  
140 love into ever-widening circles;

141

142 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod invites local churches to  
143 commit to being a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” church- a church that prioritizes  
144 contemplation, spending time communing with God in various forms of prayer; and a church of  
145 activism that seeks to make God’s love and justice real in the world; thus a church of both  
146 contemplation and action—a church of “contemplatives in action” where our love of God  
147 through contemplative practices informs how we live and act in the world, and where our interior  
148 and exterior spiritual practices complement, ground, and inspire one another.

149

150 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod calls upon all settings of  
151 the United Church of Christ to invest in curriculum and resources to support Conferences,  
152 Associations, local churches, clergy, lay leaders, General Synod and seminaries in practicing and

153 teaching a foundational life of spiritual practices, as modeled in the life of Jesus. In this  
 154 resourcing, all settings are called to remain committed to the UCC's diversity as a Multicultural,  
 155 Multiracial, and Anti-racist church, thus honoring the diversity of spiritual and contemplative  
 156 practices and teachers from many and varied cultures through whom the spirit works in different  
 157 ways;

158  
 159 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod encourages all settings of  
 160 the UCC seek to live out the foundation of contemplative practices in the ministry of God's work  
 161 in the world—making inclusive, participatory spiritual practices and teachings that cultivate  
 162 being, introspection, reflection and growth an integral part of National gatherings, including  
 163 committee work, children's, youth and adult ministries, ecumenical partnerships, and General  
 164 Synod;

165  
 166 **FUNDING:** Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with  
 167 the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

168  
 169 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries  
 170 of other entities with the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Rohr, *The Universal Christ: How A Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For, And Believe*, (Convergent: 2019), 99.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Merton, "The Sacred Land," in *A Thomas Merton Reader*, ed. Thomas P. McDonnell, (Image: 1996), 458.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Rohr, *A Spring Within Us: A Book of Daily Meditations* (CAC Publishing: 2016), 275.

<sup>4</sup> Beverly Lanzetta, *The Monk Within: Embracing a Sacred Way of Life* (Blue Sapphire: 2018), 49.

<sup>5</sup> Traci Blackmon, UCC General Synod 32 Community Worship June 23 2019, found at 1 hour 47 minutes and 1 hour 51 minutes at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqgPgjIBT6U>

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Holmes: *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2017), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Joan Chittister, *Prophets Then, Prophets Now*, disc 1 (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2006), MP3 download., from RR Daily Meditation July 5, 2019)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree>

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Holmes: *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2017), 5.

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## **A RESOLUTION TO BAN THE PRACTICE OF CONVERSION THERAPY**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

#### **Submitted by the Open and Affirming Coalition and the Mental Health Network**

#### **1 SUMMARY**

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This Resolution urges congregations and other settings in the United Church of Christ to advocate for a ban on “conversion” or “reparative” therapy—a medical practice legal in all 50 states that attempts to change or “repair” the sexual orientation or gender identity of LGBTQ+<sup>1</sup> persons in the belief that their orientation or identity is a mental illness. The Resolution further urges congregations and other settings to strengthen their efforts to reach their LGBTQ+ neighbors, especially youth, with the Good News that their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression are gifts from God.

#### **11 BACKGROUND**

12

13

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16

Conversion therapy has existed in one form or another since the late 19th century.<sup>2</sup> While the practice has caused demonstrable harm<sup>3</sup> to the mental and physical health of LGBTQ+ persons, conversion therapy continues to be legal throughout the United States.<sup>4</sup>

17

18

19

20

21

According to practitioners of conversion therapy, the sexual orientation or gender identity of LGBTQ+ persons is a disease, defect or developmental disorder. This claim has been repudiated by every professional association in the field of health care, many of which have advocated for a ban on the discredited practice.<sup>5</sup>

22

23

24

25

According to a report published the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law (June 2019), 698,000 adults in the United States have experienced conversion therapy, and 20,000 LGBTQ+ youth will be subjected to conversion therapy if state legislatures refuse to act.<sup>6</sup>

26

27

28

29

Also according to the Williams Institute (June 15, 2020), LGBTQ+ people who were subjected to conversion therapy have shown a greater risk of suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide than LGBTQ+ people who had never experienced this therapy, including

- 92% greater odds of lifetime suicidal ideation,

- 30 • 88% greater odds of attempting suicide,
- 31 • 75% greater odds of planning to attempt suicide.<sup>7</sup>

32

33 The consensus of the mental health care profession was summed up in the “Position Statement  
34 on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression” released by  
35 the American Psychoanalytic Association in 2012. They found:

36

37 “Psychoanalytic technique does not encompass purposeful attempts to “convert,” “repair,”  
38 change or shift an individual’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such  
39 directed efforts are against fundamental principles of psychoanalytic treatment and often result in  
40 substantial psychological pain by reinforcing damaging internalized attitudes.”<sup>8</sup>

41

## 42 **BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

43

44 The biblical tradition affirms that all human beings are made “in the image of God.” (Gen. 1:27)  
45 The church’s witness affirms that “in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith” and  
46 that “all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 26-28) We are therefore to “love our neighbor as  
47 ourselves” (Lev. 19:9-18 and Matt. 22:40) and act with empathy towards all others (cf. the  
48 “Golden Rule” in Lev. 19:18 and Matt. 7:12).

49

50 The capacity to love and seek love is God’s gift to all human beings. Love is a reflection God’s  
51 inner life as Trinity—the three divine persons whose love cannot not be contained but is poured  
52 out in God’s acts of creation and redemption. Human love in its many expressions is therefore  
53 God’s design for humanity, and is offered to all without regard to sexual orientation or gender  
54 identity. The psychological and spiritual damage inflicted by “conversion therapy” on LGBTQ+  
55 people, especially youth, violates the image of God that is embodied in every human being,  
56 harms our neighbor, and denies to others the grace we claim for ourselves.

57

## 58 **HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

59

60 For nearly five decades, General Synods of the United Church of Christ have repeatedly affirmed  
61 the dignity, humanity and rights of LGBTQ+ persons. This Resolution follows the trajectory set  
62 by a number of resolutions and pronouncements adopted by previous General Synods since  
63 1975, including “Resolution Deploring the Violation of Civil Rights of Gay and Bisexual  
64 Persons” (11th General Synod 1977), “Resolution Calling on United Church of Christ  
65 Congregations to Declare Themselves Open and Affirming” (15th General Synod 1985),  
66 “Resolution Deploring Violence against Lesbian and Gay People” (17th General Synod 1989),  
67 “Prevention of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Suicide” (22nd General Synod  
68 1999), “Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People within the United  
69 Church of Christ and Supporting their Civil and Human Rights” (24th General Synod 2003) and  
70 “Equal Marriage Rights for All” (25th General Synod 2005). Common to all of these actions is  
71 the belief, grounded in our faith, that LGBTQ+ persons share in the image of the Creator, and  
72 like all other persons deserve protection from violence, deprivation of rights, and any other  
73 violation of their dignity as human beings.

74

75



76 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

77

78 **WHEREAS** the medical practice known as “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” regards  
79 LGBTQ+<sup>1</sup> persons as abnormal or defective, and attempts to change or “repair” non-conforming  
80 sexual orientation or gender identity through widely-discredited therapeutic practices,<sup>9</sup> and

81

82 **WHEREAS** conversion therapy for adults is legal in 50 states and all U.S. territories, while  
83 conversion therapy for youth and children is still legal in 30 states,<sup>10</sup> and

84

85 **WHEREAS** many studies have shown that attempts to change or “repair” sexual orientation or  
86 gender identity are associated with compromised mental health including, among other harms,  
87 lifelong suffering as the result of internalized shame, increased risk of suicide, and difficulty in  
88 forming stable and lasting relationships,<sup>11</sup> and

89

90 **WHEREAS** a survey of at-risk LGBTQ+ youth published by the Trevor Project in 2020 showed  
91 that 42 percent who were subjected to conversion therapy had attempted suicide, while the  
92 attempted suicide rate of transgender and non-binary youth during or after conversion therapy  
93 was even higher at 57 percent,<sup>12</sup> and

94

95 **WHEREAS** virtually every professional association in the health care industry has declared that  
96 conversion therapy is ineffective, unethical or harmful, including the American Medical  
97 Association, the American College of Physicians, the American Psychiatric Association, the  
98 American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Psychological Association, the American  
99 Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American  
100 Counseling Association, and the National Association of Social Workers,<sup>13</sup> and

101

102 **WHEREAS** in December 2020 UCC denominational leaders joined Archbishop Desmond Tutu  
103 and more than 400 other Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu faith leaders as  
104 signatories of the statement “Declaring the Sanctity of life and the Dignity of All” which called  
105 “for all attempts to change, suppress or erase a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or  
106 gender expression—commonly known as ‘conversion therapy’—to end, and for these harmful  
107 practices to be banned.”<sup>14</sup>

108

109 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church  
110 of Christ, affirming the dignity and worth of all people, deplores the practice of “conversion  
111 therapy” or “reparative therapy” that denies LGBTQ+<sup>1</sup> youth and adults the opportunity to  
112 experience the blessings of love and human integrity, and

113

114 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod urges parents, authorized  
115 ministers and care-givers in the United Church of Christ to protect those in their care from any  
116 practice or program that purports to “cure” their sexual orientation or gender identity, and

117

118 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod urges congregations and  
119 all other settings of the church to advocate for state and federal laws protecting adults, youth and  
120 children from “conversion therapy” by banning the practice, and

121

122 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod urges congregations and  
123 other settings to strengthen their efforts to reach their LGBTQ+ neighbors, especially youth, with  
124 the Good News that their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression are gifts from God.

125  
126 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance  
127 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

128  
129 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries  
130 or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

---

<sup>1</sup> "LGBTQ+" is a common abbreviation for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer." The plus sign indicates that no acronym can fully express the rich diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities in the human family. Another common abbreviation is "LGBTQIA+," which includes the intersex and asexual communities.

<sup>2</sup> The History Channel. Gay Conversion Therapy's Disturbing 19th-Century Origins. [www.history.com/news/gay-conversion-therapy-origins-19th-century](http://www.history.com/news/gay-conversion-therapy-origins-19th-century)

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Campaign. The Lies and Dangers of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity. [www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy](http://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy)

<sup>4</sup> Movement Advancement Project. Conversion "Therapy" Laws. [www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion\\_therapy](http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion_therapy)

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Campaign. See original citation.

<sup>6</sup> Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Conversion Therapy and LGBT Youth. <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/conversion-therapy-and-lgbt-youth>

<sup>7</sup> Williams Institute. See citation above.

<sup>8</sup> American Psychoanalytic Association. Position Statement on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression. <http://apsa.org/content/2012-position-statement-attempts-change-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-or-gender>

<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Campaign. See original citation.

<sup>10</sup> Movement Advancement Project. See original citation.

<sup>11</sup> American Psychoanalytic Association. See original citation.

<sup>12</sup> The Trevor Project. About Conversion Therapy. [www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/trevor-advocacy/50-bills-50-states/about-conversion-therapy](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/trevor-advocacy/50-bills-50-states/about-conversion-therapy)

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Campaign. See original citation.

<sup>14</sup> The Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ lives. Declaring the Sanctity of Life and Dignity of All. <http://globalinterfaith.lgbt/declaration>

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## **A COMMITMENT TO GENDER SAFETY & EQUITY IN MINISTRY SETTINGS**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

Submitted by the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ

#### **SUMMARY**

1  
2  
3 This resolution calls us to renewed accountability for the theology of equality that we have long  
4 professed as the United Church of Christ. In a climate of increased violence and hatred, where  
5 women in public leadership are targeted with intimidation by the highest office of government,  
6 women and non-binary clergy are uniquely vulnerable as they stand in the pulpit. Clergy have  
7 begun to share their #metoo #churchtoo stories of discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse in  
8 the congregations where they serve. This resolution confesses our complicity with systems of  
9 sexist oppression, and asks the Church to explore ways to promote gender safety. It asks the  
10 Church to empower women and non-binary persons, both lay and ordained, to raise issues  
11 regarding sexism and discrimination, free of censure or threat of retaliation. This resolution  
12 expresses a commitment to the physical and sexual autonomy of women and non-binary persons.  
13 It urges congregations to address inequities (in pay, benefits, senior leadership, etc.) for clergy  
14 and lay women and non-binary persons who serve within the Church. Finally, it resolves that the  
15 Church do this work with intentionality and awareness of the added threats and realities of  
16 violence experienced by women and non-binary persons holding multiple marginalized  
17 identities.

18  
19

#### **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

20  
21  
22 Our scriptural tradition has a complicated relationship with women. While women are counted in  
23 the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17), their agency is mitigated by sexual exploitation  
24 (Tamar, Dinah, Bathsheba and many nameless others), objectification for barter or conquest  
25 (Ruth, Leah and Rachel), or as a buffer to protect men from violence (daughters of Lot).  
26 Patriarchal and misogynistic interpretations of scripture have only served to perpetuate and  
27 amplify the patriarchal culture and bias of those who wrote scripture.

28  
29 Although women hold important roles in the stories of our faith, by the account of Carol Meyers,  
30 of the 1,426 names which appear in the Hebrew Testament, 1,315 are specified or presumed to

31 be male.<sup>i</sup> Of those women who are named, few of their stories appear in the lectionary or  
32 traditional Sunday School curriculum. Yet those women received an inheritance from YHWH  
33 (Hagar), saved the life of Moses (Shiphrah and Puah, Miriam), protected the people of God  
34 during war (Yael, Rahab), served as prophets (Deborah, Huldah), changed the *torah* so that  
35 women could inherit property (Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milkah and Noah), and advocated for  
36 their murdered children (Rizpah).

37

38 In the Christian Testament, Jesus shared a table with women and gave them a place, defending  
39 them against the judgment and accusations of others. Women were the first witnesses of the  
40 resurrection (Mary Magdalene, Mary, mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and others). Women  
41 were funders and foundational members of the earliest Christian congregations. Our scriptures  
42 tell us that women served as leaders and teachers (Priscilla), disciples (Tabitha), apostles (Junia),  
43 deacons (Phoebe) and patrons (Lydia) in the early church. Although their stories have been  
44 largely ignored and are only now being reclaimed, these texts provide an important affirmation  
45 of the importance of women's leadership.

46

47 Biblically and theologically, the United Church of Christ affirms that women can and should  
48 serve and lead within the Church. The denomination has worked to adopt inclusive language,  
49 affirming that humankind, in all of our gender expressions, is created in the image of God.<sup>ii</sup> The  
50 United Church of Christ is proud to celebrate that a Congregationalist church ordained the first  
51 woman minister in the United States, Antoinette Brown, in 1853. (It is worth noting, however,  
52 that Brown left that church after only two years to become Unitarian.) Previous General Synods  
53 have affirmed the value and dignity of women, and called on us to recognize and address gender  
54 inequality and discrimination where they exist within the Church itself.<sup>iii</sup> As women began  
55 entering ordained ministry in great numbers, from the 1970s onward, the work of Marie Fortune  
56 and what is now the FaithTrust Institute helped committees on ministry develop processes to  
57 address ministerial sexual misconduct, as well as examine the ways women clergy were being  
58 harassed.<sup>iv</sup> Only recently has the United Church of Christ reached a point where more than 50%  
59 of active clergy are women.

60

61 In a climate of increased violence and hatred, where women in public leadership are targeted  
62 with intimidation by the highest office of government, women and non-binary clergy are  
63 uniquely vulnerable as they stand in the pulpit. Clergy across the United Church of Christ have  
64 begun to share their #metoo #churchtoo stories of discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse in  
65 the congregations where they serve.<sup>v</sup> Stories of women's leadership in scripture may seem to be  
66 the exception rather than the rule, and sexist assumptions and attitudes remain.

67

68 We are called to stand in solidarity with women and non-binary persons who, for the sake of  
69 their calling, risk their bodies and their lives to be faithful to the gospel. We are called to hold all  
70 clergy, regardless of age, gender, or active status, to the code of ethics that requires us to treat  
71 one another as equal partners in the ministry of Jesus Christ. This resolution calls us to  
72 accountability for the theology of equality that we profess as the United Church of Christ.

73

74 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

75

76 WHEREAS: The General Synod of the United Church of Christ has taken a firm, unyielding  
77 stance for the human rights and safety of women, refuses to condone any form of violence  
78 against vulnerable people,<sup>vi</sup> and strongly encourages clergy and laity to support survivors of  
79 sexual violence;<sup>vii</sup> and  
80

81 WHEREAS: The majority of women, both cisgender and transgender, whether they identify as  
82 women or as non-binary, are objectified and subjected to the violence and degradation of sexual  
83 assault and unwanted sexual advance;<sup>viii</sup> and  
84

85 WHEREAS: Sexual harassment and gender discrimination, including attacking, undermining  
86 and dismissing women and non-binary persons' leadership, is a form of violence; and occurs  
87 within a national context of escalating violence against women in positions of public leadership;  
88 and  
89

90 WHEREAS: Women and non-binary persons risk further discrimination, violence, loss of  
91 employment, ostracism or death in daring to say no or confront the harasser, and penalty of being  
92 silenced or not believed when they dare to report; and  
93

94 WHEREAS: Gender expression continues to be a minefield for women and non-binary persons,  
95 who are pressured to exude the amount of femininity that makes others comfortable – “too  
96 feminine” is seen as helpless or intentionally seductive, but “too masculine” is considered  
97 confrontational and disrespectful - and women are still judged on their appearance, rather than on  
98 their skills, ideas, achievements, or other non sexual/non-gendered attributes; and  
99

100 WHEREAS: Women are still subject to economic violence, primarily in that they are paid less  
101 than men for the same or similar work, and this lower pay in turn reduces their pension,  
102 retirement benefits and Social Security payments; they are overcharged for “women’s products”  
103 and penalized for carrying out the responsibilities of home and family; and  
104

105 WHEREAS: These experiences of bias, discrimination and violence occur in ministry settings,  
106 and are experienced by clergy and lay women and non-binary persons holding positions of  
107 leadership within the Church; and  
108

109 WHEREAS: Such discrimination is founded in misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and racism,  
110 which are antithetical to the way of Jesus; and  
111

112 WHEREAS: Our society is in the midst of a cultural transformation, with the #metoo movement  
113 empowering survivors to break the silence and share their stories of rape, abuse, and sexual  
114 harassment, and women and non-binary persons have begun sharing their #churchtoo stories of  
115 how this occurs within the Church; and  
116

117 WHEREAS: Clergy, chaplains and faith leaders are called upon to provide pastoral care to those  
118 navigating gender discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, some of which occurs within  
119 our ministry settings; and  
120

121 WHEREAS: The United Church of Christ Ministerial Code of Ethics requires ministers to “not  
122 use my position, power, or authority to exploit any person”;<sup>i</sup>  
123

124 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty Third General Synod of the United Church of  
125 Christ, confesses its complicity with systems of sexist oppression that inhibit and limit  
126 leadership, and asks all settings of the United Church of Christ, including (but not limited to)  
127 Committees on Ministry, Local Church Ministries and Justice & Witness Ministries Teams, to  
128 explore ways to promote gender safety, to empower women and non-binary persons, both lay  
129 and ordained, to raise issues regarding sexism and discrimination, reinforcing the covenants and  
130 standards of behavior which bind us together as conference, clergy, and lay leaders and  
131 members; and  
132

133 BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Thirty Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
134 affirms the physical and sexual autonomy of women and non-binary persons: the right not to  
135 have any other person invade her/their personal space without permission; the right not to be  
136 touched, or abused, either emotionally or physically, in any way by another person; the right to  
137 express gender in the ways she/they choose; the right to communicate autonomously, without  
138 reproach or censure based in sexism and misogyny; the right to expect that any such action will  
139 in no way be held against her/them for any reason in the workplace, including ministry settings,  
140 or in any social situation; and  
141

142 BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Thirty Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
143 encourages all settings of the UCC to commit to gender equity in staff compensation, and urges  
144 all settings to address inequities (in pay, benefits, senior leadership, etc.) for clergy and lay  
145 women and non-binary persons who serve within the Church; and  
146

147 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Thirty Third General Synod asserts that this work must  
148 simultaneously address the threats and realities of violence that racism, transphobia,  
149 heterosexism, classism, and ableism impose on the daily life and leadership of women and non-  
150 binary persons in the Church.  
151

## 152 **FUNDING**

153

154 The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the  
155 overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.  
156

## 157 **IMPLEMENTATION**

158

159 The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within  
160 the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.  
161

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<sup>i</sup> Meyers, Carol, “Everyday Life,” in Carol A. Newsom and Sharon Ringe, *Women’s Bible Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992).

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.ucc.org/worship/inclusive-language/general-synod-inclusive.html>

<sup>iii</sup> “Resisting Actions Seeking to Undermine the Status of Women in Society,” General Synod Resolution in 2013, <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs29-11.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/training>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/churchtoo>

<sup>vi</sup> “Violence in Relation to Women,” General Synod Pronouncement in 1983, <http://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/THE-PRONOUNCEMENT-ON-VIOLENCE-IN-RELATION-TO-WOMEN-GS-14.pdf>; “Resisting Actions Seeking to Undermine the Status of Women in Society,” General Synod Resolution in 2013, <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs29-11.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> “Supporting Survivors Of Rape and Sexual Violence Through An Ongoing Church-Wide Observance of Break The Silence Sunday,” General Synod Prudential Resolution in 2019,

<https://www.uccfiles.com/synod/2019/resolutions/9-Break-the-Silence-Sunday.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>

<sup>ix</sup> United Church of Christ Ordained Minister’s Code, [https://www.ucc.org/ministers\\_ordained-ministers-code](https://www.ucc.org/ministers_ordained-ministers-code)

The following resolution has been received by the Office of the General Minister and President prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirty-third General Synod.

Receipt and release of this resolution for pre-Synod consideration by delegates and other interested parties should not be considered an indication it will come before the General Synod. This resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director's Subcommittee on Disposition and its staff, before consideration by the full Board of Directors in March 2021. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the General Synod Standing Rules (see Standing Rule 11). The Board of Directors will decide in March whether this resolution meets those requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

## **A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING TO END 128 YEARS OF WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

Submitted by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches of the  
Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ

#### **SUMMARY**

This Resolution calls the United Church to actualize its historical commitment to justice and peace with the friendly Christian Hawaiian Kingdom nation whose constitutions are founded upon Christian values.

#### **BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

In the beginning humans were created in the image of God and were called "good". Thus, all humans were created equal. The call to justice by the prophets is God's commandment to treat everyone justly by acting righteously.

God's moral law, enshrined in the Ten Commandments, is eternal and unchanging. Our bible is built on it. These laws are God's stated will, the way he wants his kingdom and his universe to operate. In order, for justice to prevail, human laws must mirror God's law. Justice is to prescribe the right way, to do things in an appropriate way. Moses demonstrated this concept when he said, "You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's." (Deuteronomy 1:17). Justice has to do with equity in judgment without regard for a person's status. It is an equitable application of God's moral law to all people without partiality. (Numbers 15:16). When we do not operate according to biblical standards, we have abandoned God's moral law, so every man does what is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25).

Jesus came to proclaim liberty and freedom to announce God's justice being satisfied through what he called, "the favorable year of the Lord", Old Testament Year of Jubilee. It was when God set society back in order. According to Leviticus 25:8-9, Israel could not have Jubilee until the people first observed the Day of Atonement. They could not have true justice on the human level until they got right with God on the vertical level. Social justice will not be complete until



29 the people in a society, even the Church, get right with God. It is bringing the presence, precepts,  
30 and power of God to bear on society, pulling society back in an upright position.

31

### 32 **HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

33

34 Responding to the wish of Henry Opukahaia<sup>i,ii</sup> but burdened with the false ideology of White  
35 Supremacy, missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission  
36 (ABCFM) were sent to Hawaii arriving in 1820 (201 years ago).

37

38 Rev. Rufus Anderson<sup>viii</sup> attempted to correct the evils of White Supremacy and advocated for a  
39 Hawaiian-led and Hawaiian-run church during his visit to the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1863.

40

41 In 1893, descendants of missionaries led the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

42

43 President Paul Sherry traveled to Hawaii and on January 17, 1993, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the  
44 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government, apologized to the Hawaiian people at  
45 Kaunakapili Church<sup>xii</sup>. This apology was cited in Public Law 103-150 signed by President  
46 William Clinton on November 23, 1993<sup>xiii</sup>.

47

48 Given the present COVID-19 pandemic and the institutional racism seen recently, the “God is  
49 Still Speaking” church, the United Church of Christ, is challenged to actualize its struggle to  
50 fulfill the principle of justice and reconciliation within the United Church of Christ. 128 years of  
51 war crimes continues to target and violate Christian Hawaiian citizens in Hawaiian Kingdom  
52 territory and abroad which amount to a colossal scale of humanitarian and human rights  
53 violations daily.

54

### 55 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

56

57 **WHEREAS**, Henry Opukahaia is known as the missionary from the Hawaiian Kingdom that  
58 encouraged American missionaries to arrive in Hawaii<sup>i, ii</sup>, and

59

60 **WHEREAS**, the first Christian nation in the Pacific, the Hawaiian Kingdom constitution in 1840  
61 began with a quote from the Bible “God hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on  
62 the face of the earth in unity and blessedness.”<sup>iii, iv, v</sup>, and

63

64 **WHEREAS**, on December 19, 1842, United States President John Tyler agreed to recognize the  
65 independence of the Hawaiian Kingdom<sup>vi</sup>; and

66

67 **WHEREAS**, the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom through treaties with friendly nations around the  
68 world, successfully modernized Hawaiian self-governance at the time to prosper in peace, trade  
69 and friendship through treaties with friendly nations around the world for fifty years<sup>vii</sup>; and

70

71 **WHEREAS**, Rev. Rufus Anderson, the author of the three-self method (self-supporting, self-  
72 governing and self-propagating) and the long-term secretary of the ABCFM (American Board of  
73 Commissioners for Foreign Mission) arrived in Hawai`i in 1863 to tell the missionaries to create

74 self-reliant, self-governing churches and "to devolve upon it (the Hawaiian churches) the  
75 responsibilities of self-government in ecclesiastical matters."<sup>viii</sup>, and

76  
77 **WHEREAS**, Rev. Anderson's advice was not followed and the government of the Hawaiian  
78 Kingdom was overthrown on January 17, 1893<sup>ix</sup>, and

79  
80 **WHEREAS**, on December 18, 1893, President Grover Cleveland's executive agreement to  
81 restore the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom was signed by Liliuokalani and received by U.S.  
82 ambassador Albert Willis<sup>x</sup>, and

83  
84 **WHEREAS**, in 1991, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ directed  
85 President Paul Sherry to issue an apology on the 100th anniversary of the overthrow of the  
86 Hawaiian monarchy for the complicity of the church in the overthrow<sup>xi, xii</sup>, and

87  
88 **WHEREAS**, in 1993 President Clinton, with senators and representatives from Hawaii, signed  
89 Public law 103-150 apologizing for the United States role in the illegal occupation<sup>xiii</sup>, and

90  
91 **WHEREAS** the National Lawyers Guild recommended to the Governor of the State of Hawaii  
92 "to begin to comply with international humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation  
93 of the Hawaiian Islands."<sup>xiv</sup>

94  
95 **WHEREAS**, the United Church of Christ has historically stressed the importance of Justice as a  
96 key faith component for the Church, and

97  
98 **WHEREAS**, the correction of injustices depends upon correct history based upon factual  
99 matters, and history is often based upon who writes the history and factual information available,  
100 and

101  
102 **WHEREAS**, the information included in this resolution will be available at  
103 <https://ahccchurch.weebly.com/> about the founding of the Hawaiian Kingdom to correct false  
104 history about the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom, and

105  
106 **WHEREAS**, various General Synods of the United Church of Christ have taken proactive stands  
107 on Justice; and

108  
109 **WHEREAS** justice depends upon action, not just stating what is true and just and right (pono in  
110 Hawaiian),

111  
112 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church  
113 of Christ strongly urges the Mayors for the counties of the State of Hawaii "to begin to comply  
114 with international humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation of the Hawaiian  
115 Islands."

116  
117 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
118 Christ strongly urges the Governor for the State of Hawaii "to begin to comply with international  
119 humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Islands."

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ strongly urges the U.S. Congress “to begin to comply with international humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Islands.”

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ strongly urges the U.S. President “to begin to comply with international humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Islands.”

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ strongly urges all United Nation member States and non-member States to cooperate to ensure the United States complies with international humanitarian law and bring an end to the unlawful occupation of the Hawaiian Islands.

**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.

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<sup>i</sup> Papa Makua Wendell Davis 5th generation lineal descendant of Henry Opukahaia

<sup>ii</sup> Spencer, Aida Bescon. “How Gods Spirit Worked a Revolution in Hawaii in 1819-1825.” *Pricilla Papers* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 5-11. [https://www.eksendia.com/tm/school\\_journal\\_online.aspx](https://www.eksendia.com/tm/school_journal_online.aspx).

<sup>iii</sup> 1840 Constitution of the Hawaiian Kingdom,” Wikipedia, July 14, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1840\\_Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Hawaiian\\_Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1840_Constitution_of_the_Hawaiian_Kingdom).

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.hawaii-nation.org/constitution-1840.html>

<sup>v</sup> <http://hooilina.org/cgi-bin/journal?e=d-0journal--00-0-0-004-Document---0-1--1en-50---20-frameset-search-issue--001-0110escapewin&a=p&p=frameset&d=HASH0166acfd8ec6df2fa38fd161.5.2.3>

<sup>vi</sup> International Treaties,” Hawaiian Kingdom Government, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/treaties.shtml>.

<sup>vii</sup> International Treaties,” Hawaiian Kingdom Government, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/treaties.shtml>.

<sup>viii</sup> Rufus Anderson, *A Heathen Nation Evangelized: A History of the Sandwich Islands Mission* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872), 284

<sup>ix</sup> Sally Merry, *Colonizing Hawaii* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 35.

<sup>x</sup> The Hawaiian Kingdom Blog,” National Lawyers Guild Calls Upon State of Hawai’i to Comply with International Law of Occupation, November 12, 2020, <https://hawaiiankingdom.org/blog/national-lawyers-guild-calls-upon-state-of-hawaii-to-comply-with-international-law-of-occupation/>

<sup>xi</sup> Charles McCollough, “Why Our Church Apologized to Hawaii,” Why our church apologized To Hawai’i, December 13, 2020, [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy\\_url/11261/mccollough.pdf?1418437063](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/11261/mccollough.pdf?1418437063)

<sup>xii</sup> [http://rescarta.ucc.org/jsp/RcWebImageViewer.jsp?doc\\_id=8abee2f6-352d-48f9-958b-49a311bc4489/ucoc0000/UD000001/00000019](http://rescarta.ucc.org/jsp/RcWebImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=8abee2f6-352d-48f9-958b-49a311bc4489/ucoc0000/UD000001/00000019)

<sup>xiii</sup> 103d Congress Joint Resolution, “Public Law 103-150,” Statute-107-Pg 1510, November 23, 1993, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg1510.pdf>

<sup>xiv</sup> Sai, Dr. Keanu. “National Lawyers Guild Calls Upon State of Hawai‘i to Comply with International Law of Occupation.” *Hawaiian Kingdom Blog*, November 12, 2020. <https://hawaiiankingdom.org/blog/national-lawyers-guild-calls-upon-state-of-hawaii-to-comply-with-international-law-of-occupation/>

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## **DECLARATION FOR A JUST PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

Submitted by

Shalom United Church of Christ, New Haven, Connecticut

With the concurrence of:

First Church, United Church of Christ, Guilford, Connecticut  
First Congregational Church, UCC, Old Lyme, Connecticut  
Meriden Congregational Church, UCC, Meriden, New Hampshire  
Union Congregational Church, UCC, Angels Camp, California  
Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Carlsbad, California

#### 1 **SUMMARY**

2

3 The resolution calls on the General Synod to adopt a *Declaration on the Requirements for a Just*  
4 *Peace Between Palestine and Israel* articulating the principles that must be in place and honored  
5 in any future just and peaceful relationship between Israel and Palestine. The *Declaration*  
6 affirms that justice, understood both as adherence to the message of the Hebrew prophets and the  
7 life and teachings of Jesus, as well as to applicable international laws, is the fundamental and  
8 requisite principle which must guide a peaceful future for Israel and Palestine. It rejects a future  
9 imposed by military power, illegal occupation and dispossession, or unilateral annexation of land  
10 and the use of an imperialistic theology as justification. *The Declaration* pronounces Israel's  
11 continued oppression of the Palestinian people a sin, incompatible with the Gospel. It further  
12 calls upon Local Churches, Conferences, and Associations to adopt this *Declaration* as their  
13 plumbline to guide their support for the aspirations of our partners in the region and their  
14 advocacy with the United States' government for policies consistent with these principles.

