

CALLING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO BE AN ANTI-RACIST CHURCH

WHEREAS, racism is rooted in a belief of the superiority of whiteness and bestows benefits, unearned rights, rewards, opportunities, advantages, access, and privilege on Europeans and European descendants; and

WHEREAS, the reactions of people of color to racism are internalized through destructive patterns of feelings and behaviors impacting their physical, emotional, and mental health and their spiritual and familial relationships; and

WHEREAS, through institutionalized racism, laws, customs, traditions, and practices systemically foster inequalities; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance affirmed that racism has historically through imperialism and colonization created an unequal world order and power balance with present global implications impacting governments, systems, and institutions; and

WHEREAS, the denomination has shown leadership among many United Church of Christ conferences, associations, and local congregations by initiating innovative antiracism programs, by developing anti-racism facilitators, and in general have made dismantling racism a priority, there is still much to be done. As we continue in this effort, the work we do must reflect the historical and present experiences and stories of all peoples impacted by racism. We must work from a paradigm reflective of the historical relationships of racial and ethnic groups and racial oppression within the United Church of Christ and society; and

WHEREAS, the United States finds itself in increased racial unrest during this period after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. New studies show that hate crimes and blatant acts of racial violence doubled in number during the last half of 2002 and are continuing to rise. These outward acts, combined with continued institutional racism, emphasize the need for antiracism mobilization within church and society as we seek to do justice; and

WHEREAS, there are growing movements of peace that have people of all races, backgrounds, and ages involved, urging us to expand our

knowledge of what racism is and study its ramifications on all people; and

WHEREAS, General Synods of the United Church of Christ have, since 1963, voted eleven resolutions, statements, and pronouncements denouncing racism, and it is time to honor mandates and expectations of this body and of the church.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the United Church of Christ is called to be an antiracist church and that we encourage all Conferences and Associations and local churches of the United Church of Christ to adopt anti-racism mandates, including policy that encourages anti-racism *programs* for all United Church of Christ staff and volunteers; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that Conferences and Associations and local churches facilitate programs within their churches that would examine both historic and contemporary forms of racism and its effects and that the programs be made available to the churches; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that Justice and Witness Ministries provides leadership in the development and implementation of programs to dismantle racism, working in partnership with the Collegium, Covenanted Ministries, Affiliated Ministries, Associated Ministries, Conferences, Associations and local churches in developing appropriately trained anti-racism facilitators; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ work in concert to dismantle racism in church and in society and partner with Conferences and Associations in sharing resources and costs associated with doing antiracism work.

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Justice and Witness Ministries will report the progress of the development and implementation of these programs at the Twenty-fifth General Synod.

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

General Synod 24 (2003)

<http://www.ucc.org/synod/minutes.html>