

**Minutes of the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the  
Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst  
June 12-13, 2015**

**Friday, June 12, 2015**

The Rev. Mr. Rashad McPherson and Divine Purpose led the music of opening worship, along with various people delivering a welcome litany which introduced the theme of treasures found in clay pots. The Moderator, the Rev. Mr. Ian Holland, welcomed all from different parts of Massachusetts, opened the meeting and called it to order at 3:25pm. After a few announcements, the Moderator invited everyone to look at the Proposed Order of Time and Events on page 2 of the Delegate Materials, and encouraged everyone to share Annual Meeting experiences on the Facebook event page and on Twitter. The Moderator introduced the Vice-moderator, the Rev. Ms. Anne Cabbage; the Parliamentarian, Mr. Harry Pape; and the Recorder, Ms. Patti Babcock. Mr. Holland described the break-out sessions to follow the plenary, and procedures for dinner and hearings. The Moderator thanked Mr. McPherson and Divine Purpose for the wonderful music, and pointed out the potter working on the side of the stage, the Rev. Ms. Amy Bruch.

The Moderator invited the Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, to the podium. Dr. Antal thanked the Board of Directors, and the MACUCC staff. In the spirit of interdependence that is increasingly informing the Conference's ministry, Dr. Antal welcomed the Rhode Island Conference Minister, the Rev. Ms. Barbara Libby; Connecticut Conference Minister, the Rev. Mr. Kent Siladi; and special guest from the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, the Rev. Mr. Edward Matuvhunye.

Mr. Holland named the members of the Business Sub-committee: Dr. Charles Desmond; Mr. Vard Johnson; the Rev. Ms. Liz Magill; the Rev. Mr. Chuck Wildman; Ms. Martha Crawford; Mr. Holland, and Ms. Cabbage, Chair of the Sub-committee. Mr. Holland then announced the time keepers: Ms. Martha Crawford; Ms. Amy Chin; and Ms. Magill.

Ms. Crawford, as Chair of the Credentials Committee, informed the Moderator of the following registration numbers: 224 lay delegates, 189 clergy, 80 visitors, 53 others. The Moderator declared a quorum and announced that the Annual Meeting was officially in session at 3:38pm.

The Vice-moderator was invited to the podium, and explained the procedures for voting and debating. Ms. Cabbage pointed out the Proposed Standing Rules on pages 14-17 of the Advance Materials. The Vice-moderator moved the Consent Calendar listed on page 7 of the Delegate Materials. Hearing no objection to placing the two items on the Consent Calendar, the Vice-moderator called for a vote. The motion was adopted unanimously.

<b>Consent Calendar 15-AM-01</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ adopts the Consent Calendar as presented on page 75 of the Delegate Materials (Appendix A).</i>
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Ms. Cabbage then invited Mr. Rick Lawrence, Treasurer, and Mr. Chip Hamblet, Vice-treasurer to the podium to present the proposed budget for 2016. Mr. Lawrence pointed out that the Proposed Budget can be found on page 10-13 in the Advance Materials, and encouraged all to read the 2015 Annual Report. Mr. Hamblet pointed out Mr. Lawrence’s Treasurer Report on pages 8-9 of the Advance Materials. Mr. Hamblet then explained the four proposed budget votes. The first vote recommended that the OCWM Basic Support retention rate be continued at 47% in 2016, with 53% to be shared with the national setting of the United Church of Christ. The second proposal recommended that Fellowship Dues for 2016 be increased to \$18.55 per member. The third vote set income and expense totals for the 2016 budget, with income of \$2,220,850, expenses of \$2,270,850, and a transfer from operating reserve of \$50,000. The fourth vote called for 33% of United Church Mission funds received in 2016 to be sent to the national setting of the United Church of Christ. The Moderator thanked Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Hamblet, reminding us that our contributions are an instrument to do God’s work.

The Moderator explained procedures for dinner, the rules of Speakouts, and then briefly explained the order of time and events for the remainder of the evening. At 4:07pm, Mr. Holland declared the plenary in recess until 8:15 that evening.

Stories of “Treasures in Clay Jars” took place in the hearing rooms, followed by dinner, and then worship. Worship included a short meditation by the Rev. Ms. Nadia Bolz-Weber. Worship concluded at 8:47pm.

**Saturday, June 13, 2015**

The meeting reconvened at 8:36am.

The Moderator welcomed everyone and made a few announcements regarding Facebook, Twitter and Speakouts. Mr. Holland pointed out the Standing Rules on page 14-17 of the Advance Materials, and explained the rules of speaking and debate.

The Moderator called on Ms. Bonnie Fleming, manager of the hearing on the Conference budget, for her report. Ms. Fleming reported that forty-eight churches have opted in to United Church Mission as of June 2015. She also reported that the Rev. Dr. Jonathan New, Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship and Financial Development, had discovered that in order to implement United Church Mission, three different constituents need to be engaged at the church level: decision-makers; mission leaders; and those who will implement United Church Mission. There was general consensus, at the hearing, to support the four proposed votes related to the budget.

Mr. Lawrence then moved that the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ retain 47% of OCWM Basic Support received in 2016. The motion was seconded. Mr. Lawrence yielded his time for questions. There being no discussion, a vote was taken and the vote carried unanimously.

<b>OCWM Retention</b> <b>15-AM-02</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ determines that 47% of OCWM Basic Support received in 2016 be retained by the Conference.</i>
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Mr. Hamblet moved that the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ set the Fellowship dues at \$18.55 per church member as reported on December 31, 2015. The motion was seconded. There being no discussion, a vote was taken and the vote carried.

<b>Fellowship Dues</b> <b>15-AM-03</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ sets the Fellowship Dues at \$18.55 per church member as reported on December 31, 2015.</i>
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Mr. Lawrence moved that the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopt a 2016 budget with income of \$2,220,850, expenses of \$2,270,850, and a transfer from operating reserves of \$50,000. The motion was seconded. There was a question about the transfer from operating reserves, which was answered by Mr. Lawrence. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion carried.

<b>Income and Expense</b> <b>15-AM-04</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopts a 2016 budget with income of \$2,220,850, expenses of \$2,270,850, and a transfer from operating reserves of \$50,000.</i>
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Mr. Hamblet moved that the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ determine that 33% of United Church Mission support received in 2016 be forwarded to the National United Church of Christ. The motion was seconded. There being no discussion, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

<b>United Church Mission Sharing Ratio</b> <b>15-AM-05</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ determines that 33% of United Church Mission support received in 2016 be forwarded to the National United Church of Christ.</i>
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The Moderator thanked Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Hamblet for all their work and financial ministry.

The Moderator announced that if there were refinements to proposed resolutions, changes should be brought to the Business Committee table to be projected on the screen for all to see.

After several Speakouts, the Moderator introduced Mr. Kenneth Latham, First Congregational Church in Leicester, to speak on behalf of the Homelessness Task Force about legislation currently at the State House. The Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Act was reintroduced and passed on January 2015. No funding was attached to this, so the work is not over. Mr. Latham urged delegates to fill out postcards urging funding of this bill, to be taken to the State House.

The Moderator invited the Rev. Mr. Martin Riekert to report on the hearing on the Resolution on Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of Mass Incarceration in Massachusetts. Mr. Riekert noted that there was considerable consensus in the hearing. There was some concern that the proposed resolution was not broad enough, as well as concern over its implementation. The Rev. Ms. Charla Kouadio moved the Resolution on Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of Mass Incarceration in Massachusetts. The motion was seconded. Ms. Kouadio spoke to the resolution, and urged all to pass it. She pointed out a change on line 70 which had come out of the hearing. There being no discussion, the motion was voted on and was carried.

