



44 *persons for ministry and encouraging all settings of the church to be open and affirming of*  
45 *LGBT persons, welcoming them and encouraging their participation in every aspect of the*  
46 *mission and ministry of the church.”<sup>i</sup>*  
47

48 Marriage rights are now the law, but under attack; other civil rights are still tenuous or non-  
49 existent. The political and religious right continues to work to circumvent existing law, to deny  
50 and delimit the rights and privileges of LGBTQ people. Transgender persons, especially, face  
51 escalating violence in America. The Rev. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President of  
52 the United Church of Christ, has said, “*Our transgender neighbors live in a climate of fear.*  
53 *Transgender women of color are dying on the streets of our cities, and 30 states fail to provide*  
54 *any legal protection for transgender citizens from discrimination in housing, employment or*  
55 *public services. Discrimination in any form violates our values as followers of Jesus Christ and*  
56 *as Americans who believe in liberty and justice for all.”<sup>ii</sup>*  
57

58 The United Church of Christ, in its Synod Resolutions and public witness over many years, has  
59 affirmed life, celebrated welcome, and expressed solidarity.  
60

61 Yet, with all of those affirmations behind us, the delegates and visitors of the 31<sup>st</sup> General Synod  
62 entered the Exhibit Hall in Baltimore two years ago greeted by an organization that opposes civil  
63 rights and full ecclesiastical inclusion for LGBTQ members. It was a painful time, an affront to  
64 all for which we have worked, fought and died through the years. It was an attack on all LGBTQ  
65 members, visitors, guests, loved ones, friends and supporters.  
66

67 This resolution seeks to take the next bold and logical step: a call to stewardship.  
68

69 When we have defined our mission, as the United Church of Christ has in these many resolutions  
70 and affirmations, we must ask ourselves how we will align our behaviors with our mission. That  
71 is “to what degree we will dedicate our resources to meaning it?” This resolution is about clarity  
72 of mission, about devoting our resources to that which we believe.  
73

74 In the United Church of Christ, as other denominations, we teach stewardship as a faithful  
75 consideration of how we devote our entire lives to the way of Jesus as we understand and express  
76 it. We, the United Church of Christ, have articulated our belief that the way of Jesus includes  
77 welcome of LGBTQ members, worshippers and leaders. Our stewardship must reflect that.  
78

79 Stewardship, in the language of scripture and the church, is about faithful allocation and use of  
80 all that is available to us, the presumption that everything we have belongs to God and is offered  
81 back to God for the righteous and prophetic work of welcoming the in-breaking reign of God,  
82 building the kin-dom among us. If our primary work of faith is community building, we cannot  
83 allow bullies and naysayers to crowd out the marginalized.  
84

85 Eugene Grimm wrote of stewardship and the *oikonomos*, the economy, of God, “While that  
86 management has a financial dimension, it also includes responsibility for everything in the  
87 household. A manager cares for, protects, conducts, and administers. Christian stewards ... are  
88 the trustees of an enormous God-given estate.” He defines stewardship as “the way we use  
89 resources God has entrusted to us for the purposes to which God has called us.” Grimm cites 1

90 Peter 4:10: “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever  
91 gift each of you has received.” Stewards of the grace of God, we are responsible for living that  
92 grace by faithful use of all the gifts at our hands. (Generous People, 1992.)  
93

94 John Reumann’s survey of the concept of stewardship over the ages likewise “denotes  
95 responsibility for resources and a sense of well-being about what was entrusted to them”  
96 (Stewardship and the Economy of God, 1992).  
97

98 He found it is “not merely a scheme to raise money for the church, but a means of actively  
99 entering into partnership with God... the noblest expression of the Christian ideal.” The word  
100 ‘stewardship’ also is applied to ethics and how one arranges conduct, and specifically used in  
101 cases when someone appeared to be doing one thing but intended something else. Reumann  
102 further notes that Douglas John Hall has described stewardship as a means of commitment to the  
103 care of the world, with the first priority getting rid of ambiguity.  
104

105 Stewardship cannot mean simply offering 10 percent as a tithe, but then failing to account for the  
106 other 90 percent. Stewardship is about realizing that 100 percent of what we have is to reflect  
107 what we believe. This is why we believe and teach that how we vote, what we buy or boycott,  
108 what we eat or refuse to eat, where we live, what jobs we take or forego, how we devote our  
109 time, what relationships we enter or avoid – all is to reflect a life of faith. To be sure, there is a  
110 great deal of leeway in a life of faith, as well as a great deal of not living up to the highest ideals,  
111 but we subjects of the Most High God are likewise subject to a high call to reflect on the  
112 consistency of witness, and we face a high bar of accountability for the ways we devote our  
113 resources. We cannot speak of one high ideal while simultaneously spending our money  
114 undermining that same ideal. This is the very definition of integrity: what we say we believe  
115 reflected in what we do.  
116

117 So then, if we the Church say, for example, that black lives matter, you would not expect to find  
118 us speaking in racist language, holding gatherings in ‘whites only’ venues, elevating only white  
119 people to positions of authority, inviting avowed racists into our pulpits or applauding secular  
120 systems that demean or debilitate People of Color. Nor would you expect to find a table in the  
121 exhibit hall here that proliferates anti-black materials. Such a table would be anathema to our  
122 mission, and would undermine the integrity of our welcome. We simply would not allow it.  
123

124 Some will say no doubt that ‘welcoming all people’ must include welcoming those whose  
125 opinions vary. Yes. They are welcome to be in community. But hospitality does not require that  
126 we allow any person or group to use our space to undermine our mission, to recruit for their own  
127 discriminatory purposes. When we dedicate our resources, we do so single-mindedly. We do not  
128 turn on the winter heat then leave open a window to undo the work of heating. Such behavior  
129 would be irresponsible and counterproductive. Rather, we seek integrity, focus, clarity of  
130 purpose.  
131

132 Walter Brueggemann quotes Isaiah 11:5 (“*Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and*  
133 *faithfulness the belt around his loins*”) as a stewardship passage. “This messiah dresses for his  
134 work. ... puts on the clothes that announce the program for (growing) the shoot from the stump:

135 a belt marked righteousness... a second, lower belt marked faithfulness. Honoring his new dress  
136 code, all will know that resources can indeed be redeployed in genuinely covenantal ways.”<sup>iii</sup>

137  
138 We are covenantal people desiring to use our resources in covenantal ways.

