

151ST ANNUAL MEETING
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Congregational Christian Churches)
Meeting in the 219th year of the Missionary Society of Connecticut
June 15 & 16, 2018
Mass Mutual Center, 1277 Main St, Springfield, MA 01103

Friday, June 15, 2018
The Meeting Begins - Session One

7:15 PM Opening Worship

Worship provided by the Tri Conference Worship Team with the theme *Hope is On The Way*.
Keynoter: The Rev. Traci Blackmon, the Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and Senior Pastor of Christ the King UCC in Florissant, Missouri.

Revs. Barbara Libby, Kent Siladi and Jim Antal welcomed delegates and guests to Massachusetts for the Tri Conference Annual Meeting.

Saturday, June 16, 2018
The Meeting Continues - Session Two

8:30 AM Tri-Conference Joint Plenary Session

Worship provided by the Tri Conference Worship Team with Rev. Bridget Fidler preaching, The Local Church Exists to Make Disciples of Jesus.

9:00 AM Tri-Conference Joint Plenary Session

Adaptive and Transformative Leadership - We believe God calls us to bring new life as agents of change and so we embrace and encourage adaptive and transformative leadership wherever the Body of Christ is gathered. We encourage local congregations and varied ministry settings, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to form covenant partnerships with all who work for the common good in their local communities and throughout the world.

The Meeting Continues - Session Three

10:15 AM Connecticut Conference Plenary Welcome

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: *Good morning. Welcome to the Connecticut plenary of this historic Tri Conference Meeting. This portion of the meeting will include regular business to come before the Connecticut Conference as well as considering the Together, As One resolution as presented in the morning plenary. This is a moment in time when God is calling us to do a new thing. It is a time to consider greater collaboration, interdependence and unity. At the 2017 Annual Meeting the delegates approved the resolution to bring this proposal before you to the 151st Annual Meeting. Is God calling us to move forward and consider what new ways of organizing might look like? Are we as bold as those who gathered at the First General Synod in 1957 and set about the journey to form the United Church of Christ? It is for us to decide this morning if God is calling us to a new way of being in ministry together.*

As we begin this plenary let us call upon God's Spirit to be among us and to speak through us. Rev. Kari Nicewander, as this year's Conference Preacher, will you please offer a short prayer for guidance?

Conference Preacher Rev. Kari Nicewander offered a prayer.

Consent Agenda & Recognitions

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: *The Board of Directors adopts the rules for the orderly conduct of the meeting. These rules can be found in your packet attached to the Updated Consent Agenda and you will be asked to accept these rules shortly. The Moderator moderates the plenary sessions, makes announcements and keeps the meeting moving in a timely fashion. The Executive Committee of the Board serves as the business committee for this meeting. If you have any questions or concerns the committee is listed on a sheet in your packet. Please feel free to speak to one of them. We have an ambitious schedule here today. We have important work to do and we have a parliamentarian, Mr. Kevin Williams, who will help us to move through our agenda in a timely fashion.*

Only delegates who have voting cards are allowed to speak at microphones on business subjects, unless you have been specifically granted "voice without vote." Please introduce yourself each time you speak from a microphone by name and church. During open discussion times all microphones will be open. Voting members will find in your registration envelope a Yellow vote card to be used for all votes taken in the plenary. You must have this Yellow card in order to vote. Please keep that handy for the plenary session.

Pro, con and neutral microphones are available in the front of the room. The White one is for offering an amendment, refer to committee, postpone, call the question (close debate) or limit or extend debate; the Yellow one is for "Point of Order" or other incidental or privileged motion. Basically, if you are confused or just have a question and don't know which microphone to use, go to the yellow one. We'll help you figure out where to go from there.

Introductions

Moderator, Ms. Persephone Hall: Introduced Chair of the Board of Directors Bridget Fidler of First Church of Christ, Congregational in Suffield.

