



August 27, 2017

In Response to Charlottesville

Our nation fought two wars, one civil the other global, to defeat the unmeasurable harm perpetrated by adherents to National Socialism (Nazis) and White Supremacy (KKK). The values they represent stand in direct contradiction to the values espoused by our nation, written into our foundational documents and defended by those who pledged themselves to “liberty and justice for all.” We have, since those wars, worked to increase our capacity for the care and inclusivity of all people who are created by God with equal worth and value.

The recent events in Charlottesville were an affront to those values and that progress. So, too, was the response of the President of the United States who is charged with articulating and defending those values against groups like the Nazi’s and the KKK. We crossed the line from politics to issues of faith early on in this administration but the response given to the event in Charlottesville crystallized that in a way that demands our attention.

There is no way anyone can be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and not speak to these events. I am wondering too, if it is not time for a Conference wide conversation – particularly for authorized leaders and pastors-- about how to lead and what to say in our ministry contexts. If you think so, let me know.

Rev. William P. Worley, Conference Minister

Thoughts on General Synod 2017 Resolution: “Resolution of Witness in Support of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse and Neglect”

Our God loves us. This is the greatest news.

The Christian Church was started by people determined to live out the love of God found in Jesus. Peter would say, “Once you had no identity as a people, now you are God’s people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God’s mercy.” The Church gathers as people who have found their identity through the love of God. Many of the resolutions submitted at the recent General Synod were submitted by people who need our love, help and support.

I had the pleasure of going as a delegate to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. While there, I was assigned a committee that focused on a resolution that the whole General Synod also approved. We gave our support to the resolution titled, “**Resolution of Witness and Support of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse and Neglect.**”

The resolution mostly calls for the national body to advocate on behalf of abuse survivors especially those who endured sexual abuse. It also calls for the establishment of study resources for the local congregations.

We don’t want the issues addressed in the resolution, however, to only stand as something someone else must work for. This is why the resolution also calls us, the local church, to be a welcoming safe place for persons who have suffered abuse. We are called to wonder what that might mean for us. One approach to being radically loving and accepting of everyone is to identify the place in our own lives where we have been accepted by God.

Scripture tells us of God’s radical love for us. Yet I know that God loves me because in moments when I have questioned my own self-worth He & She assured me I am loved and forgiven. In fact, God said nothing was ever held against me in the first place. That is the nature of love. The God who loves me loves everyone. You and I are worthy of God’s love.

Anytime we want to present a safe space for anyone, we should go to that place where we have been loved, welcomed and accepted in the presence of God.

- Reverend Kevin Duffy-Guy, Delegate to General Synod 2017