

Racial Justice Resolution for June 2018 Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Conference

Approved by the RI COM (3/14/18) & by RI Board of Directors (4/26/18)

Resolution: Anti-Racism and Racial Justice Training for Authorized Ministers

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ became an Open and Affirming Conference in November, 2016 and is committed to understanding and counteracting the systemic racism of our culture; and

WHEREAS, our country has seen the resurgence of overt white supremacists and the continued covert racism of people who desire to be allies, which are both signs that require ongoing training in order to exorcise; 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 culture 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, Jesus instructed us in the Gospels to reconcile with our neighbor before approaching God's altar (Matthew 5:24) and to remove the log from our own eye before removing the speck from our neighbor's eye (Matthew 7:3); and

WHEREAS, the Hebrew Scriptures teach us that all humankind is made in God's image (Genesis 1:26), that mono-cultural white supremacist institutions are considered an affront to God much like the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9); 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 (Ephesians 2);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 212th Annual meeting of the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ urge the Rhode Island Conference and its Committee on Church and Ministry to adopt a policy to require 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 the adoption of the policy or within three years of being granted standing by the Association, and repeat training within each subsequent three year period; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Rhode Island Conference and its Committee on Church and 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 Rhode Island Conference to make its Racial Justice Training available for Authorized Ministers and Members-in-Discernment at least twice during each calendar year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Rhode Island Conference, 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 Rhode Island Conference make available resources to help congregations build allies and better support, encourage, and nurture Authorized Ministers of color and lay leaders of color; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rhode Island Conference make available resources for Authorized Ministers to connect their congregations with active anti-racist movements locally, nationally, and globally.