139  
140 This resolution asks us to consider, among our resources, the space in our exhibit hall during this  
141 Synod and other gatherings as an extension of our public witness, to declare that our exhibit hall  
142 shall be safe space unavailable to any group that has a mission opposed to the affirmations of the  
143 United Church of Christ. We will require in this space the unified voice of welcome that we  
144 cherish; no mixed messages and no means for harm: “The noblest expression of the Christian  
145 ideal.”

146  
147 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

148  
149 **WHEREAS:** The United Church of Christ is a denomination that welcomes and accepts  
150 everyone as they are, where our minds are nourished as much as our souls;

151  
152 **AND WHEREAS:** The United Church of Christ believes in extravagant welcome and  
153 advocates justice for all;

154  
155 **AND WHEREAS:** The United Church of Christ affirms that churches must be places of vitality  
156 in worship, learning and advocacy;

157  
158 **AND WHEREAS;** The United Church of Christ believes God calls the church to speak truth to  
159 power, liberate the oppressed, care for the poor and comfort the afflicted;

160  
161 **AND WHEREAS:** *“Every two years, General Synod brings together thousands of faithful*  
162 *members of the United Church of Christ for formal church witness, inspirational worship, and*  
163 *fellowship with friends (new and old), and at each gathering, we pledge to ‘discern resolutions*  
164 *of witness, church structure, and function ... (and) stand up for issues that demand a faithful*  
165 *witness;”* (from UCC.org);

166  
167 **AND WHEREAS:** all places, events and arenas of the General Synod are expressions of the  
168 church and fall within the theological scope of our dual responsibilities of prophetic integrity and  
169 wise stewardship, to ensure all available resources are rightly directed to the declaration and  
170 furtherance of our mission;

171  
172 **AND WHEREAS:** the LGBT community is a constituency integral to the United Church of  
173 Christ, named in the United Church of Christ by-laws as “historically under-represented” for  
174 purposes of the General Synod delegation, and identified for intentional consideration for its  
175 Board of Directors & Nominating Committee;

176  
177 **AND WHEREAS:** the organizers and representatives of those who call themselves the Faithful  
178 and Welcoming Churches (FWC) continue to categorize sexual orientation and gender identity as  
179 issues of unholy choice rather than reflections of the image of God, as expressed in these notes

180 and objectives from its own promotional materials at FWC Synod display table and the website  
181 [www.faithfulandwelcoming.org](http://www.faithfulandwelcoming.org):

- 182 • The declaration: *“We call the church to prayer for the purity, preservation of the family,*  
183 *and to the practice and proclamation of human sexuality as God’s gift for marriage*  
184 *between a man and a woman;”*
- 185 • Its stated objective: *“Form networks of churches, laity, and clergy committed to the*  
186 *vision of FWC;”*
- 187 • Counsel to congregations *“Change your church’s by-laws to disallow avowed practicing*  
188 *homosexuals as clergy and disallow same sex marriages and civil unions in the church;”*  
189 *and “Consider redirecting or designating funds marked for the UCC;”*
- 190 • A recommended litmus test for Congregations interviewing clergy candidates: *“Would*  
191 *you consent to officiate at same sex civil unions or same sex marriage ceremonies?”*;

192  
193 **AND WHEREAS:** The FWC uses United Church of Christ exhibit space at General Synod and  
194 denominational events to help connect like-minded congregations and members who oppose  
195 civil rights and full ecclesiastical inclusion for LGBT members;

196  
197 **AND WHEREAS:** The presence of FWC activity and displays are demeaning of and  
198 emotionally and spiritually hurtful to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender-queer United  
199 Church of Christ members, visitors and delegates, and undermines the extravagant welcome  
200 stated by the United Church of Christ as its core value;

201  
202 **AND WHEREAS:** Jesus’ prayer, “that they all may be one,” was a prayer for his disciples to  
203 have strength to stand together to continue his work of justice and world healing;

204  
205 **AND WHEREAS:** No similar group is afforded exhibit space for organizing against racial  
206 justice, disability justice, justice for women, or the advancement of human rights;

207  
208 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** that the Thirty Second General Synod declares that no  
209 group organizing in a way that demeans any part of the body of Christ or working against civil  
210 and human rights for LGBTQ people or any other constituency shall be allowed exhibit space in  
211 General Synod halls;

212  
213 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** that the Thirty Second General Synod rejects the  
214 mission of Faithful and Welcoming Churches as it relates to denying the full civil rights and  
215 ecclesiastical standing of LGBTQ persons, and affirms that the United Church of Christ motto,  
216 “That they may all be one,” precludes giving voice to bigotry.

## 217 218 **FUNDING**

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

## 221 222 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

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<sup>i</sup> [General Synod Minutes 2005 Twenty Fifth General Synod of the UCC](#), Pages 30-31

<sup>ii</sup> <https://openandaffirming.org/joint-coalition-ucc-statement-on-trans-military-ban/>

<sup>iii</sup> Walter Brueggemann, “Using God’s Resources Wisely” Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.