

**DRAFT OF FINAL WORDING FROM RESOLUTIONS FROM THIRTY-  
FIRST GENERAL SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST –  
2017**

**COMMITTEE 1:**

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

**Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, the recent murder of the Charleston Nine by Dillon Roof, and the extrajudicial killings of persons of color at the hands of police, such as Gregory Gunn, Akiel Denkins, Walter Scott, and Keith Scott, demonstrate that the words W.E.B. Dubois spoke in an earlier time still ring true. A major problem in American life is the issue of race. While we have, by order of law, come to physically share many public and private spaces, not enough people have come to the point of sharing hearts, minds, and spirits around a uniting vision of freedom, justice, and equality.

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

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

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

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

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the United Church of Christ to seek ways to understand the needs of, to

provide aid and assistance to, and to work in partnership with these churches and institutions by framing local initiatives that advance the purposes for which they were founded;

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

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

### **Funding**

Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

### **Implementation**

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

## **COMMITTEE 2:**

### **A CALL FOR THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO ADVOCATE FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN LIVING UNDER ISRAELI MILITARY OCCUPATION A Resolution of Witness**

#### **Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas** General Synods of the United Church of Christ have repeatedly called for a just settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, for an end to prolonged Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, for the upholding of principles of non-violence, and for the protection of human rights; and

**Whereas** the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the State of Israel has ratified, calls on states to “Treat every child deprived of liberty with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age,” to use arrest and imprisonment of children “only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time,” to give detained children “prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty” and “the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits,” and in no case to subject children to “torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,”; and

**Whereas** UNICEF in 2013 determined that the “Ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized” and that this ill-treatment of children includes the use of blindfolds, hand-ties, strip searches, physical

violence, verbal abuse and intimidation, denial of access to lawyers and parents prior to and during interrogation, and failure to inform children of their legal rights, such as their right to remain silent; and

**Whereas** subsequent update reports to UNICEF's 2013 report have found that the situation has changed little for Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank; and

**Whereas** the United States Department of State in its annual country reports on human rights practices has, since 2007 in each annual country report on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, included data and information on ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention, denial of fair trial rights in Israeli military courts, and other grave violations against children committed by Israeli forces and settlers; and

**Whereas** Defense for Children International – Palestine and other international, Palestinian, and Israeli human rights organizations regularly publish reports confirming Israel's widespread and systematic ill-treatment of Palestinian children arrested in the occupied West Bank, ill-treatment which includes heavily armed Israeli soldiers invading children's homes and arresting them in the middle of the night; failure to notify parents of the reason for arrest or the location of detention; denial of access to lawyers during interrogation; failure to inform children of their rights; the use of position abuse, threats, and isolation by interrogators to coerce confessions; the use of solitary confinement for interrogation purposes; acceptance of confessions obtained by coercion or torture as legal courtroom evidence, even those confessions written in Hebrew and not understood by children coerced into signing them; and the routine transfer of Palestinian children out of the occupied Palestinian territories to prisons inside Israel in violation of international law; and

**Whereas** Israeli forces have held an average of 201 Palestinian children in custody each month since 2011, and this number spiked dramatically in late 2015 so that by the end of February 2016 the total had increased to 440, the highest number at any given point since the Israel Prison Service began releasing data in 2008; and

**Whereas** the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act specifies that no military assistance be given to any country that "engages in a consistent pattern of gross violation of internationally recognized human rights" and on at least eleven previous occasions the U.S. has withheld assistance from countries based on their human rights violations;

**Therefore, be it resolved,** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

**Calls** on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights and exercise an absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment of detained children (defined as persons under 18 years of age) ensuring that, from the moment of arrest, all operations and procedures are carried out in accordance with international juvenile justice standards, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and

**Requests** the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ to communicate this call to the Prime Minister of Israel and the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, noting that

among the practices in Israel's military detention system that require change are the use of nighttime arrests in the child's home, physical and verbal abuse, blindfolds and restraints, strip searches, solitary confinement, coerced confessions and confessions written in Hebrew, as well as the separation of detained children from their parents and legal counselors (including the transfer of Palestinian children to prisons within the State of Israel that their parents are not permitted to visit);

**Calls** on the government of the United States to adhere to its own established law – in this case, the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act – by withholding military assistance from the State of Israel due to its practices of arrest and detention of Palestinian children, requiring Israel to guarantee basic due process rights and exercise an absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment of detained children, ensuring that, from the moment of arrest, all operations and procedures are carried out in accordance with international juvenile justice standards, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and REQUESTS the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ to communicate this call to the United States Senate, as well as the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State of the United States;

**Calls** on the United States Senate to join with 194 other nations in ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child so as to bring stronger international pressure to bear on Israel to comply with the Convention's provisions, in particular Articles 37 and 40 of the Convention governing the treatment of children held in detention and REQUESTS the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ to communicate this call to the United States Senate, as well as the President, Vice President, and Secretary of State of the United States;

**Expresses** gratitude to Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for its advocacy on behalf of children in Palestine and the State of Israel;

**Encourages** continued partnership with local, national and global ecumenical and interfaith partners, as well as with Palestinian and Israeli organizations that are advocating for the rights of children and providing educational, social, and psychological support for children and their families adversely affected by the occupation; and

**Encourages** respectful dialogue among people of all faiths about this issue that has impacted generations.

**Calls on** all settings of the United Church of Christ to learn about the plight of children in Palestine and the State of Israel, as well as to support implementation of the resolution from Thirtieth General Synod entitled "A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," using as an implementation guide the document "Promoting a Just Peace in Palestine-Israel: A Guide for United Church of Christ Faith Leaders," produced by the United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network.