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: *Will the following Honored Guests stand as you are called:*

- *General Synod delegates, Seminarians and Members in Discernment*
- *International guests: Partners from Gyonggi (Kyoung-key) Presbytery of South Korea; Moderator, Rev. Jeung gun-yeung (Jung, Gun Yung) and his wife Choe un-ju (Chay Un-Ju), of Nong Chun Church.*

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: *I will entertain a Motion to grant Voice without Vote to these honored guests. Upon motion moved and seconded, it was **VOTED #1** - to grant Voice without Vote to these honored guests*

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: *Invited the following groups to stand and be welcomed by the body: new Connecticut Pastors, new Ordinands, new Commissioned Ministers, newly licensed, and other new clergy in Special Settings. She also invited all Retired Authorized Ministers to stand and be recognized.*

Rev. Elliott Munn, West Hartford, proposed a motion to change the vote for TA1 from a paper ballot to a standing vote. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was **NOT VOTED #2** - to have the vote for the TA1 question be a standing vote - the motion did not pass.

Adoption of the Consent Agenda

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: *Please find the updated consent agenda that is attached to the Call Letter in your packet and your Yellow vote card. Please note there is a sheet with some biographical information about the board members and officers you will elect. I call upon the Chair of the Board of Directors, Rev. Bridget Fidler of Suffield.*

Rev. Bridget Fidler: *I call your attention to the Updated Consent Agenda. Any delegate can remove an item from the consent agenda for separate consideration and vote during a plenary session. I move the adoption of the Consent Agenda. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was **VOTED #3** - the Conference adopts the Consent Agenda, as written and distributed to the delegates in their packets*

Resolution priority

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: *In your delegate packets you will find a ballot (printed on lime green paper) for the priority order of discussion on the proposed Resolutions. Please vote now, and hand your ballot to a teller. In addition to the four Resolutions on the ballot, the Business Committee has agreed to the submission of a Group B resolution which was distributed at the door. If time allows, we will consider this resolution at the end of the business meeting.*

Living Waters Award

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: Called upon Rev. Kent Siladi and Rev. Bridget Fidler to present the Living Waters Award to Marjorie Roach, of The First Congregational Church of Coventry and Hugh & Kate McLean, of The First Church in Windsor. Marjorie Roach along with her pastor Rev. Nicole Yonkman and Hugh & Kate McLean along with their pastor Rev. Stephen Washburn came forward for the presentation.

Introduction of PROK Partnership Guests and exchange of gifts.

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: Called upon the Rev. Kent Siladi and the Co-Chairs of the Korean Partnership Committee, Rev. Ginny McDaniel, Senior Minister of First Congregational Church of Granby and Ms. Irene Choi, member of First Church of Christ of Glastonbury, to introduce our guests from the Gyonggi (Kyoung-key) Presbytery.

Greetings to the CTUCC from the Rev. Jeung, Gun-Yeung Moderator of the Gyeonggi Presbytery Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Dear friends in Christ Jesus, On behalf of the Gyeonggi Presbytery of the PROK, I bring you greetings! Thank you for your invitation to attend this particularly significant conference, and for allowing me the privilege to speak today. It is a great honor. Over the past few days, the hospitality which you have shown to me and my wife has let us feel the love of Christ. Thank you especially to Rev. Kent Siladi and the ten other delegates who traveled to Korea in April to attend the annual meeting of the Presbytery. These visits mark the 24th anniversary of a partnership between two countries. It has become ever stronger and is still opening new horizons. Our partnership has a special significance in Korean church history that extends beyond our denomination. It would not have been possible to forge this long-lasting relationship by human efforts alone; we thrive because of the grace of God. Today I would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to this partnership since the beginning. Your vision helped create a bridge between our two countries. I would like to give thanks to Irene Choi and Rev. Ginny

McDaniel, co-chairs of the Korean Partnership Committee. Thank you all for your continued interest in Korea. The Korean Peninsula is undergoing rapid change. We face a situation today in which no one can easily predict what will happen tomorrow. Even President Trump is unpredictable. Our hopes for inter-Korean and US-North Korea talks are huge, and we are holding our breath. This is certainly a crucial moment for US influence and leadership in the world of political relations. Each side believes that they have the destructive power to challenge world peace and the future of humanity. We are grateful to Rev. Siladi for his impressive lecture that illuminated the current situation from a biblical perspective. He had the members of the Presbytery dreaming of the reality of Shalom led by God, not political powers. I pay homage to Rev. Siladi's insights and leadership! Today you will be making your own important decision for the future. We understand that the Tri-Conference is an attempt to live out shalom through your interdependence. I look forward to the birth of a new conference that will work to demonstrate greater influence. We stand with you in your tradition of standing by the weak and the poor and practicing God's justice. May God grace and guidance be with you and sustain you in your work together.

