



July 7, 2019

## We all have a story. We are all a part of God's story. What's your story?

3 Great Loves was originally introduced at General Synod 31 in 2017 and was reaffirmed at General Synod 32 as our denomination-wide story telling initiative.

In the coming years, the United Church of Christ will collect and lift up the stories of our local churches and affiliates. Stories about how we are living out God's love and expressing love of neighbor, children and creation, our 3 Great Loves. From knitting clubs making hats for newborns; collecting food for food pantries; standing together against a social injustice; no story is too insignificant to share.



The hope of this initiative is to tell, and share the story, of how individuals, churches and organizations of the UCC are impacting and transforming the world as covenantal partners united in our common purpose, vision and mission. Work that lives out the love of God and leads to creating a just world for all.

### There are 3 ways to share your story:

- **Tell Us Your Story** by using this link: <https://www.ucc.org/3greatloves> and clicking the "Tell Us Your Story" tab
- Share your story on **Facebook, Instagram and Twitter** using **#3greatloves** in your posts
- Send your story to us: 3 Great Loves, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115

## National Officers Elected at General Synod

The United Church of Christ reelected its General Minister and President and elected a new Associate General Minister on Monday, June 24, at its General Synod in Milwaukee.

The nomination of the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson to be Associate General Minister of Global Engagement received overwhelming support from the delegates, going forward without discussion. She will serve in that position for a four-year term, which begins August 1.



The Rev. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President, received significant support. He also faced statements in opposition to his election. The lengthy debate centered on the issue of returning a white cisgender male to leadership of the denomination. "Three women have spoken powerfully from that pulpit," said Andrew Reuther of the South Central Conference. "An ally to women would step aside so that they may lead," said Sophia Heilman of the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference. "An ally to people of color would step aside so that they may lead."

Chris Watson of the New York Conference disagreed. While she believed that it was time for a woman, or a person of color, or an LGBTQ person to lead, she felt other guidance as well. "John Dorhauer has the Holy Spirit," she declared.

Nearly all of those who spoke in opposition simultaneously declared their own affection for Rev. Dorhauer and his leadership, yet believed it vitally important to put their concerns on the record. Most also said they believed he would be elected, as he was with a thirty-vote margin.

The vote itself, which required a 60% majority, was carefully reviewed by the recorders and general counsel at the request of the Synod moderator because of concerns over the performance of the wireless electronic voting devices. Delegates reported that they were not receiving the expected feedback indicating their votes had been counted, and indeed the total vote count did not equal the number of devices issued. Moderator Norman Williams reported, however, that even if all the "missing" votes had been opposed, the 60% threshold would still have been reached.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve another four years and to lead this denomination," said Dorhauer in a brief interview following the vote. "I am fully committed to the mission and will seek to do all I can to inspire and empower the members of this denomination in partnership with the Holy Spirit to fulfill that mission. "I deeply appreciate the voices that shared their concerns about my leadership and the extension of the term to another white cisgender male."

*The Rev. Eric S. Anderson, Pastor of Church of the Holy Cross UCC in Hilo, Hawai'i.*