**Funding and Implementation:**

The funding for the implementation of this Resolution will be made in accordance with the

overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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

### **COMMITTEE 3**

#### **ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN IN HOMES AND INSTITUTIONS** **A Resolution of Witness**

##### **Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas** Jesus called for society to honor children for “of such is the Kingdom of God,” Luke 18:16

**Whereas** Jesus said that harming “the least of these my brethren” was an offense against Him, Matthew 25:40

**Whereas** the United Church of Christ has approved the National Council of Churches’ Social Creed for the 21st Century, which states that “we honor the dignity of every person” as created in the divine image and therefore “commit ourselves to a culture of peace and freedom that embraces non-violence” and “nurtures character,”

**Whereas** the United Church of Christ is committed to working for a “world safe for children” and “free from violence,” 95-GS-56 Resolution of Witness

**Whereas** corporal punishment model’s aggressive behavior as a solution to conflict and sends a message that hitting smaller and weaker people is acceptable,

**Whereas** corporal punishment is degrading and traumatizing to children and often leads to physical injury,

**Whereas** corporal punishment may produce short-term compliance but is subsequently less effective, leading frustrated caretakers to inflict more severe forms of punishment,

**Whereas** some research has associated corporal punishment with chronic depression and increased crime, violence, substance abuse, anxiety and aggression in children and adults,

**Whereas** children must eventually develop their own conscience and self-discipline, which are fostered by a home environment of respect, trust, love and self-control,

**Whereas** schools and child-care centers should inspire children to enjoy learning and feel safe and affirmed,

**Whereas** corporal punishment in schools is disproportionately used on poor children, minorities, children with disabilities, and boys,

**Whereas** 19 states, including Indiana and Kentucky, allow corporal punishment in schools and child care facilities,

**Whereas** in the 2013-2014 school year Indiana had 239 cases of corporal punishment and Kentucky had 823,

**Whereas** the Churches' Network for Non-violence, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, United Methodist Church, and Presbyterian Church USA oppose corporal punishment,

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls for state and local governments to prohibit corporal punishment in schools, juvenile detention centers, group homes, mental health institutions and child-caring facilities;

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon member churches to make resources available on Christian parenting that include alternatives to corporal punishment.

#### **Funding**

Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

#### **Implementation**

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

#### **COMMITTEE 4**

### **BRING DOWN THE WALL IN THE CARIBBEAN: ENDING THE UNITED STATES EMBARGO ON CUBA** **A Resolution of Witness**

#### **Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, United Church of Christ (UCC) General Synods have previously urged this diplomatic renewal with resolutions in the General Synods of 1979 and 1993, and the General Council action of 1983; and

**Whereas**, on 10 March of this year UCC General Minister and President Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer co-signed a letter to President Barack Obama, with other Christian and Jewish leaders in the U.S., expressing support for the president's historic trip to Cuba in March 2016, for the reopening of the U.S. embassy in Havana, and for President Obama's executive actions easing some of the travel and trade restrictions; and

**Whereas**, respected international human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have long opposed the U.S. embargo of Cuba;

**Whereas**, every year since 1992 the United Nations General Assembly has overwhelmingly condemned the U.S. embargo of Cuba; and

**Whereas**, recent polling indicates that 73 percent of all U.S. citizens (including 59 percent of Republicans) favor ending the embargo; and

**Whereas**, 53 percent of Cuban Americans, traditionally the Cuban government's most fervent critics, now favor ending the embargo, with only 31 percent wanting it continued; and

**Whereas**, the governments of the United States and Cuba have resumed formal diplomatic relations; President Obama has become the first sitting U.S. chief executive to visit Cuba in more than 80 years, and has used his constitutionally authorized executive prerogative to ease some trade and travel restrictions; and

**Whereas**, members of congregations belonging to the United Church of Christ in recent years have initiated people-to-people connections between Christians here and in Cuba, resuming a legacy of border crossings led by Rev. Theodore Braun, a longtime UCC pastor who beginning in 1979 led 40 delegations of Christians from the U.S. for meetings with their sisters and brothers in Cuba;

**Therefore, be it Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ give thanks to God for the progress made since 2015 by the governments of Cuba and the United States toward demonstrating love of neighbor through the normalizing of diplomatic and economic relations; and

**Be it Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ support the initiatives of United Church of Christ congregations and others in developing friendships across the divide separating our countries, encourage additional delegations from our churches to visit Cuba, and invite and host Cuban clergy and lay leaders as our guests, in order to strengthen our bond as the body of Christ and mutually encourage one another to pursue reconciliation and justice between both countries leading to new policies; and

**Be it Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ continue to advocate for further United States administrative actions and congressional legislation in order to secure the full normalization of relations between our two countries, including but not limited to the consideration and passage of legislation that lifts travel and trade restrictions currently in place; and

**Be it Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ heartily supports honest and respectful negotiation between our governments to end the embargo, to restore mutual dignity, and to resolve political differences; and

**Be it Finally Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourage every setting of the United Church of Christ to further educate on the history of Cuba, of United States-Cuba relations, and the life of the church in Cuba, to attend to the testimony of our Cuban neighbors, and to glean wisdom and insight from those who have lived and ministered

without access to social privilege for many years. May we be evangelized anew as their story, their determination, and their faithfulness remind us that the authority of the church is not assumed through social privilege, but is granted under the Spirit's direction. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6).