15

16 The resolution draws on over fifty years of General Synod actions, statements by UCC officers,  
17 and actions by Global Ministries and its historic component bodies. It is informed by the witness  
18 of ecumenical partners, including the National Council of Churches, USA, and the World  
19 Council of Churches, and it responds to the witness of our Palestinian Christian partners, and in

20 particular *Kairos Palestine: A Word of Faith, Hope, and Love From the Heart of Palestinian*  
 21 *Suffering* (2009) and *Kairos Palestine: Cry for Hope, A Call for Decisive Action* (2020).

22  
 23 The *Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ* reminds us that “God calls the church to  
 24 accept the cost and joy of discipleship. . . and resist the powers of evil.” The *Declaration* calls on  
 25 the United Church of Christ to engage in a costly act of solidarity and accompaniment with the  
 26 Palestinian people and to resist the oppressive dispossession, occupation, and economic and  
 27 military oppression of Palestine.

28

## 29 **BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING**

30

31 In *Kairos Palestine: A Word of Faith, Hope, and Love From the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*  
 32 (2009), Palestinian Christians assert that

33

34 our land has a universal mission. In this universality, the meaning of the promises, of the  
 35 land, of the election, of the people of God open up to include all of humanity, starting  
 36 from all the peoples of this land. In light of the teachings of the Holy Bible, the promise  
 37 of the land has never been a political programme, but rather the prelude to complete  
 38 universal salvation. It was the initiation of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on  
 39 earth” (*Kairos Palestine* par. 2.3).

40

41 The promise of God regarding land and blessing in Genesis was ultimately not about possession  
 42 of land, but about the role of the people of Israel as a blessing that “all the families of the earth  
 43 shall be blessed” (Genesis 12.3).

44

45 United Church of Christ biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann writes that “the Torah and the  
 46 world it evokes are beyond a possessed land, and this notion links to ‘a true community of all’  
 47 that transcends any tribalism” (*Chosen? Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian*  
 48 *Conflict*,” 2015, p. 37). He goes on to quote Jewish philosopher Martin Buber: “This entire  
 49 history of the road from Ur of the Chaldees to Sinai is a consequence of choices and partings,  
 50 events of history – tribal history and national history. But above them stands revelation [which]  
 51 gives them their meaning, points out to them their goal. For the end of all these partings is a true  
 52 community of all men.”

53

54 In 1987 the General Synod affirmed its recognition that God's covenant with the Jewish people  
 55 has not been rescinded or abrogated by God, but remains in full force, inasmuch as “the gifts and  
 56 the call of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:29) – a clear rejection of Christian supersessionist  
 57 theology. Along with this, however, the General Synod in 2003 rejected the theological claims  
 58 of Christian Zionism which seek to privilege Jews in the modern State of Israel over others who  
 59 share the land, and instead, while recognizing “the diversity of biblical perspectives on the  
 60 question of a Jewish homeland,” also “affirms that all such perspectives should be grounded in  
 61 the message of justice and peace taught by Jesus and the biblical prophets.” That message is  
 62 summarized in the passage from Isaiah that Jesus quotes in Nazareth to inaugurate his ministry:  
 63 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
 64 He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the  
 65 oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor” (Isaiah 61.1-2; Luke 4.18-19).

66 Isaiah reminds us that the mere accumulation of property at the expense of justice and  
67 righteousness offers only a barren future: “Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to  
68 field, until there is room for no one but you and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land”  
69 (Isaiah 5.8).

70  
71 The United Church of Christ, through its mission agencies, has maintained a close relationship  
72 with the Palestinian Christian community, as well as the wider Arab population of Palestine. For  
73 decades it has supported churches and church-related agencies, as well as human rights,  
74 humanitarian, and social justice organizations in Palestine and Israel to the end that God’s  
75 blessings might be shared by all in the land and that the violence and oppression that have  
76 afflicted the region for over seventy years may end.

77  
78 Consistent with these understandings, the General Synod has repeatedly called for the  
79 implementation of a vision of the future for Israel and Palestine based on justice and security for  
80 all and the principle of self-determination. In 1973 the General Synod affirmed that “peace and  
81 security can be attained only through a just and stable political settlement that takes into account  
82 the legitimate aspirations of all the peoples in the area and, particularly, the right to existence of  
83 the State of Israel and the rights of the Palestinian Arabs.” In 1997 the General Synod called for  
84 a negotiated agreement on the status of Jerusalem “that respects the human and political rights of  
85 both Palestinians and Israelis, as well as the rights of the three religious communities.”

86  
87 In 2005 the General Synod called upon United Church of Christ settings and members “to use  
88 economic leverage, including, but not limited to: advocating the reallocation of US foreign aid so  
89 that the militarization of the Middle East is constrained; making positive contributions to groups  
90 and partners committed to the non-violent resolution of the conflict; challenging the practices of  
91 corporations that gain from the continuation of the conflict; and divesting from those companies  
92 that refuse to change their practices of gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the  
93 Occupation.” Further, the same Synod in a resolution on Israel’s construction of the separation  
94 barrier, called upon the Israeli government “to cease the project to construct the barrier, tear  
95 down the segments that have already been constructed, and make reparations to those who have  
96 lost homes, fields, property, and/or lives and health due to the barrier and its effects.”

97  
98 In 2015 the General Synod called on United Church of Christ settings “to divest any direct or  
99 substantive indirect holdings in companies profiting from or complicit in human rights violations  
100 arising from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel” and to “boycott  
101 goods identified as produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements located in the  
102 occupied Palestinian territories.” In 2017 the General Synod called on Israel to honor the United  
103 Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, calling attention to the practice of military  
104 detention for Palestinian children, denial of access to legal assistance, and the use of physical and  
105 emotional abuse. Most recently, in 2019 the General Synod called for advocacy for Palestinian  
106 refugees specifically as stipulated in UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948), and for  
107 continued US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

108  
109 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

110

111 **WHEREAS** for over seventy years Palestinian people have faced dispossession of their land,  
112 displacement from their homes, a harsh military occupation, severe restrictions on travel, the  
113 military detention of their children, home demolitions – over 120,000 to date and the constant  
114 threat of more – and vast inequities in access to natural, economic, and medical resources when  
115 compared to that enjoyed by Israeli citizens living in illegal West Bank settlements, and also on a  
116 daily basis face severe restrictions on access to their olive groves, farms, and holy sites<sup>1</sup>; and  
117

118 **WHEREAS** there are more than 5.6 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United  
119 Nations Relief and Works Administration representing a global displacement of Palestinian  
120 people dating back to 1948 whose future status remains unresolved<sup>2</sup>; and  
121

122 **WHEREAS** the Israeli government has maintained an illegal military occupation of Palestinian  
123 territories since 1967 that includes the establishment of illegal Jewish-only settlements  
124 throughout the West Bank and more recently has enacted formal discrimination against its Arab  
125 citizens through the passage of the Nation State Law in 2018<sup>3</sup>; and  
126

127 **WHEREAS** provocative actions under the Trump administration, including moving the U.S.  
128 embassy to Jerusalem, the suspension of humanitarian aid to the United Nations Relief and  
129 Works Administration, and support for Israel’s proposed illegal annexation of land in the  
130 occupied West Bank have further injured the Palestinian community and imposed serious road  
131 blocks to peace<sup>4</sup>; and  
132

133 **WHEREAS** the Trump Administration’s Department of Education has issued a rule labeling any  
134 criticism of the State of Israel as an antisemitic act in order to suppress advocacy for Palestinian  
135 rights on university campuses, and has joined many state governments in further suppressing  
136 freedom of speech in support of Palestinian civil society’s call for boycotts, divestment, and  
137 sanctions<sup>5</sup>; and  
138

139 **WHEREAS** actions by Israel, with tacit and overt support from the United States government,  
140 have established conditions comparable to those in force under Jim Crow in the United States  
141 south between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement, with segregation laws that  
142 enshrined systematic domination and oppression by whites over blacks. Israel’s acts of  
143 domination and oppression include, but are not limited to adoption of the Nation State Law in  
144 2018, the building of the separation barrier, implementation of a restrictive pass system for  
145 Palestinians, the creation of Israeli-only highways through the West Bank, and imposed military  
146 detention of Palestinian children accused of crimes; and  
147

148 **WHEREAS** the General Synod of the United Church of Christ and its officers have for over  
149 fifty years advocated for a negotiated process leading to a just peace between Israel and Palestine  
150 marked by adherence to international law and international standards of human rights and  
151 honoring the principle of self-determination and the rights of Palestinian refugees<sup>6</sup>; and  
152

153 **WHEREAS**, reminiscent of historical examples such as the United States, Canada, Australia,  
154 and Southern Africa, Israel exhibits a current-day form of settler colonialism<sup>7</sup>, actively engaged  
155 in the removal and erasure of the indigenous Palestinian population, through a matrix of control  
156 that includes: the imposition of a harsh military occupation; the de facto annexation of



157 Palestinian lands and threats of further annexation; the expansion of illegal Jewish only  
 158 settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank; the contraction of Palestinian-controlled land;  
 159 and the restriction of travel for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

160

161 **WHEREAS** *Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action* issued by Palestinian Christian leaders  
 162 and theologians in July, 2020<sup>8</sup>, states that “the very being of the church, the integrity of the  
 163 Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake. We declare that support for the  
 164 oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is  
 165 a sin. We assert that Christian support for Zionism as a theology and an ideology that legitimize  
 166 the right of one people to deny the human rights of another is incompatible with the Christian  
 167 faith and a grave misuse of the Bible”;

168

169 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church  
 170 of Christ adopts the following *Declaration*:

171

172 1. *We affirm* that the continued oppression of the Palestinian people remains, after more  
 173 than five decades of oppression of the Palestinian people, a matter of theological urgency  
 174 and represents a sin in violation of the message of the biblical prophets and the Gospel,  
 175 and that all efforts to defend or legitimate the oppression of the Palestinian people,  
 176 whether passive or active, through silence, word, or deed by the Christian community,  
 177 represent a fundamental denial of the Gospel.

178

179 *Therefore, we reject* the notion that Israel’s occupation of Palestine is a purely political  
 180 problem outside the concern of the church or that the oppression of the Palestinian people  
 181 is an inevitable consequence of global or regional geopolitical interests.

182

183 2. *We affirm* that the biblical narrative beginning with creation and extending through the  
 184 calling of the Israelites, the corrective admonitions of the prophets, the incarnation and  
 185 ministry of Jesus and the witness of the apostles to the “ends of the earth” . . . speaks of  
 186 God's blessing extending to “all the families of the earth.” (Genesis 12.3)

187

188 *Therefore, we reject* any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism,  
 189 Supercessionism, antisemitism or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or exclude any one  
 190 nation, race, culture, or religion within God’s universal economy of grace.

191

192 3. *We affirm* that all people living in Palestine and Israel are created in the image of God  
 193 and that this bestows ultimate dignity and sacredness to all;

194

195 *Therefore, we reject* any laws and legal procedures which are used by one race or religion  
 196 to enshrine one people in a privileged legal position at the expense of another, including  
 197 Israel’s apartheid system of laws and legal procedures.

198

199 4. *We affirm* that all peoples have the right to self-determination and to their aspirations for  
 200 sovereignty and statehood in the shaping of their corporate religious, cultural, and  
 201 political life, free from manipulation or pressure from outside powers, and that a just  
 202 resolution of conflicting claims is only achieved through peaceful negotiation based on

203 international law and UN resolutions, the equal protection of civil rights, and the fair and  
 204 just sharing of land and resources.

205  
 206 *Therefore, we reject* the use of Scripture to claim a divine right to the land as the rationale  
 207 for Israel’s illegal seizure and annexation of Palestinian land as well as the imposition of  
 208 so-called peace agreements by Israel or the United States through the exercise of political  
 209 and military domination that leaves Palestinians without equal rights, full citizenship, and  
 210 the opportunity to thrive religiously, culturally, politically, and economically.

211  
 212 5. *We affirm* the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes if they so choose or  
 213 to be compensated for their loss of property, consistent with UN General Assembly  
 214 resolution 194 (1948).

215  
 216 *Therefore, we reject* the denial of this right, just as we reject efforts to manipulate  
 217 internationally-agreed upon definitions of refugees to attempt to erase this right which  
 218 extends across generations.

219  
 220 6. *We affirm* the First Amendment constitutional right to freedom of speech and assembly to  
 221 protest the actions of the State of Israel and to uphold the rights of Palestinians, including  
 222 the use of economic measures to support justice as a First Amendment right and joining  
 223 the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement by individuals,  
 224 institutions, corporations, and religious bodies that advocate peace with justice or  
 225 participate in any aspect of the use of economic measures to support justice.

226  
 227 *Therefore, we reject* the idea that any criticism of policies of the State of Israel is  
 228 inherently antisemitic, and we oppose the efforts of U.S. federal and state governments to  
 229 limit free speech on university campuses and to restrict or ban support of the international  
 230 Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement.

231  
 232 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that national setting of the United Church of Christ send the  
 233 text of this *Declaration* to Local Churches, Associations and Conferences; and

234  
 235 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that all settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged  
 236 to receive this *Declaration* as a prophetic call for renewed and continued advocacy for a just  
 237 peace in Palestine and Israel and use it as a plumbline for taking action, including:

- 238  
 239 a. Committing to hearing the voices of Palestinians regarding their situation, including the  
 240 voices of Palestinian Christians through the study of Palestine Liberation Theology,  
 241 attention to statements and appeals such as *Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth* (2009)  
 242 and a *Cry for Hope* (2020), participation in travel seminars that expose visitors to the  
 243 Palestinian community, and use of resources from Global Ministries of the United  
 244 Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
 245 b. Implementing the calls of prior General Synod resolutions, including the 2015  
 246 Resolution, “A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace  
 247 in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” and the 2017 Resolution, “A Call for the United

- 248 Church of Christ to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military  
 249 Occupation.”
- 250 c. Examining critically our use and interpretations of Scripture as well as liturgies and  
 251 hymns that equate ancient Biblical Israel with the modern state in ways that promote  
 252 settler colonialism and the dispossession of Palestinian land, rights, and cultural  
 253 expressions.
- 254 d. Offering support and encouragement to college students and faculty members as well the  
 255 human rights groups (including Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace,  
 256 American Muslims for Palestine, and many other allied groups), whose freedom to speak,  
 257 witness and advocate on university campuses is threatened in any way by state or local  
 258 governments, or by college administrators.
- 259 e. Advocating for the cessation of U.S. aid to Israel until such time that Palestinian human  
 260 rights, civil rights, and self-determination are fully realized and protected in compliance  
 261 with international law, US laws on foreign military assistance, and the principles of  
 262 human rights.
- 263 f. Supporting the full restoration of US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works  
 264 Agency which carries out critical services by and for Palestinian refugees, and  
 265 encouraging continued support for UCC partners which serve Palestinian refugees.
- 266 g. Demanding that the plight of Palestinian refugees be addressed by Israel and the  
 267 international community based on United Nations Resolution 194 guaranteeing that  
 268 “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should  
 269 be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be  
 270 paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property  
 271 which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the  
 272 Governments or authorities responsible.”

## 273 274 **FUNDING**

275  
276 The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the  
 277 overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

## 278 279 **IMPLEMENTATION**

280  
281 The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within  
 282 the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

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<sup>1</sup> Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions: <https://icahd.org/>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East: <https://www.unrwa.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/7/31/17623978/israel-jewish-nation-state-law-bill-explained-apartheid-netanyahu-democracy>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.globalministries.org/ecumenical\\_statement\\_on\\_current\\_u\\_s\\_policy\\_and\\_israel\\_palestine](https://www.globalministries.org/ecumenical_statement_on_current_u_s_policy_and_israel_palestine)  
[https://www.globalministries.org/ucc\\_disciples\\_leaders\\_issue\\_joint\\_statement\\_in\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_peace\\_and\\_prosperity\\_proposal](https://www.globalministries.org/ucc_disciples_leaders_issue_joint_statement_in_response_to_the_peace_and_prosperity_proposal)

[https://www.globalministries.org/not\\_peace\\_but\\_apartheid\\_b\\_tselem\\_s\\_brief\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_trump\\_plan](https://www.globalministries.org/not_peace_but_apartheid_b_tselem_s_brief_response_to_the_trump_plan)  
[https://www.globalministries.org/ucc\\_disciples\\_leaders\\_issue\\_statement\\_on\\_israeli\\_settlements](https://www.globalministries.org/ucc_disciples_leaders_issue_statement_on_israeli_settlements)

<sup>5</sup> <https://forward.com/fast-forward/410044/trump-education-dept-adopts-controversial-new-definition-of-anti-semitism/> and <https://palestinelegal.org/news/2018/9/11/kenneth-marcus-adopts-controversial-antisemitism-definition-at-doe-with-no-public-notice-reopens-dismissed-rutgers-case-from-2014?rq=anti-semitism%20department%20of%20education>

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.globalministries.org/mee\\_resolutions](https://www.globalministries.org/mee_resolutions)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wrmea.org/israel/palestine/how-settler-colonialism-can-help-us-understand-israel-and-the-us.html> and [https://www.globalministries.org/ameu\\_s\\_the\\_link\\_the\\_decoding\\_of\\_palestine\\_towards\\_a\\_one\\_state\\_solution\\_by\\_jeff\\_halper](https://www.globalministries.org/ameu_s_the_link_the_decoding_of_palestine_towards_a_one_state_solution_by_jeff_halper)

<sup>8</sup> Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice: <https://www.cryforhope.org/>

The following resolution has been received by the Office of the General Minister and President prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirty-third General Synod.

Receipt and release of this resolution for pre-Synod consideration by delegates and other interested parties should not be considered an indication it will come before the General Synod. This resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director's Subcommittee on Disposition and its staff, before consideration by the full Board of Directors in March 2021. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the General Synod Standing Rules (see Standing Rule 11).

The Board of Directors will decide in March whether this resolution meets those requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

## **A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE AND RESPOND TO RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

Submitted by The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM), UCC, and the Council on Racial and Ethnic Ministries (COREM), UCC

#### **SUMMARY**

This Resolution calls the United Church of Christ to declare and respond to racism as a public health crisis.

#### **BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

As followers of Christ, we are called to be co-builders of the City of God, who dismantle all preventable suffering and oppression, are present to the pain that remains, and release the life-force of the resurrection in our collective story and action.

As such, God calls us to repair our world to one of health equity, where everyone has the opportunity—free from barriers—for a life of health and wellbeing. As expressed in Isaiah:

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth!...no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress. No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or old people who do not live out their days...at last they will live in the houses they build, and eat the fruit of the vineyard they plant.”<sup>1</sup>

Health equity is holy, in how it is an expression of liberation and a path towards shared abundant life together. As a movement towards wholeness, achieving health equity is the work of the Spirit and reflective of the healing ministry of Christ.

Moreover, its response does not isolate an understanding of care to the compassion of the Good Samaritan, but rather addresses *why* the road to Jericho was so dangerous to begin with.<sup>2</sup> Most poignantly, the public health concept of health equity names racism as a longstanding and present danger on that road, which has led to *avoidable* health disparities for People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color. Caused by racist policies and power,

29 People of Color experience poorer health outcomes and lower life expectancy at disproportionate  
30 rates.

31

32 And while God calls each individual person to work for an equitable society<sup>3</sup>, scripture also  
33 articulates the charge to change systems and those who influence and condone them:

34 Woe to you who make unjust policies and draft oppressive legislation, who deprive  
35 the powerless of justice and rob poor people—my people—their rights, who prey  
36 upon the widowed and rob orphans.”<sup>4</sup>

37

38 Thus, we are called not only to tend to the travelers in front of us who are “beaten, stripped  
39 naked, and left half-dead,”<sup>5</sup> but to transform the road to Jericho itself.

40

41 Such transformational work is shared, communal, and inherently interdependent. It also requires  
42 answers that reflect the reality of diverse needs—and not standards of sameness that do not  
43 acknowledge how different, and additional, resources are necessary to achieve equity. This  
44 vision lies at the heart of our tradition, as the Book of Acts illustrates:

45 The community of believers was one mind and one heart. None of them claimed  
46 anything as their own; rather, everything was held in common...nor was anyone  
47 needy among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them and  
48 give money to the apostles. It was then distributed to any members who might be in  
49 need.<sup>6</sup>

50

51 The time is far past due for this vision to remain only a glimmer of what is possible. Further, this  
52 delay is not merely an intellectual or theological exercise for People of Color or others impacted  
53 by health disparities. It speaks to lived reality and to the cry of generations wailing, “our bones  
54 are dry, our hope is gone, and we are doomed.”<sup>7</sup>

55

56 While systemic racism seeks to maintain the mountaintop for a select few and a valley of dry  
57 bones for the global majority, God says to us, “Prophecy to the wind; prophecy mere mortal, and  
58 say to it...breathe on these slain, that they may live.”<sup>8</sup> Such prophecy has been spoken by  
59 communities who—in spite of persistent structural failings—provide safety, security, and  
60 support for themselves and in collaboration with others. Know that we are all called to extend  
61 this great exhale of the Spirit, to restore hope and life, and to learn from the rescue breathers  
62 among us.

63

64 Finally, as Christians we follow a messiah who preached a message of interconnectedness and  
65 died by state-sanctioned violence for doing so. However, Christ shows us that violence does not  
66 have the final say, and that the way forward is through healing that is justice—through restoring  
67 right relationships with humanity and all creation. So, let us recommit ourselves to the call of the  
68 beloved community, where barriers to wellbeing are broken down and systems are reimagined to  
69 make it so.

70

## 71 **HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

72

73 Since its inception, the United Church of Christ has been committed to social justice and has  
74 dedicated efforts towards racial justice and health justice, specifically. It has advocated for health

75 care as a human right that is inclusive, accessible, and affordable for everyone and has called for  
 76 a commitment to be an antiracist church by examining both historic and contemporary forms of  
 77 racism. This is evidenced by numerous ministries of the UCC on the national, congregational,  
 78 and affiliated organizational levels, and by multiple General Synod resolutions such as, [Calling](#)  
 79 [the United Church of Christ to be an Anti-racist Church](#),<sup>9</sup> [An Urgent Call for Advocacy in](#)  
 80 [Support of Health Care for All](#),<sup>10</sup> [Dismantling the New Jim Crow](#),<sup>11</sup> [A Call for Study on](#)  
 81 [Reparations for Slavery](#),<sup>12</sup> [Reclaiming the Church’s Ministry of Health and Healing](#),<sup>13</sup> and  
 82 [Affirming Government’s Role to Protect the Common Good](#),<sup>14</sup> among many others.

83  
 84 This resolution proposal is consistent with the professed and lived ministry of the UCC and seeks  
 85 to be another expression of God’s still speaking voice through proclamation and tools for  
 86 change, such as education, training, and advocacy. As articulated by the COREM’s Racial and  
 87 Ethnic Health Disparities Task Force, “We are tired of a health system that does not see health  
 88 care as a basic right and a priority for all people. We are tired of a justice system that seems to  
 89 condone police brutality with no consequences for their actions. To this end, we call upon our  
 90 churches and conferences to new and increased levels of attention, commitment and action by  
 91 intentionally resolving to work on the elimination of racial and ethnic disparities as resolved and  
 92 pronounced in [General Synod 27](#).”<sup>15</sup> Addressing this injustice is imperative and its immediacy  
 93 cannot be overstated.

94  
 95

#### 96 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

97  
 98

98 **WHEREAS** “racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and  
 99 normalizes racial inequities,” in the words of Ibram X. Kendi.<sup>16</sup>

100

101 **WHEREAS** without exception and across generations, racial inequities persist in every system  
 102 of society—as evidenced through health care access, education, criminal justice, employment,  
 103 housing, access to food and clean water, services to youth, older adults, and persons with  
 104 disabilities, organizational leadership, governmental office, voting, and immigration, among  
 105 many others—and thus a specific anti-racist lens is required for health equity and broader  
 106 systemic change.<sup>17</sup>

107

108 **WHEREAS** inequities based on race also intersect with other dimensions of identity—such as  
 109 income, sex, gender, sexuality, citizenship and incarceration status, geographic location and  
 110 housing status, ability, education, language proficiency, etc.— and thus racial justice is a  
 111 necessary method from which to respond to other intersecting oppressions impacting health and  
 112 equity overall.<sup>18</sup>

113

114 **WHEREAS** public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities and  
 115 environments in which they live, learn, work and play.<sup>19</sup>

116

117 **WHEREAS** the word *crisis*, comes from the ancient Greek word that means “turning point,” and  
 118 comes from the verb meaning “to decide”—thus connoting a call to change and action.<sup>20</sup>

119

120 **WHEREAS** framing racism as an issue of public health rallies and compels faith communities,  
121 organizations, and the government to address the crisis through systemic change, in the same  
122 way other threats to public health have been addressed, such as through policies, practices,  
123 enforcement, education, and support services.<sup>21</sup>

124  
125 **WHEREAS** for over thirty-five years, research has shown how racism undermines the physical,  
126 emotional, spiritual, and relational health and wellbeing of People of African Descent,  
127 Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color, as evidenced by *The Report of the Secretary's*  
128 *Task Force on Black and Minority Health (Heckler Report)*.<sup>22</sup>

129  
130 **WHEREAS** Healthy People 2020, the federal government's prevention agenda for building a  
131 healthier nation continues to name the achievement of health equity, the elimination of  
132 disparities, and the improvement the health of all groups as the nation's overarching goal.<sup>23</sup>

133  
134 **WHEREAS** social determinants of health—the conditions in which people are born, grow, live,  
135 work and age—have a profound impact on the health of People of African Descent, Indigenous  
136 Peoples, and other People of Color;<sup>24</sup> as the effects of trauma,<sup>25</sup> poverty,<sup>26</sup> and environmental  
137 devastation<sup>27</sup> due to structural racism cannot be overstated in this regard; as the majority of  
138 changeable contributors to healthy outcomes are found in these social determinants; as these  
139 inequities are avoidable and able to be changed through policy and the redistribution of money,  
140 power, and resources;<sup>28</sup> and as this is evident nationally and globally.

141  
142 **WHEREAS** research shows that racial discrimination and the impact of implicit bias continues  
143 to persist in medicine and remains a fundamental cause of health disparities, which can also be  
144 remedied through changes in policy and education.<sup>29</sup>

145  
146 **WHEREAS** health disparities for People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other  
147 People of Color remain at unacceptable rates and breadth—as evidenced by lower life  
148 expectancy,<sup>30</sup> higher infant and maternal mortality,<sup>31</sup> poorer treatment for pain,<sup>32</sup> cancer,<sup>33</sup>  
149 cardiovascular conditions,<sup>34</sup> mental health<sup>35</sup> and end-of-life care,<sup>36</sup> and inadequate access to and  
150 quality of health care,<sup>37</sup> among many others.

151  
152 **WHEREAS** the joint forces of racism and ableism have constructed an inaccessible society and  
153 an understanding of disability as an inherently undesirable, devalued, and diminished life  
154 experience<sup>38</sup>, which has resulted in abuse, neglect, incarceration, institutionalization, and social  
155 exclusion across generations of disabled People of Color, in particular.<sup>39</sup>

156  
157 **WHEREAS** the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the devastating reality of these  
158 racial health disparities and the social and political conditions that created them;<sup>40</sup> as structural  
159 racism has been proven to be a barrier to COVID-19 treatment and prevention;<sup>41</sup> as Black,  
160 Indigenous, and Latinx communities have a COVID-19 mortality rate of more than 2.7 times the  
161 rate of People of European Decent;<sup>42</sup> as the Navajo Nation's infection rate has been the highest  
162 in the country;<sup>43</sup> as disparities in economic stability and health care access have been linked to  
163 infection rates and death;<sup>44</sup> as Communities of Color are more likely to live in multigenerational  
164 homes;<sup>45</sup> as workers of African Descent are more likely to be in jobs deemed essential;<sup>46</sup> and as  
165 one in five state and federal prisoners had COVID-19.<sup>47</sup>



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**WHEREAS** police violence, state-sanctioned terror, and the systems that uphold and condone them are an integral part of this public health crisis; as People of African Descent are three times more likely to be killed by police (and are nearly one and a half times more likely to be unarmed in those killings) than those of European Descent;<sup>48</sup> as research shows that the presence of high use of force by police in Communities of Color is associated with an increased risk in poorer health, high blood pressure, and diabetes, among other health concerns;<sup>49</sup> as 98.3 percent of killings by police from 2013-2020 have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime;<sup>50</sup> as poor data collection by law enforcement has contributed to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women;<sup>51</sup> and as People of African Descent are overrepresented on death row and are more likely to die by state execution.<sup>52</sup>

**WHEREAS** mass incarceration and the inherently racist war on people who use drugs have targeted and ravaged Communities of Color<sup>53</sup> through every measure and expression of health;<sup>54</sup> as 60 percent of the 2.2 million Americans incarcerated are of African Descent or Latinx;<sup>55</sup> as People of African Descent are nearly six times more likely to be incarcerated for drug-related offenses than their counterparts of European Descent, despite equal substance usage rates; as 72,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2019;<sup>56</sup> as the opioid overdose crisis is fueled by socioeconomic inequities, trauma, and hopelessness, in addition to harmful prescribing practices;<sup>57</sup> and as numerous governmental laws and organizational policies refuse to adopt life-saving harm reduction strategies.

**WHEREAS** immigration status directly influences health outcomes;<sup>58</sup> as migrant detention centers have a long history of medical neglect and abuse,<sup>59</sup> including preventable deaths of children;<sup>60</sup> and as family separation has long-term damaging psychological and health consequences for children, families, and communities.<sup>61</sup>

**WHEREAS** a tool of white supremacy and capitalism is to inflame and sustain racial tension and hatred in order to prevent People of European Descent, particularly those who are low-income, and People of Color from uniting as a collective force to dismantle these oppressive systems, and is also wielded in such a way, where upholding racist beliefs becomes more important than—and at the expense of—the health of European Americans that would also be improved, if not saved, by anti-racist policies.<sup>62</sup>

**WHEREAS** the answers, strategies, and practices that have come from many People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color use public health perspectives to guide their life-saving work.

**WHEREAS** voting and protecting voting rights are essential for advancing health equity; as there exists a correlation between voting behaviors and poor health; and as voting establishes the policy makers who will make decisions on a systemic level.<sup>63</sup>

**WHEREAS** there is reason to have hope; where although the magnitude and overwhelming reality of racism can evoke a sense of powerlessness, addressing social determinants of health is a practical way to move forward together on the path to justice. The church, in all of its expressions, can be a vessel for that hope to come alive. The church can be a place of trust,

212 connection, and collaboration with the wisdom already present in communities working for  
213 transformation; as Christ modeled that the work of the Good News is shared and can start today;  
214 and as each member of the Body has their own unique role to play, gift to give, and worth to  
215 claim.

216  
217 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United  
218 Church of Christ declares racism a public health crisis.

219  
220 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
221 Christ calls upon the national setting of the United Church of Christ to enable and encourage  
222 local churches, conferences, and organizations to develop methods to:

223  
a. Raise the church's consciousness of racism as a public health crisis from theological,  
bioethical, and public health perspectives.

b. Monitor and advocate for public policies that work towards health equity by addressing  
social determinants of health and divest in those that cause harm, violence, and death.

c. Discover ways in which current ministries and mission connect with and can address  
racism as a public health crisis and explore new ways of incorporating this lens into the  
life of the church.

d. Examine, in radical honesty, past and current organizational policies and practices in  
how they contribute or create barriers to health equity and racial justice.

e. Identify current and potential relationships with members of CHHSM, COREM, other  
health and human service organizations, advocacy groups, faith and community-based  
organizations, and academic institutions to collaborate on responding to racism as a  
public health crisis.