<b>Resolution, Mass Incarceration  15-AM-06</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopts the Resolution on Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of Mass Incarceration in Massachusetts (Appendix B).</i>
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The Moderator invited the Rev. Ms. Cynthia Maybeck to share a ‘clay jar’ story she had told during Friday’s breakout session, regarding a moving encounter with an ailing parishioner early in her ministry.

Dr. Antal was invited to the podium, and thanked people who serve the wider church, including those on national UCC boards and committees. He then thanked and welcomed newly ordained clergy, and clergy who are new to the Massachusetts Conference. He celebrated new ministry initiatives in Haverhill, Worcester, West Medford, Waltham, Northampton, Barnstable and the Mashpee. He then named the four 50-Year Ordinands who were attending the Annual Meeting.

Dr. Antal then introduced the Rev. Ms. Laura Everett, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Ms. Everett described some of the things the Council has been working on. Staff at the Massachusetts Council of Churches are trying to live as if the gospels were true right now. She invited everyone to an upcoming event, “The Theology of Soul Food.”

The Vice-moderator then returned to the podium to explain the history behind the resolution titled “A Call For The United Church of Christ To Take Actions Toward A Just Peace In The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”, printed on pages 23-30 of the Advance Materials. The proposed resolution

was the subject of a year-long process of discernment, had been adopted by several other conferences of the United Church of Christ, and had been submitted to the General Synod Business Committee. Thus, Ms. Cabbage stated that the resolution could not be amended by the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference.

Ms. Cabbage then invited the Rev. Dr. Beverly Prestwood-Taylor and the Rev. Ms. Elizabeth Horne to the podium, to report on the hearing. Ms. Horne reported that their task at the hearing was to listen to each other. There were concerns about bias expressed at the hearing. She pointed out that this resolution had been amended from the version that was presented at the 2014 Annual Meeting.

Ms. Sherrill Hogan moved the resolution, which was seconded. Ms. Hogan spoke to the resolution. There was much discussion for and against the proposal. The Vice-moderator recognized a point of order by a delegate who moved to end the debate. This was seconded, voted on and carried with over a two-thirds majority. Ms. Cabbage asked for a moment of silence before the vote. The Resolution was voted on and the vote carried.

<p><b>Resolution, Just Peace in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict</b> <b>15-AM-07</b></p>	<p><i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopts the Resolution – A Call For The United Church of Christ To Take Actions Toward A Just Peace In The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Appendix C).</i></p>
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After a hymn, the Moderator introduced the Resolution Of Witness Condemning Violence Committed In The Name of Religion, explaining that in order to vote on this resolution, delegates would need to temporarily suspend certain provisions of the Standing Rules by a two-thirds vote. He then called on the Rev. Ms. Marisa Brown Ludwig, who moved to suspend these provisions to allow this resolution to be considered. The motion was seconded, a vote was taken and the vote carried.

<p><b>Temporary Suspension of Standing Rules</b> <b>15-AM-08</b></p>	<p><i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ suspends the Standing Rules that interfere with the consideration of a Resolution concerning violence committed in the name of religion.</i></p>
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The Moderator called upon the Rev. Michael McSherry, manager of the hearing on the proposed resolution, to report. Mr. McSherry reported that there were a few friendly amendments and many comments arising at the hearing. Ms. Brown-Ludwig was called to the podium and moved that the Resolution be adopted. She then spoke to the Resolution, calling on all present to be peace-makers and to work against bias and bigotry. She then explained the rewording which was projected on the screen. There was some discussion, a vote was taken and the vote carried.

<b>Resolution, Condemning Violence 15-AM-09</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopts the Resolution Of Witness Condemning Violence Committed In The Name Of Religion (Appendix D).</i>
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The Vice-moderator pointed out that the Standing Rules were, at that point, in full effect again.

The Vice-moderator invited the Rev. Ms. Andrea Avaysian, of the Haydenville Congregational Church, Ms. Irene Bagdoian, of the Congregational Church of Westborough, and the Rev. Mr. Gary Shahinian, of the Park Congregational Church in Worcester, to the podium. All three spoke about their experiences as relatives of survivors of the Armenian genocide, while a slide show of pictures were projected on the screen behind them.

Ms. Cabbage introduced another “clay jar” story. Ms. Liz Crawford told her moving account of attending outdoor services of the Worcester Fellowship and her turnaround journey from being homeless to being housed and one year drug-free.

Mr. Holland introduced Speakouts. After Speakouts concluded, the Moderator pointed out the Guidelines for Clergy Compensation on pages 31-33 in the Advance Materials. He then invited Ms. Lucy Costa, manager, to report on the related hearing. Ms. Costa outlined the revisions made by the hearing participants to the proposed Guidelines. Mr. Bill Bray then moved the 2016 Guidelines for Local Church Personnel and Search Committees for Authorized Ministers and Professional Expense Reimbursement as revised. The revisions were projected on the screen. The Rev. Mr. Quentin Chin spoke to the motion. Several questions were asked and answered. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

<b>Clergy Compensation 15-AM-10</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopts the Guidelines for Local Church Personnel and Search Committees for Authorized Ministers and Professional Expense Reimbursement as revised (Appendix E).</i>
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The Moderator made some announcements, said grace, and then announced the break for lunch at 11:02am.

The Rev. Ms. Nadia Bolz-Weber offered the keynote address at the Fine Arts Center at 1:00pm.

Plenary resumed at 3:02pm. The Vice-moderator introduced more Speakouts.

Ms. Cabbage invited Mr. Dick Harter to introduce the Slate of Nominees which could be found on pages 30-34 of the Delegate Packet. Mr. Harter moved that the meeting adopt the Nominating Slate

as presented in the Delegate Materials. The motion was seconded, and there was no discussion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

<b>Nominating Slate 15-AM-11</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopts the Slate of Committee and Board Members, General Synod Delegates and Officers as presented in bold type on pages 30-34 of the Delegate Materials.</i>
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The Vice-moderator invited the Rev. Ms. Angie Menke Ballou to deliver her report on behalf of the Board of Directors. Ms. Ballou recognized the Board members and the staff, and then spoke about how the Board seeks to make the Conference mission, “making God’s love and justice real,” come alive. The vision for the Board and staff emphasizes depth, courage and bridge-building. The Board is working on ways to address institutional racism, to encourage church vitality, and to live in covenant with other churches, conferences, and denominations. Stewardship is being redefined through United Church Mission. Ms. Ballou recognized the grief over releasing Craigville, even though it no longer fits into the vision of the Conference. Lastly, Ms. Ballou led the assembly through a guided prayer.

The Moderator asked us to join him in celebrating new ministries in the Conference. He asked everyone to thank their neighbors for supporting the work of Conference programs such as Super Saturday, Search and Call, ACM’s visiting local churches, and disaster response.

The Moderator introduced the last vote of the day, the approval to empower the Board of Directors to sell the properties owned by the Conference at Craigville. He directed delegates to the proposed Resolution on page 21 of the Advance Materials, and supplementary information on page 38 of the Delegate Packet. He pointed out that the decision to not renew the lease with the Christian Camp Association had already been made by the Board of Directors in 2014, and that this vote was only to allow the Board to sell the property owned by the Conference.

Mr. Bray, manager of the hearing on this subject, spoke. He commented on the many concerns expressed at the hearing, especially by people with an emotional attachment to the property. He reported that fewer than 10% of Conference churches have used the property in recent years. He noted that there was no consensus among those present at the hearing.

Mr. Hamblet then moved the Resolution. The motion was seconded. Mr. Hamblet spoke to the motion. After many questions, there was a motion to end debate. This was seconded and passed with more than a two-thirds majority. The vote of the underlying question was then taken and carried.