### **Funding**

Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

### **Implementation**

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

## **COMMITTEE 5**

### **RESOLUTION DECLARING THE WORK OF THE PATTERN OF GIVING IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST COMPLETE AND ON PROPOSING A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR COVENANTAL GIVING AND IMPLEMENTING FUNDRAISING BEST PRACTICES** **A Prudential Resolution**

#### **Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas** the Pattern of Giving no longer serves the needs of the United Church of Christ, makes no provision for use of technologies that are commonly available today, and in some instances, prevents the implementation of philanthropic best practices that have developed over the last 30 years, and

**Whereas** a donor-centered approach to fundraising is more in keeping with the best practices of philanthropy today, and the institutionally-centered approach on which our current system relies is a barrier to increasing generosity and to developing new and thriving ministries across the United Church of Christ, and

**Whereas** the shared ministry among all settings of the United Church of Christ is built on covenantal relationships and must provide for and encourage cooperation, collaboration, and flexibility among all covenant partners in the responsible practice of fundraising and philanthropy, and

**Whereas** the Eighth General Synod affirmed giving practices that were shared with the church in 1971 in the publication of the Pattern of Giving in the United Church of Christ, and

**Whereas** the Fourteenth General Synod adopted changes in the earlier work of General Synods, published in the new Pattern of Giving, United Church of Christ 1984 Edition, and

**Whereas** understandings and patterns of giving have continued to evolve;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ

gives thanks to past General Synods for their work that resulted in the publication of the editions of the Pattern of Giving, United Church of Christ, celebrates the effective witness and guidance contained in these documents, and declares the Pattern of Giving no longer in effect.

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all ministry settings of the United Church of Christ to establish coordinated and comprehensive development programs using best practices that: are sensitive to the needs of all settings of the church; are responsive to changing patterns and practices of generosity across the church and within the culture in which the church lives; are consistent with norms, expectations, and policies of a donor-centered approach to fundraising and philanthropy; and empower congregations and individual donors to donate directly to the mission priorities that are most compelling to them.

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ directs the national setting to provide resources to coordinate this effort and build capacity for raising funds in all settings of the church, in covenant, collaboration, and partnership with Conferences and congregations.

**Be it further resolved** that Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages that Our Church's Wider Mission—Basic Support continue to be directed from congregations to Conferences.

**Be it further resolved** that Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ invites Conferences to commit to an OCWM sharing formula no less than the average rate of giving for the previous three years, on a rolling basis.

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ invites the Conferences to reevaluate the sharing formula within five years, in conversation with the national setting.

**Be it further resolved** that Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages that the four Special Mission Offerings continue to support the mission of the church, and requests that a cost-benefit analysis be completed for each offering to enable a decision regarding their future implementation.

**Be it finally resolved** Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests that the national setting conduct a marketing analysis of the names "Our Church's Wider Mission," "Our Church's Wider Mission – Basic Support," and "Our Church's Wider Mission – Special Support," in light of the multiple understanding and various uses of these across 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 Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the

United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

## **COMMITTEE 6**

### **THE DISPARITY OF RIGHTS OF ADOPTEES TO ACCESS BIRTH RECORDS FOR ADULTS**

#### **A Resolution of Witness**

Motion Failed

VOTE: 51% 50% 9%

## **COMMITTEE 7**

### **ON BECOMING AN IMMIGRANT WELCOMING CHURCH**

#### **A Resolution of Witness**

#### **Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas** the International Association for Refugees has stated, "The world is in the midst of a long-term refugee crisis;" and

**Whereas** thousands of refugees and migrants come from throughout the world to the United States seeking safety, security, freedom, and opportunity; and

**Whereas** our immigrant brothers and sisters continue to suffer as they fear raids, deportation, and seeing their families torn apart; and

**Whereas** migrants bring us as offerings their stories and experiences, dreams and hopes, energy and skills; and

**Whereas** our new neighbors experience difficulties adjusting to life in a new country; difficulties such as language barriers, culture shock, a sense of loss and isolation; and

**Whereas** the welcome and support immigrants receive helps in the building of safe communities and future prosperity; and

**Whereas** the United Church of Christ (UCC) declares "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcomed here;"

**Whereas** the twenty-ninth General Synod passed a compassionate immigration resolution that included encouraging "congregations to further engage in education work on immigration from a faith perspective, participating in border delegations and working toward making your congregation an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation;"

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ in Baltimore, Maryland in 2017 declares itself an Immigrant Welcoming Denomination.

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the development of U.S. policy dedicated to facilitating the respectful welcome and

inclusion of all immigrants;

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the National Setting, Conferences and Associations to call on their members to become active Immigrant Welcoming Congregations and proclaim themselves to be so;

**Be it finally resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ asks the National Setting to provide resources such as, "Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation - The Journey is Made by Walking," to assist congregations in this process.;

### **Funding**

The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

### **Implementation**

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

## **COMMITTEE 8**

### **A MORE JUST ECONOMY: \$15 MINIMUM WAGE, LIVING WAGES AND JOB CREATION**

#### **A Resolution of Witness**

#### **Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, scripture calls God's people care "for the widow, the orphan, and the alien living among you" (Deuteronomy 24:17-21); and

**Whereas**, Scripture declares that "God is a God of Justice" (Isaiah 30:18) and we believe that God's grace and judgment are active in all life; and

**Whereas**, we believe that God requires us to act for and with justice, mercy, and humility before God (Micah 6:8); and

**Whereas**, Jesus called disciples to "care for the least" among them (Matthew 25:31-46) and;

**Whereas**, the United States, like all nations, is blessed with an abundance of God's resources, more than enough for all;