Board Report and Together, As One Proposal

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: Called upon Bridget Fidler, Chair of the Board of Directors, and also invited forward the Board members of the Together, As One Planning Team, The Rev. Jeff Gallagher, The Rev. Marilyn Kendrix, and The Rev. Jocelyn Gardner-Spencer.

After her report, Bridget Fidler moved that upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors, the 151st Annual Meeting adopts the proposed resolution to create a new Conference of the United Church of Christ with the Rhode Island and Massachusetts Conferences. In order for the process of creating a new conference to go forward, all three conferences need to affirm votes comprising identical language. Therefore, your Board of Directors, in consultation with the Moderators and the Parliamentarian, are in agreement that the motion coming before you is an up-or-down, yes-or-no vote. Any proposed amendment will be deemed out of order by the Moderator, because any amendment would be equivalent to a "No" vote. This action includes 5 segments of the resolution, and requires a two-thirds vote of the body.

The Board of Directors Recommends to the 151st Annual Meeting:

- (i) Affirmation in all material respects of the proposed Covenant and Affiliation Agreement and TAI Corporation Articles of Organization and Bylaws (the "Covenant Documents") attached hereto as Exhibit A, by which a regional Conference corporation will be formed and the Covenant affiliation will be realized.*
- (ii) Appointment of five (5) initial Directors of the TAI Corporation for terms commencing as of the date on which the TAI Corporation is approved by the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth;*
- (iii) Election of six (6) initial Officers of the TAI Corporation, nominated by the TAI Planning Team and to be elected by the designated delegates and authorized Ministers of each Conference, acting in a plenary session, at the 2018 joint Annual Meeting of the Conferences for terms commencing as of the date on which the Corporation is approved by the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth.*
- (iv) Delegation to the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ Board of Directors, working with the TAI Planning Team and legal counsel, authority to finalize the terms of the Covenant Documents, with the proviso that any material change to the terms contained in Exhibit A, be returned to the Membership for further consideration and vote at the 2019 Annual Meeting.*

(v) *Authorization of The Rev. Bridget Fidler, Board Chair and Calvin Price, Treasurer, upon instruction of the Board of Directors, to execute the Covenant Documents in final form, take all other actions and do any and all other things necessary to effect the foregoing votes.*

A thorough discussion followed, which included pros and cons about creating a new Conference of the United Church of Christ to include the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences.

Moderator called for a period of silence before votes were cast. Paper ballots were cast and collected by tellers. The ballot count was taken out of the room for tabulation.

Moderator Persephone Hall: Announced the results of the paper ballot votes for the Together, As One Proposal: 242 votes *for* this proposal, 44 votes *against* this proposal. **VOTE #4 Passed**. 84.6% of the voting body said yes, which exceeds the 2/3 majority required.

Moderator Persephone Hall: Called on Bridget Fidler, Chair of the Board of Directors.

Bridget Fidler: Moved that upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors, the 151st Annual Meeting adopt the proposed modification to the CT Conference CTUCC Constitution and Bylaws amending Article V of the Constitution of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ (Congregational Christian Churches) by replacing the word “Corporators” with the word “Members” (and, where the term is applicable, the Corporators) so that the final sentence of the Article will become “The Board of Directors of the Conference shall also constitute the Members, (and, where the term is applicable, the Corporators) of the Missionary Society of Connecticut and the Trustees of the Fund for Ministers.”

Moderator Persephone Hall: *Remember, delegates, please have your Yellow VOTING CARDS available for any actions that need a vote. The suggested actions/motions from the Board of Directors do not need a second. Please remember to hold your applause out of respect for one another. We now know that both Massachusetts and Rhode Island have voted in favor of the Together, As One proposal.*

Moderator: Each delegate will be given 2 minutes to speak and we will alternate between the pro and con microphones. The Neutral Microphone will be used for procedural motions, point of order or questions of procedures. Is there any discussion? No discussion. **VOTE #5 Passed**, taken by show of voting cards.

Moderator Persephone Hall: Invites Conference Minister, Rev. Kent Siladi to lead the meeting in prayer. Rev. Siladi offered prayers of blessings for this conference.

UCC Constitution Changes

Moderator Persephone Hall: Called on Bridget Fidler, Chair of the Board of Directors.