<b>Craigville Property Sale 15-AM-12</b>	<i>The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ adopts the Proposed Resolution on Craigville Properties as presented in on pages 21-22 of the Advanced Materials. (Appendix F)</i>
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The Moderator asked for a moment of silence and offered a prayer.

The Rev. Mr. John White presented another “clay jars” story regarding an experience with reading “every word of the Bible.” Many people in his congregation had expressed that the Bible was very important to them, but he realized that many had never actually read the Bible. Reading the entire body of Scripture proved transformative for the church.

The Moderator invited The Rev. Dr. Jonathan New of the Conference staff to talk about United Church Mission. Dr. New described how he had picked up the implementation process begun by Mr. Andy Gustafson. As of the Annual Meeting, there were 48 opt-in churches so far, or 13% of the Conference’s churches. He thanked these churches for being bold and “jumping right in”. He pointed out the Conference has developed resources to help churches take on the process of adopting United Church Mission.

The Moderator called our attention to the honorees celebrated at the Recognition Luncheon, including Green Churches, those receiving “Bold New Initiative” awards, newly-certified Christian Educators, and those celebrating milestones. He asked everyone to read about these on pages 18-28 in the Delegate Packet.

The Vice-moderator delivered the final report of the Business committee. The final count of participants was 187 clergy, 222 delegates, 76 visitors, and 44 others. As Chair of the Business committee, Ms. Cabbage reported that all business has been accomplished. Dr. Antal was invited to the microphone, where he expressed gratitude for Mr. Holland and Ms. Cabbage; and the members of the Board of Directors who are concluding their service, Ms. Amy Chin, Ms. Martha Congdon, Mr. Charlie Desmond, Ms. Jane McCord, and Mr. Holland. He welcomed Ms. Cabbage as the incoming Moderator and Mr. Ian Tosh as the incoming Vice-moderator.

Ms. Cabbage thanked the hospitality team and the music team, and then declared that the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting would be adjourned at the conclusion of the closing service of worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Babcock, Recorder

Martha Crawford, Secretary

**Appendices to the Minutes of the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the  
Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ  
June 12-13, 2015**

**Appendix A:  
Consent Calendar**

1. *The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting adopts the Standing Rules as printed on pages 14-17 of the Advance Materials.*
2. *The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting adopts the Order of Time and Events as printed on page 2-4 of this packet.*

**Appendix B:  
Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of  
Mass Incarceration in Massachusetts**

Presented by Christ's Community Church (UCC), Chicopee, Massachusetts  
A Resolution of Christian Conviction

**Statement Describing Necessity of Adoption of Resolution At The Annual Meeting At This Time<sup>i</sup>**

The United States imprisons more of its own people than any other country in the world. While the U.S. comprises 5% of the total global population, it alone accounts for a staggering 25% of the world's prison population. Indeed, more than 2.2 million people are currently incarcerated in U.S. prisons and jails, while more than 5 million additional persons are under the supervision of its justice system, either on probation or on parole. All totaled, there are over 7 million people currently subject to the U.S. criminal justice system.<sup>ii</sup>

Moreover, the U.S. prison population is far from representative of the nation's population as a whole. For instance, while African American males comprise only 6% of the U.S. population, they make up an astonishing 40% of those in prison or jail.<sup>iii</sup> African American males have a 32% chance of serving time at some point in their lives, while white males only have a 6% chance. Between 1980 and 2008, the number of incarcerated whites increased by 585,000, while the number of incarcerated minorities increased by 1.4 million.<sup>iv</sup>

“Mass incarceration on a scale almost unexampled in human history is a fundamental fact of our

country today – perhaps the fundamental fact, as slavery was the fundamental fact of 1850. In truth, there are more black men in the grip of the criminal-justice system – in prison, on probation, or on parole – than were in slavery then. Over all, there are now more people under ‘correctional supervision’ in America – more than six million – than were in the Gulag Archipelago under Stalin at its height.”<sup>v</sup>

“Mass incarceration has now become a principal vehicle for the reproduction of racial hierarchy in our society. Our country’s policymakers need to do something about it. And all of us are ultimately responsible for making sure that they do.”<sup>vi</sup>

As people of faith, we are called to dismantle systems that violate human and civil rights. This resolution is intended to mobilize members of the United Church of Christ in Massachusetts to join the burgeoning movement of faith and community organizations to halt the rapidly growing trend of mass incarceration in this country and thereby dismantle the new caste system it has created.

Because several resolutions on mass incarceration are to be offered at the General Synod in 2015 and because the Massachusetts General Court is now in session and will have before it legislation of the type described in this resolution, it is imperative that this resolution be brought before the 216th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

### **Biblical and Theological Grounding**

“Woe to you who issue unjust laws, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice, and to rob the poor of my people of their rights.” (Isaiah 10:1-2a)

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captive and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.” (Luke 4:18)

Jesus calls followers to “visit those in prison” as though He were there, and Paul urges the young Christian movement “to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” As Christians professing the teachings of the Prophets and Gospels, we are responsible for speaking and acting prophetically when the laws of the land are not just or fair to all communities they are intended to serve and protect.

### **RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS mass incarceration across our nation has reached levels unprecedented in history, akin

to Jim Crow or slavery by another name, in the words of Michelle Alexander author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* and we, as Christians, are called upon to remember those in prison and to rectify oppression and unjust laws and practices;

WHEREAS members and friends from individual congregations of the United Church of Christ in Massachusetts are working to end mass incarceration and to encourage members and friends from other congregations to do the same;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 216th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ supports legislative and administrative actions designed to reduce mass incarceration and to ameliorate its effects, including the following:

- Repeal mandatory minimum drug sentences. This would restore judicial discretion in sentencing for drug charges, reducing the risk to an offender of a sentence substantially greater than his or her personal circumstances warrant.
- End collateral sanctions and fees with the Registry of Motor Vehicles, including the minimum \$500 reinstatement fee for driver's license suspension, all of which impair the released citizen's ability to return to the community.
- Reduce specific low-level felonies to misdemeanors, thereby lowering maximum time for incarceration.
- Provide greater access to treatment for addiction and to rehabilitation services and expand medical and counseling services for those suffering mental illness.
- Promote restorative justice practices. Restorative justice programs heal communities by creating contexts in which victims can truly be heard, individuals who have engaged in destructive behavior can gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for their actions and take responsibility for the harm they have done to others, and relationships can be transformed.
- Reform the pre-trial process: 5,000 of the 15,000 people currently in jail are not being held because they have been convicted of a crime, but because they simply cannot afford bail.
- Reestablish the Sentencing Commission: the Commission has not revised its guidelines since 1996; in 2011 60% of non-drug offenders received sentences where the minimum and maximum were almost the same.
- Establish an Innocence Commission.
- Halt the construction of new prison units until the foregoing reforms can take effect.
- Redirect savings effected through criminal justice reform into human development and job creating strategies targeting communities with high rates of poverty and crime, further improving public safety for everyone.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 216th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ authorizes the Board of Directors and the Minister and President to communicate the contents of this resolution to Governor Charles Baker, Attorney General Maura Healey and all members of the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts and to take whatever steps are necessary or desirable to convey to the media and interested parties the sense of this resolution;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 216th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ authorizes the Board of Directors and the Minister and President to submit to member UCC congregations a copy of this resolution, to encourage member congregations (a) to engage in prayer, consciousness raising, and education about the crisis of mass incarceration, (b) to renew efforts to engage in Sacred Conversations on Race, specifically addressing the crisis of mass incarceration and (c) to urge members and friends of such congregations to request their elected representatives to take actions, as set forth in this resolution, to reduce mass incarceration and ameliorate its effect.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 216th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ authorizes the Board of Directors and the Minister and President to lend support to (including co-sponsorship of) such resolutions as may be submitted to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ that address issues of mass incarceration and convey to their best judgment the sense of this resolution.