**Whereas**, the United States is an extremely wealthy country;

**Whereas**, God's resources are not being equitably shared;

**Whereas**, God's call to love our neighbors compels us to work for an economy where all jobs pay a living wage and everyone who wants a job has one;

**Whereas**, the federal minimum wage is set at \$7.25 an hour, unchanged since 2009, and the tipped minimum wage is \$2.13 an hour;

**Whereas**, our neighbors who work in low-wage jobs would welcome our support for their struggles for fair wages and better working conditions;

**Whereas**, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources 2015 guidelines for a family of four living in poverty is a household income of \$24,250; and

**Whereas**, wages of \$15 per hour for a 40-hour workweek constitute an annual wage of \$32,000 which only begins to address the economic injustice of minimum annual wages that are below federal poverty guidelines; and

**Whereas**, we believe every worker's right to form and join a labor union must be protected;

**Whereas**, our international trade and investment laws must be fair;

**Whereas**, millions of people want and need a job but cannot find one; and

**Whereas**, in 2005 General Synod XXV approved a resolution "For the Common Good" calling all settings of the United Church of Christ to "do justice and promote the common good by working actively to ensure full employment, dignity on the job, living wages, and sufficient income for everyone;" and

**Whereas**, General Synods have repeatedly called for full employment including in 1977 with the affirmation of "the God-given right of all persons to useful and remunerative work" and called on "federal, state, and local governments together with industry, business, labor and the unemployed to formulate and implement policies and programs to achieve full employment;"

**Therefore, be it Resolved that**, We the delegates to the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ seeks a just economy where all job pay a living wage and everyone who wants a job has one, and

**Call** on each member church of the United Church of Christ to examine its compensation of part-time and full-time staff to assure that each is paid at least \$15/hour or plan to reach, if possible, that minimum compensation by 2019;

**Call** on all settings of the United Church of Christ to support workers' efforts for better wages and working conditions and to participate in community efforts that seek to repair America's economic and social divisions and build a moral economy; and

**Call** on all settings of the United Church of Christ to advocate among local, state, and federal policy makers:

- to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour as soon as possible and ensure the minimum wage continues to rise so that all jobs pay a living wage,
- to strengthen the right of workers to form and join labor unions, to protect this right

more vigorously, and to increase penalties for violations,

-to enact fair international trade and investment agreements that protect workers, consumers, small firms, the environment, democratic process, and national sovereignty in the USA and in our trading-partner nations, and

-to create jobs and address society's unmet needs, such as repairing and replacing crumbling infrastructure and providing affordable childcare and early childhood education. calls on all settings of the United Church of Christ to advocate with Congress, and as appropriate, with state legislators and policymakers in other localities to ensure living wages for all workers by:

- raising the minimum wage, eliminating the separate tipped minimum wage and ensuring the minimum wage continues to rise each year so that all jobs pay a living wage;
- strengthening the right of workers to form and join labor unions, protecting these rights more vigorously, and increasing penalties for violations; and
- enacting fair international trade and investment agreements that will protect workers, consumers, small firms, the environment, democratic processes, and national sovereignty in the U.S. and in our trading-partner nations.

**Be it further resolved** the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on all settings of the United Church of Christ to support workers' efforts for better wages and working conditions and to participate in community efforts that seek to repair our economic and social divisions and build a moral economy;

**Be it further resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ, recognizing that everyone who wants a job should have one, calls on all settings of the United Church of Christ to advocate with Congress and policymakers at all levels to create jobs and address our society's unmet needs by, for example, repairing and replacing our crumbling infrastructure and providing affordable childcare and early-childhood education.

### **Funding**

The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

### **Implementation**

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

## **COMMITTEE 9**

### **ON ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY TRAINING FOR AUTHORIZED MINISTERS**

A Resolution of Witness

### **Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, in the year 1993, The Nineteenth General Synod adopted the "Statement of Christian Conviction of the Proposed Pronouncement Calling the United Church of Christ to be a Multiracial and Multicultural Church"; and

**Whereas**, by adopting the above statement the church called itself in all settings to be a true multiracial and multicultural church, “confessing and acting out its faith in the one sovereign God who through Jesus Christ binds in covenant faithful people of all races, ethnicities and cultures and to rejoice in these diversities as gifts to the human family in the variety of God's grace” and

**Whereas**, by the year 2045, the majority of United States citizens will be multicultural and multiracial with African, Asian, Latino, Pacific Islander and Native American roots demanding greater need for understanding and acceptance among all who claim through the Holy Spirit to belong to the Body of Christ; and

**Whereas**, in this year 2017, many United Church of Christ churches have been unable to fulfill the commitment made at the 19th General Synod and continue to reflect ‘the most segregated hour of the week’ leaving African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islander Americans in primarily African, Asian, European, Latino, Native, and Pacific Islander United Church of Christ churches isolated by their own ethnicity, unable to understand, reach out or support those in other ethnic communities affected by the widespread incidents of racial violence and injustice spreading across our country and rendering many of us impotent in the process of dismantling institutional racism, a task to which we are called as members of the body of Christ; and

**Whereas**, as people of faith and witnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Galilee we are called to be a coalition of Easter people bound together by our support of one another, showing up for each other where there is injustice and celebrating together where there is joy, for “If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, if one member is honored, all the members share its joy”; and

**Whereas**, the realization of Jesus’ prayer, “that they may all be one,” is impossible without self-reflection, serious study, and by engaging in safe, meaningful, substantive and bold conversations on the brokenness and divisiveness created within the body of Christ by the realities of institutional racism, and by the lack of understanding and the failure to nurture and lift up our cultural differences and gifts; and