Bridget Fidler: On July 2 and 3, 2017 the Thirty-first General Synod adopted a series of amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ dealing with the relationship between the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada, on authorized ministry and relating to the structure of the Board of Directors and National Setting. The 38 Conferences of the Church are now required to ratify the changes to the Constitution before those Constitutional changes may be implemented.

Bridget Fidler: I move that upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors, the 151st Annual Meeting ratify the amendments to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, as voted by the Thirty-first General Synod on July 2, 2017.

Moderator Persephone Hall: After no further discussion, and a brief moment of silence, votes were cast by hand ballot. **VOTE #6 PASSED** - the recommendation from the Board of Directors to ratify the amendments to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, as voted by the Thirty-first General Synod on July 2, 2017.

Action on Resolutions - Resolutions Committee

Moderator Persephone Hall: *Remember, delegates, please have your (Yellow) VOTING CARDS available for any actions that need a vote. Also please be sure to have available the resolution that is included in your packets and the rules that are attached to the Call Letter. Resolutions are moved by a committee charged with the task of bringing them to the Annual Meeting; thus, they do not require a second. Please note the Rules of Procedure, as approved in the Consent Agenda, determines the course of action for considering Resolutions. The presenters of the resolution will have 5 minutes to speak to the resolution. If there is a designated reactor they will be allowed 5 minutes as well. Then the mikes will be open to alternating pro and con speakers for 2 minutes each. Amendments must be submitted in writing to the registrar. Forms may be obtained from the registrar for amendments. Please remember to refrain from any outward form of expression.*

Moderator Ms. Persephone Hall: Called upon the Rev. Alice O'Donovan, of Tolland and chair of the Resolutions Committee. The resolutions will be moved forward in the following order, based on the votes cast:

- A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION CALLING FOR ANTI-RACISM AND RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING FOR CLERGY
- A RESOLUTION OF AFFIRMATION DENOUNCING ACTS OF VIOLENCE, HATRED, AND RACISM CARRIED OUT IN THE NAME OF NEO-NAZI AND WHITE SUPREMACIST IDEOLOGIES
- RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR TRANSPARENCY OF INFORMATION ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
- A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDING WORKING TOGETHER TO END BULLYING
- A RESOLUTION OF WITNESS CONDEMNING OUR GOVERNMENTS ABHORRENT POLICY OF SEPARATING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN FROM THEIR PARENTS AT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER

Rev. Alice O'Donovan acknowledged and thanked the committees and congregations for their proposals and work, and also thanked Sioux Wilusz who guided the committee and churches through the resolutions process.

Rev. Alice O'Donovan moved forward **A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION CALLING FOR ANTI-RACISM AND RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING FOR CLERGY**. It was then **VOTED #7 TO ADOPT** the **A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION CALLING FOR ANTI-RACISM AND RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING FOR CLERGY** as follows:

WHEREAS, Jesus instructed us in the gospels to reconcile with our neighbor before approaching God's altar (Matt:5:24); and to remove the log from our own eye before removing the speck from our neighbor's eye (Matt:7:3); and

WHEREAS, the Hebrew Scriptures teach us that God delights in diversity, that all humanity bears God's image (Gen:1:26), that Sabbath protections extend to all people in the land (Ex. 20:8-11 and Dt. 5:12-15), that love of neighbor is commanded (Lv. 1:17); and

WHEREAS, the Epistles teach us that Christ came to break down the dividing wall that is the hostility between us that we might be reconciled as one body with diverse members (Eph 2); and

WHEREAS, the Missionary Society of Connecticut has a long history of working on the forefront of racial justice, boasting the first known African American Christian minister to be formally ordained in a predominantly white mainline denomination, having played an active role in the fight to free the captives of the Amistad, and having taken public stands against segregation both here in America and abroad in the recent decades; and

WHEREAS, in the year 2017, the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution calling on all judicatory and educational settings of the denomination to include the study of cultural diversity/sensitivity and institutional racism in clergy preparation and continuing education, and as a requirement for maintaining standing for all persons engaged in authorized ministry within and on behalf of the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, nearly 30 years after the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ became an Open & Affirming body and adopted its Inclusive Non-Discrimination Policy, people of color still experience racism in local churches and at the Conference, racism that is intentional and unintentional, personal and institutional, interpersonal and cultural, offenses that are often committed, condoned, or ignored by clergy; and