<sup>i</sup> The text of the Brief Summary and the Biblical, Theological, Historical Grounding, below, draws heavily on a text prepared by the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, the Michigan Conference, the Southwest Conference, the Philadelphia Association of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference and the UCC Mental Health Network on a resolution to be offered in 2015 at General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>iii</sup> African-Americans constitute 8.1% of Massachusetts' population but 28% of its prison population. Blacks and Latinos now make up 54% of Massachusetts' prison inmates. Massachusetts DOC Population Trends 2013.

<sup>iv</sup> Bruce Western, Professor Sociology, Harvard University, Boston Globe December 12, 2014. <sup>v</sup> "The Caging of America," Adam Gopnik, The New Yorker Magazine, January 30, 2012. <sup>vi</sup> Race, Incarceration and American Values, Loury, Glenn, Boston Review, 2008, pp. 34-37.

# **Appendix C: A Call For the United Church of Christ To Take Actions Toward A Just Peace In The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.**

**Presented by the Justice and Witness Ministry Council on behalf of the  
Palestine-Israel Task Team of the Conference  
A Resolution of Witness**

The following resolution has been submitted to the Office of General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ prior to the deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirtieth General Synod. General Synod is the biennial meeting of the national United Church of Christ. The proposers seek endorsement of the resolution by the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference. This resolution may not be amended by the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference, because it has already entered the General Synod process in its current form.

## SUMMARY

This resolution proposes a fourfold strategy by the United Church of Christ to help end the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The strategy seeks to combine: (1) educational empowerment (study of *Kairos Palestine 2009 – ‘A Moment of Truth’: A Word of Faith, Hope, and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*); (2) economic leverage (divestment from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and boycott of products produced in such territories by Israeli companies); (3) political pressure (petition to Congress to ensure that aid to Israel violates neither the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act nor the U.S. Arms Export Control Act); and (4) interreligious dialogue (conversation among the three Abrahamic faiths aimed at reaching religious reconciliation and achieving political resolution).

## BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING

This resolution is grounded in the Biblical prophetic call to do justice and the decisive embodiment of that call in Jesus Christ. It springs from the Affirmation of the 15th General Synod that the United Church of Christ is a Just Peace Church. That affirmation commits the United Church of Christ to enacting “solidarity with the poor, seeking to be present in places of oppression, poverty, and violence, and standing with the oppressed in the struggle to resist and change . . . evil.” It thereby commits the United Church of Christ to be both “a community of resistance, standing against social structures comfortable with violence and injustice,” and “a community of political and social engagement, in regular dialogue with the political order.”

In addition, the United Church of Christ has historically stressed the importance of living out a Covenantal theology, whereby diverse autonomous organizations covenant to collaborate for the common good. Through such Covenantal relationships, the United Church of Christ partners globally with those most impacted by the continuing conflict between the Palestinians and Israel. The current list of thirteen Global Ministries Middle Eastern partners includes regional groups as well as Israeli and Palestinian groups, notably Kairos Palestine.

Informed by that Just Peace commitment and Covenantal theology, this resolution seeks to respond to the theological declaration of our Christian partners in the Middle East that we are at a Kairos

moment – a special opportunity provided by the “Still Speaking God” for us individually as Christians and collectively as a church both to listen to the Palestinian people courageously voice faith, hope, and love in the midst of their suffering and to respond with action.

Such listening and response is thoroughly in keeping with various historical (and historic!) United Church of Christ resolutions and actions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

The United Church of Christ has affirmed the right of Israelis and Palestinians to live peacefully within internationally recognized borders.

The United Church of Christ has identified Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land and the human rights abuses it has committed there to be a major source of conflict and has called for an end to settlement activity.

The United Church of Christ has a long history of effectively supporting boycotts against products produced under unjust conditions (lettuce, grapes, infant formula, etc.) and policies that produce such conditions (apartheid).

The United Church of Christ has had, since the passage of the 2005 resolution on economic leverage, a strong history of corporate engagement with companies that profit from the Occupation.

### MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The desired outcome is a just peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The hope is that individuals, churches, and church entities will learn of the present plight of the Palestinians, will study the history of the conflict, will examine their own consciences, and will engage in individual and institutional actions to pressure the government of Israel to end the Occupation as a step toward a just peace. At the same time, the call is to address members of our own government and ask them to ensure that U.S. aid to Israel complies with applicable U.S. laws.

Those stakeholders most directly affected are the Palestinians. The originators of the resolution, the United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network, have consulted with United Church of Christ’s Global Ministries partner, Kairos Palestine, and with the movement that represents a wide coalition of the largest Palestinian organizations, trade unions, networks, and NGOs. Both enthusiastically support the resolution, as do Palestinian groups within the United States. Many groups in other Christian denominations and in the Jewish community also support this resolution.

The originators have also approached the two major United Church of Christ financial entities addressed by the divestment call – United Church Funds and the Pension Boards – United Church of Christ, Inc.

The United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network has consulted with staff from United Church Funds and has been in dialogue with them over the past six months. In addition, a member of the United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network Steering Committee has been welcomed to the meetings of the Ecumenical Action Group, which has been working on corporate engagement with some of the companies named in the resolution for the past nine years. None of the American companies named has responded to shareholder pressure to disengage from its support of the Occupation. Two of the international companies have taken steps to or made announcements that

they would remove their operations from the occupied territories, but they have not yet fully done so. United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network is committed to continued dialogue about the best way to make investment/divestment decisions and welcomes a mechanism for establishing standards by which to make such decisions in the future.

United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network has also attempted to dialogue with the Pension Boards – United Church of Christ, Inc. on the divestment issue. Thus far, its staff has not been willing to engage in dialogue on the topic. Its executive has stated on the basis of legal opinion that its fiduciary responsibilities do not allow it to make investment/divestment decisions in response to Synod votes. Nevertheless, it has responded to the 2005 Synod “Economic Leverage” resolution by investing in the Siraj Fund, which supports nineteen Palestinian companies. Although this is indeed a positive step in support of the Palestinian economy, it does not acknowledge Israel’s complete control over that economy and all its resources as documented by the World Bank. Therefore, it cannot be viewed as an effective step toward ending the Occupation.

Finally, this resolution recognizes that members of the Jewish community with whom we have had long standing interfaith relationships are also stakeholders. It commends those relationships and calls for them to continue and expand.

### ACTION STEPS

Studying the Kairos Palestine document individually and in church groups

Encouraging travel to the region with Global Ministries and other alternative travel groups

Sponsoring local educational conferences

Self-examining investment portfolios by individuals, churches, conferences, and national United Church of Christ entities to discern whether and how divestment may be effectuated

Working side by side with allied organizations in local communities to initiate and support boycott actions

Writing letters and petitions, as well as making visits, to members of Congress in cooperation with Justice and Witness Ministries or other peace groups

Initiating or continuing interfaith dialogues at all levels

### EVALUATION PLAN

The resolution asks the General Minister and President to provide the whole church an annual assessment on the implementation of the resolution. United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network will offer a report on actions in the wider church that may be of assistance in developing that assessment.

### INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the

United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body for each of the four components addressed in the resolution (elucidated above in the section entitled Summary), with the funding to be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies (primarily the United Church Board, Global Ministries, and Justice and Witness Ministries) and the funds available to these agencies, keeping in mind that many of the actions will be taken by individuals and congregations of the United Church of Christ.