**Whereas**, there is considerable evidence that when people actually begin to share their own preconceptions, misunderstandings and fears about cultural diversity/sensitivity and institutional racism in discussions groups, boundaries and walls are dismantled and healing occurs; and

**Whereas**, the UCC’s Local Church Ministries and the UCC’s Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization team (MESA) published in April 2009, a revised list of “The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ” and named in the marks of “Personal and Professional formation for Ministry” (Section 3) Item 14c “to accept and promote diversity, to inspire others to do so, and to minister in a multicultural and multiracial, open and affirming, just peace, accessible to all, united and uniting church” and “to encourage ongoing conversation regarding issues of ministry in the 21st century”; and

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ and many seminaries, Conferences, Associations and local churches currently have curriculum resources available to facilitate the study of cultural diversity/sensitivity and institutional racism including a new curriculum, “White Privilege – Let’s Talk,” published by the United Church of Christ’s Justice and Witness Ministries; and

**Whereas**, the authorized minister called upon to serve in each United Church of Christ ministry setting is the primary leader, teacher, and facilitator of such study and conversation,

**Therefore be it resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all the judicatory and educational settings of the denomination to include the study and training in key principles and best practices of cultural diversity, inclusion and equity as well as anti-racism, unconscious bias and anti-white supremacy trainings in clergy preparation, continuing education, and as an ongoing requirement for maintaining standing for all persons engaged in authorized ministry within and on behalf of the United Church of Christ;

**Be it finally resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests the United Church of Christ’s Justice and Witness Ministries, the UCC’s Local Church Ministries and the UCC’s Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization team (MESA) cooperate by collecting best practices to support the implementation of such requirement, study and training as a witness by July, 2019.

**Funding:**

Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**Implementation:**

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

**COMMITTEE 10**

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

**Text of the Motion:**

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

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

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

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

age of eighteen;

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

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

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

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

**Whereas**, ACES have a negative impact on child development, as manifested in adverse neurobiological effects (e.g., brain abnormalities, stress hormone dysregulation), deleterious psychosocial consequences (e.g., poor attachment, poor socialization, poor self-efficacy), and significant health-risk behaviors (e.g., smoking, obesity, substance abuse, promiscuity);

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

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

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

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

**Whereas**, many survivors of child abuse and neglect often experience spiritual struggles in the course of healing, trying to come closer to God as they question how God could allow such

abuse and neglect to happen in the first place. Indeed, trauma can shake people's faith in a natural or divine order and cast them into a state of existential crisis whereby they begin to lose trust in an all-powerful and good God, assume that their world is anything but safe and well-ordered, and believe that they themselves are wicked and deserving of bad outcomes;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Be It Further Resolved**, the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages each Association and congregation of the United Church of Christ to have Authorized Ministers and other leaders of the church understand the importance of the issue this

resolution addresses and learn alongside participants of the church that adult survivors are, for the most part, invisible because of the compulsion they have felt since childhood not to self-disclose, as well as to train its -participants to respond positively to those who are ready to self-disclose (probably for the first time) through words and deeds that are accepting, validating, non-judgmental, and non-pressuring; and

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

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the various settings of the UCC to work with state and federal representatives to strengthen the Americans with Disabilities Act so that mental disabilities are accommodated just as much as physical disabilities in the workplace; to encourage state and federal lawmakers to develop a standardized method of reporting child mental, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and/or child neglect by clinicians, criminal justice organizations, social service providers, healthcare organizations, insurance companies, researchers, and public policy makers; to encourage state and federal lawmakers to eliminate statutes of limitations for child abuse and neglect, as such statutes infringe upon the procedural due process rights of adult survivors of child abuse and neglect by denying them access to the courts and thereby to legal justice; and to work with the media and state and federal legislators to focus strongly on the need to support adult survivors of child abuse and neglect.

**Funding:**

The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**Implementation:**

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

**COMMITTEE 11**

**AFFIRMING AND SUPPORTING THE AUTHORIZED MINISTRIES OF UNDER-REPRESENTED CLERGY IN LCOAL CONGREGATIONS: A CALL FOR GREATER REPRESENTATION AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

**A Prudential Resolution**

**Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, "God created humankind in God's image," so that we human beings have been gifted to become co-creators with the divine and are thus ultimately responsible for what we are to make of our own lives together (Genesis 1:27a [NRSV]);

**Whereas**, our life together means that "we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and

individually we are members one of another,” so that we are called by God to create a beloved community of mutuality whereby each person can be the benefactor and beneficiary of all persons and therefore can realize his or her full humanity (Romans 12:5 [NRSV]);

**Whereas**, we acknowledge and confess that it is not right to disregard this call and thereby prevent all God's children from becoming fully who they are created to be;

**Whereas**, as God’s children we know that we must do more to love others as we do ourselves and must acknowledge that God has given us the beauty and magnificence of the full spectrum of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, degree of ableness, and gender identity and expression in our world and that this spectrum must be more fully represented in the pulpits of our churches;

**Whereas**, we acknowledge and confess that in our fractured world racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and cisgender bias have vitiated our attempts to form the beloved community and are therefore an affront to God as well as to our oneness in Jesus Christ, in which there is to be “no longer Jew or Greek . . . slave or free . . . male and female” (Galatians 3:28a [NRSV]);

**Whereas**, we are called accordingly to denounce institutional structures that separate God’s people based upon differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, degree of ableness, and gender identity and expression;