224  
225 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
226 Christ calls upon the U. S. Congress and state legislatures to pass legislation that would address  
227 social determinants of health, such as The Anti-Racism in Public Health Act, which would create  
228 a “Center on Anti-Racism in Health” at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ,  
229 and to establish a “Law Enforcement Violence Prevention Program” at the CDC.

230  
231 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance  
232 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

233  
234 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries  
235 or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

236

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 65:17-21

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., "Beyond Vietnam -- A Time to Break Silence" (sermon, Riverside Church, New York City, April 4, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 25:31-46

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<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 10:1-2.

See also James 5:1-4: “Now an answer for the rich: weep and howl for the miseries that are coming to you...Laborers mowed your fields, and you cheated them! Listen to the wages that you kept back: they call out against you; realize that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of our God Most High.”

<sup>5</sup> Luke 10:30.

<sup>6</sup> Acts 4:32-34.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 37:11.

<sup>8</sup> Ezekiel 37:9.

<sup>9</sup> General Synod 24, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> General Synod 27, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> General Synod 30, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> General Synod 23, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> General Synod 21, 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> General Synod 27, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* (New York: One World, 2019), 13.

<sup>17</sup> "Why Lead with Race," HealthEquityGuide.org – A Human Impact Partners Project, last modified July 27, 2019, <https://healthequityguide.org/about/why-lead-with-race/>.

<sup>18</sup> We heed the wisdom of the [Combahee River Collective](#), which teaches, “If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression,” and name the inclusion of trans and gender-diverse folk into our understanding of this principle.

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<sup>21</sup> "Racism As a Public Health Crisis," Cornell Health, accessed October 30, 2020, <https://health.cornell.edu/initiatives/skorton-center/racism-public-health-crisis>.

<sup>22</sup> "30th anniversary of the Report of the Secretary’s Task Force on Black and Minority Health (Heckler Report)," US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, last modified 2015, <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/heckler30/>.

<sup>23</sup> "Healthy People 2020," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified October 31, 2018, <https://cdc.gov/dhdsp/hp2020.htm#:~:text=The%20overarching%20goals%>.

<sup>24</sup> "Social Determinants of Health," WHO | World Health Organization, accessed October 30, 2020, <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health>.

<sup>25</sup> Racial Trauma," Mental Health America, accessed October 30, 2020, <https://www.mhanational.org/racial-trauma>.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Kimmel et al., "Racial Disparities in Poverty Account for Mortality Differences in US Medicare Beneficiaries," ScienceDirect.com | Science, Health and Medical Journals, Full Text Articles and Books, last modified December 2016, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352827316000100>.

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<sup>30</sup> Timothy Cunningham et al., "Vital Signs: Racial Disparities in Age-Specific Mortality Among ...," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified April 8, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6617e1.htm>.

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The following resolution has been received by the Office of the General Minister and President prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirty-third General Synod.

Receipt and release of this resolution for pre-Synod consideration by delegates and other interested parties should not be considered an indication it will come before the General Synod. This resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director’s Subcommittee on Disposition and its staff, before consideration by the full Board of Directors in March 2021. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the General Synod Standing Rules (see Standing Rule 11). The Board of Directors will decide in March whether this resolution meets those requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

## **“Who will speak for the Trees?”<sup>1</sup> A Resolution on the Rights of Nature**

### **A Resolution of Witness**

Submitted by the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ  
“We abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”<sup>2</sup>  
Aldo Leopold

#### **SUMMARY**

1  
2  
3 The manifestations of climate change have radically escalated with increased severity, and it is  
4 more than likely we have ten years to dramatically change our relationship to nature.<sup>3</sup> This  
5 resolution on the Rights of Nature calls for a change of human relationship to nature from  
6 apartheid with nature, views nature as “object” and a “commodity” for our benefit, profit, and  
7 exploitation to recognition that we are citizens of the Earth, interconnected to the web of life.  
8 Indigenous peoples as well movements in the Southern Hemisphere have pioneered the rights of  
9 nature, connecting human and environmental rights. More recently, the environmental rights  
10 have appeared as justice movements internationally to defend Nature.<sup>4</sup> It has evolved to defend  
11 and restore damaged bio-regions and preserve biodiversity and prevent increasing rapid species  
12 extinction. In the US, the Rights of Nature has countered the legal granting of corporation the  
13 rights of a person.  
14 The UCC has long history in the defense of human and environmental rights since a group of  
15 Black women placed their bodies to block trucks with toxic PCBs being dumped in their locale.  
16 This led to UCC development of environmental racism and two historical studies.<sup>5</sup>  
17 The UCC has opportunity to address our need as a church and humanity’s need to change our  
18 relationship of relating to Nature as an “it” to a “thou.”  
19

#### **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

20  
21  
22 Our biblical traditions share the notion of the land as divine gift. Leviticus 25:23 and Psalm 24:1  
23 make clear that God owns the land. The phrase “the land of God” (*‘erets Yhwh*) in the Hebrew  
24 scriptures assumes God’s ownership. There was tension between the perspective that “the Earth  
25 is the Lord’s” (Ps. 24:1) and the appropriation of the land or the Earth as “theirs.”

26 **Genesis 1:2** “the earth was formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a  
 27 wind (*ruach*) swept over the face of the waters.” God’s Spirit is involved in, abides, and sustains  
 28 creation. As humans wound the Earth through ecocide, we are wounding the Spirit.

29 **Genesis 2:2-3** “On the seventh day, God finished the work that God completed, and God rested  
 30 on the seventh day from all work God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it,  
 31 because of it, God rested from all the work that God had done.” God delights in creation. When  
 32 we see Nature from the eyes of God, we see Nature as beloved.

33 In the Hebrew scriptures, there is a developed creation-centered spirituality, an on-going  
 34 relationship with God as Creator and Spirit who abide in the natural world, sustain the world, and  
 35 developed in actions defending divine distributive justice and recognition when sharing (in the  
 36 wilderness), there was abundance. The stories of Jesus feeding of the multitude embodies the  
 37 notion of abundance in creation when we share resources.

38 **Matthew 5:5** “Blessed are the meek (*praus*), for they will inherit the earth.” The Earth-loving  
 39 Jesus speaks of the meek. The meek understand the Earth as as a divine gift to be used with  
 40 reverence and gratitude. Embedded in this eco-beatitude is the inverse: Non-meek (*apraus*) is  
 41 construed as the violent, who will not inherit the Earth.

42 **Matthew 22:37, 39** The Earth-loving Jesus annoyingly reminds God inclusive insistence on  
 43 loving our neighbor. That inclusiveness included beyond family and tribe to include outsiders,  
 44 Samaritans and Gentiles, enemies, and our contemporary construal of Nature/Earth as  
 45 commodity to be recklessly exploited and abused by humanity. Love Nature is consistent with  
 46 the inclusiveness of Jesus’s creation-centered spirituality that would include wildlife and habitats  
 47 (Nature) as we love ourselves.

48

#### 49 **How This Resolution Differs**

50

51 Though this resolution depends upon the past history of UCC environmental resolutions and  
 52 makes explicit what these resolutions intend is human change with Nature. The 17 resolution  
 53 “The Earth is the Lord’s, Not Ours to Wreck: Imperative for New Moral Era” (2017) recognizes  
 54 the Earth belongs to Earth, that it is a divine gift to us. We are called to co-live with the Earth  
 55 with respect and nature. This resolution “Who will Speak for the Trees?” invites us to makes a  
 56 spiritual/human to change our human relationship to Nature, not as an “it” but as a “thou,” alive  
 57 with the presence of God’s Spirit and part of God’s beloved community. We are all members of  
 58 the community of the Earth; we are co-participants in Nature and are called to respond  
 59 compassionately to the cries of Nature.

60

61 The resolution recognizes an important reality for living on Earth claimed by the deceased the  
 62 eco-theologian Thomas Berry, “The universe is not a collection of objects, but a communion of  
 63 subjects.” Nature needs to be recovered as primordial “thou.” This becomes a forceful and  
 64 antidote to making Nature an object to be used without respect and reverence.

65

#### 66 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

67

68 **WHEREAS** all rights, human and the more than human lives, depend on the flourishing and  
 69 vital natural cycles of life, and healthy Earth living systems. We are all interconnected to all  
 70 living beings, and when we diminish or fail to recognize the rights of the natural world, we

71 diminish our own life. Humanity and nature are interconnected, The Rights of Nature recognizes  
 72 a reciprocal and responsible human relationship with Nature.<sup>6</sup>  
 73

74 **WHEREAS** The UCC has a long history of creation-care, starting with the recognition of  
 75 environmental racism in the 1980s, its studies on toxic pollution (1987, 2007, 2020), responsibly  
 76 and the campaign of the Three Great Loves: Neighbor, Children, and Creation (2017), programs  
 77 on Green and Creation Justice Churches, and the formation of Environmental Justice Teams. The  
 78 United Church of Christ Synod has passed resolutions that directly express concerns for  
 79 Earthcare.<sup>7</sup> .  
 80

81 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty Third General Synod of the United Church  
 82 of Christ declares that

- 83 • humans need a dramatic shift from the point of view that the Earth and all her resources  
 84 are available to our sole benefit.
- 85 • Nature is not there for enslavement, and it is wrong for people of faith to view nature as  
 86 property that we own and may abuse.
- 87 • We proclaim publicly, “The Earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it, the world, and those  
 88 who live in it (PS. 24:1).”
- 89 • The Earth is an original gift to sustain all life.  
 90

91 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
 92 Christ calls for prophetic action by listening to the cries of the Earth and by adopting this “Rights  
 93 of Nature” declaration. We boldly proclaim the following principles in the public square:

- 94 • Promote compassionate care, foster love, and co-live responsibly with the Earth  
 95 Community of Life.<sup>8</sup> Safeguard the common goods, space and shared resources of the  
 96 Earth, for humanity and biokind; uphold the rights of ecological integrity, biodiversity,  
 97 and healthy bioregions. Advocate intergenerational responsibility for the biotic  
 98 community of the Earth and gratitude of the natural world as divine gift. The  
 99 interdependence of humans and Nature is fundamental to sustainable life on Earth. Co-  
 100 living with Nature involves distributive justice, a fair sharing and responsible  
 101 participation of natural resources.
- 102 • Uphold ecological principle that the Rights of Nature supersedes harmful and destructive  
 103 property rights, for the balanced cycles of the natural world must be protected as a  
 104 common good for the present and future generations of human life and biokind. The  
 105 Rights of Nature counters corporate rights to exploit and violate Nature. Restore the  
 106 repealed EPA regulations and protections. Promote economies of life rather than  
 107 unregulated extractive economies that exploit resources. Seek financial reparations and  
 108 restoration to the habitats when corporations and/or government projects harm and  
 109 damage habitats.
- 110 • Support the Indigenous peoples, the Earth Charter, and nature rights movement to grant  
 111 legal standing as corporations have legal rights.<sup>9</sup> Require all corporate and/or  
 112 governmental land and water projects to perform environmental impact studies on  
 113 minimizing damage to habitats (waterways, lands, and atmosphere) and wildlife. Local  
 114 communities or environmental organizations have a right to represent the unheard voices  
 115 cries of Nature.



- 116 • Foster respect and gratitude for Nature as divine gift. Combat attitudes of relegating  
117 Nature as mere capital for profit nor trashed as dumping ground for toxic waste.
- 118 • Promote the rights to Nature to be free from undue human harm, the right healthy  
119 habitants, the right to species flourishing, a right to a fair share of the bio-region and its  
120 goods, and the right to fulfil their ecological potential without undue human  
121 infringements.
- 122 • Prioritize renewable energies over fossil fuels; the economies of life such as the Green  
123 New Deal have over extractive and unbridled economies that pollute and damage the  
124 Earth. Encourage organic farming and regenerative agriculture; support family farming  
125 and local farmer markets; reduce usage of pesticides and insecticides negatively  
126 impacting the soil, aquifers, and other life. Work for food justice and security for all  
127 people.
- 128 • Respect all treaties with indigenous nations, that includes their lands and kinship natural  
129 relations. Ally and support indigenous peoples in their de-colonization of Nature, protect  
130 their kinship rights and access to sacred lands.

131  
132 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
133 Christ calls on individual churches to respond to the Rights of Nature by taking the following  
134 actions:

- 135 • Participate in the Season of Creation for September Sundays.<sup>10</sup> Include Creation care  
136 during each liturgical season (Earth-seders, Tenebrae, Easter sunrise service outdoors,  
137 and Earth Day. Preach every six weeks often on Earth Justice. Celebrate outdoors or  
138 bring the outdoors into the church.
- 139 • Ritualize environmental grief: Bio-Diversity Day (May 22), Remembrance for Lost  
140 Species (November 22). Start environmental grief support groups.
- 141 • Foster love of God’s creation, organize walks in botanical gardens and wilderness, plant  
142 trees, take nature hikes, and attend UCC summer camps.
- 143 • Study and implement Kairos Document, Call to Action, a 10- year Mobilization Plan on  
144 Climate Change and Inequality.<sup>11</sup>.
- 145 • Become a Creation Justice Church and Green Hub of God’s green grace,  
146 [https://www.ucc.org/how\\_it\\_works\\_becoming\\_a\\_creation\\_justice\\_church](https://www.ucc.org/how_it_works_becoming_a_creation_justice_church)
- 147 • Subscribe to the UCC Environmental Justice newsletters and environmental newsletters;  
148 share webinars, and read and study on creation care and climate change. These are  
149 spiritual practices to equip us for creation care.
- 150 • Work for the Green New Deal (the transition to renewable energies) Advocate for the  
151 Rights of Nature and take part in climate strikes and non-violent protests.
- 152 • Organize locally, partner and build local community networks with conservationist and  
153 environmental groups. Many folks in these organization have had spiritual experiences  
154 within nature, recognize and find common ground to restore damaged environments.
- 155 • Be creative and imaginative in our defense of the Rights of Nature.

156  
157 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance  
158 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

159  
160 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries  
161 or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*, New York, Random House, 1971. At the same year when Dr. Seuss published *The Lorax* with the haunting moral question, “Who will speak for the Trees?” a young law professor Christopher Stone, who was teaching property law published the article, “Should Trees Have Standing?” He argued that there was no legal barrier to granting rights to nature since rights were granted to ships and corporations. See the original and expanded rationale of the resolution. [https://www.nhcucc.org/uploads/documents/conference-ministries/annual-meetings/Resolution%20of%20the%20Rights%20of%20Nature%20\(3\).pdf](https://www.nhcucc.org/uploads/documents/conference-ministries/annual-meetings/Resolution%20of%20the%20Rights%20of%20Nature%20(3).pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*.

<sup>3</sup> World Meteorological Organization, State of Global Climate, 2020, Provisional Report, [https://library.wmo.int/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=10444](https://library.wmo.int/doc_num.php?explnum_id=10444)

<sup>4</sup> The word “nature” is a secular term used to describe the material world, both animate and inanimate. Nature is a term for what the Abrahamic religions interpreted as “creation” because of creation’s relationship to God. The word nature is less employed in other religious cultures. “Land” is the analogous linguistic category for nature, used in indigenous spiritualities and in the Hebrew scriptures. Nature is the more inclusive term.

<sup>5</sup> James H. Cone, “Whose Earth, Is It, Anyway?,” in *Earth Habitat*, ed. by Dieter Hessel & Larry Rasmussen, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2001, loc. 350. Quoted from: Bunyan Bryant & Paul Mohal, *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards: A Time for Discourse*, Westview Press, 1992, 2. See also: “A Movement Is Born: Environmental Justice and the UCC: [http://www.ucc.org/a\\_movement\\_is\\_born\\_environmental\\_justice\\_and\\_the\\_ucc](http://www.ucc.org/a_movement_is_born_environmental_justice_and_the_ucc)

<sup>6</sup> Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1998, pp. 108-109; James A. Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological integrity and Christian Responsibility*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1991. A Bill of Biotic Rights (rights of nonhuman life) pp. 186-189; *The Stillheart Declaration on the Rights of Nature and the Economics of the Biosphere* (2013) <https://peoplesrightsplanetsrights.wordpress.com/tag/stillheart-declaration/>; John Hart, *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. (Roman Catholics), *Principles of Christian Ecological Ethics*, pp. 219-220.

<sup>7</sup> Past General Synod Resolutions: 2013, *Mountain Top Removal: Coal Mining in Appalachia; Urging Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies to Address Climate Change; On Making UCC Church Buildings More Carbon Neutral*; 2015, *Transition From Fossil Fuels to Renewable Energy*; 2017, *The Earth Is the Lord’s, Not Ours to Wreck: Imperatives for a New Moral Order*; 2019, *Let Justice Roll: Declaring Support for the Green New Deal, Affirming the Intersectionality of Climate Justice with All Justice Issues*, [https://www.ucc.org/environmental\\_resolutions\\_at\\_general\\_synodRespect](https://www.ucc.org/environmental_resolutions_at_general_synodRespect)

<sup>8</sup> Principle of the Earth Charter. <https://earthcharter.org/read-the-earth-charter/preamble/>

<sup>9</sup> Alexis Bunten, “What Do the Rights of Nature have do with Indigeneity?” *BioNeers*, <https://bioneers.org/rights-nature-indigeneity/>; Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, <https://celdf.org/>; Mari Margold, “Marching towards Change: Faith and Governance in the Movement for the Rights of Nature,” Center for Humans and Nature, [Marching Toward Change—Faith and Governance in the Movement for the Rights of Nature | Center for Humans & Nature \(humansandnature.org\)](https://www.humansandnature.org/). David R. Boyd, *The Rights of Nature: A Legal Revolution that Could Save the World*, FVW Press, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Season of Creation, <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

<sup>11</sup> UCC Kairos Document, [https://www.ucc.org/a\\_kairos\\_call\\_to\\_action](https://www.ucc.org/a_kairos_call_to_action)

The following resolution has been received by the Office of the General Minister and President prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirty-third General Synod. Receipt and release of this resolution for pre-Synod consideration by delegates and other interested parties should not be considered an indication it will come before the General Synod. This resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director’s Subcommittee on Disposition and its staff, before consideration by the full Board of Directors in March 2021. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the General Synod Standing Rules (see Standing Rule 11). The Board of Directors will decide in March whether this resolution meets those requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

**A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL  
DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT (2015-2024)<sup>1</sup>**

**A Resolution of Witness**

Submitted by the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Southwest  
Conference of the United Church of Christ

**SUMMARY**

This resolution calls on the United Church of Christ to recognize the United Nations declaration of an International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). In declaring this decade, the United Nations acknowledges that African descendant people are a group whose rights must be protected and promoted. The United Nations accounts for over 200 million people who self-identify as African descent living in the Americas.<sup>2</sup> The resolution calls on the United Church of Christ to: 1) acknowledge this Decade; 2) adopt its frameworks for addressing the issues affecting African descendant people; and 3) promote the Decade and resulting outcomes for advocating for the rights of African descendant people.

**BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

At the outset of the creation stories, God declared that all that was made was good. Included in the goodness of creation was the creation of persons in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The *Imago Dei* is present across many traditions which note that the equality of human kind rests on the theological premise that all people reflect the Divine. The sin of racism and the disenfranchisement of individuals because of their race or skin color is antithetical to the *Imago Dei*.

The unity of the church continues to be threatened by racism and all forms of discrimination. The global racial divide is a threat to the unity of the church which looks to the accord that Jesus prayed for. “That they may all be one” (John 17:21) is a reminder of the oneness that is exemplified in God’s love for all God’s people. Racism is a challenge to the church and continues to be a dehumanizing force robbing communities of rights, freedom and dignity.

The unity of the church is reflected in the rich diversity that is present in all of God’s people – race, gender, ethnicity, theology, sexuality – all are created in the image of the Divine. It is a core value of the United Church of Christ to work towards equality and to ensure that an inclusive communication of the Gospel is present and accessible for all. The Gospel is a call to

31 action on behalf of the least of these. Jesus' ministry was a message to the margins of his day  
32 "to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go  
33 free" (Luke 4:18).

34  
35 The call to the church is to bring the good news of the Gospel, and to ensure that the oppressed  
36 go free. The oppression of racial injustice must be addressed in all areas of society. The church  
37 has the opportunity and mandate to be present in addressing the challenges facing people of  
38 African descent globally.

39

#### 40 **HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

41

42 The history of racial injustices in the United States and across the Americas includes the  
43 commodification of African lives through the Transatlantic Slave Trade. While records point to  
44 the earliest enslaved people being brought into the United States in 1619, the kidnapping and  
45 enslavement of African people date back to the early 15th century and the arrival of the  
46 Portuguese on the African continent. The ensuing centuries of the Transatlantic Slave Trade  
47 brought about the removal of 12-15 million Africans from their continent to, at first, provide  
48 essential labor for the system of exploitation and expropriation of economic and other resources  
49 in the European colonization of Indigenous peoples and lands in the Americas that built  
50 European mercantile empires, and subsequently, to meet the need for uncompensated labor  
51 during the era of the Industrial Revolution in European nations and their colonies.<sup>3, 4</sup> This bounty  
52 of uncompensated labor supported a plantation economy founded in imperialism and  
53 undergirded by the demonization of Africans and African-ness.

54

55 This arrival of African people in the Americas was undergirded by stereotypes of African people.  
56 These stereotypes were present in naming Africans as inferior to Europeans. This vilification and  
57 stereotyping of African peoples were supported by Christianity and Christian doctrine.<sup>5, 6</sup> By  
58 utilizing the Bible, theology, and the Church as instruments of oppression, white supremacy and  
59 white privilege became normative in the Americas.<sup>7</sup> These instruments of racism are still present  
60 among us almost two hundred years after emancipation and over fifty years beyond the Civil  
61 Rights movement in the United States.

62

63 The United Nations stated: "In proclaiming this Decade, the international community is  
64 recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must  
65 be promoted and protected. Around 200 million people identifying themselves as being of  
66 African descent live in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world,  
67 outside of the African continent."<sup>8</sup> These 200 million people in the Americas identified by the  
68 UN are the descendants of Africans who were kidnapped from the African continent and  
69 enslaved in the Americas.

70

71 The United Church of Christ and its predecessor bodies have been strong advocates for Civil  
72 Rights for African descendant people in the United States. The General Synod has spoken on  
73 several occasions regarding racism. In 2003, the Twenty-Fourth General Synod adopted the  
74 resolution "Calling on the United Church of Christ to Renew Battle Against Racism in all its  
75 Guises."<sup>9</sup> The Twenty-Fourth General Synod also adopted a resolution "Calling the United  
76 Church of Christ to be an Anti-Racist Church."<sup>10</sup> Both of these resolutions informed a  
77 commitment to combat racism including racism directed toward people of African descent.

78

79 In its call for the church to be an anti-racist church in 2003, the UCC referenced the 2001 United  
 80 Nations World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related  
 81 Intolerance<sup>11</sup> in Durban, South Africa and its affirmation that “racism has historically through  
 82 imperialism and colonization<sup>12</sup> created an unequal world order and power balance with present  
 83 global implications impacting governments, systems, and institutions.” The International Decade  
 84 comes four years after the International Year for People of African Descent (2011).

85  
 86 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

87  
 88 **WHEREAS** the human rights of African descendant people globally and in the United States  
 89 continue to be challenged by the presence of racism and the legacy of whiteness, and

90  
 91 **WHEREAS** a myriad of social issues are byproducts of the racial inequities stemming from  
 92 prejudice, bigotry, White privilege, White fragility, and White supremacy,<sup>13</sup> and

93  
 94 **WHEREAS** the numbers of incarcerated people of African descent in the Americas  
 95 continues to grow,<sup>14</sup> and

96  
 97 **WHEREAS** disparities in healthcare, housing, education, the plight of women and girls, and a  
 98 myriad of interconnected issues point to the need for addressing racism and calling attention to  
 99 the need to protect the human rights of African descendant people.<sup>15</sup>

100  
 101 **WHEREAS** in many countries, while African descendant people attained civil rights, the human  
 102 rights guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the  
 103 United Nations General Assembly<sup>16</sup> continue to be elusive, and

104  
 105 **WHEREAS** data show that police have continued killing Black men and women  
 106 at disproportionate rates,<sup>17, 18</sup> even after the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor  
 107 sparked international protests against racism and police brutality, with a total of 164 Black  
 108 men and women who were killed by police from January 1 to August 31, 2020,<sup>19, 20</sup> and

109  
 110 **WHEREAS** in June of 2020 four black men, Malcolm Harsch, Robert Fuller Dominique Alexander  
 111 and an unidentified Black teenager were found hanged to death,<sup>21</sup> all reported by authorities to have  
 112 committed suicide, a claim disputed by their family members and many other people,<sup>22</sup> and

113  
 114 **WHEREAS** the Bible and Christian theology affirm *imago dei* – that all people are created in  
 115 the image of God; and

116  
 117 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has consistently shown leadership in advocacy and for  
 118 the rights of African descendant people in the United States and globally; and

119  
 120 **WHEREAS** the United Nations declaration of the Decade calls for the promotion and protection  
 121 of the rights of people of African descent; and

122  
 123 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ passed several resolutions that address the unfair  
 124 treatment of people of African descent, that call for legislation and action to address injustices  
 125 perpetuated against African descendant people and continues to decry the systems that support  
 126 and perpetuate white privilege and white supremacy as tools that produce racism and racial

127 inequality;

128

129 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ continues to advocate for the dismantling of racism and  
130 racist institutions through education and policy;

131

132 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church  
133 of Christ recognizes the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent  
134 (2015 - 2024);

135

136 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
137 Christ encourages all settings of the Church to increase awareness of the United Nations Decade  
138 for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and work ecumenically to promote the Decade;

139

140 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United  
141 Church of Christ encourages all settings of the Church to utilize this Decade to  
142 intentionally address the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade;

143

144 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of  
145 Christ encourages all settings of the Church to adopt the Decade themes of recognition, justice  
146 and development as frameworks for its advocacy, commitments and engagement in the fight  
147 for the rights of People of African Descent.

148

149 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with  
150 the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

151

152 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or  
153 other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

<sup>1</sup> <http://undocs.org/A/RES/68/237>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent#:~:text=In%20proclaiming%20this%20Decade%2C%20the,descent%20live%20in%20the%20Americas.>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=369&Itemid=145.html](http://www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369&Itemid=145.html)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa\\_article\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa_article_01.shtml)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/12/05/discriminating-in-the-name-of-religion-segregationists-and-slaveholders-did-it-too/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2014/06/24/black-theology-and-legacy-oppression>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/01/883115867/white-supremacist-ideas-have-historical-roots-in-u-s-christianity>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent#:~:text=In%20proclaiming%20this%20Decade%2C%20the,descent%20live%20in%20the%20Americas.>

<sup>9</sup> <http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/RESOLUTION-CALLING-ON-THE-UNITED-CHURCH-OF-CHRIST-TO-RENEW-THE-BATTLE-AGAINST-RACISM-IN-ALL-OF-ITS-GUISES.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/CALLING-THE-UNITED-CHURCH-OF-CHRIST-TO-BE-AN-ANTI-RACIST-CHURCH.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.un.org/WCAR/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.un.org/WCAR/e-kit/indigenous.htm>

<sup>13</sup> [https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C3&as\\_vis=1&q=disparities+and+racism&btnG=](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C3&as_vis=1&q=disparities+and+racism&btnG=)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>

<sup>15</sup> [https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=healthcare+disparities+and+racism&hl=en&as\\_sdt=0&as\\_vis=1&oi=scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=healthcare+disparities+and+racism&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholar)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.statista.com/chart/21857/people-killed-in-police-shootings-in-the-us/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/585152/people-shot-to-death-by-us-police-by-race/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.blackenterprise.com/police-killed-at-least-164-black-people-in-the-first-eight-months-of-2020/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/black-people-killed-by-police-in-the-u-s-in-2020/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://couriernewsroom.com/2020/06/18/4-black-men-were-found-hanged-in-3-weeks-what-is-happening/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/14/us/robert-fuller-malcolm-harsch-deaths.html>

**THE SECOND REPORT OF  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD  
TO THE THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SYNOD**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-05-01**

To approve the Agenda.

*(Supporting Document UCCB-21-05-01 Agenda)*

**GRANT VOICE WITHOUT VOTE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-05-02**

To grant voice without vote to Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Tami Marinella, Cheryl Williams.

**APPROVAL OF UCCB MARCH 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-05-03**

To approve the minutes of the March 4, 2021 Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

*(Supporting Document UCCB-21-05-02 Minutes 04.09.2021)*

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**IT WAS VOTED:  
UCCB-21-07-01**

To approve the Agenda.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-07-02**

To approve the Consent Agenda.

UCCB-21-07-02a: grant Voice Without Vote to Staff and Others: Geoffrey Black, Donyale Copeland, Cynthia Gaffney, Heather Kimmel, Alisa Lewis, Vivian Lucas, Tami Marinella, Dianne Roberts, Cheryl Williams.

UCCB-21-07-02b: To elect Onyx Kuthuru (Class of 2023) to fill an unexpired board term.

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-06-GOV-03 Onyx Kuthuru Bio*



UCCB-21-07-02c: To elect Rachel MaeRose as chair and June Boutwell as vice chair of the General Synod Nominating Committee for the 2021-2023 biennium.

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-06-GOV-04 Rachel MaeRose & June Boutwell Bios*  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-06-GOV-05 Rachel MaeRose & June Boutwell Demographics*

UCCB-21-07-02d: To elect the following individuals to the General Synod Nominating Committee to fill unexpired terms: Cathy Green to the class of 2025 and Sue Johannsen to the class of 2023.

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-06-GOV-06 GSNC Nominee Bios*

UCCB-21-07-02e: To nominate the following individuals for election by the Thirty-third General Synod to the General Synod Nominating Committee class of 2027: Lynn Jones, Laura Migarone, Thomas Mitchell, Warren Orikasa, and Sue Sheer.

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-06-GOV-06 GSNC Nominee Bios*

UCCB-21-07-02f: To receive the report of the Executive Committee as set forth in the minutes of the April 13, 2021 Executive Committee meeting.

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-04-ExCom-Minutes\_04.13.2021*

UCCB-21-07-02g: To approve the proposed corporate membership of the United Church Funds, Inc. for the next biennium, including the election of Doni Mooberry Slough, Noah Jensen Tabor, and Bernard Wilson to serve full six-year terms, and Lynn Bujnak to serve the unexpired term of Kathy Dwyer.

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-07-02g-1\_Bernard Wilson (Bio)*  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-07-02g-2\_Doni Mooberry Slough (Bio)*  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-07-02g-3\_Lynn Bujnak (Brief Bio)*  
*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-07-02g-4\_Noah Jensen Tabor (Resume)*

UCCB-21-07-02h: To receive the preliminary report of the General Synod Credentials Committee

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-07-02h-CC-Preliminary Report\_06.28.2021*

**APPROVAL OF UCCB MAY 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-07-03**

To approve the minutes of the May 28, 2021 Meeting of the United Church of Christ Board.

*Supporting Document: UCCB-21-07-02\_Minutes\_May\_28\_6.14.2021*

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-07-07**

To go into Executive Session.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-07-08**

To return to Regular Session.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-07-09**

To approve the Executive Session Minutes from March 5, 2021.

<p><b>CHAIR/VICE CHAIR NOMINATING COMMITTEE</b></p>
---------------------------------------------------------

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-05-04**

To elect Cameron Barr as Chair of the United Church of Christ Board for the 2021-2023 Biennium, beginning at the close of the 2021 General Synod and continuing until the close of the 2023 General Synod or until a successor is duly elected and assumes office.

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-05-05**

To elect Julia Gaughan as Vice-Chair of the United Church of Christ Board for the 2021-2023 Biennium, beginning at the close of the 2021 General Synod and continuing until the close of the 2023 General Synod or until a successor is duly elected and assumes office.