WHEREAS, our country has seen both the resurgence of overt white supremacy and continued covert racism embodied in white privilege, sins that require repentance, confession and education in order to be redeemed.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ urge the Associations of the Conference and their Committees on Ministry to adopt a policy requiring all Authorized Ministers (including Ordained, Limited Standing, Licensed, and Commissioned) to participate in, at minimum, a one-day workshop on racism and racial justice within three years of adoption of the policy or within three years of being granted standing by the Association, and repeat training within each subsequent three to five year period; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Associations of the Conference and their Committees on Ministry to adopt a policy requiring Members In-Discernment to participate in, at minimum, a one-day workshop on racism and racial justice as a prerequisite for ordination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Connecticut Conference to make its

Racial Justice Training available for Members-in-Discernment and Authorized Ministers at least twice during each calendar year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Connecticut Conference, working with the Racial Justice Ministries, Regional Ministers, Regional Ministry Teams, and local churches to expand its Racial Justice Training for Christian Educators, Youth Leaders, Sunday School Teachers, Music Directors, Organists, Choir Directors, and other Lay Leaders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Connecticut Conference make available resources to help congregations build allies and better support, encourage, and nurture clergy of color and lay leaders of color; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Connecticut Conference make available resources for clergy to connect their congregations with active anti-racist movements locally, nationally, and globally.

Rev. Alice O'Donovan moved forward **A RESOLUTION OF AFFIRMATION DENOUNCING ACTS OF VIOLENCE, HATRED, AND RACISM CARRIED OUT IN THE NAME OF NEO-NAZI AND WHITE SUPREMACIST IDEOLOGIES** submitted by Monroe Congregational Church & Newtown Congregational Church, UCC.

It was then **VOTED #8 TO ADOPT** the **A RESOLUTION OF AFFIRMATION DENOUNCING ACTS OF VIOLENCE, HATRED, AND RACISM CARRIED OUT IN THE NAME OF NEO-NAZI AND WHITE SUPREMACIST IDEOLOGIES** as follows:

WHEREAS scripture offers important teachings such as:

- God's call and commandment to love God with all of one's being (Deut. 6:5), and to love one's neighbor as one's self (Matthew 22:37-40)
- God's call through the prophets to "act justly and love mercy" (Micah 6:8)
- God's call through Jesus "to do unto others . . ." (Matthew 7:12), to see the despised and oppressed as children of God, as in the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-30), and in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)
- God's vision of the church as a people "drawn from every nation, all tribes, peoples, and languages" (Revelations 7:9); and

WHEREAS the church has understood itself to be called by God to speak and act on behalf of the outcast and oppressed in many times and cultures; and

WHEREAS since 2016, we have witnessed significant increases in the incidents of hate speech, hate crimes, assault, and harassment, directed at many minority peoples including immigrants, Native Americans, Muslims, Jews, LGBTQ people and more; and

WHEREAS we recognize that all persons have a constitutional right to free speech, nonetheless the open display of Nazi and white supremacist regalia (swastika and Confederate flags), the overt hateful and racist behavior in the white nationalist "Unite the Right" demonstration (Charlottesville VA, Aug. 12th, 2017), and the increasingly frequent expression of hateful, extremist views in many forms of media is both profoundly disturbing to us and diametrically opposed to our mandate from God; and

WHEREAS on September 12th, 2017, both Houses of the United States Congress unanimously passed a joint resolution condemning white nationalists, white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and other hate groups.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, denounce all forms and expressions of white supremacist hatred as displayed by neo-Nazi groups, the Ku Klux Klan, and others; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we stand in solidarity with those who are so often the targets of such hate speech and actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage United Church of Christ congregations to join with other communities of faith to proclaim our shared commitment to Racial Justice; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution, if affirmed, be put into proper format for submission to the 2019 General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

Alice O'Donovan moved forward **RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR TRANSPARENCY OF INFORMATION ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT** submitted by Environmental Ministry Team of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.