**Whereas**, we are further called to dismantle institutional structures and shadow ministries that – by intention or effect – construct or perpetuate systems and processes that objectify, exclude, and divide persons, as well as those that establish and propagate prejudices or maintain the status quo, including “pulpit requirements” that result in the installation of pastors and leaders who most closely resemble the congregations whom they serve and thereby prevent those same congregations from enjoying the gift of diversity;

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ at its Eleventh General Synod (1977), its Thirteenth General Synod (1981), its Fifteenth General Synod (1985), and its Twentieth General Synod (1995) urged all settings to employ “persons with disabilities,” including clergy, and at its Twenty-Second General Synod (1999) adopted a resolution entitled “The Calling of Clergy with Disabilities”;

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ at its Fifteenth General Synod (1985) adopted a resolution “Calling on UCC Congregations to Declare Themselves Open and Affirming” and at its Eighteenth General Synod (1991) adopted a resolution “Affirming Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Persons and their Ministries”;

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ at its Nineteenth General Synod (1993) adopted a resolution which called upon the UCC in all its settings to become a truly multiracial and multicultural church;

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ at its Twenty-Fourth General Synod (2003) adopted a resolution entitled “Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender Peoples within the

UCC and Supporting their Civil and Human Rights,” which, inter alia, encourages all UCC congregations “to welcome transgender people into membership, ministry, and full participation”;

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ at its Twenty-Second General Synod (1999) adopted, as part of a resolution entitled “Fair and Just Compensation,” a report to the Twenty-First General Synod that called for the same “attention and vigilance . . . to the fair and just treatment of persons called and employed by various settings of the UCC” as the denomination demonstrates “in the workplaces of society”;

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ at its Twenty-Second General Synod (1999) adopted a resolution entitled “Pastoral Compensation” that called for an immediate review of compensation plans for clergy serving Native American congregations and for recommendations to be made to the Twenty-Third General Synod “to correct the existing disparities in compensation for clergy serving American Indian congregations”;

**Whereas**, the historic social justice advocacy of the UCC – as witnessed by the aforementioned resolutions – has sought to manifest itself in multiple ways to create truly emancipative change that is inspired by the biblical writings, the prophets, the teachings and life of Jesus, the historic cloud of witnesses to the Christian faith, and the leaders of transformational movements for universal peace, justice, and equality, and that is enacted in the light of God’s unbounded love for all creation;

**Whereas**, UCC theology and polity permit its different ministries to witness and advocate in ways that are faithful to the Christian gospel, fitting to their unique gifts, and functional in their particular contexts;

**Whereas**, diversity in ministry is a good and a blessing, and just as it has been facilitated by the establishment of clear and attainable pathways to ordination for members of under-represented groups, so also it must be encouraged by the enactment of pro-active policies designed by congregational search committees to engage such individuals in the congregational search process;

**Whereas**, the generally low percentages of clergy from under-represented groups in the denomination’s solo and senior pastorates indicate there is still much work to be done in realizing a truly representative, just, and inclusive ordained ministry in our churches;

**Whereas**, the collection, tracking, reporting, and analysis of data regarding the composition and compensation of, as well as the complexion of candidacy pools for, authorized ministerial positions in local churches have been incomplete and/or inconsistent;

**Whereas**, there are no current means to certify that there is fair application of compensation guidelines; and

**Whereas**, experience has taught us that clergy from under-represented groups are often paid less than their counterparts in comparable ministerial settings, resulting in congregational-serving

UCC clergy from under-represented groups often having less in their pension funds for retirement than those counterparts;

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon:

1. UCC congregations, through open dialogue, and discussion, and education to seek to identify and eliminate barriers to authorized ministry that are based upon institutional bias;
2. UCC congregations to carry out search processes for their authorized ministers, as well as to examine and – if need be – amend or emend their personnel policies, in ways that heed the Holy Spirit’s call for inclusiveness and justice;
3. UCC congregations to heed that call not only by eliminating explicit and implicit policies and procedures that exclude candidates to authorized ministerial positions on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity and expression, but also – and perhaps more importantly – by implementing policies and procedures, including statements in their church profiles, that welcome and include the widest diversity of candidates possible;
4. the search committees of UCC congregations to interview persons from under-represented groups for all their authorized ministerial positions;
5. each authorized ministerial search committee of a UCC congregation to certify to those responsible for the administration and oversight of its Conference’s search and call process that there is diversity of race, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability to the extent that such can be and is known in the candidacy pool beginning at the first interview stage, and also to certify that a diversity of candidates has been or will be interviewed for the authorized ministerial position, and that, where there is a lack of such diversity, each authorized ministerial search committee of a UCC congregation will work with those responsible for the administration and oversight of its Conference’s search and call process to identify such candidates;
6. the candidates for authorized ministry in a local church to be in contact with their Conference’s office, as well as those responsible for the administration and oversight of that Conference’s search and call process to assist such candidates as they prepare for the search interview process;
7. UCC congregations to commit to comparable compensation and promotion of its authorized ministers who have similar qualifications and responsibilities, regardless of their race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, or disability and to be assisted in this endeavor by attending and adhering closely to their Conference’s compensation guidelines;
8. the many UCC Conference and Association committees on ministry, the UCC’s Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Team (MESA), and those responsible for the administration and oversight of the Conferences’ search and call processes to develop strategies to ensure fair and equitable compensation packages and to explore ways in which local

congregations can certify that their compensation package(s) are meeting certain minimum standards, including those related to benefits and pensions;