*Supporting Document UCCB-21-03-Chair\_Vice-Chair\_Nom\_Com-01 Report*

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB -21-07-06**

To approve the creation of a Task Force to address the future financial viability of the national setting of the United Church of Christ including consideration of Legacy Giving Circle and possible formation of a Foundation.

*Supporting Documents: UCCB-21-06-03-Dev Comm-Comparative Giving Report and UCCB-21-06-04-Dev Comm-Exploration of Foundation*

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB -21-07-05**

To approve the proposed amendments to the United Church of Christ Board Standing Rules.

*Supporting Document UCCB-21-06-GOV-07 Proposed UCCB Standing Rules Amendments*

**RACIAL JUSTICE, EQUITY AND  
INCLUSION RFP COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-05-06**

To accept the proposal of Culture Brokers in response to the Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment Request for Proposal and to authorize the expenditure of funds necessary for the associated fees.

*Supporting Documents UCCB-21-05-Equity-RFP-01\_Culture\_Brokers\_proposal; UCCB-21-05-Equity-RFP-02\_Mission\_Institute\_proposal*

**UCC NATIONAL OFFICE SPACE  
NEEDS COMMITTEE**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB-21-07-04**

To affirm the General Minister & President's exploration of the possibilities for the best stewardship of the office building at 700 Prospect Avenue, including: affirming the GMP's authority as President of 700 Prospect Corporation to lead the 700 Prospect Corporation Board of Trustees in selling the building if appropriate analysis warrants; affirming the GMP's authority to review, select, and lease a new office space location in Cleveland for the National Setting of the United Church of Christ; and affirming the GMP's authority to take all other necessary actions to accomplish any such sale and lease.

*Supporting Document UCCB-21-XX-OS-02 May 18 Minutes/DRAFT*

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**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST BOARD  
SITTING AS BUSINESS COMMITTEE  
OF THE THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL  
SYNOD**

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-07-10**

To grant voice without vote to Resource Persons to General Synod as follows:

**RESOURCE PERSONS TO BE GRANTED VOICE WITHOUT VOTE BY GENERAL SYNOD**

David Anderson	Committee Process Team
Kevin Peterson	Committee Process Team
Suzi Townsley	Committee Process Team
Roy Mosley	Committee Process Team
Dennis Frische-Mouri	Committee Process Team
Caroline Belsom	Committee Process Team
Maria Brace	Committee Chair
Rebecca David	Committee Chair
Andria M. Davis	Committee Chair
Marilyn Kendrix	Committee Chair
Cheryl Lindsay	Committee Chair
Crystal McCormick	Committee Chair
Elliott Munn	Committee Chair
Michael Vollbrecht	Committee Chair
Valerie Smith	Associate GS Administrator
Corey Larson	Agenda Coordinator
Derek B. Ritenour	Parliamentarian
Reginald Brantley	Parliamentarian
Heather Kimmel	General Counsel
Ken Medema	Theological Reflector
Tami Marinella	Chief Financial Officer
Shameerah Lemon	GS Registrar
Nathan Young	meet.ucc
Julie Yarborough	Association of United Church Educators
Thom Bower	Association of United Church Educators

**It was VOTED:  
UCCB 21-07-11**

To approve list of General Synod Committee Liaisons as follows:

**NOTICE OF GENERAL SYNOD COMMITTEE LIAISONS**

Carrie Call  
Hannah Cranbury  
Kevin Graham

Carla Gregg-Kearns  
Dick Harter  
David Nelson  
Inez Reid

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-07-12** To approve the General Synod Agenda as presented.

**It was VOTED:**  
**UCCB 21-07-13** To adjourn

## APPENDIX F

### 1 **BYLAWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

#### 2 **PREAMBLE**

3 100 These Bylaws, consistent with the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, further define  
4 and/or regulate the General Synod and its relationships with the Covenanted, Affiliated, and  
5 Associated Ministries and Other Bodies which are related to the General Synod, and the United  
6 Church of Christ Board, and describe the free and voluntary relationships which the Local  
7 Churches, Associations, Conferences, and Ordained, Commissioned and Licensed Ministers  
8 sustain with the General Synod and with one another. The pattern of relationships and procedures  
9 so described is recommended to Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and authorized  
10 ministers to enable them more effectively to accomplish their tasks and the work of the United  
11 Church of Christ.

#### 12

### 13 **ARTICLE I. THE MINISTRY**

#### 14 **Members in Discernment**

15 101 A member of a United Church of Christ Local Church wishing to explore God's call to  
16 ministry, and the potential of that call leading to authorized ministry (ordained, commissioned or  
17 licensed), requests, along with the member's Local Church, to enter a covenant of discernment  
18 with the Association.

19  
20 102 The Committee on Ministry of the member's Association interviews the member to decide  
21 whether to join with the member and the Local Church in a covenant of discernment. The goal of  
22 discernment is to determine whether the member is called to authorized ministry, what the  
23 specific character of that ministry might be, and, if authorization is appropriate, what steps are to  
24 be taken toward authorization. Normally a covenant of discernment leading to authorization is  
25 expected to be for not less than two years.

26  
27 103 The Association and the Local Church are in a mutual covenant with the Member in  
28 Discernment to offer support, counsel, and direction during this time of decision making and  
29 preparation.

30  
31 104 A Member in Discernment who is called to authorized ministry will follow a plan of  
32 preparation for that ministry which has been prepared with the Association Committee on  
33 Ministry. With respect to ordained ministry, a bachelor's degree and Master of Divinity may be  
34 included in the plan.

#### 35

#### 36 **Ordained Ministry**

37 105 Not more than six months prior to the completion of theological preparation for  
38 authorization, a Member in Discernment preparing for the ordained ministry applies with the  
39 Member in Discernment's Local Church to its Association for approval as a candidate for  
40 ordination. If the service of ordination is to be performed within an Association other than that of  
41 the Member, the procedure, including that described in the following paragraph, is initiated by  
42 that Association after consultation with the Association which is in covenant with the Member in  
43 Discernment.

44  
45 106 The Committee on Ministry of the Association examines the Member in Discernment with  
46 respect to Christian faith; character; ability to do the work expected; preparation to meet the  
47 responsibilities of the office; educational and theological attainments; and knowledge of the  
48 history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ. If, following this examination, the  
49 committee is satisfied with the fitness of the Member in Discernment, it makes an affirmative  
50 recommendation to the Association. In turn, upon receipt of this recommendation, the

51 Association may opt for further examination or proceed immediately to authorize the ordination,  
52 subject to a call recognized by the Association.

53  
54 107 Ordination by an Association of the United Church of Christ, in cooperation with the Local  
55 Church, confers Ordained Ministerial Standing as an Ordained Minister of the United Church of  
56 Christ and recognition as an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of  
57 Christ) and The United Church of Canada.

58  
59 108 After the ordination or in anticipation of it, a certificate is issued bearing the signatures of the  
60 proper officers of the Association and the General Minister and President of the United Church of  
61 Christ.

62  
63 **Ordained Ministerial Standing**

64 109 An Ordained Minister moving from the bounds of one Association to another applies for a  
65 transfer of Ordained Ministerial Standing to the new Association.

66  
67 110 An Ordained Minister engaged in Local Church ministry has standing in the Association in  
68 which the Local Church served has standing. An Ordained Minister engaged in other than Local  
69 Church ministry has standing in the Association where the Ordained Minister's Local Church  
70 membership is held.

71  
72 111 An Ordained Minister engaged in a ministry requiring prolonged absence from the United  
73 States, or one that does not permit a fixed residence, may apply to have Ordained Ministerial  
74 Standing in the Association of the Ordained Minister's choice.

75  
76 112 An Ordained Minister who withdraws from active service in the ordained ministry prior to  
77 retirement applies to the Ordained Minister's Association for Leave of Absence. The Association  
78 may grant such Leave of Absence for one year at a time. Except in special cases such Leave of  
79 Absence is not granted for more than five years in succession.

80  
81 113 An Ordained Minister retiring from active service by reason of age or disability retains  
82 Ordained Ministerial Standing in the Association of the Ordained Minister's choice. Membership  
83 in a Local Church must be maintained.

84  
85 114 An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ serving a church not affiliated with the  
86 United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or The United Church of  
87 Canada, or serving a local church of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or The United  
88 Church of Canada without Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing retains Ordained Ministerial  
89 Standing in the United Church of Christ so long as the Ordained Minister's Association approves.

90  
91 115 The church membership of an authorized minister serving in Local Church ministry shall be  
92 in the Local Church served. The church membership of an authorized minister serving in a setting  
93 other than Local Church Ministry, or of an authorized minister without fixed residence shall be in  
94 a Local Church of the United Church of Christ in the Association where the authorized minister  
95 holds or seeks authorized ministerial standing.

96  
97 **Ordained Ministers from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

98 116 An ordained minister from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may hold Ordained  
99 Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ only when serving a United Church  
100 of Christ calling body or serving in a ministry capacity directly relating to the United Church of  
101 Christ.



102  
103 117 Upon demonstrating knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of  
104 the United Church of Christ to the Association in which the person resides, an Ordained  
105 Ministerial Partner from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may seek a call in the United  
106 Church of Christ.

107  
108 118 An Ordained Ministerial Partner from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who accepts  
109 a call in the United Church of Christ joins a Local Church in the United Church of Christ and  
110 applies for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the Association in which Local Church  
111 membership is held.

112  
113 119 An ordained minister from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds Ordained  
114 Ministerial Partner Standing in an Association shall maintain ordained ministerial standing within  
115 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Region in which the United Church of Christ calling  
116 body is located.

117  
118 120 In the United Church of Christ, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is granted by the  
119 Association where the ordained minister from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is called  
120 to serve and is for the period of call for which it is granted. If a new consecutive call to perform  
121 the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ is  
122 extended, then Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing may be transferred across Associations  
123 pursuant to the process for transferring standing.

124  
125 121 Ordained ministers from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) holding Ordained  
126 Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ are expected to maintain  
127 requirements for ongoing ministerial standing from both denominations.

128  
129 122 Primary oversight of an ordained minister from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
130 holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is with the United Church of Christ. In the event of  
131 a fitness review, the Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in which the person's  
132 ordained ministerial standing is maintained shall be informed and invited to participate in the  
133 procedures.

134  
135 **United Church of Christ Ordained Ministers Serving in the Christian Church (Disciples of**  
136 **Christ)**

137 123 An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner  
138 Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

139  
140 (a) shall maintain Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ.  
141 Ordained Ministerial Standing shall be held in the Association in which local  
142 church membership is held;

143  
144 (b) shall hold local church membership in a local church of the Christian Church  
145 (Disciples of Christ); and

146  
147 (c) shall relate to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for the Ordained  
148 Minister's primary support and accountability in ordained ministry.

149  
150 124 Ordained Ministers from the United Church of Christ holding Ordained Ministerial Partner  
151 Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are expected to maintain requirements for  
152 ongoing ministerial standing from both denominations.

153  
154 125 Primary oversight of an Ordained Minister from the United Church of Christ holding  
155 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is with the  
156 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In the event of a disciplinary procedure, the United  
157 Church of Christ Association in which standing is held shall be informed and invited to  
158 participate in the procedures. The Association may accept the procedures and outcome of the  
159 Region or utilize its own procedures to determine the person's ongoing standing in the United  
160 Church of Christ.  
161  
162 126 When a person no longer has Ordained Ministerial Standing in either the United Church of  
163 Christ or Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), that person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial  
164 Partner and no longer has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing.  
165  
166 **Ordained Ministers from The United Church of Canada**  
167 127 An ordained minister from The United Church of Canada may hold Ordained Ministerial  
168 Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ only when serving a United Church of Christ  
169 calling body or serving in a ministry capacity directly relating to the United Church of Christ.  
170  
171 128 Upon demonstrating knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of  
172 the United Church of Christ to an Association, an Ordained Ministerial Partner from The United  
173 Church of Canada may seek a call in the United Church of Christ.  
174  
175 129 An Ordained Ministerial Partner from The United Church of Canada who accepts a call in the  
176 United Church of Christ joins a Local Church of the United Church of Christ, and applies for  
177 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the Association in which Local Church membership is  
178 held.  
179  
180 130 An ordained minister from The United Church of Canada who holds Ordained Ministerial  
181 Partner Standing in an Association shall also maintain ordained ministerial standing within their  
182 current presbytery of The United Church of Canada.  
183  
184 131 In the United Church of Christ, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is granted by the  
185 Association where the ordained minister from The United Church of Canada is called to serve  
186 and is for the period of call for which it is granted. If a new consecutive call to perform the duties  
187 and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ is extended,  
188 then Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing may be transferred across Associations pursuant to  
189 the process for transferring standing.  
190  
191 132 Ordained ministers from The United Church of Canada holding Ordained Ministerial Partner  
192 Standing in the United Church of Christ are expected to maintain requirements for ongoing  
193 ministerial standing from both denominations.  
194  
195 133 Primary oversight of an ordained minister from The United Church of Canada holding  
196 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is with the United Church of Christ. In the event of a  
197 fitness review, The United Church of Canada Ministry Personnel Office shall be informed and  
198 invited to participate in the procedures.  
199  
200 **United Church of Christ Ordained Ministers Serving in The United Church of Canada**  
201 134 An Ordained Minister from the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained Ministerial  
202 Partner Standing in The United Church of Canada  
203

- 204 (a) shall maintain Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ.  
 205 Ordained Ministerial Standing shall be held in the Association in which Local  
 206 Church membership is held.  
 207  
 208 (b) shall hold Local Church membership in a Local Church of the United Church of  
 209 Christ and in a presbytery of The United Church of Canada.  
 210  
 211 (c) shall relate to The United Church of Canada for the Ordained Minister's primary  
 212 support and accountability in ordained ministry.  
 213

214 135 Ordained Ministers from the United Church of Christ holding Ordained Ministerial Partner  
 215 Standing in The United Church of Canada are expected to maintain requirements for ongoing  
 216 ministerial standing from both denominations.  
 217

218 136 Primary oversight of an Ordained Minister from the United Church of Christ who holds  
 219 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in The United Church of Canada is with The United  
 220 Church of Canada. In the event of a disciplinary procedure, the United Church of Christ  
 221 Association in which standing is held shall be informed and invited to participate. The  
 222 Association may accept the procedures and outcome of The United Church of Canada or utilize  
 223 its own procedures to determine the person's ongoing standing in the United Church of Christ.  
 224

225 137 When a person no longer has Ordained Ministerial Standing in either the United Church of  
 226 Christ or The United Church of Canada, that person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner  
 227 and no longer has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing.  
 228

229 **Ordained Ministers from Denominations Other than the Christian Church (Disciples of**  
 230 **Christ) or The United Church of Canada**

231 138 An ordained minister of a denomination other than the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
 232 who desires to enter the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ applies for Privilege of  
 233 Call to the Association within whose bounds the minister resides.  
 234

235 139 The Committee on Ministry of the Association examines the applicant as to the applicant's  
 236 abilities, reasons for desiring to enter the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ,  
 237 educational and theological attainments, knowledge of the history, polity, and practices of the  
 238 United Church of Christ, and Christian faith and experience. If the applicant is found to be  
 239 qualified, the Association grants Privilege of Call, thereby declaring said applicant eligible to  
 240 seek a call in the United Church of Christ. Privilege of Call shall be granted for a period of one  
 241 year and may be renewed. After accepting a call, the ordained minister applies for Ordained  
 242 Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ to the Association of which the Local Church  
 243 of membership is a part.  
 244

245 140 An ordained minister of another denomination other than the Christian  
 246 Church (Disciples of Christ) or The United Church of Canada who wishes to retain ordained  
 247 ministerial standing in that denomination and who has become pastor of a Local Church of the  
 248 United Church of Christ, or serves in a Covenanted, Affiliated or Associated Ministry of the  
 249 United Church of Christ, or has become pastor of a yoked charge or a federated church one part  
 250 of which is affiliated with the United Church of Christ, or has been called to an ecumenical  
 251 ministry one constituent of which is the United Church of Christ, may apply to the Association  
 252 for dual ordained ministerial standing which is limited to duration of that pastorate or that  
 253 responsibility, and during that period may have all the rights and privileges of such membership.  
 254

255 **Commissioned Ministers**

256 141 A Member in Discernment seeking initial recognition and authorization as a Commissioned  
257 Minister applies with the Member in Discernment's Local Church to the Association of which  
258 that church is a member.

259  
260 142 The Committee on Ministry of the Association examines the Member in Discernment with  
261 respect to Christian faith, character, ability to do the work expected and preparation to meet the  
262 responsibilities of the office to be filled, and make its recommendation of fitness to the  
263 Association. If upon acceptance of the recommendation or upon further examination and decision  
264 by the Association itself, the applicant is found to be qualified, commissioning thereby is  
265 authorized.

266  
267 143 Commissioned Ministers are listed separately from Ordained Ministers and from Licensed  
268 Ministers on the rolls of the Association.

269  
270 144 A Commissioned Minister moving from the bounds of one Association to another and who  
271 continues in the specific church-related ministry, applies for a transfer of the commission to the  
272 new Association.

273  
274 145 A Commissioned Minister seeking to be commissioned for a new or different church-related  
275 ministry applies to the Association for commissioning for the new ministry.

276  
277 146 A Commissioned Minister who ceases to function in the specific church-related ministry to  
278 which the minister was commissioned resigns the commission or applies to the Association for  
279 Leave of Absence. Leave of Absence is granted for one year at a time, but not more than three  
280 consecutive years.

281  
282 147 A Commissioned Minister who retires from service as a Commissioned Minister may be  
283 recognized by the Association as a Retired Commissioned Minister of the United Church of  
284 Christ. Voting membership in that Association is thereby granted. Such recognition is regularly  
285 reviewed.

286  
287 **Licensed Ministers**

288 148 A Member in Discernment seeking recognition and authorization as a Licensed Minister  
289 applies with the Member in Discernment's Local Church to the Association of which that church  
290 is a member.

291  
292 149 The Committee on Ministry of the Association examines the Member in Discernment with  
293 respect to Christian faith, character, ability to do the work expected, preparation to meet the  
294 responsibilities of the office, educational and theological attainments, and knowledge of the  
295 history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ. If the applicant is found to be  
296 qualified, a license is granted by the Association for not more than one year to serve in a  
297 designated Local Church or within that Association. Following a review by the Committee on  
298 Ministry, the license may be renewed annually for two more years after which the Association  
299 may grant the license for a time determined to be appropriate.

300  
301 150 At the request of the Local Church which the person serves, the Association may grant the  
302 Licensed Minister the right to administer the sacraments and rites of the Church for this Local  
303 Church.

304

305 151 Licensed Ministers are listed separately from Ordained Ministers and from Commissioned  
306 Ministers on the rolls of the Association.

307  
308 152 A Licensed Minister who retires from service as a Licensed Minister may be recognized by  
309 the Association as a Retired Licensed Minister of the United Church of Christ. Voting  
310 membership in that Association is thereby granted. Such recognition is regularly reviewed.

311  
312 **Calling, Installing and Terminating a Pastor**

313 153 It is the responsibility of a committee of the Local Church to seek a candidate for a vacancy  
314 in the office of pastor.

315  
316 154 In filling a vacancy or in securing pastoral services during the period of a vacancy, the  
317 committee of the Local Church, through its Conference Minister, obtains counsel and access to  
318 the services of the "Search and Call" process of the United Church of Christ.

319  
320 155 The committee of a Local Church requests the Conference Minister to secure relevant  
321 information about any Ordained Minister, Ordained Ministerial Partner, or Licensed Minister  
322 whom it wishes to consider or who requests to be considered for the vacancy.

323  
324 156 Any Ordained Minister, Ordained Ministerial Partner, or Licensed Minister may confer with  
325 the Conference Minister concerning a pastoral vacancy. At the Ordained Minister's request or at  
326 the request of the Ordained Ministerial Partner, that person's name shall be submitted by the  
327 Conference Minister for consideration by the committee of any Local Church where there is a  
328 pastoral vacancy.

329  
330 157 All vacancies within the Conference shall be reported promptly to the designated  
331 administrative office in the National Setting of the Church.

332  
333 158 The committee of the Local Church presents to the Local Church the name of a candidate it  
334 recommends to fill the vacancy. The Local Church determines whether or not it wishes to call the  
335 person recommended.

336  
337 159 In the call agreement the terms of the pastoral relationship are stated, including the agreement  
338 of the Local Church to participate in the pension fund on the pastor's behalf. The pastor, the  
339 Local Church, Association Committee on Ministry, and the Conference Minister should each  
340 receive a copy of the call agreement. The Conference Minister shall inform the designated  
341 administrative office in the National Setting of the Church when the call has been accepted.

342  
343 160 When an Ordained Minister or Licensed Minister accepts a call to a Local Church, the  
344 Minister and the Local Church join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of  
345 installation or recognition.

346  
347 161 Report of the service of installation or recognition is signed by the proper officer of the  
348 Association and by the Conference Minister, and is reported to the designated administrative  
349 office in the National Setting of the Church.

350  
351 162 When a pastor or a Local Church decides to terminate the pastoral relationship, notice of the  
352 decision is sent to the Conference Minister and the Association. The Association takes action  
353 appropriate to the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. The Conference Minister promptly  
354 informs the designated administrative office in the National Setting of the Church.

355

356 **Ministerial Accountability**

357 163 All authorized ministers of the United Church of Christ are active partners in a covenant of  
358 mutual accountability with their Association of standing, their Local Church, and, in the case of  
359 those serving in settings other than a Local Church, with their calling body. Such a covenant  
360 includes, but is not limited to, mutual support and care, continued discernment of call, and  
361 lifelong learning.

362  
363 164 All authorizations for Ordained Ministerial Standing, for Ordained Ministerial Partner  
364 Standing, and for commissioned and licensed ministry granted by an Association are subject to  
365 oversight by that Association, including periodic consultation and review.

366  
367 165 The ecclesiastical oversight of Ordained Ministers, persons with Ordained Ministerial Partner  
368 Standing, Commissioned Ministers, and Licensed Ministers is the responsibility of the  
369 Association in which their current ecclesiastical authorization is held.

370  
371 **ARTICLE II. ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFERENCES**

372 **Associations**

373 166 An Association elects officers and elects or appoints such committees as it deems necessary  
374 for the transaction of its business and the correlation of its work with that of the Conference and  
375 the General Synod.

376  
377 167 An Association determines its own method for securing financial support.

378  
379 168 An Association is concerned with the welfare of all Local Churches within its boundaries.

380  
381 169 An Association seeks ways and means to assist Local Churches when they are undergoing  
382 unusual difficulties requiring help beyond their own resources.

383  
384 170 An Association offers encouragement, guidance, and assistance in the organization of new  
385 Local Churches.

386  
387 171 An Association, with the counsel of the Conference, receives Local Churches into the United  
388 Church of Christ.

389  
390 172 An Association covenants with members of the United Church of Christ within that  
391 Association as together they discern God's call to authorized ministry and prepare for ordination,  
392 commissioning or licensing.

393  
394 173 An Association ordains, commissions, and licenses qualified candidates; grants standing as a  
395 covenantal relationship with Ordained Ministers, Licensed Ministers, Commissioned Ministers,  
396 and persons with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing; certifies to, transfers, and terminates  
397 Ordained Ministerial Standing, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing, commissioned ministerial  
398 standing and licenses; installs Ordained Ministers and persons with Ordained Ministerial Partner  
399 Standing; covenants with Licensed Ministers, Commissioned Ministers, and the Local Churches  
400 to which they are called; grants Privilege of Call and Leaves of Absence; reviews and  
401 ecclesiastically oversees Ordained, Commissioned, and Licensed Ministers and persons with  
402 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing; and verifies that an Ordained Ministerial Partner has  
403 demonstrated knowledge of, and appreciation for, the history, polity, and practices of the United  
404 Church of Christ.

405

406 174 An Association receives and acts upon business referred to it by its Local Churches, its  
407 Conference, the General Synod, and other bodies.

408  
409 175 An Association may petition and overture its Conference or the General Synod.

410  
411 **Conferences**

412 176 A Conference elects officers and elects or appoints such committees as it deems necessary  
413 for the transaction of its business and the correlation of its work with that of the General Synod.

414  
415 177 A Conference employs such salaried personnel as its program may require.

416  
417 178 A Conference receives and acts upon business, requests, counsel, and references from Local  
418 Churches, Associations, the General Synod, and other bodies.

419  
420 179 A Conference provides names to the General Synod Nominating Committee as requested.

421  
422 180 A Conference may petition and overture the General Synod.

423  
424 181 A Conference chooses delegates and alternate delegates to the General Synod in accordance  
425 with the Constitution of the United Church of Christ and these Bylaws.

426  
427 182 A Conference receives from the Local Churches contributions for denominational support  
428 and keeps detailed records of the same.

429  
430 183 A Conference consults on a regular basis with the General Minister and President, or the  
431 General Minister and President's designee, acting on behalf of the General Synod, to reach  
432 mutual agreement upon the percentage, or the dollar amount, of the undesignated gifts for  
433 denominational support to be retained for its own support.

434  
435 184 Upon the basis of the agreed upon percentage, or dollar amount, the Conference each month  
436 retains the amount necessary for its own support and forwards the balance to the treasury office of  
437 the National Setting.

438  
439 185 A Conference, in the interest of the Local Churches, discharges those duties and provides  
440 those services which will strengthen the witness of the United Church of Christ, such as:

- 441  
442 a) Coordinating the work and witness of the Local Churches and Associations;  
443  
444 b) Rendering counsel to Local Churches and ministers in situations calling for help  
445 beyond their own resources;  
446  
447 c) Rendering an advisory service to Local Churches and to ministers with reference to  
448 pastoral search;  
449  
450 d) Establishing and maintaining Conference offices, Conference centers, institutions, and  
451 other agencies needful to its growth and welfare;  
452  
453 e) Sponsoring in-service training for ministers; and  
454  
455 f) Conducting conferences, retreats, clinics, and workshops.  
456

457 186 A Conference maintains ecumenical and interfaith relations within its boundaries with other  
458 fellowships to the end that mutual understanding and cooperation may be advanced.

459

### 460 **ARTICLE III. THE GENERAL SYNOD**

#### 461 **Meetings of the General Synod**

462 187 Regular meetings of the General Synod shall be held biennially.

463

464 188 Special meetings of the General Synod may be called by resolution of the General Synod, by  
465 the United Church of Christ Board, or upon receipt of a petition from at least twenty percent of  
466 the Conferences. A special meeting so petitioned shall be convened not earlier than three months  
467 nor later than four months after the petition is received by the General Minister and President of  
468 the United Church of Christ. The petition and the call for a special meeting shall contain a  
469 statement of the purpose of the meeting. In any special meeting only such business may be  
470 transacted as is specified in the call.

471

472 189 The time and place of all meetings of the General Synod shall be determined by the United  
473 Church of Christ Board unless otherwise directed by the General Synod.

474

475 190 The call for any meeting of the General Synod shall be signed by the General Minister and  
476 President of the United Church of Christ. Such call shall be issued at least six months prior to a  
477 regular meeting and at least three months prior to a special meeting of the General Synod. All  
478 calls shall be sent to the Conferences and the Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries,  
479 and notice of these calls shall be transmitted to the Local Churches by the Conferences.

480

481 ~~191 All proceedings of the General Synod shall, unless otherwise provided for, be governed by~~  
482 ~~the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, as amended. Any regular or~~  
483 ~~special meeting of the General Synod may be held remotely, as determined by the United Church~~  
484 ~~of Christ Board, with all delegates attending through communications equipment that allows~~  
485 ~~delegates to communicate contemporaneously with one another.~~

486

487 192 Expenses of General Synod delegates, including travel expenses for meetings of the General  
488 Synod, shall be the responsibility of the sending groups, except expenses of Conference voting  
489 delegates as negotiated with the Conferences shall be borne by the General Synod.

490

#### 491 **Membership of the General Synod**

492 193 The membership of the General Synod shall consist of voting delegates and associate  
493 delegates. Visitors shall be welcome.

494

#### 495 **Voting Delegates**

496 194 Voting delegates shall consist of Conference delegates, all members of the United Church of  
497 Christ Board, and delegates named by the Historically Underrepresented Groups, as these are  
498 hereinafter defined. All voting delegates shall be members of a Local Church of the United  
499 Church of Christ. Each voting delegate to the General Synod shall be entitled to a single vote at  
500 the General Synod.

501

#### 502 **Conference Delegates**

503 195 The number of Conference delegates shall be allocated to each Conference by the United  
504 Church of Christ Board on the basis of the number of persons who have membership in the Local  
505 Churches of the Conference. There shall not, however, be fewer than three delegates allocated to  
506 any Conference. The total number of Conference delegates in any biennium shall not be fewer  
507 than 675 nor more than 725. Delegates and alternate delegates shall be chosen by each



508 Conference from among its authorized ministers in full standing and persons with Ordained  
509 Ministerial Partner Standing and the members of its Local Churches. Conferences may initiate  
510 and consider nominations from the Associations. From each Conference, except in Conferences  
511 having three delegates, (a) lay persons shall constitute at least fifty percent of the delegates and  
512 (b) the delegation shall reflect the United Church of Christ's commitment to affirmative action  
513 the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion; it shall be representative of people of diverse races,  
514 ethnicities, genders, gender expressions ; it shall be representative of racial and ethnic persons  
515 (Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, Asian-Americans, and Pacific Islanders), women and  
516 youth and young adults (at least twenty percent of each delegation shall be under 30 years of age  
517 at the time of the commencing of their terms, and where possible, be represented equally by (1)  
518 youth, persons of high school age; and (2) young adults, persons graduated from high school or  
519 over 19 years of age). In Conferences with three delegates the above requirements for  
520 representation are recommended but shall not be mandatory. Despite any lack of exact  
521 compliance with these requirements, actions of a General Synod which is constituted in  
522 substantial compliance with these representation requirements, as determined by the United  
523 Church of Christ Board, shall be valid.

524  
525 196 The term of Conference delegates, other than any elected to fill unexpired terms, shall begin  
526 at the opening of the next regular meeting of the General Synod following their election and shall  
527 continue for a period of four years, terminating at the opening of the third regular meeting of the  
528 General Synod following such election; provided, however, that each Conference delegation shall  
529 be divided into two classes with terms expiring in alternate bienniums. When the number in one  
530 class from a given Conference exceeds the number in the other class by more than one, the  
531 Conference shall at the earliest possible opportunity make use of a two-year term for one delegate  
532 or fill any delegate vacancy that may occur in such a way as to equalize the two classes. No  
533 delegate who has served a full term shall again be elected until after at least two years have  
534 elapsed. Delegates shall be members of all regular and special meetings of the General Synod  
535 which are held during their term of office unless they have become separated from the  
536 Conference which elected them.

#### 537 538 **United Church of Christ Board Delegates**

539 197 The members of the United Church of Christ Board shall be voting delegates at the General  
540 Synod, and their term shall be concurrent with their terms as members of the United Church of  
541 Christ Board.

#### 542 543 **Historically Underrepresented Groups Delegates**

544 198 There shall be forty (40) Historically Underrepresented Groups delegates, four (4) from each  
545 of the Historically Underrepresented Groups: Council for American Indian Ministry; The  
546 Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries; Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice; Pacific  
547 Islander and Asian American Ministries; United Black Christians; UCC Disabilities Ministries;  
548 Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries; the United Samoan Ministries; the Open and  
549 Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ; and the UCC Mental Health Network. The  
550 term of Historically Underrepresented Groups delegates, other than any elected to fill unexpired  
551 terms, shall begin at the opening of the next regular meeting of the General Synod following their  
552 election and shall continue for a period of four years, terminating at the opening of the third  
553 regular meeting of the General Synod following such election. No delegate who has served a full  
554 term shall again be elected until after at least two years have elapsed.

