

be nominated so that no Area shall have fewer than three directors. To the extent possible, members-at-large shall be nominated so that each Association is represented by at least one director.”

Appendix C: Resolution to Update the Massachusetts Conference’s 1984 Open and Affirming (ONA) Resolution to include Gender Identity and Gender Expression

WHEREAS, the Apostle Paul said that, as Christians, we are many members, but we are one body in Christ (Romans 12:4), and Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) without being judgmental (Matthew 7:1-2) nor disparaging of others (Luke 18:9-14) (text from 1985 GS ONA Resolution); and

WHEREAS, the 1984 Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference adopted the first ever Open and Affirming Resolution in the whole United Church of Christ, calling on churches to welcome and affirm lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and include them fully in the life, ministry and employment of the UCC, and thereby became the first Open and Affirming (ONA) Conference in the UCC (pre-dating the ONA Program); and

WHEREAS, the UCC General Synod adopted resolutions, in 1985, calling on UCC churches and entities to be Open and Affirming to lesbian, gay and bisexual persons, and, in 2003, calling on churches and entities to affirm the ministries and gifts of transgender persons and to advocate for their civil and human rights; and

WHEREAS, The UCC Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns has had a policy since July 2010 that all churches and settings applying for an ONA listing shall include the wording “gender identity and gender expression” (or “transgender”) in addition to “sexual orientation” (or “lesbian, gay, bisexual”) in their ONA covenants in order to be designated as Open and Affirming; and

WHEREAS, The UCC Coalition encourages all current ONA churches and settings with Open and Affirming covenants that currently include only lesbian, gay and bisexual persons to revise their ONA covenants to include “persons of all gender identities and gender expressions” or “transgender persons”; and

WHEREAS, given that the Massachusetts Conference is an Open and Affirming Conference (one of 16 Conferences in the UCC) by virtue of its having adopted an ONA resolution, and that it has historically been a leader in the ONA movement nationally, and that it currently has over 10% of the national total of ONA churches, it again has the opportunity to be a leader in the ONA movement by updating its welcome to include transgender persons;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 213TH Annual Meeting updates its 1984 *Resolution on Calling on United Church of Christ congregations to Declare Themselves Open and Affirming* to include children, youth and adults of all gender identities and gender expressions as well as lesbian, gay and bisexual persons; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 213TH Annual Meeting encourages all congregations of the Massachusetts Conference which have declared themselves Open and Affirming to revise their ONA covenants to include the full welcome and affirmation of persons of all gender identities and gender expressions, and to share their revised ONA covenants with The UCC Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 213th Annual Meeting encourages all congregations of the Massachusetts Conference which have not yet declared themselves to be Open and Affirming to prayerfully consider becoming Open and Affirming congregations, and to welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, into community, membership, ministry, full participation and employment.

Proposed by the Commission on Mission and Justice Ministries; developed by the MA Conference Open and Affirming Ministry Team

Previous Massachusetts Conference and United Church of Christ Resolutions addressing Open and Affirming:

- MA Conference Resolution Calling on United Church of Christ Congregations to Declare Themselves Open and Affirming, adopted by MA Conference Annual Meeting, June 16, 1984
- 15th UCC General Synod Resolution Calling on United Church of Christ Congregations to Declare Themselves Open and Affirming, Adopted on July 2, 1985
- 24th UCC General Synod Resolution Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People within the united Church of Christ and Supporting their Civil and Human Rights, Adopted on July 15, 2003