It was then **VOTED #9 TO ADOPT** the **RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR TRANSPARENCY OF INFORMATION ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT** as follows:

WHEREAS, we are called by God to be stewards of the earth (Genesis 1:26), follow God's commandments lest risk the earth's desolation (Deuteronomy 28); and

WHEREAS, Jesus came as a light to show us the way (John 12:46-47), calling on us to be alert (Matthew 24:42; 25:13) and follow him into discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20); and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has a historic commitment to the responsible stewardship of Creation *; and

WHEREAS, responsible stewardship can only be possible with an informed, organized and active citizenry engaged with government and the private sector, that relies on transparency, such as the sharing of research, planning documents, and other resources; and

WHEREAS, transparency is essential for public confidence in the political process and development projects, and allows for a truly democratic and spirited debate on issues of concern for citizens; and

WHEREAS, the construction or upgrading of energy infrastructure may threaten water, air or land quality, the natural resources of our State; it is imperative that the relevant bodies of our government assure transparency of communication between builders and the public.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ call upon members as stewards of creation to become informed about energy infrastructure projects in their locales, to exchange such information among themselves, to work with local and state governmental agencies to promote optimal environmental quality; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we call upon members of local churches to advocate for legislation to require complete transparency with regard to energy infrastructure development and construction in local communities.

Rev. Alice O'Donovan moved forward **A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDING WORKING TOGETHER TO END BULLYING** submitted by fifteen delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

It was then **VOTED #10 TO ADOPT** the **A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDING WORKING TOGETHER TO END BULLYING** as follows:

WHEREAS, Jesus taught, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39); and

WHEREAS, there should be no fear in the Church’s love, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.” (1 John 4:18); and

WHEREAS, many people are hurting from the effects of bullying in the forms of physical and verbal harassment, oppression, and exclusion; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports, “Compared with other students, negative attitudes toward LGB persons may put these youths at increased risk for experiences with violence. ‘Violence’ can include behaviors such as bullying, teasing, harassment, and physical assault.

10% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property

34% were bullied on school property

28% were bullied electronically

23% of LGB students who had dated or went out with someone during the 12 months before the survey had experienced sexual dating violence in the prior year

18% of LGB students had experienced physical dating violence

18% of LGB students had been forced to have sexual intercourse at some point in their lives.”¹

WHEREAS, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) reports that 75% of transgender youth feel unsafe at school, and those who are able to persevere had significantly lower GPAs, were more likely to miss school out of concern for their safety, and were less likely to plan on continuing their education. Along with, 59% of trans students have been denied access to restrooms consistent with their gender identity. Rather than focusing on their education, many students struggle for the ability to come to school and be themselves without being punished for wearing clothes or using facilities consistent with who they are. Some are denied opportunities to go on field trips or participate in sports. Together with bullying and victim-blaming, these

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “LGBT Youth,” Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health, <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm> (Accessed June 23, 2017).

conflicts can lead to disproportionate discipline, school pushout, and involvement in the juvenile justice system.²

WHEREAS, the 27th 2017 General Synod of the United Church of Christ resolved that it

- Supports the efforts of organizations, especially public school districts, to develop programs that promote anti-bullying, safe schools, age and family structure acceptance of wide-ranging diversity;
- Affirms that diversity/multi-cultural education should embrace people of all races, ethnic origins, genders, faiths, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic classes, countries of origin, and their families;
- Decries organized and systematic efforts to cast diversity/multi-cultural education in negative terms using fear and intimidation;
- Affirms and supports congregations, church leaders, and public school districts that are playing a prophetic role in the encouragement of diversity/multi-cultural education in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the delegates to the 127th 1994 Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference UCC resolved to call upon the members of our congregations, to respond to issues that make this world unfit for children, most particularly those issues related to the occurrence of violence and its effects on the lives of children; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ call upon the churches of the Connecticut Conference UCC to speak the value of each and every life, and to that end, boldly proclaim our opposition to the practices of bullying in all its forms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge our churches, committees, and camping retreat ministries to create safe space for each and every child of God, without regard to religion, race, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, socio-economic status, gender identity, physical or mental ability, and sexual orientation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED in the spirit of advocating for safe sanctuary, we call upon every United Church of Christ member to respond to acts of bullying with acts of compassion, and to take a public stand against speeches of hate, harassment and acts of violence filled with long-held prejudices against all persons; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we call upon the Church and society to intentionally validate, support, and empower persons being injured by bullying behavior in workplaces, in schools, and in all environments.

Signed:

Rev. Greg Gray, Thompson Congregational, UCC, Windham Association

Rev. Jonathan Chapman, Westfield Congregational, UCC, Windham Association

Rev. Dr. Susan Foster, East Woodstock Congregational Church, Windham Association

Rev. Kristen Provost Switzer, Newtown Congregational Church, UCC, Fairfield East Assoc.