#### 555 556 **Associate Delegates**

557 199 Unless otherwise serving as a voting delegate to

558 the General Synod, the chairperson of the governing body and the principal minister(s) or  
559 executive(s) of each Conference; the chairperson of each Task Force created by the General  
560 Synod not otherwise represented on the United Church of Christ Board; the chairperson of each  
561 General Synod standing committee; a representative of the Christian Churches (Disciples of  
562 Christ); and one representative of each of the seminaries of the United Church of Christ not  
563 otherwise represented, chosen by the seminary, shall be Associate Delegates, with voice but  
564 without vote.

#### 565 566 **Ecumenical Delegates**

567 200 In each biennium the United Church of Christ Board may invite a representative from each of  
568 its U.S. and Canada full communion partners as an associate delegate to the General Synod of the  
569 United Church of Christ. In addition, the United Church of Christ Board may invite a  
570 representative from up to three other partner churches in the United States. These representatives  
571 shall be accorded the same privileges as Associate Delegates.

#### 572 573 **Moderators of the General Synod**

574 201 The Moderator shall be elected by the General Synod. The office of Moderator shall be filled  
575 alternately by lay persons and authorized ministers or persons with Ordained Ministerial Partner  
576 Standing. The Moderator shall take office upon the adjournment of the regular meeting at which  
577 the Moderator is elected and shall hold office through the next regular meeting or until a  
578 successor has been qualified and installed.

580 202 The Moderator shall preside at the sessions of the General Synod.

581  
582 203 There shall be elected an Assistant Moderator of the General Synod to assist the Moderator in  
583 presiding at sessions of the General Synod. The Assistant Moderator shall take office upon  
584 adjournment of the regular meeting at which the Assistant Moderator was elected and shall hold  
585 office through the next regular meeting. The Assistant Moderator will be eligible for nomination  
586 and election to the position of Moderator, upon completion of the term of Assistant Moderator.

587  
588 204 The Moderator and Assistant Moderator shall include an authorized minister or a person with  
589 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and a layperson, and shall reflect the diversity to which the  
590 United Church of Christ is committed.

#### 591 592 **Committees of the General Synod**

593 205 The General Synod shall have such Committees as it may deem necessary, including but not  
594 limited to those named hereafter.

595  
596 206 **Nominating Committee** The Nominating Committee shall consist of 16 members elected by  
597 the General Synod as follows:

598  
599 a) Ten members will be elected from a pool of nominees provided by the Conferences, as  
600 follows: At least nine months before each regular meeting of the General Synod, the  
601 United Church of Christ Board shall invite each Conference not currently represented on  
602 the Nominating Committee to submit the name of an authorized minister or a person with  
603 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and the name of a layperson for possible  
604 membership on the Nominating Committee as an at-large member. The United Church of  
605 Christ Board shall submit these names, to the General Synod. Not more than one of the  
606 at-large members of the Nominating Committee shall be from any one Conference.  
607 Notwithstanding this requirement, if a member of the Nominating Committee moves to a  
608 Conference from which there is another member of the Committee currently serving, the

609 member moving to the Conference currently served by another member shall continue to  
610 serve as a member of the Nominating Committee until the end of the biennium. The  
611 position on the Nominating Committee held by the member who moved becomes vacant  
612 at the end of the biennium during which the above change in Conference occurs.  
613

614 b) Four members will be elected from a pool of nominees provided by the following  
615 groups: the Council for American Indian Ministry; The Colectivo de UCC Latinx  
616 Ministries; Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice; Pacific Islander and Asian  
617 American Ministries; United Black Christians; United Samoan Ministries, the Open and  
618 Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ; UCC Disabilities Ministries; the  
619 Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries; and the UCC Mental Health Network. At  
620 least nine months before each regular meeting of the General Synod, the United Church  
621 of Christ Board shall invite each of the six groups not currently represented on the  
622 Nominating Committee to submit the names of an authorized minister or a person with  
623 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and a layperson for possible membership on the  
624 Nominating Committee. The United Church of Christ Board shall submit to the General  
625 Synod for election the number of names needed to maintain four members from these  
626 groups on the Nominating Committee. Two members will be an authorized minister or a  
627 person with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and two members will be laypersons.  
628 The Conference affiliations of the representatives from these groups will not affect the  
629 determination of the Conference affiliation of the at-large members elected in accordance  
630 with paragraph 201a.  
631

632 c) Two members will be appointed from among the members of the United Church of  
633 Christ Board.  
634

635 d) The diversity of the Nominating Committee shall reflect the diversity requirements for  
636 the United Church of Christ Board, as set forth in these bylaws.  
637

638 e) A member of the Nominating Committee who has served a full term shall not be  
639 eligible for re-election until a biennium has elapsed. Terms of members shall begin at the  
640 close of the General Synod at which the members have been elected and continue to the  
641 close of the third regular General Synod after their election. The Chairperson of the  
642 Nominating Committee shall be named by the United Church of Christ Board from the  
643 members of the Nominating Committee within six months after each regular meeting of  
644 the General Synod.  
645

646 207 The Nominating Committee of the General Synod, prior to the call for nominations, reviews  
647 the composition of the continuing membership of the United Church of Christ Board and  
648 determines the needed nominations. In its call for suggestions of names, the Nominating  
649 Committee will indicate the criteria consistent with the provisions of these Bylaws which will be  
650 used for filling positions on the United Church of Christ Board. Each Conference or group to be  
651 represented shall provide at least two names for each of the positions.  
652

653 208 The Nominating Committee shall make all nominations for election by the General Synod for  
654 which the Constitution and Bylaws do not otherwise provide. The Nominating Committee shall  
655 consider, but not be limited to, such attributes as candidates' leadership, a wide range of life  
656 experience and background including socio-economic, cultural competency, financial knowledge,  
657 fund raising experience, community building skills, commitment to justice, and understanding of  
658 good governance. The Nominating Committee shall maintain records of suggested nominees and  
659 their qualifications.

660  
661 209 The Nominating Committee is responsible for ensuring that the membership of the United  
662 Church of Christ Board embodies the commitment of the United Church of Christ to diversity and  
663 balance, both in its overall composition and in its internal segments. In order to achieve this end,  
664 the Nominating Committee may, if necessary, approach any group submitting and/or  
665 recommending names with the request that they assist in that task by presenting additional names.  
666

667 210 When selecting candidates for offices, the Nominating Committee shall consider all names  
668 submitted.  
669

670 211 The Nominating Committee shall submit its report to the General Synod at least twenty-four  
671 hours before the elections are scheduled to take place, unless the General Synod, by a three-  
672 fourths vote, consents to an earlier election.  
673

#### 674 **Credentials Committee**

675 212 The Credentials Committee shall ~~consist of ten delegates to the General Synod, five of whom~~  
676 ~~shall come from each of the two classes of General Synod delegates. At least three months before~~  
677 ~~each regular meeting of the General Synod the United Church of Christ Board shall appoint five~~  
678 ~~members from the latest class of delegates and shall designate one of the ten members of the~~  
679 ~~Committee as chairperson. Terms of members shall be for four years, beginning with their~~  
680 ~~appointment and terminating with the appointment of their successors by the United Church of~~  
681 ~~Christ Board or persons designated by the United Church of Christ Board from its own~~  
682 ~~membership.~~ The Credentials Committee will review the composition of the Conference and  
683 other voting delegations for compliance with the composition requirements of these Bylaws and  
684 is empowered to request changes in membership to all voting delegations so that said delegations  
685 and the Delegation as a Whole will be in compliance with the provisions of these Bylaws.  
686

#### 687 **Budget Committee, Business Committee, and Committee of Disposition**

688 213 The Budget Committee, the Business Committee, and the Committee of Disposition at each  
689 regular and special meeting of the General Synod shall be the United Church of Christ Board or  
690 persons designated by the United Church of Christ Board from its own membership. The role and  
691 scope of the Budget Committee, Business Committee and the Committee of Disposition shall be  
692 determined by the United Church of Christ Board.  
693

#### 694 **Officers of the United Church of Christ**

695 214 The General Synod shall call by election, from among the members of the United Church of  
696 Christ, the General Minister and President, the Associate General Ministers, and such other  
697 officers of the United Church of Christ as the General Synod may from time to time determine.  
698

699 215 Each Officer of the United Church of Christ serves at the will of the General Synod, and may  
700 be terminated as an Officer of the United Church of Christ by the United Church of Christ Board  
701 acting as the General Synod ad interim in accordance with the United Church of Christ Board's  
702 procedures.  
703

704 216 The term of each Officer of the United Church of Christ shall be two regular meetings of the  
705 General Synod, terminating at the opening of the third regular meeting of the General Synod  
706 following such election, not to exceed three terms, and shall commence within ninety days  
707 following call by election by the General Synod. Officers of the United Church of Christ shall  
708 hold office until their successors have been elected and qualified and have assumed the duties of  
709 their office. Officers of the United Church of Christ may be reelected, but not more than twice,  
710 subject to the call by election of the General Synod.

711  
712 **General Minister and President**  
713 217 The General Minister and President, who shall have Ordained Ministerial Standing or  
714 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing, is called to ministry in and on behalf of the United Church  
715 of Christ upon election by the General Synod.  
716  
717 a) Spiritual Leader of the Church:  
718 The General Minister and President is the spiritual leader and pastor of the Church,  
719 charged with the care and nurture of the spiritual life of the Church. The General Minister  
720 and President is responsible for the unity and well-being of the Church, and for nurturing  
721 its covenantal life and ecumenical and interfaith relationships, and leading the visioning,  
722 planning, coordination and implementation of the total mission of the United Church of  
723 Christ.  
724  
725 b) Theological Interpreter:  
726 The General Minister and President is the principal leader in interpreting the theological  
727 perspectives and values of the United Church of Christ as guided by the General Synod  
728 and in consultation with the Officers of the United Church of Christ. The General  
729 Minister and President is the chief representative of the United Church of Christ in the  
730 public square and at ecumenical, interdenominational and interfaith tables.  
731  
732 c) Convener:  
733 The General Minister and President will convene and preside at the meetings of the  
734 Officers of the United Church of Christ. The General Minister and President is  
735 responsible for coordinated communication, fund raising and planning in collaboration  
736 with the Associate General Ministers. The General Minister and President is a member of  
737 the Mission Planning Council.  
738  
739 d) Chief Executive Officer:  
740 The General Minister and President is the Chief Executive Officer of the General Synod  
741 and is its principal spokesperson. The General Minister and President oversees the  
742 administration of the National Setting offices. The General Minister and President leads  
743 and directs the work of the Associate General Ministers and the Officers of the United  
744 Church of Christ. The General Minister and President is the executive ultimately  
745 responsible for all hiring and termination decisions in the National Setting of the United  
746 Church of Christ. The General Minister and President may from time to time delegate  
747 administrative responsibilities as the needs of the Church and good judgment dictate.  
748  
749 The General Minister and President serves as the corporate President of the United Church of  
750 Christ Board, each of the Covenanted Ministries, ~~the Common Services Corporation of the~~  
751 ~~United Church of Christ~~, and all other corporations related to the Covenanted Ministries. The  
752 General Minister and President determines the delegation and direction of the work of the  
753 Covenanted Ministries to the Associate General Ministers, with the affirmation of the United  
754 Church of Christ Board.  
755  
756 The General Minister and President serves as an ex-officio member in all meetings of the  
757 Affiliated and Associated Ministries. The General Minister and President shall serve as an ex-  
758 officio member, with voice, but not vote, in the meetings of all Commissions, Councils, and  
759 Committees of the United Church of Christ, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution and  
760 Bylaws of the United Church of Christ; except that the General Minister and President shall not  
761 participate in the work of the Search Committee for the General Minister and President. The

762 General Minister and President shall be the official representative of the Church in ecumenical,  
763 interdenominational, and interfaith relations. The General Minister and President may appoint a  
764 representative for such occasions as the General Minister and President deems advisable.

765  
766 218 The General Minister and President is accountable to the General Synod and the United  
767 Church of Christ Board, acting as the General Synod ad interim.

768  
769 219 The candidate for the position of General Minister and President is nominated for an initial  
770 term by a search committee of the United Church of Christ, broadly representative of the Church,  
771 and appointed by the United Church of Christ Board. The search committee includes at least one  
772 Conference Minister named by the Council of Conference Ministers and one representative of the  
773 Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries to be selected, in the first instance, from the COREM  
774 members on the United Church of Christ Board, each with voice and vote. At least one member  
775 shall be a youth or young adult. The affirmative action commitment of the Church is to be fully  
776 respected in the search process and diversity maintained in the membership of the Officers of the  
777 United Church of Christ. The candidate chosen by the search committee is confirmed by a two-  
778 thirds vote of the United Church of Christ Board before the candidate's name is placed before the  
779 General Synod. Only one nominee may be presented for election, and nominations may not be  
780 made from the floor. An affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the General Synod is  
781 necessary for election and call. The General Minister and President does not participate in the  
782 work of the search committee choosing a successor. The General Minister and President is  
783 evaluated regularly through a process approved by the United Church of Christ Board. In the  
784 event that the General Minister and President is unable to discharge the responsibilities of that  
785 Office, or if there is a vacancy in that Office, the United Church of Christ Board shall name an  
786 Associate General Minister to serve as Acting General Minister and President until the General  
787 Minister and President returns to service or is replaced by a successor elected by the General  
788 Synod after a search process.

789  
790 **Associate General Ministers**

791 220 An Associate General Minister may be a lay person, an authorized minister, or a person with  
792 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing. Each Associate General Minister serves as an appointed  
793 member of the United Church of Christ Board and accordingly as a member of the Board of  
794 Directors of each Covenanted Ministry.

795  
796 221 Each Associate General Minister will be responsible for the work of the Covenanted  
797 Ministries, as delegated and directed by the General Minister and President and affirmed by the  
798 United Church of Christ Board of Directors.

799  
800 222 As led by the General Minister and President, each Associate General Minister will be  
801 involved in the overall functions of the National Setting, including visioning and planning,  
802 communications, development and management of budgets, development and leadership of staff,  
803 and implementation of policies adopted by the General Synod and the United Church of Christ  
804 Board.

805  
806 223 Each Associate General Minister will be accountable to the General Synod through the  
807 United Church of Christ Board. Each Associate General Minister serves at the will of the United  
808 Church of Christ Board and may be terminated by the United Church of Christ Board, acting as  
809 the General Synod ad interim, in accordance with its procedures.

810  
811 224 Each Associate General Minister is an Officer of the United Church of Christ.

812

813 225 Each Associate General Minister is to be nominated for an initial term by a search committee  
814 of the United Church of Christ broadly representative of the Church, appointed by and from the  
815 United Church of Christ Board. The search committee shall include the General Minister and  
816 President; one Conference Minister, named by the Council of Conference Ministers; one  
817 representative of the Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries to be selected, in the first instance,  
818 from the COREM members on the Board of Directors and one representative of the UCC  
819 Disabilities Ministries to be selected, in the first instance, from the UCC Disabilities Ministries  
820 member on the Board of Directors, each with voice and vote. At least one member shall be a  
821 youth or young adult. The affirmative action commitment of the Church is to be fully respected in  
822 the search process and diversity maintained in the membership of the Officers of the United  
823 Church of Christ. The candidate chosen by the search committee is to be confirmed by a two-  
824 thirds vote of the United Church of Christ Board of Directors before the candidate's name is  
825 placed in nomination before the General Synod. Only one nominee may be presented for election,  
826 and nominations may not be made from the floor. An affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of  
827 the General Synod is necessary for the call by election. An Associate General Minister does not  
828 participate in the work of the search committee choosing a successor. The Associate General  
829 Minister is evaluated regularly by a process approved by the United Church of Christ Board of  
830 Directors. The evaluation process shall include the General Minister and President, with voice  
831 and vote. Terms of office shall begin within ninety days following their election. An Associate  
832 General Minister shall hold office until the Associate General Minister's successor has been  
833 elected and qualified and has assumed the duties of the Office.

834  
835 226 In the event that an Associate General Minister is unable to discharge the responsibilities of  
836 that position, or if there is a vacancy in the office, the United Church of Christ Board of  
837 Directors, in consultation with the General Minister and President, may appoint an Acting  
838 Associate General Minister, who shall be an Acting Officer of the Church, according to its rules  
839 and procedures acting as the General Synod ad interim. An Acting Associate General Minister  
840 shall serve until the Associate General Minister returns to service, or is replaced by a successor  
841 called by election by the General Synod.

#### 842 843 **United Church of Christ Board**

844 227 The United Church of Christ Board continues the work of, and acts as agent for, predecessor  
845 bodies, and continues other ministries, as specified in the Constitution of the United Church of  
846 Christ.

847  
848 228 The United Church of Christ Board shall consist of up to 52 members. Thirty-six members  
849 shall serve in at-large positions and up to 16 members shall be appointed members with voice and  
850 vote. The composition of the United Church of Christ Board shall embody the commitment of the  
851 United Church of Christ to be a ~~multicultural and multiracial~~ diverse, equitable, and inclusive  
852 Church open and accessible to all, reflecting ~~the racial and ethnic diversity of society with a~~  
853 balance of leadership between women and men among people of diverse races, ethnicities,  
854 genders, gender expressions, and sexuality, open and accessible to all. All members of the United  
855 Church of Christ Board shall be voting members, except as legally proscribed and noted below.

856  
857 229 The 36 at-large members, nominated by the General Synod Nominating Committee, and  
858 elected by the General Synod as members of the United Church of Christ Board, shall reflect the  
859 following composition at the time of their election:

- 860  
861 • ~~50% or more~~ A majority shall be persons of color.

862 • ~~50% or more~~A majority shall be persons who identify as women, both transgender and  
863 cisgender; non-binary persons; or gender non-conforming persons. The remaining members may  
864 be persons who identify as men, both transgender and cisgender.  
865 • ~~1/3~~One-third shall be authorized ministers or persons with Ordained Ministerial Partner  
866 Standing.  
867 • ~~1/3 shall be laymen.~~  
868 • ~~1/3 shall be laywomen~~Two-thirds shall be laypersons.  
869 • ~~20%~~Twenty percent shall be under 30 years of age. To the extent possible, the under 30 years of  
870 age members shall include both youth of high school age and young adults. All such members  
871 shall be voting members except as legally proscribed.  
872 • At least one member shall be a person who self-identifies as having a disability.  
873 • At least one member shall be a person who self-identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or asexual.  
874 At least one member shall be a person who self-identifies as transgender.  
875  
876 a) At-large members shall serve one term of three regular meetings of the General Synod,  
877 which shall commence at the close of the General Synod at which the person is elected  
878 and qualified and shall terminate at the close of the General Synod in which a successor  
879 is elected and qualified. At-large members shall be divided into three classes of 12  
880 members each, with a class of 12 members being elected at each General Synod. No at-  
881 large member who has served more than one-half of a full term shall be nominated to  
882 serve again until at least one regular meeting of the General Synod has elapsed.  
883 Nominations for the at-large positions shall be solicited from all entities and  
884 organizations within the United Church of Christ. There shall not be more than three at-  
885 large members from any one Conference at the time of an individual's election.  
886  
887 b) The General Synod Nominating Committee nominates these persons after submission  
888 of names, according to the procedures established in these Bylaws, and criteria  
889 determined by the Nominating Committee. In order to fulfill its responsibilities to ensure  
890 that the membership of the United Church of Christ Board reflects the diversity to which  
891 the United Church of Christ is committed, the Nominating Committee may ask for  
892 additional names to be submitted.  
893  
894 230 Appointed members of the United Church of Christ Board with voice and vote shall include:  
895  
896 a) The Officers of the United Church of Christ.  
897  
898 b) The Moderator and the Assistant Moderator of the General Synod.  
899  
900 c) One member designated by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to serve a term  
901 of two years. Any such member shall be eligible to serve up to two additional terms and  
902 not to exceed three terms.  
903  
904 d) Six principal ministers of Conferences, one to be elected from each Region by the  
905 Council of Conference Ministers for a term of two years, not to exceed two consecutive  
906 terms. If any such member ceases during the member's term of office on the United  
907 Church of Christ Board to be the principal minister of a Conference within the Region  
908 from which said member was elected, a vacancy shall be thereby created to be filled by  
909 election by the Council of Conference Ministers.  
910  
911 e) The Executive of the United Church Funds, Inc.  
912



- 913 f) The Executive of The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ  
 914  
 915 g) The Executive of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries  
 916  
 917 231 Although members of the United Church of Christ Board may be nominated or selected by  
 918 particular groups, each member serves on behalf of, and bears responsibility for, the well-being of  
 919 the whole Church.  
 920  
 921 232 The United Church of Christ Board shall elect, from its members who are elected by the  
 922 General Synod, a chairperson and a vice-chairperson according to its own Standing Rules.  
 923  
 924 233 The United Church of Christ Board shall appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer, who shall not  
 925 be members of the United Church of Christ Board, and shall have voice but no vote. The  
 926 Secretary and the Treasurer may be appointed from staff members at the National Setting, who  
 927 shall report to the General Minister and President, who is directly accountable to the United  
 928 Church of Christ Board.  
 929  
 930 234 The Secretary and the Treasurer shall have the customary duties of a corporate secretary and  
 931 treasurer to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.  
 932

933 **Responsibilities of the United Church of Christ Board**

- 934 235 The United Church of Christ Board shall act for the General Synod ad interim, and, in  
 935 cooperation with the Officers of the United Church of Christ, shall provide coordination and  
 936 evaluation of the work of the Church and shall carry out such other responsibilities as may be  
 937 from time to time delegated to it by the General Synod or as provided for in these Bylaws or the  
 938 Constitution.  
 939  
 940 a) The United Church of Christ Board shall be responsible for strategic planning and  
 941 policymaking. The Committees of the United Church of Christ Board shall make  
 942 recommendations to the members of the United Church of Christ Board for strategic  
 943 planning, policymaking, and oversight purposes. The United Church of Christ Board  
 944 shall receive recommendations from the Investment and Endowment Committee  
 945 regarding the annual draw rate on invested funds that may be used to carry out the  
 946 mission entrusted to the Covenanted Ministries. Recommendations as to the annual draw  
 947 rate and as to the allocation of the annual dollar amounts resulting from the application of  
 948 the annual draw rate to each of the restricted endowment funds and to each of the historic  
 949 donor intended uses of each of the unrestricted endowment funds shall not be modified  
 950 by the United Church of Christ Board except upon a two-thirds vote of the members  
 951 present of the full Board.  
 952  
 953 b) The United Church of Christ Board is responsible for policies relating to the mission  
 954 of the United Church of Christ in its National Setting. It shall support the on-going work  
 955 of the General Synod through its various ministries, planning for and encouraging  
 956 cooperation among those ministries, with Local Churches, Associations, and  
 957 Conferences, and with other expressions of the Church which contribute to and embody  
 958 God’s mission in Jesus Christ. It shall support the spiritual and financial health of the  
 959 Church, and shall ensure the presence and implementation of policies which contribute to  
 960 the health of the Covenanted Ministries in relationship with one another and their  
 961 accountability to the General Synod. It shall receive reports from the Officers of the  
 962 United Church of Christ and provide oversight and support for the work of that body. It  
 963 shall facilitate the business of the General Synod and assume such other tasks as may be

964 assigned to it by the General Synod. It shall be a focal point for decision-making, overall  
965 planning and evaluation, and budgeting in the National Setting. It shall receive and report  
966 upon divergent points of view and maintain an open channel for the consideration of  
967 minority or dissenting opinion. It shall submit a report of its work to the General Synod at  
968 each regular meeting. In cooperation with the Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated  
969 Ministries it shall make an annual informational report to the Local Churches and the  
970 Conferences about the total program of the Church in the National Setting.  
971

972 236 Vacancies occurring in offices, commissions, or committees of the General Synod, or in the  
973 membership of the United Church of Christ Board, shall, unless otherwise provided, be filled by  
974 the United Church of Christ Board acting as the General Synod ad interim, such actions to be  
975 reported to the next General Synod.  
976

977 237 The United Church of Christ Board shall make such elections, nominations or appointments  
978 as these Bylaws or action of the General Synod may require.  
979

980 238 Acting as the Budget Committee for the General Synod, the United Church of Christ Board  
981 shall determine the allocation of funds from denominational support. The United Church of Christ  
982 Board, acting as the Budget Committee, shall also receive and review the past and projected use  
983 of denominational funds allocated to each Covenanted Ministry and recommend the  
984 denominational support threshold amount for ~~the~~ each General Synod regular meeting interval.  
985

986 239 The United Church of Christ Board shall be an incorporated body in order to ensure that it  
987 may effectively and expeditiously perform all legal functions of the General Synod and all of its  
988 other functions as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.  
989 The membership of the Corporation shall consist of those persons described in the Bylaws as  
990 members of the Board of Directors of the United Church of Christ, who shall be elected or  
991 affirmed in the manner therein provided and who shall have the right to vote only to the extent  
992 granted by the Bylaws. Those members shall also be the Directors of the Corporation. The  
993 Corporation shall have such officers as required by law and as provided in these Bylaws. The  
994 Corporation may adopt for its government and the management of its affairs bylaws and rules not  
995 inconsistent with its Articles of Incorporation nor with the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and  
996 regulations of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.  
997

998 240 The United Church of Christ Board shall serve as the Business Committee of the General  
999 Synod during its sessions, and as such shall prepare the agenda and schedule for all meetings of  
1000 the General Synod, recommend changes therein during sessions, and appoint committees not  
1001 otherwise provided.  
1002

1003 **Administration of the National Setting Offices**

1004 241 The General Minister and President shall oversee the administration of the National Setting  
1005 offices.  
1006

1007 **Committees of the United Church of Christ Board**

1008 242 The United Church of Christ Board shall have such other Committees as it may deem  
1009 necessary, including but not limited to those named hereafter, and each may draw on expertise  
1010 beyond the Board if necessary.  
1011

1012 **Ministry Committees**

1013 243 The United Church of Christ Board shall establish committees relating to the mission and  
1014 ministry of the United Church of Christ (the Ministry Committees). Each Ministry Committee

1015 shall make recommendations to the United Church of Christ Board regarding ministry priorities  
1016 and policy. The Ministry Committees will honor the diversity commitments of the United Church  
1017 of Christ and work in covenant with each other and National Setting staff. To the extent possible  
1018 while still maintaining expertise needed on the Ministry Committees, the composition of each  
1019 Ministry Committee shall embody the commitment of the United Church of Christ to a  
1020 multicultural and multiracial Church, with leadership reflecting race and gender diversity, open  
1021 and accessible to all. To the extent possible while still maintaining expertise needed on the  
1022 Ministry Committees, each United Church of Christ Board member will be assigned to a Ministry  
1023 Committee based on that individual's experience, expertise, personal passion and spiritual calling.  
1024 Individuals also will be considered based on the role that they may serve as members of the  
1025 Common Global Ministries Board, the mission partnership between the United Church of Christ  
1026 and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Each Ministry Committee will elect a chairperson  
1027 and a vice-chairperson, subject to the requirement that at least one of these positions must be held  
1028 by a person of color in each Ministry Committee.  
1029

1030 **Executive Committee**

1031 244 The Executive Committee shall consist of up to 16 members of the United Church of Christ  
1032 Board, as follows:

- 1033
- 1034 a) Chairperson and vice-chairperson of the United Church of Christ Board
  - 1035
  - 1036 b) Chairperson of the Audit Committee, Finance and Budget Committee, Governance  
1037 Committee, Investment and Endowment Committee, and Development Committee
  - 1038
  - 1039 c) The Officers of the United Church of Christ
  - 1040
  - 1041 d) One Conference Minister
  - 1042
  - 1043 e) Moderator of the General Synod
  - 1044
  - 1045 f) Three additional at-large members, one from each of the three classes
  - 1046
  - 1047 g) To the extent possible while still maintaining diversity and expertise, the composition  
1048 of the Executive Committee shall embody the commitment of the United Church of  
1049 Christ to a multicultural and multiracial Church, with membership reflecting age, race,  
1050 and gender diversity, open and accessible to all.

1051

1052 245 The Executive Committee shall have the responsibility to ensure that visioning and strategic  
1053 planning be done on behalf of the National Setting of the Church. It will lead the United Church  
1054 of Christ Board in developing and articulating comprehensive and integrated strategies and goals  
1055 for the National Setting. The Executive Committee will facilitate the United Church of Christ  
1056 Board's identification of concerns and ideas related to communications, identity, fundraising,  
1057 fund development, strategic planning, evangelism, and other critical issues for the life of the  
1058 whole Church. The decision-making power and authority of the Executive Committee shall be  
1059 governed by the standing rules of the United Church of Christ Board.  
1060

1061 **Finance and Budget Committee**

1062 246 The Finance and Budget Committee shall consist of up to 12 members of the United Church  
1063 of Christ Board, including:

- 1064
- 1065 a) Chairperson or vice-chairperson of the United Church of Christ Board

1066  
1067           b) Six representatives of the United Church of Christ Board  
1068  
1069           c) General Minister and President  
1070  
1071 247 The duties and responsibilities of the Committee include:  
1072  
1073           a) Reviewing the annual available resources and being responsible for financial planning.  
1074  
1075           b) Reviewing the proposed Annual Budget recommended by the General Minister and  
1076           President in consultation with key staff and mission partners, such as Common Global  
1077           Ministries.  
1078  
1079           c) Recommending the Annual Budget to the United Church of Christ Board.  
1080  
1081           d) Receiving and reviewing regular financial reports.  
1082  
1083 **Investment and Endowment Committee**  
1084 248 The Investment and Endowment Committee shall consist of up to 14 members and shall be  
1085 members of the United Church of Christ Board (except as noted below), including:  
1086  
1087           a) Six representatives from the United Church of Christ Board  
1088  
1089           b) The Officers of the United Church of Christ  
1090  
1091           c) The Executive of the United Church Funds, Inc., with voice but without vote  
1092  
1093           d) The United Church of Christ Board, by vote of its membership, may add up to three  
1094           individuals with legal and/or investment expertise who are not members of the United  
1095           Church of Christ Board but are members of the United Church of Christ.  
1096  
1097 249 The duties and responsibilities of the Committee include:  
1098  
1099           a) Assuring that the legacy/historic restrictions on the use of restricted funds and the  
1100           intended use restrictions of the unrestricted funds of each of the historic ministries are  
1101           monitored, accounted for, maintained and reported to the United Church of Christ Board  
1102           annually. The Committee shall monitor and oversee the allocation of both restricted and  
1103           unrestricted funds to ensure that they will be allocated based on donor intent, whenever  
1104           that can be determined and to provide the full Board an overview of all funds in order to  
1105           encourage the most effective collaborative and holistic use of those funds to meet the  
1106           missional needs of the Church.  
1107  
1108           b) Recommending to the United Church of Christ Board investment policies including  
1109           investment screens that reflect the commitment of the United Church of Christ to  
1110           corporate social responsibility.  
1111  
1112           c) Managing the investment of the endowed funds and other assets including real  
1113           property in accordance with investment policies approved by the United Church of Christ  
1114           Board.  
1115

- 1116 d) Monitoring and reporting on the management of invested funds to the United Church  
 1117 of Christ Board.  
 1118  
 1119 e) Recommending to the United Church of Christ Board the annual draw rate on invested  
 1120 funds that may be used to carry out the mission entrusted to the Covenanted Ministries.  
 1121 Recommendations as to the annual draw rate and as to the allocation of the annual dollar  
 1122 amounts resulting from the application of the annual draw rate to each of the restricted  
 1123 endowment funds and to each of the historic donor intended uses of each of the  
 1124 unrestricted endowment funds shall be accepted by the United Church of Christ Board  
 1125 unless modified by a vote of two-thirds of the members present of the full Board.  
 1126  
 1127 f) Reviewing, monitoring and recommending to the United Church of Christ Board the  
 1128 allocation of the annual dollar amounts resulting from the application of the spending rate  
 1129 to each of the restricted endowment funds and to each of the historic donor intended uses  
 1130 of each of the unrestricted endowment funds.  
 1131  
 1132 g) Providing Board representation to the Investment Committee of the United Church  
 1133 Funds, Inc.  
 1134

1135 **Audit Committee**

1136 250 The Audit Committee shall consist of such members as determined by the United Church of  
 1137 Christ Board, provided that members of the Board must comprise a majority of the members of  
 1138 the Audit Committee. The United Church of Christ Board, by vote of its membership, may  
 1139 include on the Audit Committee individuals with legal and/or financial expertise who are not  
 1140 members of the United Church of Christ Board but are members of the United Church of Christ.  
 1141 All Committee members shall be voting members.  
 1142

1143 251 The duties and responsibilities of the Committee include:

- 1144  
 1145 a) Retaining the audit firm to perform the annual financial audit.  
 1146  
 1147 b) Receiving and reviewing the audit report from the auditors and reporting to the United  
 1148 Church of Christ Board.  
 1149  
 1150 c) Such other duties as assigned by the United Church of Christ Board.  
 1151

1152 **Regions**

1153 252 The United Church of Christ Board shall make an appropriate assignment of the several  
 1154 Conferences into Regions. The Regions as thus determined shall form the basis for Conference  
 1155 representation on national bodies wherever required by the Bylaws.  
 1156

1157 **Organization of the United Church of Christ Board**

1158 253 The United Church of Christ Board shall organize itself as it deems necessary to carry out its  
 1159 responsibilities and fulfill its mandates.  
 1160

1161 **Advisory Commissions**

1162 254 The United Church of Christ Board may provide for special advisory commissions on  
 1163 subjects of pervasive interest to the entire Church on which the United Church of Christ Board  
 1164 and/or the General Minister and President need policy or substantive advice. Members of such  
 1165 commissions and its chairperson shall be appointed by the United Church of Christ Board

1166 pursuant to its Standing Rules and shall include at least one member of the United Church of  
1167 Christ Board.