In addition, Global Ministries, the joint witness of the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ for international peace, reconciliation, and justice, will be invaluable in implementing the resolution as it works to nurture existing partnerships in the region. Its efforts will be enhanced by the June 2015 launch of its eighteen-month Middle East Initiative.

Moreover, the United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network, supported by its own budget, will continue to broaden its work of educating local churches and conferences.

Taking all the aforementioned into account, it is clear that the United Church of Christ is currently well-equipped to implement easily this resolution.

#### PROBABILITY OF INFLUENCING SOCIAL CHANGE

With the adoption of this resolution, the Thirtieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ will secure its rightful place alongside other denominations and peace-seeking groups in the United States and around the world that are taking a public stand against the occupation of Palestinian territories by the Israeli government while promoting the human rights of the Palestinians and opposing the use of violence by either party.

The unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict is of world-wide concern and has the potential to influence many other issues, including the safety of U.S. citizens here and abroad. The United Church of Christ has not addressed this conflict via resolution since 2005; yet, political realities have changed drastically in the interim. Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories has become increasingly entrenched; settlements have grown exponentially; four massive attacks have been carried out on Gaza; and several attempts at the "peace process" have failed to resolve the conflict. Frustration with the lack of progress has contributed to escalating violence from both sides.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Christians have issued their Kairos Palestine 2009 – "A Moment of Truth" document, and Palestinian civil society has endorsed a movement calling for boycott, divestment, and sanctions. That movement is now world-wide and has achieved some notable successes, particularly in Europe but also in the U.S., including the loss of \$26 million in contracts by Veolia, the divestment from Israeli banks by European banks and pension funds, and the loss of revenue by SodaStream. Recently, Kuwait announced the termination of contracts with companies complicit in the Occupation and Sweden recognized the State of Palestine. In addition, most of the mainline Protestant denominations in the U.S. have been considering resolutions that call for some form of boycott and/or divestment. Indeed, local Presbyteries, Episcopal Dioceses, and Methodist conferences have voted to boycott or divest. Most notably, the Presbyterian General Assembly voted in 2014 to divest from three companies.

By approving this resolution with its clear, unequivocal call for specific actions toward ending the occupation of Palestinian territories, the United Church of Christ can offer a sign of hope to the Palestinians and add its weight to a world-wide movement toward a just peace in the region.

United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network has been presenting workshops and study sessions on this issue in local churches, associations, and conferences since its inception in January 2012 and will continue to do so. The consideration of this resolution in five United Church of Christ conferences and its acceptance as a study document in two more conferences have led to an enormous amount of discussion and education in those conferences. Without a resolution with specific action components, such engagement would not have occurred. The consideration of the resolution by the Synod opens this conversation to the wider United Church of Christ.

### TEXT OF THE MOTION

The psalmist celebrates, “How good it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity.” (Psalm 133) Yet today the Middle East is torn by disunity between Semitic brothers and sisters separated by “dividing walls of hostility.” (Ephesians 2:14) We hear the call of the prophet Micah, “And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8) - and we are reminded that we must conduct ourselves with kindness and humility even as we seek to counteract injustice anywhere and to stand in solidarity with its victims everywhere.

As disciples of Jesus, we hear and seek to heed his call to be peacemakers: responding to violence with non-violence and extending love to all. In the words of the Kairos Palestine document, “True Christian theology is a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed, a call to justice and equality among peoples.” (Kairos Palestine 2009 – “A Moment of Truth”) <sup>i</sup>

THEREFORE, in the spirit of the witness of the psalmist and ancient prophets and of the ministry of Jesus the Christ, we offer this resolution.

WHEREAS, in 1985 the 15th General Synod of the United Church of Christ committed itself to be a Just Peace Church; <sup>ii</sup>

WHEREAS, historically the United Church of Christ has affirmed Israel’s right to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries (GS 16 [1987] <sup>iii</sup> and GS 18 [1991] <sup>iv</sup> ) and asserted the rights of Palestinians to enjoy sovereignty in an independent, contiguous, and viable state of their own, within secure and recognized boundaries (GS 16 [1987], GS 17 [1989], <sup>v</sup> and GS 18 [1991];

WHEREAS, past General Synods have identified the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and its human rights abuses committed therein to be a major source of conflict and have called for the end of the construction and expansion of settlements (GS 18 [1991] and GS 21 [1997] <sup>vi</sup> );

WHEREAS, the various expressions of the United Church of Christ have a long history of effectively using boycotts against products and policies (lettuce, grapes, infant formula, apartheid, etc.) to address injustices;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is deeply committed to interfaith relationships and General Synods have confessed to the sin of anti-Semitism and proclaimed its renunciation (GS 23 [2001]) <sup>vii</sup> and have denounced actions against Islam or Muslims based on ignorance or fear (GS 28 [2011]); <sup>viii</sup>

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has historically stressed the importance of living out a Covenantal theology, whereby diverse autonomous organizations covenant to collaborate for the common good, and that through such Covenantal relationships the United Church of Christ has partnered globally with those most impacted by the continuing conflict between Palestinians and Israel;

WHEREAS, as demonstrated through ongoing dialogue and partnerships, the United Church of Christ values and nurtures its relationships with Jewish groups in the U.S. and Israel who seek justice, equality, and freedom for both peoples, including groups with differing perspectives on the conflict;

WHEREAS, Palestinians in the West Bank have lived since 1967 under Israeli military occupation that subjects them to many human rights abuses, including: loss of their land for the purpose of building Israeli settlements; limited access to their land and to each other on account of the route of the Separation Wall on occupied Palestinian territories; systematic displacement into small, non-contiguous geographic enclaves separated by barriers and checkpoints; gross inequality in the amount of water allocated to them; severe and arbitrary travel restrictions; limited access to holy sites; segregated roads; demolition of their homes; destruction of their crops by settlers and the Israeli army; and arbitrary arrest, even of children;<sup>ix</sup>

WHEREAS, the Israeli government has once again subjected Palestinians in Gaza to military attacks using deadly force beyond that necessary for Israel's acknowledged need for self-defense and thereby beyond that measure of proportionate response permitted by historically Christian just war theory,<sup>x</sup> has destroyed Gaza's infrastructure and economy, and has imposed: severe limits on personal entry and on the entry of products essential to Gazans' well-being; fishing limits in violation of international law and the Oslo accords; and strict control of electronic communications, as well as of air and sea space;<sup>xi</sup>

WHEREAS, Israel has annexed Palestinian East Jerusalem and separated it from West Bank and Gaza and continues to appropriate Palestinian properties there for Jewish settlements and to deny building permits to Palestinians, as well as to revoke the residency rights of many of its Palestinian citizens there;<sup>xii</sup>

WHEREAS, Israel refuses to end, but rather has sought to solidify, its occupation of territory conquered in the 1967 War, leading to numerous illegal actions and human rights abuses by the Israeli government and military in defiance of United Nations resolutions,<sup>xiii</sup> and refuses to respect the 4th Geneva Convention as called for by the International Court of Justice in its opinion concerning the Separation Wall in the occupied Palestinian territories;<sup>xiv</sup>

WHEREAS, our Palestinian Christian partners, seeking an alternative to violence born of hopelessness and despair, have authored Kairos Palestine 2009 - 'A Moment of Truth': A Word of Faith, Hope, and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering as a call and summons to their global partners to engage in non-violent measures that will pressure Israel to end the Occupation;<sup>xv</sup>