9. the Boards of Directors of the Conferences, in consultation with the Associations of the Conferences, to continue to acknowledge, examine, and help address the economic challenges facing authorized ministers in the UCC;

10. those responsible for the administration and oversight of their Conference's search and call process to encourage the inclusion of members of under-represented groups in their Conference's local church authorized ministerial searches, and to specify a means to provide leadership, guidance, and training, including inclusion strategies and practices, to their local church search committees in order that they may seriously consider and call diverse authorized ministerial leadership;

11. those responsible for the administration and oversight of their Conference's search and call process to identify a means to collect and disseminate annual demographic data related to all local church authorized ministers in their Conference beginning no later than 2018;

12. those responsible for the administration and oversight of their Conference's search and call process to develop and implement a strategic plan, based upon the initial demographic data collected, that sets out specific diversity goals and objectives as a means of informing and alerting the congregations of their Conference about best practices in creating opportunities and meeting expectations for greater inclusion, comparable compensation, and equitable promotion of individuals from under-represented groups with respect to local church authorized ministerial positions;

13. those responsible for the administration and oversight of their Conference's search and call process to deliver to their Board of Directors copies of the aforementioned strategic plans within six (6) months of the collection of the initial demographic data;

14. the Associations of a Conference to assist in encouraging and supporting the progress of their local congregations in reaching these specified diversity goals and objectives and the Board of Directors of each Conference to certify to its apposite Conference Annual Meeting the status of that progress;

15. the UCC's Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) and the UCC's Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization team (MESA) to develop a strategic plan to collect (through, among other means, requests for annual reports/reviews of clergy employment and compensation) data by race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and disability, such data to include composition at the assistant, associate, senior, and solo pastor levels, comparative compensation, and representation in selection pools – all in order to track and measure the realization of a truly representative, just, and inclusive ordained ministry in our churches; and

16. the Board of Directors of the UCC to send a copy of this resolution to the UCC's Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) and to the UCC's Ministerial Excellence, Support and

Authorization team (MESA).

**Funding:**

The funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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

**COMMITTEE 12:**

**TOWARD DISABILITY JUSTICE: A CALL TO THE CHURCH AND CHURCHES**  
**Resolution of Witness**

**Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ General Synod Twenty-Five has called upon all settings of the UCC to be “Accessible to All” (GS resolution Called to Wholeness in Christ, 2005);

**And, Whereas**, the UCC Collegium of officers has already publicly supported a call for the United States of America to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities;

**Therefore, be it Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod calls the United Church of Christ in all its settings to commit to disability justice;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ advocates for the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and calls upon all other settings of the United Church of Christ to do the same;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the national setting to monitor legislation and court decisions that involve the Americans with Disabilities Act and other legislation that impacts persons with disabilities and use this information to invite other settings of the Church to serve as a prophetic witness to the inclusion of all persons in society;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges all settings of the UCC to be a prophetic voice for wage equality and against the injustice of the subminimum wage for persons with disabilities;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls for the continued right of persons with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on all United Church of Christ outdoor ministry settings to include persons with disabilities in mainstreamed age appropriate programs and welcome persons with disabilities in all outdoor ministry settings;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges all UCC settings to be advocates for affordable and equal health care insurance without prejudice to preexisting conditions inclusive of mental health;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on all settings of the UCC to actively advocate in support of Medicaid funding to ensure independence and lifelines for persons with disabilities;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ invites all UCC settings to develop awareness of health disparities experienced by persons with disabilities who may not be offered or made eligible for organ transplant, or other life sustaining treatment, because they live with disabilities;

**Let it Be Further Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges the national setting, and all other UCC settings, to develop an active response to the intersectionality of race and disability in relation to police brutality and death by police force, and further calls upon local congregations and seminaries to be sources of education about disability/mental health awareness and places where police can interact and gain experience with persons with disabilities in safe non-threatening settings;

**Let it Be Finally Resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages UCC Disaster Ministries to include the need for disaster preparedness among persons with disabilities in their disaster response plans and that disaster ministry teams in all settings of the Church engage persons with disabilities to develop emergency preparedness plans.

**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 UCC Collegium of officers in consultation with the UCCDM Board of Directors, and other appropriate ministries will determine the implementing body.

**COMMITTEE 13**

**AFFIRMING THE COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS' BOYCOTT OF  
WENDY'S**

**A Resolution of Witness**

**Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, farmworkers are among the most oppressed workers in the United States;

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ has long supported farmworkers' struggle for justice;

**Whereas**, in 1973, General Synod IX suspended most of its work for 24 hours while nearly 100

pilgrims travelled from St. Louis to California's Coachella Valley to stand with farmworkers threatened with violence;

**Whereas**, in 2001, when the Coalition of Immokalee Workers called for a boycott of Taco Bell (the company that would eventually become the first to sign on to the Fair Food Program), GS XXIII endorsed the boycott and the United Church of Christ became the first denomination (of many, eventually) to support it;

**Whereas**, in 2005, GS XXV passed a resolution that celebrated Taco Bell's entry into the Fair Food Program (then called the Fair Food Alliance) and encouraged the United Church of Christ to "support the CIW in its efforts to extend this new model of corporate social responsibility throughout the fast food industry" (*italics added*);

**Whereas**, in 2009, when GS XXVII met in Tampa, many United Church of Christ members devoted a portion of their lunch break to march to a nearby Publix grocery store to encourage that supermarket chain to join the Fair Food Program;

**Whereas**, two years ago a letter calling on Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program, signed by nearly two-dozen faith leaders including the United Church of Christ's General Minister and President Rev. Geoffrey Black, was presented to Wendy's board of directors at the 2014 shareholder meeting;