1168

1169 **Common Services**

1170 ~~255 In covenant with the Covenanted Ministries, the United Church of Christ Board, through and~~  
1171 ~~by the Common Services Corporation of the United Church of Christ, shall provide for common~~  
1172 ~~services, including, but not limited to, common treasury services, accounting services, personnel~~  
1173 ~~services, logistical services, information services and office support services. It shall also provide~~  
1174 ~~for a common salary program and shall provide common personnel policies.~~

1175

1176 ~~256 Each Covenanted Ministry shall use the aforementioned common services, program and~~  
1177 ~~policies whenever legally permissible and otherwise appropriate, all as determined by its own~~  
1178 ~~board of directors.~~

1179

1180 ~~257 A nonprofit corporation shall be formed for the purpose of providing the above-described~~  
1181 ~~common services. The corporation, to be named the Common Services Corporation of the United~~  
1182 ~~Church of Christ, shall be governed by its articles of incorporation, rules, and bylaws, and the~~  
1183 ~~Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ. The General Minister and President~~  
1184 ~~shall be the principal executive of the Common Services Corporation of the United Church of~~  
1185 ~~Christ. The number of directors of the Common Services Corporation of the United Church of~~  
1186 ~~Christ shall be up to ten, consisting of:~~

1187

1188 ~~i. Two representatives of, and selected by, Local Church Ministries;~~

1189

1190 ~~ii. Two representatives of, and selected by, Justice and Witness Ministries;~~

1191

1192 ~~iii. Two representatives of, and selected by, Wider Church Ministries;~~

1193

1194 ~~iv. General Minister and President; and~~

1195

1196 ~~v. Key operations, financial services, and human resources personnel as deemed~~  
1197 ~~necessary by the General Minister and President.~~

1198

1199 ~~The directors of the Common Services Corporation of the United Church of Christ shall be the~~  
1200 ~~members of the corporation. The board of directors shall appoint such committees, with such~~  
1201 ~~responsibilities, as it deems necessary to carry out its work. The corporate officers of the~~  
1202 ~~Common Services Corporation of the United Church of Christ shall be the following:~~

1203

1204 ~~(i) General Minister and President, who as President of this corporation shall be~~  
1205 ~~accountable to the board of directors;~~

1206

1207 ~~(ii) A Secretary, who shall be appointed by and report to the General Minister and~~  
1208 ~~President;~~

1209

1210 ~~(iii) A Treasurer, who shall be appointed by and report to the General Minister and~~  
1211 ~~President.~~

1212

1213 ~~258 Policy decisions related to the Common Services Corporation of the United Church of Christ~~  
1214 ~~shall be the responsibility of the board of directors of the Common Services Corporation of the~~  
1215 ~~United Church of Christ.~~

1216

1217 **ARTICLE IV. ORGANIZATION**

1218 259 The work of the United Church of Christ shall be carried out by the United Church of Christ  
1219 Board, the Covenanted, Affiliated, Associated Ministries, Councils, and other such bodies as may  
1220 from time to time be created by, or related to, the General Synod or the United Church of Christ  
1221 Board.

1222

1223 **COVENANTED MINISTRIES**

1224 260 The Covenanted Ministries are Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, and  
1225 Wider Church Ministries.

1226

1227 261 The General Minister and President oversees the programmatic work of the Covenanted  
1228 Ministries, which shall be carried out in accordance with the policies, planning, and broad  
1229 oversight of the United Church of Christ Board as provided in these Bylaws.

1230

1231 **LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRIES**

1232 **Purpose and Mission**

1233 262 The purpose and mission of Local Church Ministries shall be to encourage and support the  
1234 Local Churches of the United Church of Christ in the fulfillment of God's mission. It continues  
1235 the work of, and acts as agent for, predecessor bodies, and continues other ministries, as specified  
1236 in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ and as described in its articles of incorporation.  
1237 The program, administrative, and financial development functions of Local Church Ministries  
1238 shall be carried out in cooperation with the United Church of Christ Board. The United Church of  
1239 Christ Board shall oversee these functions, which will be coordinated and implemented by staff  
1240 assigned by the General Minister and President. Local Church Ministries shall retain  
1241 responsibility for all legacies and other property received, maintained or held by it, and shall have  
1242 sole authority to approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or other property.

1243

1244 263 In overseeing the purpose and mission of Local Church Ministries, the United Church of  
1245 Christ Board shall encourage Local Churches to shape their life and mission in partnership with  
1246 one another, with other expressions of the Church, and with ecumenical and interfaith  
1247 communities. The United Church of Christ Board will work to promote the vocation of all  
1248 members, leadership of laity and clergy, and facilitate a system of ecclesiastical call. The United  
1249 Church of Christ Board will nurture stewards, and will coordinate and promote denomination-  
1250 wide mission funding. The United Church of Christ Board will work with Local Churches in  
1251 striving for the vitality of Local Churches as inclusive and accessible communities of mission,  
1252 evangelism, church development, education, unity, worship, nurture, and justice so that the good  
1253 news of Jesus Christ will be proclaimed in word and deed.

1254

1255 264 The United Church of Christ Board shall work in interactive partnership with Local  
1256 Churches, Associations, Conferences, and national expressions of the Church.

1257

1258 **Governance and Leadership**

1259 265 Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, Local Church Ministries shall be  
1260 incorporated and governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the members of the United  
1261 Church of Christ Board. It shall act pursuant to the provisions as defined in the Constitution and  
1262 Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, its own articles of incorporation and bylaws, and by the  
1263 rules of its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors of Local Church Ministries performs the  
1264 functions normally associated with boards of directors, and such additional tasks necessary to  
1265 carry out its purposes and mandates, including the formation of associated auxiliary corporations.  
1266 Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, it has legal corporate status for the  
1267 purpose of holding, receiving, and managing unrestricted, restricted, and designated allocated

1268 funds, and funds donated to it from all sources. It is responsible for its articles of incorporation  
1269 and required corporate documents, and establishes its own rules and bylaws. It has responsibility  
1270 for organizing its ministries in order to carry out its mandates, for providing necessary staffing,  
1271 and for determining the manner and site(s) of its office(s). The Board of Directors may grant  
1272 authority to sub-units, ministry teams, or other appropriate entities, to speak and act on its behalf  
1273 within its own broad policy statements and those of the General Synod of the United Church of  
1274 Christ. The Board of Directors may form task groups representing a variety of groups of the  
1275 Church necessary for implementing its mission.  
1276

1277 266 Members of the Board of Directors of Local Church Ministries serve on behalf of the whole  
1278 Church.  
1279

## 1280 **JUSTICE AND WITNESS MINISTRIES**

### 1281 **Purpose and Mission**

1282 267 The purpose and mission of Justice and Witness Ministries shall be to enable and encourage  
1283 Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and national expressions of the United Church of  
1284 Christ to engage in God's mission globally by direct action for the integrity of creation, justice,  
1285 and peace. It continues the work of, and acts as agent for, predecessor bodies, and continues other  
1286 ministries, as specified in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ and as described in its  
1287 articles of incorporation. The program, administrative, and financial development functions of  
1288 Justice and Witness Ministries shall be carried out in cooperation with the United Church of  
1289 Christ Board. The United Church of Christ Board shall oversee these functions, which will be  
1290 coordinated and implemented by staff assigned by the General Minister and President. Justice and  
1291 Witness Ministries shall retain responsibility for all legacies and other property received,  
1292 maintained or held by it, and shall have sole authority to approve any use, expenditure or disposal  
1293 of its legacies or other property.  
1294

1295 268 In overseeing the purpose and mission of Justice and Witness Ministries, the United Church  
1296 of Christ Board shall encourage the Church in all of its expressions to speak prophetically on  
1297 matters of justice, power, and public policy. The United Church of Christ Board shall assist the  
1298 Church in all of its expressions to confront expressions of injustice and alienation in the Church  
1299 and in the society. The United Church of Christ Board shall provide support for the Church's  
1300 ministry of service on behalf of those who are poor, the forgotten and the oppressed, and for those  
1301 marginalized by stigma and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or their disabilities,  
1302 including mental illness. The United Church of Christ Board may provide public witness on  
1303 behalf of the justice and witness policies of the General Synod.  
1304

1305 269 The United Church of Christ Board shall work in interactive partnership with Local  
1306 Churches, Associations, Conferences, national expressions of the Church, and with ecumenical  
1307 and interfaith groups, and community organizations.  
1308

### 1309 **Governance and Leadership**

1310 270 Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
1311 shall be incorporated and governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the members of the  
1312 United Church of Christ Board. It shall act pursuant to the provisions as defined in the  
1313 Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, its own articles of incorporation and  
1314 bylaws, and by the rules of its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors of Justice and Witness  
1315 Ministries performs the functions normally associated with boards of directors, and such  
1316 additional tasks necessary to carry out its purposes and mandates, including the formation of  
1317 associated auxiliary corporations. Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, it  
1318 has legal corporate status for the purpose of holding, receiving, and managing unrestricted,



1319 restricted, and designated allocated funds, and funds donated to it from all sources. It is  
1320 responsible for its articles of incorporation and required corporate documents, and establishes its  
1321 own rules and bylaws. It has responsibility for organizing its ministries in order to carry out its  
1322 mandates, for providing necessary staffing, and for determining the manner and site(s) of its  
1323 office(s). The Board of Directors may grant authority to sub-units, ministry teams, or other  
1324 appropriate entities, to speak and act on its behalf within its own broad policy statements and  
1325 those of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. The Board of Directors may form task  
1326 groups representing a variety of groups of the Church necessary for implementing its mission.  
1327

1328 271 Members of the Board of Directors of Justice and Witness Ministries serve on behalf of the  
1329 whole Church.  
1330

## 1331 **WIDER CHURCH MINISTRIES**

### 1332 **Purpose and Mission**

1333 272 The purpose and mission of Wider Church Ministries shall be to encourage and support  
1334 Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and national expressions of the United Church of  
1335 Christ to participate in the global, multiracial, multicultural church, accessible to all, and to  
1336 support United Church of Christ ministries around the world and the nation. It continues the work  
1337 of, and acts as agent for, predecessor bodies and continues other ministries, as specified in the  
1338 Constitution of the United Church of Christ and as described in its articles of incorporation. The  
1339 program, administrative, and financial development functions of Wider Church Ministries shall  
1340 be carried out in cooperation with the United Church of Christ Board. The United Church of  
1341 Christ Board shall oversee these functions, which will be coordinated and implemented by staff  
1342 assigned by the General Minister and President. Wider Church Ministries shall retain  
1343 responsibility for all legacies and other property received, maintained or held by it, and shall have  
1344 sole authority to approve any use, expenditure or disposal of its legacies or other property.  
1345

1346 273 In overseeing the purpose and mission of Wider Church Ministries, the United Church of  
1347 Christ Board shall strengthen relationships with partner churches and oversee participation in the  
1348 Common Global Ministries Board in joint venture with the Christian Church (Disciples of  
1349 Christ). The United Church of Christ Board shall provide support for institutional ministries in  
1350 health care, education, disaster relief, and social services in the United States and internationally.  
1351 It shall also coordinate volunteer ministries in all expressions of the Church. In cooperation with  
1352 partner churches it shall promote interfaith dialogue and global education and advocacy issues.  
1353 Through the Common Global Ministries Board, the United Church of Christ Board shall oversee  
1354 the sending and receiving of missionaries.  
1355

1356 274 The United Church of Christ Board shall work in interactive partnership with Local  
1357 Churches, Associations, Conferences, and national expressions of the Church and of the  
1358 ecumenical and interfaith bodies.  
1359

1360 275 **Governance and Leadership** Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ,  
1361 Wider Church Ministries shall be incorporated and governed by a Board of Directors comprised  
1362 of the members of the United Church of Christ Board. It shall act pursuant to the provisions as  
1363 defined in the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, its own articles of  
1364 incorporation and bylaws, and by the rules of its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors of  
1365 Wider Church Ministries performs the functions normally associated with boards of directors, and  
1366 such additional tasks necessary to carry out its purposes and mandates, including the formation of  
1367 associated auxiliary corporations. Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, it  
1368 has legal corporate status for the purpose of holding, receiving, and managing unrestricted,  
1369 restricted, and designated allocated funds, and funds donated to it from all sources. It is

1370 responsible for its articles of incorporation and required corporate documents, and establishes its  
1371 own rules and bylaws. It has responsibility for organizing its ministries in order to carry out its  
1372 mandates, for providing necessary staffing, and for determining the manner and site(s) of its  
1373 office(s). The Board of Directors may grant authority to sub-units, ministry teams, or other  
1374 appropriate entities, to speak and act on its behalf within its own broad policy statements and  
1375 those of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. The Board of Directors may form task  
1376 groups representing a variety of groups of the Church necessary for implementing its mission.  
1377

1378 276 Members of the Board of Directors of Wider Church Ministries serve on behalf of the whole  
1379 Church.

1380  
1381 **OFFICERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1382 277 The Officers of the United Church of Christ, defined in Article IV of the Constitution of the  
1383 United Church of Christ, support and consult with the United Church of Christ Board and the  
1384 Covenanted Ministries in carrying out their work in a spirit of coordination and cooperation. The  
1385 General Minister and President is the presiding Officer. Led by the General Minister and  
1386 President, the Officers of the United Church of Christ are responsible for providing leadership for  
1387 the mission programming in the United Church of Christ and for the proper implementation of  
1388 General Synod actions. The Officers of the United Church of Christ coordinate research, long-  
1389 range planning, program evaluation, and report on the ongoing programs of the United Church of  
1390 Christ.

1391  
1392 278 The Officers of the United Church of Christ are convened by the General Minister and  
1393 President as the presiding officer and consult with the United Church of Christ Board and the  
1394 General Synod. They shall consult regularly with the leaders of the Affiliated and Associated  
1395 Ministries of the United Church of Christ. They meet regularly with the Cabinet of the Council of  
1396 Conference Ministers.

1397  
1398 **MISSION PLANNING COUNCIL**

1399 279 The Mission Planning Council provides a multi-missional setting which brings together the  
1400 Officers of the United Church of Christ, and principal staff of the United Church of Christ Board  
1401 and the Covenanted, Associated, and Affiliated Ministries of the United Church of Christ, for  
1402 planning coordinated ministries and for visioning and exploring new perspectives over a wide  
1403 range of mission, theological, ecumenical, spiritual, stewardship, financial, justice,  
1404 communications, gender, disability, and racial issues and concerns. The Mission Planning  
1405 Council is responsible for the coordination and correlation of mission and purpose and for  
1406 maintaining mutual trust, mutual accountability, and the wise use of leadership and talents. It is  
1407 designed to encourage cooperation and sharing of talents among the Ministries. The Mission  
1408 Planning Council may invite others to participate, including representatives of Conferences and  
1409 partner churches, as it deems appropriate. The General Minister and President coordinates the  
1410 tasks, meetings, agendas, and follow-up actions of the Mission Planning Council.

1411  
1412 **AFFILIATED MINISTRY**

1413 280 Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, The Pension Boards—United  
1414 Church of Christ is an Affiliated Ministry of the United Church of Christ and serves the Church  
1415 and its United Church of Christ Board and Covenanted Ministries as a separate corporation.

1416  
1417 281 The purpose of The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ is to make available  
1418 ministerial welfare activities and a system of employee benefit programs designed to assist  
1419 authorized ministers and lay workers in achieving financial security during working and  
1420 retirement years.

1421  
1422 282 The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ continues as a nonprofit membership  
1423 corporation which determines its own governance and leadership. The Pension Boards—United  
1424 Church of Christ will have membership on the United Church of Christ Board.  
1425

1426 **ASSOCIATED MINISTRY**

1427 283 Pursuant to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, the United Church Funds, Inc., is  
1428 an Associated Ministry of the United Church of Christ Board of the United Church of Christ, and  
1429 serves the Church, the United Church of Christ Board and the Covenanted Ministries as a  
1430 separate corporation related to the United Church of Christ Board.  
1431

1432 284 The purpose of the United Church Funds, Inc. is to provide a means by which individuals and  
1433 organizations of the Church may further exercise their stewardship of resources for the sake of  
1434 strengthening the mission of the Church as set forth in the Constitution of the United Church of  
1435 Christ.  
1436

1437 285 The United Church Funds, Inc. will work cooperatively with the United Church of Christ  
1438 Board to facilitate comprehensive financial planning and development; and will continue its  
1439 relationship with The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ. It shall have membership on the  
1440 United Church of Christ Board.  
1441

1442 286 The corporate membership of the United Church Funds, Inc. shall consist of 15 persons  
1443 nominated and elected by the United Church of Christ Board for terms of six years, one-third to  
1444 be elected each biennium and to serve until their respective successors are elected and qualified.  
1445 The General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and the chairperson of the  
1446 United Church of Christ Board shall be appointed members. At least two of the members elected  
1447 each biennium shall not be members of the United Church Funds, Inc. at the time of their  
1448 election. The United Church of Christ Board may remove a member of the United Church Funds,  
1449 Inc. and shall fill vacancies for unexpired terms.  
1450

1451 **Other Provisions**

1452 287 No person shall serve in more than one General Synod elected position simultaneously.  
1453 Further, no employee of a Covenanted, Associated, or Affiliated Ministry shall serve as a voting  
1454 member of the United Church of Christ Board, except as otherwise set forth in these Bylaws.  
1455

1456 288 All members of the United Church of Christ Board, with the exception of the representatives  
1457 from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), shall be members of the United Church of Christ.  
1458

1459 **ARTICLE V. INDEMNIFICATION**

1460 289 Any Officer of the United Church of Christ, or any member, including officers and directors,  
1461 of the General Synod, the United Church of Christ Board or the Councils, Commissions, and  
1462 Committees of the General Synod may, to the full extent allowed by law, be indemnified by the  
1463 United Church of Christ Board against all judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement of,  
1464 and against all reasonable expenses, including attorney's fees, actually and necessarily, incurred  
1465 in defense of any lawsuit, proceeding or prosecution (including appeal thereof) wherein such  
1466 person is made a party by reason of being such officer or member to the extent such person is not  
1467 otherwise indemnified by another entity. This provision shall also extend to any lawsuit,  
1468 proceeding, or prosecution in which such officer or member is made a party in such person's  
1469 capacity as an officer or member of another organization in which the person serves at the request  
1470 of any of the above entities or bodies.  
1471

1472 290 In all other lawsuits, proceedings, or prosecutions, indemnity shall not be made unless the  
1473 officer or member acted in good faith and for a purpose which the person reasonably believed to  
1474 be in the best interests of the Entity or body of which the person is an officer or member and in  
1475 criminal actions or proceedings only upon the additional requirement that the person had no  
1476 reasonable cause to believe that the operative conduct or inaction was unlawful.  
1477

1478 291 These indemnity provisions shall also operate for the benefit of anyone duly serving in a  
1479 representative capacity for such member or officer.  
1480

1481 292 The United Church of Christ Board is authorized to purchase insurance providing  
1482 indemnification pursuant to the provisions of the preceding. Any such contract of insurance may  
1483 afford coverage for matters as to which the United Church of Christ Board may not give  
1484 indemnity.  
1485

#### 1486 **ARTICLE VI. OTHER BODIES**

1487 The following groups are identified as related in covenant to the United Church of Christ, through  
1488 a primary relationship with the United Church of Christ Board.  
1489

#### 1490 **COUNCILS**

##### 1491 **Council for American Indian Ministry**

1492 293 Created by the Eighth General Synod in 1971 (71-GS-77) and given its present mandate by  
1493 the Sixteenth General Synod in 1987 (87-GS-58), the Council for American Indian Ministry  
1494 (CAIM) is a national body with primary responsibility for providing Christian ministry and  
1495 witness in American Indian settings, and is a resource to the whole United Church of Christ in  
1496 understanding and supporting American Indian churches and communities. The Council for  
1497 American Indian Ministry supports and gives general direction to the American Indian members  
1498 and congregations of the United Church of Christ, advocating with them, through CAIM's  
1499 Recognized Unit of Ministry, to embody their own cultures and values and to be vital parts of the  
1500 United Church of Christ and the Conferences in which they are located. The Council for  
1501 American Indian Ministry encourages and supports the identification, enlistment, and support of  
1502 American Indian candidates for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. Working with  
1503 American Indian people throughout the United Church of Christ, the Council seeks to develop  
1504 broad bases of visibility, nurture and support for American Indian people, communities, and  
1505 churches. The Sixteenth General Synod vote calls for CAIM to be accountable to the General  
1506 Synod through the United Church of Christ Board and to be funded from one-third of the net  
1507 income of the neighbors in need offering.  
1508

##### 1509 **Council for Higher Education**

1510 294 The Council for Higher Education (CHE) shall be composed of the academies, colleges, and  
1511 theological schools that indicate their desire to be recognized as related to the United Church of  
1512 Christ and that are accepted by the Council as conforming to its standards; and of  
1513 representative(s) from the United Church of Christ Board. For purposes of business and policy  
1514 making, member academies, colleges, and theological schools shall be represented by each  
1515 institution's executive head or other key officer as designated by each institution's executive  
1516 head. The Council shall organize with its own chairperson, secretary, and any other officers  
1517 needed to carry on its work. All officers shall be executive heads of their institutions. The Council  
1518 shall be administratively related to the General Synod through the United Church of Christ Board;  
1519 this provision not precluding the Council's right to direct access to the General Synod concerning  
1520 any matters in which it may feel that its interests in program or budget require the exercise of  
1521 such access. An Associate General Minister appointed by the General Minister and President  
1522 shall be an advisory member of the Council with voice but without vote. The Council shall be

1523 organized in two sub-sections: College and Academy Section, and Seminary Section. The  
1524 Council for Higher Education shall advance and interpret higher education in the United Church  
1525 of Christ, including the cultivation of closer relationships between the educational institutions and  
1526 the Church, the expression of the connection between faith and knowledge in those institutions,  
1527 and, in cooperation with the United Church of Christ Board, the promotion of education as an  
1528 integral part of the Church's mission.

1529  
1530 **Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries**

1531 295 Created by the Fourteenth General Synod (83-GS-43) the Council for Racial and Ethnic  
1532 Ministries (COREM) provides a place where racial and ethnic groups can develop their common  
1533 agenda, collaborate with appropriate program and mission bodies of the United Church of Christ  
1534 so that resources for racial and ethnic ministries will be effective and relevant, discern appropriate  
1535 ways by which the many and varied gifts of racial and ethnic groups may be made available to the  
1536 Church, and advocate for racial and ethnic concerns within the United Church of Christ. It is  
1537 composed of two representatives each from the Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministry  
1538 (PAAM), The Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries, the Council for American Indian Ministry  
1539 (CAIM), United Black Christians (UBC), Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice  
1540 (MRSEJ), and United Samoan Ministries (USM) who are accountable to the groups that send  
1541 them. COREM is accountable to the United Church of Christ Board.

1542  
1543 **Council for Theological Education**

1544 296 The Council for Theological Education (CTE) shall be responsible for fostering mutual  
1545 accountability between the United Church of Christ and the Seminaries of the United Church of  
1546 Christ, for periodic reviews of the criteria for being designated as a Seminary of the United  
1547 Church of Christ, and for the general well-being of the relationship between the seminaries and  
1548 the United Church of Christ. The Council will exercise care for the Seminaries, explore ways by  
1549 which theological education contributes to the leadership needs of the Church, foster cooperation  
1550 among the Seminaries, and facilitate communication and appropriate engagement between the  
1551 Seminaries of the United Church of Christ and Historically Related Seminaries and with other  
1552 seminaries which provide theological education for persons preparing for authorized ministry in  
1553 the United Church of Christ. Seminaries of the United Church of Christ retain full membership  
1554 and responsibility in the Council for Higher Education and its seminary section. The Council will  
1555 provide comment to the United Church of Christ Board whenever the United Church of Christ  
1556 Board prepares to recommend a seminary for recognition as a Seminary of the United Church of  
1557 Christ. The Council shall be composed of the President and one additional representative from  
1558 each of the Seminaries of the United Church of Christ, a representative from one of the  
1559 Historically Related Seminaries, two representatives from the Council of Conference Ministers  
1560 elected by that Council, two conference staff persons who relate to a Committee on Ministry  
1561 and/or work with the search and call process from a conference not otherwise represented on the  
1562 Council, four persons who serve on a Committee on Ministry, the General Minister and President,  
1563 and an Associate General Minister appointed by the General Minister and President. The General  
1564 Minister and President will assign staff members as necessary to support the programmatic work  
1565 of the Council. An intentional effort will be made to ensure that those who have been historically  
1566 under-represented be present in the membership of the Council. The Council shall meet annually  
1567 and shall elect its own officers each biennium.

1568  
1569 **Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries**

1570 297 The Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries (CYYAM) shall serve to advocate,  
1571 support programs, and be a resource for youth and young adult ministries throughout the United  
1572 Church of Christ and shall report to the United Church of Christ Board and to the General Synod  
1573 on issues, developments, and concerns in youth and young adult ministries in church and society.

1574 It shall monitor to ensure that the unique gifts and talents of youth and young adults are present in  
1575 all aspects of the life of the Church. It shall inform, envision, and shape national youth and young  
1576 adult ministry priorities across the Church. The Council and its membership will act as a resource  
1577 regarding youth and young adult ministry opportunities across the Church (including but not  
1578 limited to internships, mission trips, Regional Youth Events, National Youth Event, and the  
1579 General Synod). The Council shall organize itself as needed in order to carry out its work and  
1580 shall have direct access to the United Church of Christ Board and the General Synod in areas of  
1581 program and budget. The Council's composition shall reflect the United Church of Christ's  
1582 commitment to having a diversity of perspectives in church governance.  
1583

#### 1584 **Council of Conference Ministers**

1585 298 The Council of Conference Ministers (CCM) shall be composed of the Conference Ministers  
1586 of the several Conferences. The General Minister and President shall be a member ex-officio,  
1587 without vote, of the Council and its Cabinet. It shall select a chairperson and such other officers  
1588 and committees as it shall deem necessary. It shall elect from its members those who are to serve  
1589 on the United Church of Christ Board and in other representative positions, distributing those  
1590 positions among the Regions. It shall maintain a close relationship with the Officers of the United  
1591 Church of Christ, the United Church of Christ Board, and national units the Covenanted  
1592 Ministries, the Affiliated Ministry, and the Associated Ministry with respect to matters affecting  
1593 the life of the Church.  
1594

#### 1595 **Historical Council**

1596 299 The Historical Council (HC) shall be composed of 12 members, three elected by each of the  
1597 Historical Societies, Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed, and six at large  
1598 appointed by the United Church of Christ Board. One-third shall be named each biennium for a  
1599 term of six years, to serve until their respective successors are named and qualified, and not to  
1600 exceed two terms. The United Church of Christ Board will name from these 12 members the  
1601 chairperson. The Council shall meet at the call of the General Minister and President or the  
1602 chairperson. It shall act in an advisory capacity to the General Minister and President and the  
1603 United Church of Christ Board in overseeing the archives of the United Church of Christ and of  
1604 the two Historical Societies, in expressing interest and concern for all archival collections related  
1605 to the several heritages of the denomination, in recommending the amount to be allocated in the  
1606 contributions budget for the Historical Societies, and in reminding the United Church of Christ of  
1607 its traditions. The Council shall receive financial support through the United Church of Christ  
1608 Board and staff support as assigned by the General Minister and President.  
1609

#### 1610 **Council for Health and Human Service Ministries**

1611 300 The Council for Health and Human Services Ministries (CHHSM) was recognized by the  
1612 Fifteenth General Synod as an organization composed of institutions and programs in health and  
1613 welfare related to the United Church of Christ and accepted by the CHHSM as conforming to its  
1614 standards. The CHHSM is organized with its own Directorate and Officers. The purposes and  
1615 functions of the CHHSM shall include: 1) The support and nurture for its member institutions and  
1616 programs in fulfillment of their ministries as part of the mission of the United Church of Christ;  
1617 2) Representation of the ministries of its member institutions and programs to the General Synod  
1618 and United Church of Christ Board in the conduct of the mission of the United Church of Christ  
1619 in health and welfare; 3) Cooperation with the Conferences and the United Church of Christ  
1620 Board in the process of Conference recognition of health and human service ministries,  
1621 monitoring the authorization to seek funds within Conferences, and approval of requests to  
1622 conduct capital campaigns; 4) Provision, annually, to the United Church of Christ Board, the  
1623 names of those member institutions and programs which conform to the standards set by  
1624 CHHSM; 5) Cooperation with the United Church of Christ Board in collecting information on

1625 institutions and programs in health and welfare to be listed in the *United Church of Christ*  
1626 *Yearbook*; and 6) Participation in secular, ecumenical, and inter-faith networks in the field of  
1627 health and welfare.

1628

#### 1629 **SELF-CREATED GROUPS**

##### 1630 **The Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries**

1631 301 The Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries is a diverse community of children of a God who  
1632 created us to flourish in this world, to live in interconnection with one another and creation  
1633 through intentional relationships grounded in love, justice, and peace. We believe in Jesus' Good  
1634 News message of extravagant welcome to ALL at the table of God, the acknowledgement and  
1635 value of the diversity of people and their gifts, the promise of life in abundance, and freedom and  
1636 wholeness for all of creation. In the spirit of mutual accountability, The Colectivo de UCC Latinx  
1637 Ministries commits to sharing our experience and gifts with the whole church as we claim our  
1638 place within the body of Christ, seeking to be members, not a mission of the United Church of  
1639 Christ. Our membership is comprised of individuals, congregations, Associations, Conferences,  
1640 and nationally based ministries of United Church of Christ who have endorsed the values and  
1641 goals of the Colectivo and agree to join in covenant to strengthen and support the mission and  
1642 ministry of Latinx people in the UCC. We also welcome dialogue and connections with  
1643 ecumenical partners and community-based organizations that share our values.

1644

##### 1645 **Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice**

1646 302 Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice (MRSEJ) is a group which brings together  
1647 clergy who advocate on behalf of African Americans in church and society, providing a caucus of  
1648 ministers for fellowship, for sharing mutual concerns, and for actions regarding the agenda of the  
1649 black constituency within the United Church of Christ. MRSEJ challenges, monitors, initiates,  
1650 and supports the cause of African American involvement to the fullest possible measure in the  
1651 life of the United Church of Christ.