WHEREAS, the resolution "Concerning the Use of Economic Leverage in Promoting Peace in the Middle East," passed by the General Synod in 2005, calls upon "the Covenanted Ministries, Pension Boards, United Church Foundation, local churches and members to use economic leverage, including, but not limited to: advocating the reallocation of US foreign aid so that the militarization of the Middle East is constrained; making positive contributions to groups and partners committed

to the non-violent resolution of the conflict; challenging the practices of corporations that gain from the continuation of the conflict; and divesting from those companies that refuse to change their practice of gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the Occupation”;<sup>xvi</sup>

WHEREAS, despite years of corporate engagement and the submission of shareholder resolutions from United Church Funds<sup>xvii</sup> and other religious and secular groups, few companies have withdrawn any of their operations that support the Occupation;

WHEREAS, many agencies, institutions, universities, and Christian denominations around the world are severing financial ties to companies or institutions that help sustain the Israeli occupation and now, notably, have been joined by various Jewish groups in the U.S., such as Jewish Voice for Peace<sup>viii</sup> and American Jews for a Just Peace-Boston,<sup>xix</sup> as well as Israeli groups, such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions<sup>xx</sup> and Coalition of Women for Peace,<sup>xxi</sup> that support using boycott and divestment strategies; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ’s efforts to end the Occupation through economic leverage and advocacy for the protection of human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis are not aimed at isolating Israel or any other party but reflect the belief that engagement and communication among all affected by the current tragic situation in the Middle East are in the deepest interests of both Palestinians and Israelis;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

CALLS upon United Church of Christ churches and church members to study the Kairos Palestine document and take heed of its call for non-violent measures pressuring Israel to end the Occupation, in solidarity with the Palestinian people;<sup>xxii</sup>

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board, the Pension Boards - United Church of Christ, Inc., United Church Funds, conferences, local churches, members, and other related United Church of Christ entities to divest any holdings in the following companies that have been found to profit from the occupation of the Palestinian territories by the state of Israel: Caterpillar Inc., Motorola Solutions, Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP or its successors, G4S, and Veolia Environment plus its subsidiaries;

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board to establish an advisory group composed of representatives from the stakeholders in this issue, with the specific assignment of developing and publishing standards by which faith-driven investment, divestment, and re-investment decisions can be made in the future;

CALLS upon all national entities of the church to boycott goods identified as produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements located in the occupied Palestinian territories, including, but not limited to, Ahava skin care products,<sup>xxiii</sup> SodaStream products,<sup>xxiv</sup> and Hadiklaim dates;<sup>xxv</sup> and upon church members to join boycotts of such goods in their local communities;

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Officers of the Church and church members to persist in the request to Congress, previously made by a number of religious leaders, to ensure that U.S. aid to Israel violates neither the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits assistance to any country that engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations, nor the U.S. Arms Export Control

Act, which limits the use of U.S. weapons to “internal security” or “legitimate self-defense”;<sup>xxvi</sup>

COMMENDS United Church of Christ leadership for continuing to dialogue with major Jewish organizations and call for United Church of Christ-wide participation in a rigorous dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths at all levels – in particular between local congregations – in order to identify ways in which groups of congregations of different faiths can work in concert to promote sacred reconciliation among all people who are affected by the conflict in the Middle East and to influence public policies in ways that will promote peace and social justice for Palestinians and Israelis and end violence in all its forms;

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board to monitor the implementation of this resolution by all United Church of Christ national entities and to ensure that those who manage the United Church Board’s own invested funds and who provide United Church Board employee health and pension benefits are in compliance with the resolution; and

ASKS the General Minister and President to provide an annual report to the whole church on the implementation of this resolution, including a summary of interfaith dialogue at various levels, along with examples of interfaith, congregation-to-congregation peace efforts.

## FUNDING

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

## IMPLEMENTATION

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

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> “General Synod pronouncement and proposal for action on the United Church of Christ as a ‘Just Peace Church,’”  
<http://www.ucc.org/beliefs/theology/general-synod-pronouncement.html>

<sup>iii</sup> “The Israeli Palestinian Conflict,”  
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-toisraelpalestine/1987-ip-resolution.html>

<sup>iv</sup> “Consequences of the Persian Gulf War for a Just Peace Church,”  
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1991-gulf-warresolution.html>

<sup>v</sup> “The Middle East,”  
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-toisraelpalestine/1989-mid-east-resolution.html>

<sup>vi</sup> “Palestine/Israel,”

<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-toisraelpalestine/1997-palestine-israel-resol.html>

vii Minutes of the Twenty-third General Synod, “Resolution: Anti-Semitism,” pp. 11- 12, <http://www.ucc.org/assets/pdfs/synod/g23.pdf>

viii <http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/Resolution-On-Actions-of-Hostility-Against-Islam.pdf> (2011).

ix Annual Report, B’Tselem, “Human Rights in the Occupied Territories 2011,” [http://www.btselem.org/annual\\_report\\_2011](http://www.btselem.org/annual_report_2011) and UN Human Rights Council Session 12, “Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories,” <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf>

x As John Hickox has observed, “The most recent episode of Israel's bi-annual atrocities in Gaza has faded from the news. How can that be? An estimated 2106 citizens of Gaza were killed! Israel admits that ‘as many as 72% were civilians.’ That means that 1516 non-Hamas men, women, children and babies were killed by rockets and bombs launched from American-made Apache helicopters and F-16 jets.” <http://cpcjusticeandwitness.com/2014/09/23/where-did-it-all-begin/> Given that Israel is reported to have lost just sixty-seven of its soldiers and only six of its civilians in the recent conflict, there can be little doubt that its response did not meet the just war principle of proportionate use of force. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29503439>

xi <http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/>

xii “Background on East Jerusalem,” B’Tselem, [www.btselem.org/jerusalem](http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem).

xiii <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/study-israel-leads-in-ignoring-security-council-resolutions-1.31971> and <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stat/un.html>

xiv Advisory Opinion, International Court of Justice, 9 July 2004, “Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&p3=6>

xv <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>.

xvi <http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/2005-economicleverage.html>

xvii United Church Funds, “UCF Mideast Engagements,” <http://ucfunds.org/social-responsibility/corporateengagement/economic-leverage/promoting-peace/united-church-funds-engagements/>

xviii [www.jvp.org](http://www.jvp.org)

xix [www.ajpboston.org](http://www.ajpboston.org)

<sup>xx</sup> <http://icahdusa.org/an-open-letter-from-jeff-halper/>

<sup>xxi</sup> <http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/><sup>xxii</sup>  
<http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

<sup>xxii</sup> <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

<sup>xxiii</sup> <http://www.codepink4peace.org/section.php?id=415>

<sup>xxiv</sup> <http://sodastreamboycott.org>

<sup>xxv</sup> <http://whoprofits.org/company/hadiklaim-israel-date-growers-cooperative>

<sup>xxvi</sup> Letter from religious leaders asking Congress to condition Israel military aid on human rights compliance, dated October 2012, <http://globalministries.org/news/mee/pdfs/Military-aid-to-Israel-Oct-1-Final.pdf>

## **Appendix D: Resolution Of Witness Condemning Violence Committed In The Name Of Religion**

*Presented by the Justice and Witness Ministry Council on behalf of the Task Force on Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations of the Conference*

We are deeply troubled by the rising tide of religious persecution both here in the United States and globally, and especially the acts carried out in the name of religion. As Christians, our faith calls us to condemn all acts of violence that cloak hatred in the language of religious conviction.

We affirm that Christian discipleship demands an active witness against such violence, in particular against the shameful acts done in the name of Christianity. In this current global environment, one that threatens to anesthetize and demoralize those of us who follow a crucified messiah, we confess the sin of our complicity in each moment we remain silent.