Rev. Shea Zellweger, Bethany First Church of Christ Congregational UCC, New Haven Assoc,

² Nation Center for Transgender Equality, "Youth & Students," <https://transequality.org/issues/youth-students> (Accessed November 17, 2017).

Waterbury South Congregational Church, Inc., Naugatuck Valley Assoc.
Rev. Rachel J. Bahr, First Congregational Church of Southington, CT, Central Association
Rev. Shawn Fisher, Groton Congregational Church, New London Association
Kat Voght, Westfield Congregational, UCC, Windham Association
Rob Voght, Westfield Congregational, UCC, Windham Association
Susan Waldron, ONA Ministry Team, Windham Association
Rev. Christa D. Swenson, Mystic Congregational Church, UCC, New London Association
Rev. Larissa Forsythe, The Congregational Church, UCC, South Glastonbury, Hartford East
Rev. Jack Perkins Davidson, Spring Glenn Church, UCC, New Haven Association
Rev. Matthew Emery, Storrs Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Windham Assoc.
Rev. Jill Olds, United Congregational Church of Tolland, UCC, Tolland Association

Rev. Alice O'Donovan moved forward **A RESOLUTION OF WITNESS CONDEMNING OUR GOVERNMENTS ABHORRENT POLICY OF SEPARATING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN FROM THEIR PARENTS AT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER** submitted by delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

It was then **VOTED #11 TO ADOPT** the **A RESOLUTION OF WITNESS CONDEMNING OUR GOVERNMENTS ABHORRENT POLICY OF SEPARATING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN FROM THEIR PARENTS AT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER** as follows:

WHEREAS one of the *Three Great Loves* identified by the United Church of Christ is the *Love of Children*; and

WHEREAS Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14); and

WHEREAS we learn that "when a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you . . ." (Leviticus 19: 33-34); and

WHEREAS the current administration has initiated a policy of separating parents from children when families arrive seeking asylum at the southern border of our nation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference, condemn in the strongest terms possible the outrageous, inhumane, and unjust treatment of those "strangers" seeking refuge at our southern border. The deliberate and cruel separation of infants and children from their parents must cease at once, and a more compassionate, kinder, and more just policy – one that reflects the "better angels" of our national nature – must take its place.

Moderator Persephone Hall: Called upon the Rev. Ryan Gackenheimer, Executive Director of Silver Lake Conference Center. Rev. Ryan Gackenheimer showed a video and highlighted the ministry of Silver Lake.

Moderator Persephone Hall: Called The Rev. Fredd Ward forward, and passed the gavel and the UCC medallion along to Rev. Fredd Ward as Moderator for the 2019 Annual Meeting.

Rev. Kent Siladi presented Thank-you gifts to Moderator Persephone Hall and Board of Directors President Rev. Bridget Fidler.

Moderator Persephone Hall: The Annual Meeting in 2019 will be held October 25-26th, at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield, MA. It will be a joint meeting of the CT, MA and RI Conferences. Following closing worship this afternoon, the 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, acting also as the Connecticut Conference of the Congregational Christian Churches, is adjourned.

Session Four

Tri-Conference Plenary and Listening Sessions

2:15 PM Tri-Conference Plenary Session;

Ian Tosh, of the Massachusetts Conference, announced their Together, As One Proposal Voting results: 301 votes for, 3 votes against. Frances Monroe, of the Rhode Island Conference, announced their Together, As One Proposal Voting results: 100% of all votes cast were for the proposal. Bridget Fidler, of the Connecticut Conference, announced their Together, As One Proposal Voting results: 86% of all votes cast were for the proposal. Rev. Barbara Libby offered a prayer. Rev. Barbara Libby spoke on behalf of the Rhode Island Conference. Rev. Jim Antal spoke on behalf of the Massachusetts Conference. Rev. Kent Siladi spoke on behalf of the Connecticut Conference.

3:00 PM Tri-Conference Listening Sessions

Break-out sessions with various discussion leaders and scribes. Living the Love & Justice of Jesus Together – What's Next?

5:00 PM Regathering; Closing Worship

Worship provided by the Tri Conference Worship Team

The 151st Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference was adjourned at 6:18pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Ford, Registrar & Program Associate