1652

##### 1653 **UCC Disabilities Ministries**

1654 303 The UCC Disabilities Ministries (UCCDM) strives for the full inclusion of persons with  
1655 disabilities in the life and mission of the Church. The UCCDM encourages all settings of the  
1656 United Church of Christ to be open, inclusive, affirming, and accessible in their buildings,  
1657 worship, education, fellowship, and service so that they may proclaim God's word to and with all  
1658 persons, including those with disabilities. It seeks to enable all members of the United Church of  
1659 Christ to affirm the theological/biblical affirmations of the wholeness of all people, and to  
1660 recognize the ministry to and with persons with disabilities as a part of the ministry of all the  
1661 baptized. The UCCDM Board of Directors includes persons with disabilities, members of  
1662 families of persons with disabilities, experts on disabilities, and other persons from the United  
1663 Church of Christ who support the purposes of the UCCDM and reflect the diversity of the United  
1664 Church of Christ.

1665

##### 1666 **Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries**

1667 304 Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM), organized in 1974 and recognized  
1668 by the Tenth General Synod, advocates for the presence, participation and contributions of  
1669 PAAM in the life of the United Church of Christ and serves its constituent members and  
1670 churches, initiating and supporting their life, and working for greater representation in wider  
1671 church settings. It seeks to strengthen Local Churches, to nurture and develop lay and clergy  
1672 leadership for the church, and to address issues of justice. As an advocate group for the rights of  
1673 people, PAAM is involved in issues of the rights of Pacific Islander and Asian people in the  
1674 United States and in the United Church of Christ and works in the areas of rights for women and  
1675 children, the poor on welfare, institutional racism, and political prisoners.

1676

1677 **United Black Christians**

1678 305 United Black Christians (UBC) is a special interest group which represents over 50,000  
1679 African-American members of the United Church of Christ. It stands in the affirmation that each  
1680 person has gifts to offer to the Church, and that each is entitled to full rights and privileges as  
1681 children of God. UBC dedicates itself to providing voice for all African-American members of  
1682 the United Church of Christ, seeking to witness to, and preserve the history and legacy of the  
1683 African-American people and churches. UBC is an active advocate for liberation and social  
1684 justice at home and abroad.

1685

1686 **The Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ**

1687 306 The Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ (The Coalition) is  
1688 composed of members and friends of the United Church of Christ who affirm the good news that  
1689 all persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions are loved and  
1690 empowered by God. The Coalition actively works to combat prejudice and seeks justice for, and  
1691 the full inclusion and involvement of, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Christians in all  
1692 expressions of the United Church of Christ. In its leadership and outreach, The Coalition is  
1693 committed to ending exclusion based on sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and  
1694 expression, race, age, size, class and/or ableness. It promotes mutual ministries of pastoral care,  
1695 education, and advocacy within the United Church of Christ and society as a whole; encourages  
1696 Local Churches, Associations and Conferences to become “Open and Affirming” (ONA); and  
1697 organizes within Conferences to make resources of The Coalition available to all.

1698

1699 **United Samoan Ministries**

1700 307 United Samoan Ministries was organized in 2010 and recognized by the Twenty Ninth  
1701 General Synod in Long Beach, California, in 2013. USM conducted its reorganization process  
1702 between 2011 and 2014. USM is established to provide a setting for members of Samoan  
1703 congregations in the United Church of Christ to gather for fellowship, spiritual nurturing, mutual  
1704 support, and communications to strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ. USM also seeks but is not  
1705 limited to: strengthening channels of communication among Samoan congregations in the United  
1706 Church of Christ (UCC) and their respective ministries; exchanging of information and building  
1707 communication about the UCC in all its settings including local congregations, Associations,  
1708 Conferences, National Ministries and Global Partners; establishing a setting for collective  
1709 decision-making that will fulfill the USM Mission Statement and strengthen the covenantal  
1710 relationships among Samoan congregations within the UCC; providing a setting to develop and  
1711 enhance the leadership and cultural identities among Samoan congregations in order to empower  
1712 them in the UCC; and recognizing and celebrating the unique insights and contributions of  
1713 Samoans throughout the life of the UCC. USM encourage all Samoans of all ages to affirm their  
1714 unique ethnic and cultural identities while embracing the Still Speaking God and find joy,  
1715 spiritually “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

1716

1717 **UCC Mental Health Network**

1718 308 The UCC MHN faithfully seeks to understand and address the impact of mental health  
1719 challenges on the members of our congregations, in our communities, and our society. We  
1720 encourage all settings of the UCC to be welcoming, inclusive, supportive, and engaged with  
1721 persons who are living with a mental health challenge, brain disorder, and substance use disorder.  
1722 All are invited into the Body of Christ, and those living with mental health conditions are  
1723 welcomed into the work and leadership of the Church. Through educational materials,  
1724 conferences across the country, practical resources, stories from individuals and congregations,  
1725 and the WISE for Mental Health certification, the UCC MHN answers Jesus’ call to build the  
1726 Kingdom of God. We urge congregations, Associations, and Conferences of the UCC to become



1727 WISE about mental health as a way to live fully with justice, peace, and love. The UCC MHN  
1728 Board of Directors does this work through a diversity of people, especially those who are  
1729 personally living with mental health challenges, brain disorders, substance use disorders, and  
1730 their loved ones, as well as professionals in mental health and recovery from addiction.

1731

1732 **Relationships**

1733 309 Unless otherwise designated in these Bylaws, each of the aforementioned bodies shall have a  
1734 primary relationship with the United Church of Christ Board which shall serve as its primary  
1735 linkage to the national expressions of the United Church of Christ, to which it shall report  
1736 annually. This primary relationship shall be defined by the United Church of Christ Board in  
1737 consultation with the respective group. The designated relationship shall be reviewed each  
1738 biennium by the appropriate partners, and may be changed upon the mutual consent of those  
1739 partners, and so declared by vote of the United Church of Christ Board. The General Minister and  
1740 President shall be responsible for initiating said review.

1741

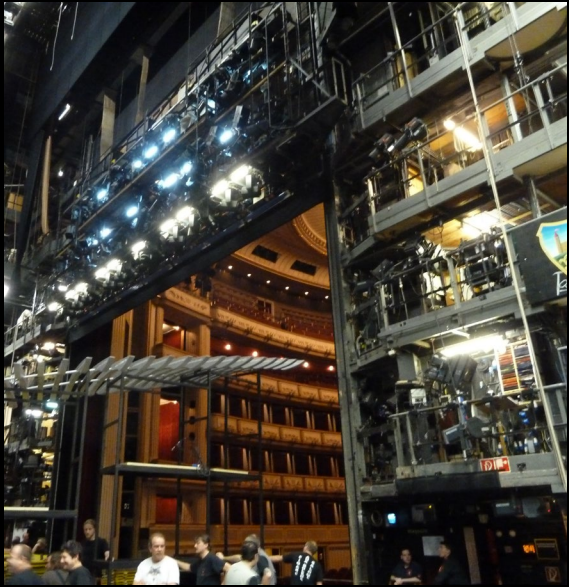
1742 In effect July 3, 2017; amendments approved by the General Synod in 2017 that were contingent upon ratification of the amendments  
1743 to the Constitution were effective October 13, 2018. Updated effective June 25, 2019 upon recognition by the General Synod of The  
1744 Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries and UCC Mental Health Networks as Historically Underrepresented Groups.

# The UCCB Financial Report

General Synod 33

Tami Marinella, Chief Financial Officer







Accountability & Transparency

# Strategic Priorities



INCLUSIVE  
EXCELLENCE



TECHNOLOGY  
INFRASTRUCTURE



CURRICULUM,  
TRAINING &  
DEVELOPMENT



INNOVATION  
CENTER & THINK  
TANK



STRATEGIC  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
ALIGNMENT

In thousands of Dollars, except for %

	2020		2019		2018	
	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
Operating revenues and support:						
Total return draw	7,719	37	8,276	37	8,175	37
OCWM-Basic support	4,377	21	4,868	22	4,985	23
OCWM-Special support	1,032	5	1,479	7	1,529	7
Gifts, donations and trust income	2,533	12	1,779	8	1,564	7
Management fees & reimbursements	1,861	9	2,547	11	2,053	9
Church loan interest	1,777	9	1,731	8	1,716	8
Publications and other resource sales	899	4	1,202	5	1,234	6
Other	665	3	495	2	685	3
Total Operating revenues and support	<u>20,863</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>22,377</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>21,941</u>	<u>100</u>

In thousands of Dollars, except for %

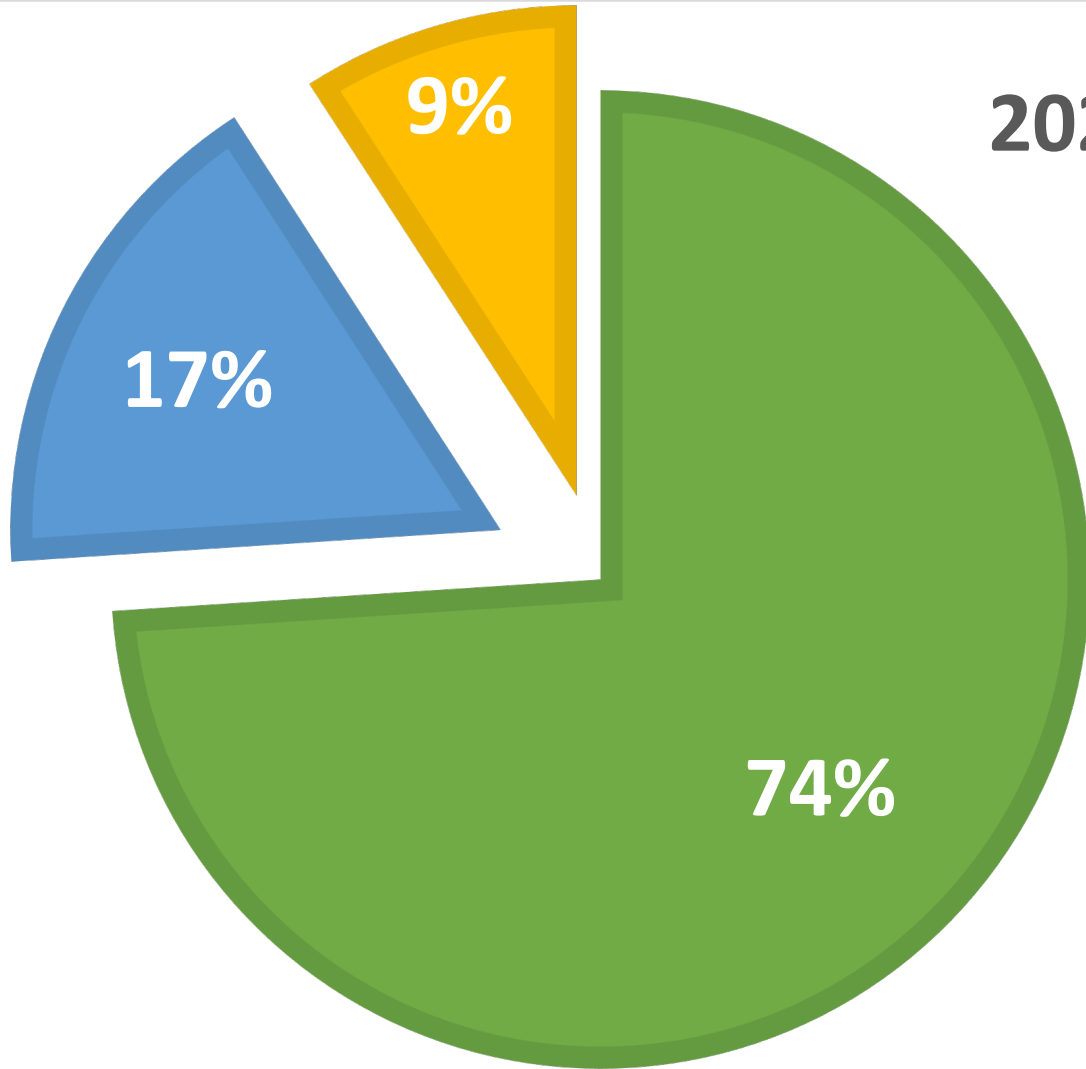
	2020		2019		2018	
	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
OCWM-Special Support (Operating):						
Neighbors in Need	825	80	1,144	77	1,177	77
Strengthen the Church	207	20	335	23	352	23
Total	<u>1,032</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>1,479</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>1,529</u>	<u>100</u>

OCWM-Special Support (Non-Operating/Pass-Through):

One Great Hour of Sharing	1,155	1,983	1,951
Christmas Fund	186	382	588
Total	<u>1,341</u>	<u>2,365</u>	<u>2,539</u>



## 2020 National Setting Costs



- Programs
- Administration
- Fundraising

# PLAYBILL

THEATRE

## The National Setting in 4 Acts



A dark stage with spotlights and the text "Thank You!" overlaid. The scene is dimly lit, with several bright spotlights shining down from above, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The floor is dark, and the overall tone is professional and appreciative.

Thank You!

**REPORT REGARDING THE RE-ELECTION OF THE  
ASSOCIATE GENERAL MINISTER**

On October 3, 2020, the United Church of Christ Board nominated for re-election by the Thirty-Third General Synod the Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister of the United Church of Christ, for an additional four-year term as Associate General Minister of the United Church of Christ, and submits its nomination for consideration by delegates to the Thirty-Third General Synod, meeting virtually July 11-18, 2021.

Heather E. Kimmel

General Counsel and Corporate Secretary

May 10, 2021

## APPENDIX I

### BECOMING A CHURCH OF CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION A Resolution of Witness

#### TEXT OF THE MOTION

**WHEREAS** the 21st century has seen a resurgence of Christian spiritual and contemplative practices, yet many churchgoers have not heard of or engaged in these practices in church;

**WHEREAS** people who leave church often find a scarcity of spiritual food there to nourish their souls, and are frequently unfamiliar with practices that cultivate self-care and love of God; and have turned to other spiritual and secular communities and organizations to fulfill this need;

**WHEREAS** there is a wide diversity of spiritual practices in the Christian tradition, and we aim to honor the diversity of each of these practices as they serve to build up the body of Christ;

**WHEREAS** with the crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, and the financial fallout causing greater need than ever for work for social justice, the church is called to model and share expressions of activism modeled in the contemplative spirit of Jesus;

**WHEREAS** Jesus said “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit” (John 15: 5), and Christian contemplative practices hold the goal of abiding more deeply in Christ;

**WHEREAS** if we look at the “Tree of Contemplative Practices”<sup>[1]</sup> as but one example of this diversity, we see that the myriad of spiritual disciplines far surpasses what the Church universal and the UCC in particular have offered to church members. As Barbara Holmes says, “Contemplative practices can be silent or evocative, still or embodied in dance or shout. Always, contemplation requires attentiveness to the Spirit of God.”<sup>[2]</sup>;

**WHEREAS** being “transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Romans 12: 2) begins with honest self-examination, reflective introspection and dialogue, and intentions and commitments to change, through God’s grace;

**WHEREAS** the UCC is rooted in the “Three Great Loves” of neighbor, children, and creation, and authentic contemplative practices expand our capacity and commitment to love and justice, so that we might be clearer channels for God’s love to shine through and might more fully “come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” (Ephesians 4: 13)

**WHEREAS** the UCC is often identified as a progressive church for activists, whereas what makes the church unique is its spiritual grounding in the love and wholeness of God,

**WHEREAS** the church’s foundation of divine love grounds and informs communal life in the body of Christ, as well as provides the reason for why the church expresses its witness in active forms of justice, peace, and service in the world;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages local churches to become churches of “contemplatives in action,” remembering the essential disciplines modeled by Jesus of silent prayer, meditation, and practices to commune with the Divine Mother-Father, and letting contemplative depth inspire our forming and sustaining of life-giving, spiritually-generative community and our church’s action in the world through works of charity, social justice, peacemaking, earth-stewardship, and making disciples on the path of God’s unconditional, agape love;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages training of future clergy and lay leaders in the ways of contemplation, spiritual practice, and Christian mysticism, providing experiential grounding for the sustained life of faith; living into our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ and as children of God to see the Divine in everyone and everything in all creation, beginning with ourselves and expanding our love into ever-widening circles;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod invites local churches to commit to being a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” church- a church that prioritizes contemplation, spending time communing with God in various forms of prayer; and a church of activism that seeks to make God’s love and justice real in the world; thus a church of both contemplation and action—a church of “contemplatives in action” where our love of God through contemplative practices informs how we live and act in the world, and where our interior and exterior spiritual practices complement, ground, and inspire one another.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod calls upon all settings of the United Church of Christ to invest in curriculum and resources to support Conferences, Associations, local churches, clergy, lay leaders, General Synod and seminaries in practicing and teaching a foundational life of spiritual practices, as modeled in the life of Jesus. In this resourcing, all settings are called to remain committed to the UCC’s diversity as a Multicultural, Multiracial, and Anti-racist church, thus honoring the diversity of spiritual and contemplative practices and teachers from many and varied cultures through whom the spirit works in different ways;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod encourages all settings of the UCC seek to live out the foundation of contemplative practices in the ministry of God’s work in the world—making inclusive, participatory spiritual practices and teachings that cultivate being, introspection, reflection and growth an integral part of National gatherings, including committee work, children’s, youth and adult ministries, ecumenical partnerships, and General Synod;

**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 of other entities with the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

[1] <http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree>

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**A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE AND RESPOND TO  
RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS  
A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** “racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities,” in the words of Ibram X. Kendi.<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS** without exception and across generations, racial inequities persist in every system of society—as evidenced through health care access, education, criminal justice, employment, housing, access to food and clean water, services to youth, older adults, and persons with disabilities, organizational leadership, governmental office, voting, and immigration, among many others—and thus a specific anti-racist lens is required for health equity and broader systemic change.<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS** inequities based on race also intersect with other dimensions of identity—such as income, sex, gender, sexuality, citizenship and incarceration status, geographic location and housing status, ability, education, language proficiency, etc.— and thus racial justice is a necessary method from which to respond to other intersecting oppressions impacting health and equity overall.<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS** public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities and environments in which they live, learn, work and play.<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS** the word *crisis*, comes from the ancient Greek word that means “turning point,” and comes from the verb meaning “to decide”—thus connoting a call to change and action.<sup>5</sup>

**WHEREAS** framing racism as an issue of public health rallies and compels faith communities, organizations, and the government to address the crisis through systemic change, in the same way other threats to public health have been addressed, such as through policies, practices, enforcement, education, and support services.<sup>6</sup>

**WHEREAS** for over thirty-five years, research has shown how racism undermines the physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational health and wellbeing of People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color, as evidenced by *The Report of the Secretary’s Task Force on Black and Minority Health (Heckler Report)*.<sup>7</sup>

**WHEREAS** Healthy People 2020, the federal government’s prevention agenda for building a healthier nation continues to name the achievement of health equity, the elimination of disparities, and the improvement the health of all groups as the nation’s overarching goal.<sup>8</sup>



**WHEREAS** social determinants of health—the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age—have a profound impact on the health of People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color;<sup>9</sup> as the effects of trauma,<sup>10</sup> poverty,<sup>11</sup> and environmental devastation<sup>12</sup> due to structural racism cannot be overstated in this regard; as the majority of changeable contributors to healthy outcomes are found in these social determinants; as these inequities are avoidable and able to be changed through policy and the redistribution of money, power, and resources;<sup>13</sup> and as this is evident nationally and globally.

**WHEREAS** research shows that racial discrimination and the impact of implicit bias continues to persist in medicine and remains a fundamental cause of health disparities, which can also be remedied through changes in policy and education.<sup>14</sup>

**WHEREAS** health disparities for People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color remain at unacceptable rates and breadth—as evidenced by lower life expectancy,<sup>15</sup> higher infant and maternal mortality,<sup>16</sup> poorer treatment for pain,<sup>17</sup> cancer,<sup>18</sup> cardiovascular conditions,<sup>19</sup> mental health<sup>20</sup> and end-of-life care,<sup>21</sup> and inadequate access to and quality of health care,<sup>22</sup> among many others.

**WHEREAS** the joint forces of racism and ableism have constructed an inaccessible society and an understanding of disability as an inherently undesirable, devalued, and diminished life experience<sup>23</sup>, which has resulted in abuse, neglect, incarceration, institutionalization, and social exclusion across generations of disabled People of Color, in particular.<sup>24</sup>

**WHEREAS** the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the devastating reality of these racial health disparities and the social and political conditions that created them;<sup>25</sup> as structural racism has been proven to be a barrier to COVID-19 treatment and prevention;<sup>26</sup> as Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities have a COVID-19 mortality rate of more than 2.7 times the rate of People of European Decent;<sup>27</sup> as the Navajo Nation’s infection rate has been the highest in the country;<sup>28</sup> as disparities in economic stability and health care access have been linked to infection rates and death;<sup>29</sup> as Communities of Color are more likely to live in multigenerational homes;<sup>30</sup> as workers of African Descent are more likely to be in jobs deemed essential;<sup>31</sup> and as one in five state and federal prisoners had COVID-19.<sup>32</sup>

**WHEREAS** police violence, state-sanctioned terror, and the systems that uphold and condone them are an integral part of this public health crisis; as People of African Descent are three times more likely to be killed by police (and are nearly one and a half times more likely to be unarmed in those killings) than those of European Descent;<sup>33</sup> as research shows that the presence of high use of force by police in Communities of Color is associated with an increased risk in poorer health, high blood pressure, and diabetes, among other health concerns;<sup>34</sup> as 98.3 percent of killings by police from 2013-2020 have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime;<sup>35</sup> as poor data collection by law enforcement has contributed to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women;<sup>36</sup> and as People of African Descent are overrepresented on death row and are more likely to die by state execution.<sup>37</sup>

**WHEREAS** mass incarceration and the inherently racist war on people who use drugs have targeted and ravaged Communities of Color<sup>38</sup> through every measure and expression of health;<sup>39</sup>

as 60 percent of the 2.2 million Americans incarcerated are of African Descent or Latinx;<sup>40</sup> as People of African Descent are nearly six times more likely to be incarcerated for drug-related offenses than their counterparts of European Descent, despite equal substance usage rates; as 72,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2019;<sup>41</sup> as the opioid overdose crisis is fueled by socioeconomic inequities, trauma, and hopelessness, in addition to harmful prescribing practices;<sup>42</sup> and as numerous governmental laws and organizational policies refuse to adopt life-saving harm reduction strategies.

**WHEREAS** immigration status directly influences health outcomes;<sup>43</sup> as migrant detention centers have a long history of medical neglect and abuse,<sup>44</sup> including preventable deaths of 96 children;<sup>45</sup> and as family separation has long-term damaging psychological and health consequences for children, families, and communities.<sup>46</sup>

**WHEREAS** a tool of white supremacy and capitalism is to inflame and sustain racial tension and hatred in order to prevent People of European Descent, particularly those who are low-income, and People of Color from uniting as a collective force to dismantle these oppressive systems, and is also wielded in such a way, where upholding racist beliefs becomes more important than—and at the expense of—the health of European Americans that would also be improved, if not saved, by anti-racist policies.<sup>47</sup>

**WHEREAS** the answers, strategies, and practices that have come from many People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Color use public health perspectives to guide their life-saving work.

**WHEREAS** voting and protecting voting rights are essential for advancing health equity; as there exists a correlation between voting behaviors and poor health; and as voting establishes the policy makers who will make decisions on a systemic level.<sup>48</sup>

**WHEREAS** there is reason to have hope; where although the magnitude and overwhelming reality of racism can evoke a sense of powerlessness, addressing social determinants of health is a practical way to move forward together on the path to justice. The church, in all of its expressions, can be a vessel for that hope to come alive. The church can be a place of trust, connection, and collaboration with the wisdom already present in communities working for transformation; as Christ modeled that the work of the Good News is shared and can start today; and as each member of the Body has their own unique role to play, gift to give, and worth to claim.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ declares racism a public health crisis.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the national setting of the United Church of Christ to enable and encourage local churches, conferences, and organizations to develop methods to:

- a. Raise the church's consciousness of racism as a public health crisis from theological, bioethical, and public health perspectives.
- b. Monitor and advocate for public policies that work towards health equity by addressing social determinants of health and divest in those that cause harm, violence, and death.
- c. Discover ways in which current ministries and mission connect with and can address racism as a public health crisis and explore new ways of incorporating this lens into the life of the church.

- d. Examine, in radical honesty, past and current organizational policies and practices in how they contribute or create barriers to health equity and racial justice.
- e. Identify current and potential relationships with members of CHHSM, COREM, other health and human service organizations, advocacy groups, faith and community-based organizations, and academic institutions to collaborate on responding to racism as a public health crisis.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the U. S. Congress and state legislatures to pass legislation that would address social determinants of health, such as The Anti-Racism in Public Health Act, which would create a “Center on Anti-Racism in Health” at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and to establish a “Law Enforcement Violence Prevention Program” at the CDC.

**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 141 or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

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**A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DECADE  
FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT (2015-2024)<sup>1</sup>  
A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** the human rights of African descendant people globally and in the United States continue to be challenged by the presence of racism and the legacy of whiteness, and

**WHEREAS** a myriad of social issues are byproducts of the racial inequities stemming from prejudice, bigotry, White privilege, White fragility, and White supremacy,<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS** the numbers of incarcerated people of African descent in the Americas continues to grow,<sup>3</sup> and

**WHEREAS** disparities in healthcare, housing, education, the plight of women and girls, and a myriad of interconnected issues point to the need for addressing racism and calling attention to the need to protect the human rights of African descendant people. <sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS** in many countries, while African descendant people attained civil rights, the human rights guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly<sup>5</sup> continue to be elusive, and

**WHEREAS** data show that police have continued killing Black men and women at disproportionate rates,<sup>6, 7</sup> even after the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor sparked international protests against racism and police brutality, with a total of 164 Black men and women who were killed by police from January 1 to August 31, 2020,<sup>8, 9</sup> and

**WHEREAS** in June of 2020 four black men, Malcolm Harsch, Robert Fuller Dominique Alexander and an unidentified Black teenager were found hanged to death,<sup>10</sup> all reported by authorities to have committed suicide, a claim disputed by their family members and many other people,<sup>11</sup> and

**WHEREAS** the Bible and Christian theology affirm *imago dei* – that all people are created in the image of God; and

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has consistently shown leadership in advocacy and for the rights of African descendant people in the United States and globally; and

**WHEREAS** the United Nations declaration of the Decade calls for the promotion and protection of the rights of people of African descent; and

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ passed several resolutions that address the unfair treatment of people of African descent, that call for legislation and action to address injustices perpetuated against African descendant people and continues to decry the systems that support and perpetuate white privilege and white supremacy as tools that produce racism and racial inequality;

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ continues to advocate for the dismantling of racism and racist institutions through education and policy;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 - 2024);

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the Church to increase awareness of the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and work ecumenically to promote the Decade;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the Church to utilize this Decade to intentionally address the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the Church to adopt the Decade themes of recognition, justice and development as frameworks for its advocacy, commitments and engagement in the fight for the rights of People of African Descent.

**FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with 66 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.

<sup>1</sup> <http://undocs.org/A/RES/68/237>

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**A RESOLUTION TO ADVOCATE AND ACT TO CHANGE THE CASH BAIL BOND  
SYSTEM TO ELIMINATE RACIAL AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES INHERENT IN THE  
PRESENT SYSTEM  
A Resolution of Witness**

**WHEREAS** the U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and African Americans, Latinos, Latinas, and indigenous peoples are disproportionately incarcerated in the United States [i];

**WHEREAS** since 2000, the vast majority of the jail population increase was caused by the detention of individuals prior to trial (pretrial) of which 60 to 70% were classified nonviolent minimum-security [ii];

**WHEREAS** cash bail bonding is an over 2-billion-dollar industry [iii];

**WHEREAS** the inability to make cash bail extracts an untold human cost on the accused due to their loss of employment, housing and, often times, family support [iv];

**WHEREAS** there are proven instances of inadequate health care for incarcerated persons, death and injury suffered by incarcerated persons [v];

**WHEREAS** at least 70% of inmates in local jails are not convicted of any crime [vi];

**WHEREAS** persons who cannot make bail are poor and four times more likely to receive jail time with sentences three times longer than those who do make bail [vii] , [viii];

**WHEREAS** bail set for people of color exceeds that for whites by 35% and Latinos by 19% [ix];

**WHEREAS** three out of four criminal cases in state trial courts are for misdemeanors that, if proved, would result in fines and/or less than a year in jail [x];

**WHEREAS** political contributions made by the Bail Industry in between 2002 and 2016 exceeded \$5,000,000 [xi];

**WHEREAS** money-based systems release nearly half of the most dangerous defendants with little to no meaningful supervision [xii];

**WHEREAS** the US is the only nation besides the Philippines to have a legal commercial bail bond industry;

**WHEREAS** corporate and/or systemic structures, or individuals which derive profit from the imprisonment of human beings serve to perpetuate the legacy of slavery, oppression and heartless greed which the United Church of Christ has long sought to expose and correct;

**WHEREAS** we are admonished as followers of Christ to “Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured;" (Hebrews 13:3)



**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

- a. That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ strongly urges the reform of the bail bond systems within individual states and the United States in order to eliminate the racial and social injustices in the present cash bail bond systems;
- b. That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the individual states and the United States to institute alternatives to cash bail bond systems;
- c. That the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church to raise their consciousness of the theological, social, racial, ethnic and economic inequities which make possible the existence of the unfair and unjust bail bond systems;
- d. That, to accomplish these goals, the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church to seek partnerships with other organizations also working toward the goals.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the U.S. Congress and state legislatures to reform the cash bail bond systems to be more just and humane.

**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.

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[i] "Highest to Lowest - Prison Population Rate." The Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London. [https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison\\_population\\_rate?field\\_region\\_taxonomy\\_tid=All](https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All). "8 Facts You Should Know About the Criminal Justice System and People of Color." Jamal Hagler, 2015. The Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2015/05/28/113436/8-facts-you-should-know-about-the-criminal-justice-system-and-people-of-color/>. "American Indians and Crime". Lawrence A. Greenfeld and Steven K. Smith. 1999, NCJ 173386, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/aic.pdf>

[ii] County Jails at a Crossroads: An Examination of the Jail Population and Pretrial Release. Natalie R. Ortiz, 2015. National Association of Counties. [http://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/Final%20paper\\_County%20Jails%20at%20a%20Crossroads\\_8.10.15.pdf](http://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/Final%20paper_County%20Jails%20at%20a%20Crossroads_8.10.15.pdf). Presbyterian Church (USA) "Bail Curriculum", June 5, 2018; <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/opw/2018/06/06/pcusa-bail-out-curriculum>

[iii] When Bail Feels Less Like Freedom, More Like Extortion. The New York Times. 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/31/us/bail-bonds-extortion.html>

[iv] Who Pays? Fines, fees, Bail, and the Cost of Courts. The Yale Law School, 2018. [https://law.yale.edu/system/files/area/center/liman/document/liman\\_colloquium\\_book\\_04.20.18.pdf](https://law.yale.edu/system/files/area/center/liman/document/liman_colloquium_book_04.20.18.pdf)

[v] Incarceration and Health: A Family Medicine Perspective (Position Paper). American Academy of Family Physicians. <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/incarcerationandhealth.html>

[vi] 70% of People in Local Jails are not Convicted of Any Crime. Prison policy initiative. 2017. [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/pie2017\\_jail\\_detail.html](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/pie2017_jail_detail.html). Bail system is unfair to poor, reform advocates say. Tammy Grubb. The News and Observer 8/5/2018 <http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODN/NewsandObserver/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=NAO%2F2018%2F08%2F05&entity=Ar03600&sk=C385BCE1&mode=text>. A closer look at cash bail

(and the alternatives) as NC Courts Commission prepares to review. Joe Killian, 2018. NC Policy Watch, October 2018. [www.ncpolicywatch.com/2018/10/08/monday-numbers-a-closer-look-at-cash-bail-and-the-alternatives-as-nc-courts-commission-prepares-to-review/](http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2018/10/08/monday-numbers-a-closer-look-at-cash-bail-and-the-alternatives-as-nc-courts-commission-prepares-to-review/)

[vii] Detaining the Poor: How money bail perpetuates an endless cycle of poverty and jail time. Bernadette Rabuy and Daniel Kopf, 2016. Prison Policy Initiative.