We acknowledge that the roots of religious violence cannot be fully understood in isolation from political, economic, and military forces that impact the world. Yet, as people of faith, we reject all attempts to justify violence as being divinely inspired or mandated. Such is a denial of the God-given value of each human life, and an act of sin that stands in direct opposition to faithful discipleship. We humbly acknowledge that Christians themselves have judged and persecuted people of other Christian traditions, of other faiths and of no faith to the point of extreme violence in the name of our beliefs and we have used our sacred texts to justify it. We repent of these misuses of our religious tradition.

Yet we also affirm that throughout history, Christians have engaged with each other and people of other faiths for real reconciliation and healing. We honor that the world's noble faiths share core values of compassion, justice and peacemaking, and we recommit to right relationships among people of all religious traditions, calling each other to the best of our sacred teachings.

Therefore, we call upon ourselves and Christians everywhere to condemn acts of hate and violence done in the name of any of our sacred religions, and to actively engage with our faith partners: Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Baha'i, Unitarian Universalist and so many others to stand together against all acts of oppression done to anyone because of their faith.

### **BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING**

In the United Church of Christ, we hear God speaking to us throughout the Bible:

Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. (Matt 5:9)

Peter declared, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God." (Acts 10:34-35)

Jesus calls us to respond to hatred with love: Matt 5:43-48 "You have heard it said, 'you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," (Matt 5:43,44)

Jesus tells us that the road to eternal life is won by these two great commands – to love God with all our hearts, soul, strength and mind and to love our neighbors as ourselves, and then calls us to an expanded vision of what it means to love our neighbor; (Luke 10:25-37)

As Christians, the gospel teachings of Jesus Christ especially call us to reject the complicity of silence in the face of injustice to any peoples, and to regularly engage with neighbor faith communities in public witness together modelling ecclesial faithfulness as an antidote to the escalating violence of our time.

WHEREAS we proclaim that the God we worship is the God of all Creation;

WHEREAS the Massachusetts Conference UCC and General Synod have persistently called upon our churches to act as reconcilers in solidarity with victims of religious persecution (MC 1981, 1985, 1987, 1988, 2003); and condemning actions of hostility against Islam and the Muslim Community (MC 2011) and grow in relationship with people of the Muslim faith (GS 1989); condemning anti-semitism in all its forms and affirming the Jewish faith (GS 1987, 2001, MC 2005); to responding to hate with love (GS 1997), and standing with all people who teach compassion, justice, and peace (MC 2005, 2011);

WHEREAS there have been more than 150 hate crimes reported against Muslims and mosques around the United States since 9/11/2001 (the Southern Poverty Law Center); and attacks against 700 mosques in Great Britain since 9/11/2001 ( the Daily Mail); Three Muslim students were shot and killed at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in February 2015; hundreds of Muslims are fleeing persecution in Myanmar and Bangladesh May 2015;

WHEREAS there has been a global resurgence in anti-semitism, such as the killing of four people at a Jewish museum in Brussels, Belgium in May 2014, anti-semitic riots in Paris in July of 2014, killing of four Jews in a kosher grocery January 2015 in East Paris, France, and the killing of Jewish volunteer security guard outside a synagogue in Copenhagen, Denmark in February 2015;

WHEREAS the General Synod of the UCC has condemned the violence perpetuated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict including but not limited to acts of suicide bombings by Palestinians and the use of force by the Israeli government in the sustained occupation of designated Palestinian territories (2005); and has called the churches to be active agents of peace in responding to the suffering of all peoples in the Middle East (1997, 2005, 2011) through interfaith relationship and dialogue, positive investment in healing projects working toward a just peace with dignity for all: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Druze, Baha'is and others in the Middle East; and the Massachusetts Conference UCC has called itself especially to these commitments (1981, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1996);

WHEREAS there have been increased attacks on Christian groups in Syria (hundreds kidnapped in February 2015, hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes, bombings and violence against their churches), executions of Ethiopian Christians in Libya April 2015, Christians attacked and fleeing by the thousands in northern Iraq April 2015;

WHEREAS there have been enough attacks against Hindu temples and groups in the United States since August 2014 that the US Justice Department has mandated the inclusion of anti-Hindu hate crimes as a category in crime-reporting forms starting in January 2015;

WHEREAS the UN reported increasing state-sponsored violence and discrimination against the Baha'i Community of Iran, including arrests and imprisonment.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE 2015 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

Calls upon the churches and church members to condemn violence done in the name of Christianity, or the name of any religion, because it stands in direct opposition to the God made known to us in Jesus Christ;

Calls upon the churches and church members to pray for and support all Christian communities that are suffering persecution and violence, particularly Coptic, Syrian, Palestinian, Assyrian and Armenian Christians in the Middle East.

Calls upon the churches and church members specifically to reaffirm our condemnation of anti-Semitism and all its manifestations, foster collaborative relationships with local Jewish communities and stand as allies with Jewish people anywhere they are threatened or persecuted because of their faith;

Calls upon the churches and church members to condemn anti-Muslim bigotry and violence, in all its manifestations, to build relationships with local Muslim communities and work together on initiatives to promote understanding, collaborative good works, and peacemaking throughout the world;

Calls upon the churches and church members to condemn violence against Baha'is, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and other people of faith, as well as people of no faith. We invite greater engagement with local inter-religious dialogue and mission;

Calls upon the churches and church members to research and support programs of non-violent conflict resolution and reconciliation, especially among adversarial faith groups; develop just solutions for the living and working of all peoples in conflict regions, and forge peace-building initiatives.

Praises those of our churches which have engaged neighboring synagogues, mosques, churches and all communities of faith as ecumenical/interfaith allies for the good of the world, and urges all our churches to do so.

## **Appendix E: 2016 Guidelines for Local Church Personnel and Search Committees for Authorized Ministers and Professional Expense Reimbursement**

The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, seeking to balance the growth, vitality and financial sustainability of its churches with the fair and appropriate compensation of its authorized ministers, recommends that all congregations meet the goals as outlined in these *Compensation Guidelines for Authorized Ministers*. The guidelines apply to all people serving in authorized ministries of the church, including full-time and part-time solo, senior, associate and assistant pastors, both settled and interim, as well as licensed and commissioned ministers.

These guidelines change the approach to ministerial compensation. Rather than specifying compensation based upon years of ordained experience and congregation size, these guidelines should encourage clergy and congregations to think of compensation in terms of ranges based upon the skills and talent pastors bring to complement the ministries of their congregations. They intend to foster a constructive dialogue between clergy and congregation to shape their shared ministry. This dialogue should reflect the scope of ministry which includes: congregation size, ministry tasks, congregational resources, the pastor's skills and expertise, and any exceptional conditions facing the congregation's current ministry.

The tables below reflect the scope of ministry and the experience and skills of the pastor. The financial information presented in this resolution was benchmarked on the price of a three-bedroom house in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that had a median value of \$300,000. We advise congregations and clergy to take into consideration their local community's actual median price of housing and make adjustments accordingly. These ranges reflect Conference-wide compensation data reported to the national offices of the United Church of Christ.

- Table A presents the Total Compensation Package, to be allocated by the pastor among cash salary, housing, SECA Allowance, pension dues, health, dental, vision, life and disability insurance. This is the full cost to the church. Note that these figures include parsonage value. This table should guide congregations in their budget process to determine their financial obligations to provide compensation and benefits for their minister. This table applies to full-time ministers. When a congregation's financial resources cannot meet the compensation in this table, the congregation and pastor should explore the possibility of part-time ministry, whereby the percentage of this table the congregation can provide would reflect the part-time equivalent for the position. This will enable a pastor to have time to engage in additional employment in order to have enough income to serve in the community.
- Tables B and C present ranges for Cash Salary and Housing, with and without a parsonage. To this amount, the following components would be added:
  - SECA Allowance – 7.65% of salary basis (cash salary plus housing)
  - Home Equity Allowance for those in a parsonage – 1.5% of average home value
  - Pension Dues – 14% of salary basis

- Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan – 1.5% of salary basis
- Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance

In addition to these compensation components, an Accountable Reimbursement Plan for:

- Mileage reimbursement – for use of a personal car at current IRS rate plus tolls and parking, or an automobile provided by the church
- Professional expenses – At least \$1,500 per year for other travel, meetings, books, professional subscriptions, and any other business expenses allowed by the IRS.
- Continuing education time and expense – At least \$500 for workshops, trainings and retreats, participation in a Clergy Community of Practice, and supervision or mentoring.

