

1 **A RESOLUTION OF AFFIRMATION REGARDING**
2 **CHILD MARRIAGE AND FORCED MARRIAGES**

3
4 Submitted by the Church Council of Immanuel Congregational Church, Hartford, CT

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6 **WHEREAS**, Micah 6:8 asks us: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
7 and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”; and

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9 **WHEREAS**, in Luke 17:2, Christ says, “It were better for him that a millstone were
10 hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of
11 these little ones”; and

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13 **WHEREAS**, at least 207,459 minors were married in the United States between 2000
14 and 2015¹; and

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16 **WHEREAS**, children as young as 12 years old have been able to marry in Louisiana,
17 Alaska, and, South Carolina¹; and

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19 **WHEREAS**, most of forced marriages are not between similarly aged minors, but are
20 with partners who are much older, in their 20’s, 30’s, or even older; and

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22 **WHEREAS**, research regarding child and forced marriage indicates that females, and
23 males to a lesser degree, report that they agreed to a child marriage only after a
24 threat from their families or spouse that if they did not enter into marriage, they
25 would be physically abused or ostracized from their families²; and

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27 **WHEREAS**, many females in forced child marriages report they:
28 • are physically and sexually assaulted by their spouses,
29 • are denied comprehensive health care,
30 • are forced to become pregnant,
31 • are denied prenatal health care,
32 • are required to stop their education and employment,
33 • have attempted to get out of their marriage but are not able to enter a contract for an
34 attorney, use a domestic violence shelter, or obtain other services to help them,
35 • feel trapped and that their child or forced marriage has life-long negative impacts; and

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37 **WHEREAS**, the minimum marriage age in most U.S. states is 18, but exceptions in
38 48 states allow those younger than 18 to marry and laws in 17 states do not set
39 a minimum age below which a child cannot marry²; and

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41 **WHEREAS**, Delaware and New Jersey are the only states requiring that only those 18
42 years old and older may marry, with no exceptions; and

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44 **WHEREAS**, legislation enacted in Connecticut in 2017 outlawed child marriage for
45 minors under the age of 16 years, but did not cover the youths between 16 and 18 years
46 of age.

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48 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that we the delegates to the Special Meeting of the
49 Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ abhor the practice of
50 forced and child marriage; and

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52 **THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we the delegates to the Special
53 Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ call upon
54 authorized ministers of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ to
55 refuse to officiate such a service; and

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57 **THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that we the delegates to the Special
58 Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ call upon
59 the Connecticut General Assembly to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18
60 years old.

¹ [Child Marriage in America by the Numbers - Frontline](https://apps.frontline.org/child-marriage-by-the-numbers)
(apps.frontline.org/child-marriage-by-the-numbers)

² www.unchainedatlast.org/child-marriage-legal-in-every-state