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[xi] Bail Bond Businesses Buck for Bookings. Ciara O'Neill, 2018. FollowtheMoney.org

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**A COMMITMENT TO GENDER SAFETY & EQUITY IN MINISTRY SETTINGS**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**WHEREAS** The General Synod of the United Church of Christ has taken a firm, unyielding stance for the human rights and safety of women, refuses to condone any form of violence against vulnerable people, [i] and strongly encourages clergy and laity to support survivors of sexual violence; [ii] and

**WHEREAS** The majority of women, both cisgender and transgender, whether they identify as women or as non-binary, are objectified and subjected to the violence and degradation of sexual assault and unwanted sexual advance; [iii] and

**WHEREAS** Sexual harassment and gender discrimination, including attacking, undermining and dismissing women and non-binary persons' leadership, is a form of violence; and occurs within a national context of escalating violence against women in positions of public leadership; and

**WHEREAS** Women and non-binary persons risk further discrimination, violence, loss of employment, ostracism or death in daring to say no or confront the harasser, and penalty of being silenced or not believed when they dare to report; and

**WHEREAS** Gender expression continues to be a minefield for women and non-binary persons, who are pressured to exude the amount of femininity that makes others comfortable – “too feminine” is seen as helpless or intentionally seductive, but “too masculine” is considered confrontational and disrespectful - and women are still judged on their appearance, rather than on their skills, ideas, achievements, or other non sexual/non-gendered attributes; and

**WHEREAS** Women are still subject to economic violence, primarily in that they are paid less than men for the same or similar work, and this lower pay in turn reduces their pension, retirement benefits and Social Security payments; they are overcharged for “women’s products” and penalized for carrying out the responsibilities of home and family; and

**WHEREAS** These experiences of bias, discrimination and violence occur in ministry settings, and are experienced by clergy and lay women and non-binary persons holding positions of leadership within the Church; and

**WHEREAS** Such discrimination is founded in misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and racism, which are antithetical to the way of Jesus; and

**WHEREAS** Our society is in the midst of a cultural transformation, with the #metoo movement empowering survivors to break the silence and share their stories of rape, abuse, and sexual harassment, and women and non-binary persons have begun sharing their #churchtoo stories of how this occurs within the Church; and

**WHEREAS** Clergy, chaplains and faith leaders are called upon to provide pastoral care to those navigating gender discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, some of which occurs within our ministry settings; and

**WHEREAS** The United Church of Christ Ministerial Code of Ethics requires ministers to “not use my position, power, or authority to exploit any person”; [iv]

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ, confesses its complicity, active participation with, and passive acceptance of systems of sexism, misogyny, transphobia, and gender oppression that inhibit and limit leadership; directs the United Church of Christ Board and urges all other settings of the United Church of Christ – including (but not limited to) local congregations, Committees on Ministry, and Justice and Local Church Ministries Teams – to explore ways to promote gender safety, to empower women, transgender, gender-expansive, nonbinary, genderqueer, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, and two-spirit persons (hereinafter referred to as “Included Persons”), both lay and authorized ministers, and to raise issues regarding sexism and discrimination, reinforcing the covenants and standards of behavior which bind us together as conferences, associations, congregations, authorized ministers, lay leaders and members; and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms the physical and sexual autonomy of Included Persons: the right not to have any other person invade their personal space without permission; the right not to be touched, or abused, either emotionally or physically, in any way by another person; the right to express gender in the ways they choose; the right to communicate autonomously, without reproach or censure based on sexism, misogyny, transphobia and gender oppression; the right to expect that any such action will in no way be held against them for any reason in the workplace, including all ministry settings, or in any social situation; and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ directs the UCCB and urges all settings of the UCC to commit to gender equity and address inequities (e.g., compensation, benefits, senior leadership roles, other employment opportunities, hiring, promotion, and termination, etc.) for all Included Persons, both authorized ministers and laity who serve the Church; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod asserts that this work must simultaneously address the threats and realities of violence that result from racism, heterosexism, classism, xenophobia, immigration status (real and assumed), ableism, and other intersectional oppressions impose on the daily life and leadership of Included Persons in the Church.

**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.

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[i] “Violence in Relation to Women,” General Synod Pronouncement in 1983, <http://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/THE-PRONOUNCEMENT-ON-VIOLENCE-IN-RELATION-TO-WOMEN-GS-14.pdf>; “Resisting Actions Seeking to Undermine the Status of Women in Society,” General Synod Resolution in 2013, <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs29-11.pdf>

[ii] “Supporting Survivors Of Rape and Sexual Violence Through An Ongoing Church-Wide Observance of Break The Silence Sunday,” General Synod Prudential Resolution in 2019, <https://www.uccfiles.com/synod/2019/resolutions/9-Break-the-Silence-Sunday.pdf>

[iii] <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>

[iv] United Church of Christ Ordained Minister's Code, [https://www.ucc.org/ministers\\_ordained-ministers-code](https://www.ucc.org/ministers_ordained-ministers-code)

**THE ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST REQUEST TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FORMAL GROUP  
A Prudential Resolution**

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ takes seriously our individual Christian covenant with God as the primal covenant from which our human covenants are derived and by which they are shaped. <sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS** in the above view it is “the covenantal relationship with God that creates the church and, in turn created a covenantal relationship among the people who are the church.”<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ holds seriously the call to be an open and welcoming faith community, accepting into the church body and leadership all facets of expression found in God’s people, creating a rich diversity of expression, background, culture, sexual and gender identity and expression.

**WHEREAS** the work of conference ministry and associate conference ministry places those doing the work at the intersection of church life, between the Local Church and the National Setting, including associations where those exist calling for “keeping communication flowing in all directions, nurturing relationships, articulating and supporting covenantal relationships.”<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS** in response to “[t]he Proposal for Action adopted by the Twentieth General Synod called upon local churches, conferences and associations, those called and employed by the church, and various national bodies to act in a variety of ways in support of the fair and just compensation of all persons called and employed by the church”<sup>4</sup> the AACM states it provides resources and advocacy to support ACMs in their positions.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the establishment of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers, a Self-Created Group serving to support those who serve in a staff or called position doing conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers be identified as related in covenant to the United Church of Christ, through a primary relationship as a Self-Created Group with the United Church of Christ Board.

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

<sup>1</sup> Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Covenant in Our UCC Heritage. In Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ (pp.32). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Covenant in Our UCC Heritage. In Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ (pp. 33). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

<sup>3</sup> Hoffman, J. F. (2008). Our Covenant as the Wider United Church of Christ. In Covenant: A study for the United Church of Christ (pp. 36). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

<sup>4</sup> Fair & Just Compensation A Report to the Twenty-first General Synod 97-GS-50 62-65

**DECLARATION FOR A JUST PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**WHEREAS** for over seventy years Palestinian people have faced dispossession of their land, displacement from their homes, a harsh military occupation, severe restrictions on travel, the military detention of their children, home demolitions – over 120,000 to date and the constant threat of more – and vast inequities in access to natural, economic, and medical resources when compared to that enjoyed by Israeli citizens living in illegal West Bank settlements, and also on a daily basis face severe restrictions on access to their olive groves, farms, and holy sites; [1] and

**WHEREAS** there are more than 5.6 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Administration representing a global displacement of Palestinian people dating back to 1948 whose future status remains unresolved; [2] and

**WHEREAS** the Israeli government has maintained an illegal military occupation of Palestinian territories since 1967 that includes the establishment of illegal Jewish-only settlements throughout the West Bank and more recently has enacted formal discrimination against its Arab citizens through the passage of the Nation State Law in 2018; [3] and

**WHEREAS** provocative actions under the Trump administration, including moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, the suspension of humanitarian aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Administration, and support for Israel’s proposed illegal annexation of land in the occupied West Bank have further injured the Palestinian community and imposed serious road blocks to peace; [4] and

**WHEREAS** the Trump Administration’s Department of Education has issued a rule labeling any criticism of the State of Israel as an antisemitic act in order to suppress advocacy for Palestinian rights on university campuses, and has joined many state governments in further suppressing freedom of speech in support of Palestinian civil society’s call for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions; [5] and

**WHEREAS** actions by Israel, with tacit and overt support from the United States government, have established conditions comparable to those in force under Jim Crow in the United States south between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement, with segregation laws that enshrined systematic domination and oppression by whites over blacks. Israel’s acts of domination and oppression include, but are not limited to adoption of the Nation State Law in 2018, the building of the separation barrier, implementation of a restrictive pass system for Palestinians, the creation of Israeli-only highways through the West Bank, and imposed military detention of Palestinian children accused of crimes; and

**WHEREAS** the General Synod of the United Church of Christ and its officers have for over fifty years advocated for a negotiated process leading to a just peace between Israel and Palestine marked by adherence to international law and international standards of human rights and honoring the principle of self-determination and the rights of Palestinian refugees; [6] and

**WHEREAS**, reminiscent of historical examples such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Southern Africa, Israel exhibits a current-day form of settler colonialism [7], actively engaged in the

removal and erasure of the indigenous Palestinian population, through a matrix of control that includes: the imposition of a harsh military occupation; the de facto annexation of Palestinian lands and threats of further annexation; the expansion of illegal Jewish only settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank; the contraction of Palestinian-controlled land; and the restriction of travel for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza;

**WHEREAS** *Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action* issued by Palestinian Christian leaders and theologians in July, 2020 [8], states that “the very being of the church, the integrity of the Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake. We declare that support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin. We assert that Christian support for Zionism as a theology and an ideology that legitimize the right of one people to deny the human rights of another is incompatible with the Christian faith and a grave misuse of the Bible”;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopts the following *Declaration*:

1. *We affirm* that the continued oppression of the Palestinian people remains, after more than five decades of oppression of the Palestinian people, a matter of theological urgency and represents a sin in violation of the message of the biblical prophets and the Gospel, and that all efforts to defend or legitimate the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word, or deed by the Christian community, represent a fundamental denial of the Gospel.

*Therefore, we reject* the notion that Israel’s occupation of Palestine is a purely political problem outside the concern of the church or that the oppression of the Palestinian people is an inevitable consequence of global or regional geopolitical interests.

2. *We affirm* that the biblical narrative beginning with creation and extending through the calling of the Israelites, the corrective admonitions of the prophets, the incarnation and ministry of Jesus and the witness of the apostles to the “ends of the earth” . . . speaks of God's blessing extending to “all the families of the earth.” (Genesis 12.3)

*Therefore, we reject* any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism, Supercessionism, antisemitism or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or exclude any one nation, race, culture, or religion within God’s universal economy of grace.

3. *We affirm* that all people living in Palestine and Israel are created in the image of God and that this bestows ultimate dignity and sacredness to all;

*Therefore, we reject* any laws and legal procedures which are used by one race or religion or political entity to enshrine one people in a privileged legal position at the expense of another, including Israel’s apartheid system of laws and legal procedures.

4. *We affirm* that all peoples have the right to self-determination and to their aspirations for sovereignty and statehood in the shaping of their corporate religious, cultural, and political life, free from manipulation or pressure from outside powers, and that a just resolution of conflicting claims is only achieved through the equal protection of civil rights, the fair and just sharing of land and resources, and peaceful negotiation based on international law and UN resolutions.

*Therefore, we reject* the use of Scripture to claim a divine right to the land as the rationale for Israel’s illegal seizure and annexation of Palestinian land as well as the imposition of so-called peace agreements by Israel or the United States through the exercise of political and military domination



that leaves Palestinians without equal rights, full citizenship, and the opportunity to thrive religiously, culturally, politically, and economically.

5. *We affirm* the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes if they so choose or to be compensated for their loss of property, consistent with UN General Assembly resolution 194 (1948). *Therefore, we reject* the denial of this right, just as we reject efforts to manipulate internationally-agreed upon definitions of refugees to attempt to erase this right which extends across generations.

6. *We affirm* the First Amendment constitutional right to freedom of speech and assembly to protest the actions of the State of Israel and to uphold the rights of Palestinians, including the use of economic measures to support justice as a First Amendment right and joining the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement by individuals, institutions, corporations, and religious bodies that advocate peace with justice or participate in any aspect of the use of economic measures to support justice.

*Therefore, we reject* the idea that any criticism of policies of the State of Israel is inherently antisemitic, in confession that some criticism is antisemitic in intent or impact, and we oppose the efforts of U.S. federal and state governments to limit free speech on university campuses and to restrict or ban support of the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that national setting of the United Church of Christ send the text of this *Declaration* to Local Churches, Associations and Conferences; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that all settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to receive this *Declaration* as a prophetic call for renewed and continued advocacy for a just peace in Palestine and Israel and use it as a plumbline for taking action, including, for example:

a. Committing to hearing the voices of Palestinians regarding their situation, including the voices of Palestinian Christians through the study of Palestine Liberation Theology, attention to statements and appeals such as *Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth* (2009) and a *Cry for Hope* (2020), participation in travel seminars that expose visitors to the Palestinian community, and use of resources from Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

b. Implementing the calls of prior General Synod resolutions, including the 2015 Resolution, “A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” and the 2017 Resolution, “A Call for the United Church of Christ to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation.”

c. Examining critically our use and interpretations of Scripture as well as liturgies and hymns that equate ancient Biblical Israel with the modern state in ways that promote settler colonialism and the dispossession of Palestinian land, rights, and cultural expressions.

d. Offering support and encouragement to college students and faculty members as well as the human rights groups (including Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace, American Muslims for Palestine, and many other allied groups), whose freedom to speak, witness and advocate on university campuses is threatened in any way by state or local governments, or by college administrators.

e. Advocating for the cessation of U.S. military aid to Israel until such time that Palestinian human rights, civil rights, and self-determination are fully realized and protected in compliance with international law, US laws on foreign military assistance, and the principles of human rights.

f. Supporting the full restoration of US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency which carries out critical services by and for Palestinian refugees, and encouraging continued support for UCC partners which serve Palestinian refugees.

g. Demanding that the plight of Palestinian refugees be addressed by Israel and the international community based on United Nations Resolution 194 guaranteeing that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.”

**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.

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[1] Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions: <https://icahd.org/>

[2] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East:  
<https://www.unrwa.org/>

[3] <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/7/31/17623978/israel-jewish-nation-state-law-bill-explained-apartheid-netanyahu-democracy>

[4] [https://www.globalministries.org/ecumenical\\_statement\\_on\\_current\\_u\\_s\\_policy\\_and\\_israel\\_palestine](https://www.globalministries.org/ecumenical_statement_on_current_u_s_policy_and_israel_palestine)  
[https://www.globalministries.org/ucc\\_disciples\\_leaders\\_issue\\_joint\\_statement\\_in\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_peace\\_and\\_prosperity\\_proposal](https://www.globalministries.org/ucc_disciples_leaders_issue_joint_statement_in_response_to_the_peace_and_prosperity_proposal)

[https://www.globalministries.org/not\\_peace\\_but\\_apartheid\\_b\\_tselem\\_s\\_brief\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_trump\\_pl](https://www.globalministries.org/not_peace_but_apartheid_b_tselem_s_brief_response_to_the_trump_plan)  
an

[https://www.globalministries.org/ucc\\_disciples\\_leaders\\_issue\\_statement\\_on\\_israeli\\_settlements](https://www.globalministries.org/ucc_disciples_leaders_issue_statement_on_israeli_settlements)

[5] <https://forward.com/fast-forward/410044/trump-education-dept-adopts-controversial-new-definition-of-anti-semitism/> and <https://palestinelegal.org/news/2018/9/11/kenneth-marcus-adopts-controversial-antisemitism-definition-at-doe-with-no-public-notice-reopens-dismissed-rutgers-case-from-2014?rq=anti-semitism%20department%20of%20education>

[6] [https://www.globalministries.org/mee\\_resolutions](https://www.globalministries.org/mee_resolutions)

[7] <https://www.wrmea.org/israel/palestine/how-settler-colonialism-can-help-us-understand-israel-and-the-us.html> and

[https://www.globalministries.org/ameu\\_s\\_the\\_link\\_the\\_decolonizing\\_of\\_palestine\\_towards\\_a\\_one\\_state\\_solution\\_by\\_jeff\\_halper](https://www.globalministries.org/ameu_s_the_link_the_decolonizing_of_palestine_towards_a_one_state_solution_by_jeff_halper)

[8] Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice: <https://www.cryforhope.org/>

**A RESOLUTION TO BAN THE PRACTICE OF CONVERSION THERAPY**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**WHEREAS** the medical practice known as “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” regards LGBTQ+1 persons as abnormal or defective, and attempts to change or “repair” non-conforming sexual orientation or gender identity through widely-discredited therapeutic practices; [1] and

**WHEREAS** conversion therapy for adults is legal in 50 states and all U.S. territories, while conversion therapy for youth and children is still legal in 30 states; [2] and

**WHEREAS** many studies have shown that attempts to change or “repair” sexual orientation or gender identity are associated with compromised mental health including, among other harms, lifelong suffering as the result of internalized shame, increased risk of suicide, and difficulty in forming stable and lasting relationships; [3] and

**WHEREAS** a survey of at-risk LGBTQ+ youth published by the Trevor Project in 2020 showed that 42 percent who were subjected to conversion therapy had attempted suicide, while the attempted suicide rate of transgender and non-binary youth during or after conversion therapy was even higher at 57 percent; [4] and

**WHEREAS** virtually every professional association in the health care industry has declared that conversion therapy is ineffective, unethical or harmful, including the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, and the National Association of Social Workers; [5] and

**WHEREAS** in December 2020 UCC denominational leaders joined Archbishop Desmond Tutu and more than 400 other Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu faith leaders as signatories of the statement “Declaring the Sanctity of life and the Dignity of All” which called “for all attempts to change, suppress or erase a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression—commonly known as ‘conversion therapy’—to end, and for these harmful practices to be banned”; [6]

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ, affirming the dignity and worth of all people, deplores the practice of “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” that denies LGBTQ+1 youth, children, and adults the opportunity to experience the blessings of love and human integrity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges parents and guardians, caregivers, and authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ to protect those in their care from any practice or program that purports to “cure” their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges congregations and all other settings of the church to advocate for state and federal laws protecting youth, children, and adults from “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” by banning the practice; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod encourages congregations and other settings of the church to work with ecumenical and interfaith partners to raise awareness of the harms of “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” and to advocate for banning the practice; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges congregations and other settings to strengthen their efforts to reach their LGBTQ+ neighbors, especially youth and children, with the Good News that their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression are gifts from God.

**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.

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[1] Human Rights Campaign. The Lies and Dangers of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity. [www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy](http://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy)

[2] Movement Advancement Project. Conversion "Therapy" Laws. [www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion\\_therapy](http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion_therapy)

[3] American Psychoanalytic Association. Position Statement on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression. <http://apsa.org/content/2012-position-statement-attempts-change-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-or-gender>.

[4] The Trevor Project. About Conversion Therapy. [www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/trevor-advocacy/50-bills-50-states/about-conversion-therapy](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/trevor-advocacy/50-bills-50-states/about-conversion-therapy)

[5] Human Rights Campaign. See original citation.

[6] The Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ lives. Declaring the Sanctity of Life and Dignity of All. <http://globalinterfaith.lgbt/declaration>

**“WHO WILL SPEAK FOR THE TREES?” A RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHTS OF  
NATURE  
A Resolution of Witness**

**FINAL TEXT**

**WHEREAS** all rights, human and the more than human lives, depend on the flourishing and vital natural cycles of life, and healthy Earth living systems. We are all interconnected to all living beings, and when we diminish or fail to recognize the rights of the natural world, we diminish our own life. Humanity and nature are interconnected, The Rights of Nature recognizes a reciprocal and responsible human relationship with Nature; [1]

**WHEREAS** The UCC has a long history of creation-care, starting with the recognition of environmental racism in the 1980s, its studies on toxic pollution (1987, 2007, 2020), responsibly and the campaign of the Three Great Loves: Neighbor, Children, and Creation (2017), programs on Green and Creation Justice Churches, and the formation of Environmental Justice Teams. The United Church of Christ Synod has passed resolutions that directly express concerns for Earthcare; [2] .

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ boldly proclaims in the public square that:

- Humans need a dramatic shift from the point of view that the Earth and all her resources are available for our sole benefit.
- Nature is not ours for enslavement but was created as a mutually sustaining ecosystem, which is not to be destroyed or abused. People of faith are stewards of the land in our care. We proclaim publicly, “The Earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it” (PS. 24:1).
- The Earth is an original gift to sustain all life.
- We are indebted to the leadership and witness of Indigenous Peoples and the labor of generations of those who have actively been engaged in the conservancy and stewardship of the earth as central to their being.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ listens to the cries of the Earth, adopts this “Rights of Nature” resolution, and takes the following prophetic actions:

- Promote compassionate care, foster love, and co-live responsibly with the Earth Community of Life. [3] Safeguard the common goods, space and shared resources of the Earth, for humanity and biokind. Uphold the rights of ecological integrity, biodiversity, and healthy bioregions. Advocate intergenerational responsibility for the biotic community of the Earth and gratitude of the natural world as divine gift. Promote the value of interdependence of humans and Nature as fundamental to sustainable life on Earth. Affirm that co-living with Nature involves distributive justice, a fair sharing and responsible participation of natural resources.

- Uphold the ecological principle that the Rights of Nature supersedes harmful and destructive property rights, for the balanced cycles of the natural world must be protected as a common good for the present and future generations of human life and biokind. Advocate for EPA regulations and protections that promote the Rights of Nature. Promote economies of life rather than unregulated extractive economies that exploit resources. Seek financial reparations and restoration to the habitats when corporations and/or government projects harm and damage habitats.
- Support the Earth Charter, the Nature Rights movement, and the movement of Indigenous Peoples to grant legal standing to nature. [4] Urge all corporate and/or governmental land and water projects to perform environmental impact studies on minimizing damage to habitats (waterways, lands, atmosphere) and wildlife. Promote the right of local communities or environmental organizations to represent the unheard voices and cries of Nature.
- Foster respect and gratitude for Nature as a divine gift. Combat attitudes that relegate Nature to mere capital for profit or a dumping ground for toxic waste.
- Promote the Rights of Nature to be free from human harm, including the right to healthy habitats, the right to species flourishing, the right to a fair share of the bio-region and its goods, and the right to fulfil their ecological potential without human infringements.
- Prioritize renewable energies over fossil fuels and prioritize the economies of life - such as the Green New Deal - over extractive and unbridled economies that pollute and damage the Earth.
- Encourage organic farming and regenerative agriculture. Encourage the reduction of pesticides and insecticides that negatively impact the soil, aquifers, and other life. Support family farming and local farmers' markets. Work for food justice and security for all people.
- Support the upholding of all treaties with indigenous nations, respecting their lands and kinship natural relations. Ally with and support Indigenous Peoples in their de-colonization of Nature, protecting their kinship rights and access to sacred lands.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on all settings of the church to respond to the Rights of Nature by taking intentional actions such as:

- Participating in the Season of Creation for September Sundays; [5] incorporating creation care into each liturgical season (Tenebrae, Easter sunrise service outdoors, and Earth Day); preaching often on Earth Justice; celebrating outdoors or bringing the outdoors into the church.
- Ritualizing environmental grief by observing occasions such as International Day for Biological Diversity (May 22), Remembrance Day for Lost Species (November 30); starting environmental grief support groups.
- Fostering love of God's creation, organizing walks in botanical gardens and wilderness areas, planting trees, taking nature hikes, and attending summer camps.

- Studying and implementing “A Kairos Call to Action”, a 10- year mobilization plan on climate change and inequality. [6]
- Becoming a Creation Justice Church and green church. [7]
- Subscribing to the UCC Environmental Justice newsletters and environmental newsletters, sharing webinars, and reading and studying about creation care and climate change, as spiritual practices to equip us for creation care.
- Working for the Green New Deal (the transition to renewable energies) and the Blue New Deal (protection and restoration of oceans and waterways); advocating for the Rights of Nature and taking part in climate strikes and non-violent protests.
- Organizing locally by partnering and building community networks with conservationist and environmental groups, and finding common ground to restore damaged environments.
- Being creative and imaginative in defense of the Rights of Nature.

**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.

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[1] Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1998, pp. 108-109; James A. Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological integrity and Christian Responsibility*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1991. A Bill of Biotic Rights (rights of nonhuman life) pp. 186-189; *The Stillheart Declaration on the Rights of Nature and the Economics of the Biosphere* (2013) <https://peoplesrightsplanetsrights.wordpress.com/tag/stillheart-declaration/> ; John Hart, *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. (Roman Catholics), Principles of Christian Ecological Ethics, pp. 219-220.

[2] Past General Synod Resolutions: 2013, *Mountain Top Removal: Coal Mining in Appalachia; Urging Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies to Address Climate Change; On Making UCC Church Buildings More Carbon Neutral*; 2015, *Transition From Fossil Fuels to Renewable Energy*; 2017, *The Earth Is the Lord’s, Not Ours to Wreck: Imperatives for a New Moral Order*; 2019, *Let Justice Roll: Declaring Support for the Green New Deal, Affirming the Intersectionality of Climate Justice with All Justice Issues*,

[https://www.ucc.org/environmental\\_resolutions\\_at\\_general\\_synod](https://www.ucc.org/environmental_resolutions_at_general_synod)Respect

[3] Principle of the Earth Charter. <https://earthcharter.org/read-the-earth-charter/preamble/>

[4] Alexis Bunten, “What Do the Rights of Nature have do with Indigeneity?” *BioNeers*, <https://bioneers.org/rights-nature-indigeneity/> ; Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, <https://celdf.org/> ; Mari Margold, “Marching towards Change: Faith and Governance in the Movement for the Rights of Nature,” Center for Humans and Nature, [Marching Toward Change—Faith and Governance in the Movement for the Rights of Nature | Center for Humans & Nature \(humansandnature.org\)](https://www.humansandnature.org/). David R. Boyd, *The Rights of Nature: A Legal Revolution that Could Save the World*, FVW Press, 2017.

[5] Season of Creation, <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

[6] UCC Kairos Document, [https://www.ucc.org/a\\_kairos\\_call\\_to\\_action](https://www.ucc.org/a_kairos_call_to_action)

[7] [https://www.ucc.org/how\\_it\\_works\\_becoming\\_a\\_creation\\_justice\\_church](https://www.ucc.org/how_it_works_becoming_a_creation_justice_church)



**A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING TO END 128 YEARS OF WAR BETWEEN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM  
A Resolution of Witness**

**WHEREAS** Henry Opukahaia is known as the missionary from the Hawaiian Kingdom that encouraged American missionaries to arrive in Hawaii; [i], [ii] and

**WHEREAS** the first Christian nation in the Pacific, the Hawaiian Kingdom constitution in 1840 began with a quote from the Bible “God hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth in unity and blessedness”; [iii], [iv], [v] and

**WHEREAS** on December 19, 1842, United States President John Tyler agreed to recognize the independence of the Hawaiian Kingdom; [vi] and

**WHEREAS** the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom through treaties with friendly nations around the world, successfully modernized Hawaiian self-governance at the time to prosper in peace, trade and friendship through treaties with friendly nations around the world for fifty years; [vii] and

**WHEREAS** Rev. Rufus Anderson, the author of the three-self method (self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating) and the long-term secretary of the ABCFM (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission) arrived in Hawai‘i in 1863 to tell the missionaries to create self-reliant, self-governing churches and "to devolve upon it (the Hawaiian churches) the responsibilities of self-government in ecclesiastical matters"; [viii] and

**WHEREAS** Rev. Anderson’s advice was not followed and the government of the Hawaiian Kingdom was overthrown on January 17, 1893; [ix] and

**WHEREAS** on December 18, 1893, President Grover Cleveland’s executive agreement to restore the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom was signed by Liliuokalani and received by U.S. ambassador Albert Willis; [x] and

**WHEREAS** in 1991, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ directed President Paul Sherry to issue an apology on the 100th anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy for the complicity of the church in the overthrow; [xi], [xii] and

**WHEREAS** in 1993 President Clinton, with senators and representatives from Hawaii, signed Public Law 103-150 apologizing for the United States role in the illegal occupation; [xiii] and

**WHEREAS** the National Lawyers Guild recommended to the Governor of the State of Hawaii “to begin to comply with international humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Islands”; [xiv] and

**WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has historically stressed the importance of Justice as a key faith component for the Church; and

**WHEREAS** the correction of injustices depends upon correct history based upon factual matters, and history is often based upon who writes the history and factual information available; and

**WHEREAS** the information included in this resolution will be available at <https://ahecchurch.weebly.com/> about the founding of the Hawaiian Kingdom to correct false history about the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom; and

**WHEREAS** various General Synods of the United Church of Christ have taken proactive stands on Justice; and

**WHEREAS** justice depends upon action, not just stating what is true and just and right (pono in Hawaiian);

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all settings of the church, denomination officers, conferences, associations, and congregations to live into the 1993 Apology of the United Church of Christ delivered to the Native Hawaiian People by President Paul Sherry;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we call upon the United Church of Christ's General Counsel's office to listen to and consider recommendations from the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches, other Native Hawaiian organizations, and Native Hawaiian voices drafting communications to local, national and international leaders and organizations calling for compliance with international humanitarian law and an end to the illegal occupation of the Hawaiian islands;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirm its commitment to stand alongside and in support of the efforts of Native Hawaiians to seek redress and restitution for the war crimes of the US against the Hawaiian Kingdom including, but not limited to, the crime of denationalization;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the United Church of Christ Board will provide the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ with a written and oral update on the progress on the implementation of this resolution.

**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.

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[i] Papa Makua Wendell Davis 6th generation descendant of Henry Opukahaia

[ii] Spencer, Aida Bescon. "How Gods Spirit Worked a Revolution in Hawaii in 1819-1825." *Pricilla Papers* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 5-11.

[https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/pp193\\_2hgswarihi1819.pdf](https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/pp193_2hgswarihi1819.pdf)

[iii] 1840 Constitution of the Hawaiian Kingdom," Wikipedia, July 14, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1840\\_Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Hawaiian\\_Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1840_Constitution_of_the_Hawaiian_Kingdom).

[iv] <https://www.hawaii-nation.org/constitution-1840.html>

- [v] <http://hooilina.org/cgi-bin/journal?e=d-0journal--00-0-0-004-Document---0-1--1en-50---20-frameset-search-issue---001-0110escapewin&a=p&p=frameset&d=HASH0166acfd8ec6df2fa38fd161.5.2.3>
- [vi] International Treaties,” Hawaiian Kingdom Government, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/treaties.shtml>.
- [vii] International Treaties,” Hawaiian Kingdom Government, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/treaties.shtml>.
- [viii] Rufus Anderson, *A Heathen Nation Evangelized: A History of the Sandwich Islands Mission* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872), 284
- [ix] Sally Merry, *Colonizing Hawaii* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 35.
- [x] The Hawaiian Kingdom Blog,” National Lawyers Guild Calls Upon State of Hawai‘i to Comply with International Law of Occupation, November 12, 2020, <https://hawaiiankingdom.org/blog/national-lawyers-guild-calls-upon-state-of-hawaii-to-comply-with-international-law-of-occupation/>
- [xi] Charles McCollough, “Why Our Church Apologized to Hawaii,” Why our church apologized To Hawai‘i, December 13, 2020, [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy\\_url/11261/mccollough.pdf?1418437063](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/11261/mccollough.pdf?1418437063)
- [xii] [http://rescarta.ucc.org/jsp/RcWebImageViewer.jsp?doc\\_id=8abee2f6-352d-48f9-958b-49a311bc4489/ucoc0000/UD000001/00000019](http://rescarta.ucc.org/jsp/RcWebImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=8abee2f6-352d-48f9-958b-49a311bc4489/ucoc0000/UD000001/00000019)
- [xiii] 103d Congress Joint Resolution, “Public Law 103-150,” Statute-107-Pg 1510, November 23, 1993, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg1510.pdf>
- [xiv] Sai, Dr. Keanu. “National Lawyers Guild Calls Upon State of Hawai‘i to Comply with International Law of Occupation.” *Hawaiian Kingdom Blog*, November 12, 2020. <https://hawaiiankingdom.org/blog/national-lawyers-guild-calls-upon-state-of-hawaii-to-comply-with-international-law-of-occupation/>