There are also benefits that add no extra cost to the church, which should be offered:

- Participation in Medical or DCAP Flex Spending
- Participation in Tax Sheltered Annuity

#### Time Considerations

- The work schedule of a full-time local pastor is an average of 40-50 hours per week with no more than 3 evenings in a given week and 2 regular days off per week.
- Paid Holidays according to church personnel policy.
- Vacation Time -- Four weeks paid vacation per year.
- Continuing Education Leave -- Two weeks, including weekends, per year.
- Sabbatical time and expense – Three months full-time sabbatical leave every 5-7 years.
- Sick Time according to church personnel policy – Two weeks per year.
- Parental Leave, for Birth or Adoption – Twelve weeks paid (by church and/or disability plan) and up to six months of unpaid leave.
- Personal/Compassionate Leave as needed for bereavement or family celebrations.

#### Tables

The following tables are based upon the following:

- Church size – number of members.
- Clergy experience – years of ordained and other experience, supervisory responsibility.
- Full-time equivalent, relative to a 40-50 hour average work week, 4 weeks vacation, and 2 weeks of continuing education leave.

Though these tables show years of ordained experience, the Conference encourages clergy and congregations to consider compensation as follows:

- Low – Base training and education with minimal related experience.

- Mid - Demonstrates consistent, successful performance in all areas of the job.
- High - Performs job responsibilities independently and in a highly effective manner; may demonstrate unique knowledge or skill; is often a resource to others.

**Table A. Total Compensation Package**

*Note these figures include salary, housing, health insurance, dental and vision insurance, pension dues, life and disability income plan, SECA allowance. Health insurance and dental and vision coverage are based upon the 2015 rates established by the UCC Pension Board for clergy over 41 years old with family.*

*Use this table to determine the impact upon the church budget. Minor adjustments may be necessary to reflect local housing conditions.*

Number of Members	Low (0-3 years)	Mid (4 – 10 years)	High (+10 years)
0-150	\$92,949	\$100,960	\$116,918
150-300	\$105,817	\$115,404	\$134,201
300-500	\$118,306	\$129,407	\$151,483
500-1000	\$164,729	\$181,381	\$214,684

**Table B. Base Salary and Parsonage Range**

Number of Members	Low (0-3 yrs)	Mid (4-10 yrs)	High (+10 yrs)
0-150	\$34,500*	\$38,700	\$47,000
150-300	\$41,300	\$46,300	\$56,100
300-500	\$47,800	\$53,600	\$65,100
500-1000	\$72,100	\$80,800	\$98,200

\*Minimum is based upon 2014 minimum and is valid with current statewide data

Note: Salary Basis includes the Cash Salary.

**Table C: Cash and Housing Allowance Range**

Number of Members	Low (0-3 yrs)	Mid (4-10 yrs)	High (+10 yrs)
0-150	\$52,300	\$58,650	\$71,300
150-300	\$62,500	\$70,100	\$85,000
300-500	\$72,400	\$81,200	\$98,700
500-1000	\$109,200	\$122,400	\$148,800

## **Appendix F: Resolution - Craigville Properties**

Presented by the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

### **Introduction**

In October of 2014, the Board of Directors voted not to renew the lease agreement with the Christian Camp Meeting Association by which the Massachusetts Conference has managed the Craigville Retreat Center for many years. The Board made this decision after several years of study, conversation and discernment, including open meetings with UCC members and others (see *[Board Votes Not to Renew Craigville Lease](#)*, MACUCC website, 10/5/2014). The Conference will end its management of Craigville Retreat Center as of December 31, 2015. The Christian Camp Meeting Association, which owns most of the property comprising Craigville Retreat Center, is seeking another management partner to operate the center.

The Conference owns one guest house (“Minnie’s Seaside Rest”) and one staff house which are part of the Retreat Center. The recommended vote below would grant authority to the Board of Directors to sell, or lease-to-sell, these properties at market value. The Board proposes to use proceeds of these sales in three ways:

1. First, to pay transaction costs of the sales, including any legally-required septic or other upgrades;
2. Second, as one of several sources for severance to be paid to MACUCC staff at Craigville;
3. Third, all further proceeds to be added to the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Capital Campaign Endowment.

The guest house known as Minnie’s Seaside Rest was a restricted gift to the Conference from Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ. In accordance with the gift restriction, net proceeds from the sale of Minnie’s Seaside Rest will be retained in a permanent endowment by that name, the income to be used for Sustaining Pastoral Excellence. Any severance costs funded by the sale of properties will therefore be drawn from proceeds from the sale of the staff house.

To these ends, the Board of Directors proposes to the 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting the following:

### **Vote of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ**

**Whereas**, the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (the “Conference”) owns real properties in Centerville, Barnstable County, Massachusetts, and comprising part of the Craigville Retreat Center; and

**Whereas**, after concluding a carefully developed discernment process, the Board of Directors of the Conference has recommended that the Conference either lease with option to purchase, or sell the Craigville Retreat Center properties; and

**Whereas**, the Board of Directors has received an appraisal of the Craigville Retreat Center properties as of January 16, 2015 from a Certified General Appraiser, valuing such properties at \$1,266,000 fair market value; and

**Whereas**, the Board of Directors desires to actively market the Craigville Retreat Center properties; and

**Whereas**, Article VIII, Section 5 of the Conference's bylaws provides in part:

“However, corporate assets, whether restricted monies or title to real property and whether one transaction or a series of related transactions, involving more than an aggregate of \$250,000 shall be disbursed or conveyed only by a vote of the Conference.”

Now, therefore, it is hereby:

**Voted:**

That the 216th Annual Meeting of the Conference hereby authorizes the Board of Directors of the Conference to either lease with an option to purchase, or to sell, the real properties owned by it in Centerville, Barnstable County, Massachusetts, and comprising part of the Craigville Retreat Center; and it is further

**Voted:**

That the 216th Annual Meeting of the Conference hereby authorizes the Board of Directors of the Conference to proceed to either lease with an option to purchase, or to sell, its real properties in Centerville, Barnstable County, Massachusetts, and comprising part of the Craigville Retreat Center at its fair rental with option to purchase value, or its fair market value, such fair rental with option to purchase value, or its fair market value to be determined by the Board of Directors of the Conference, and upon such terms and conditions as the Board of Directors of the Conference shall determine to be reasonable and necessary; and it is further

**Voted:**

That the 216th Annual Meeting of the Conference hereby authorizes the Board of Directors of the Conference to either enter into such lease with an option to purchase agreement, or such purchase and sale agreement, and execute such lease with option to purchase agreement, or such deed or deeds and such further documents as this Board deems reasonable and necessary to effect such lease with option to purchase or effect such sale; and it is further

**Voted:**

That the 216th Annual Meeting of the Conference hereby authorizes the Board of Directors of the Conference to delegate signing authority for such lease with option to purchase agreement, or such purchase and sale agreement, such deed or deeds, and such further documents to the Conference's Minister and President and the Conference's Treasurer or either of them.