**Whereas**, numerous United Church of Christ congregations and members have marched, hosted marchers, participated in rallies and other events, sent letters and postcards, held workshops, and acted in a variety of ways to support the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and pressure Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program;

**Whereas**, 10 years of activities and efforts to encourage Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program have been unsuccessful;

**Whereas**, a boycott is a major undertaking and not to be embarked upon without great care, it is now a necessary next step given the failure of the great many efforts made over the last ten years to encourage Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program;

**Whereas**, the UCC Florida Conference at their Spring Gathering (April 29-30, 2016) endorsed the boycott of Wendy's as did the Central Atlantic Conference at their Annual Meeting in June 2016; and

**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ Board of Directors endorsed the boycott in May, 2016.

**Therefore, be it resolved**, the Thirty-first General Synod endorses the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' boycott of Wendy's and calls on all settings of the United Church of Christ to become informed about farm workers' lives and working conditions and to honor the CIW boycott.

**Funding:**

The funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the

overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**Implementation:**

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

**COMMITTEE 14A**

**ON RECOGNIZING AND STUDYING GUN VIOLENCE**  
**AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas**, in 1996 at the urging of the National Rifle Association, the Congress of the United States has prevented federal money from being spent on researching gun violence and has actively restricted the nation’s principal public health agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from looking into why the United States has five times the rate of gun deaths per year than most European countries; and

**Whereas**, in October 2015 a group of 110 U.S. Representatives, led by U.S. Rep. David Price (D-N.C.), called on House of Representatives leaders “to reject short-sighted and unnecessary riders that freeze gun violence research,” and that the United States response to the increasing gun-violence, while debated, “should be informed by sound scientific evidence;” and

**Whereas**, in June 2016 the American Medical Association adopted a position that the United States is facing a ‘public health crisis in gun violence’ that requires a comprehensive public health response and solution and will actively lobby Congress to overturn the restrictions on the CDC; and

**Whereas**, the CDC has successfully led on research related to many non-medical public health emergencies — such as automobile safety, safeguards related to children’s toys, and tobacco education — that has resulted in significantly reduced rates of senseless death and injury; and  
**Whereas**, the United Church of Christ as reaffirmed many times its longstanding commitments to both social justice and public health,

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

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

**Be it finally resolved** that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges

members and other settings of the United Church of Christ to actively speak out against restrictive legislation that seeks to silence or stifle the scientific and medical community from providing sound methods to save and improve the lives of all of God's people.

**Funding:**

Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**Implementation:**

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

**COMMITTEE 14b**

**THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S – NOT OURS TO WRECK**  
**IMPERATIVES FOR A NEW MORAL ERA**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**Text of the Motion:**

**Whereas** the leaders of over 190 countries have signed the Paris Climate Accord, acknowledging the critical role every country must play if the life-sustaining climate of the earth is to continue to sustain life as we have always known it;

**Whereas** the mayors of 30 American cities, the governors of numerous states and leaders of hundreds of American companies have publicly committed the institutions they lead to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with the Paris Climate Accord;

**Whereas** over the past 50 years the UCC, along with religious leaders from other faiths and denominations, have issued countless statements on the goodness of Creation and our call to act as responsible stewards, all of which has been an insufficient witness;

**Whereas** the Core Purpose of the United Church of Christ states (in part): "... we serve God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world as made manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,"

**Whereas** this historic moment provides Christian communities with a powerful opportunity to bear witness to the sacredness of God's Creation and the urgent call to preserve it, and responding to this call expresses the new mission initiative of the UCC known as the three great loves, one of which is love of creation;

**Therefore, be it resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ raises its prophetic voice regarding the urgency of healing the climate of the earth, our home and God's gift for the future of all life, both human and all other life,

**Be it further resolved**, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the whole of the church to prayerfully engage the following imperatives as we seek to initiate a new moral era:

**Let our clergy accept the mantle of moral leadership**

Now is the time for clergy to speak from their pulpits about the moral obligation of our generation to protect God’s creation. Let the world know that whatever the current American administration may say or do, we who follow Jesus will not back away from God’s call to protect our common home.

**Let all of us incarnate the changes we long for**

Now is the time for congregations and for every person of faith to set a moral example through our own words and actions. As individuals and as communities, let us commit to making decisions of integrity in our energy choices, even as we commit to hold our political leaders accountable to do the same.

**Let us proclaim truth in the public square**

We are now living in a John 18:37 moment, in which we must hold to the truth we understand from our two Testaments and from the sacred book of nature, recognizing that when truth is compromised, only power prevails.

- Let our communities of faith be bold and courageous as we address the greatest moral challenge that the world has ever faced.
- Let us commit to resist all expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and demand new sources of renewable energy that are accessible to all communities.
- Let us do all we can to change America's understanding of the story that our generation is writing. Let us begin a new story – a story that is not dependent on fossil fuel or on wealth for the few and misery for the many.

Accepting that it is up to us – we the people – whether in the streets, at the State House, in the halls of power, with our phones and emails, by committing our time, financial resources and prayers – let us pour ourselves out to bend the moral arc of justice, with joy in our hearts, beauty in our sights, and hope for the children.

**Funding:**

Funding for the implementation of this Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**Implementation:**

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

**COMMITTEE 15:**

**RESOLUTION OF WITNESS IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING AID  
IN DYING.**

MOTION FAILED:

62.24% YES; 33.38% NO; 4.37% ABSTAIN