Proposed Resolutions
General Synod 2021

Since the first General Synod met in Cleveland in June 1957, the national gathering of the United Church of Christ has brought together a minimum of 675 delegates from its 36 conferences to give shape and form to our expressions of the church, the proclamation of the gospel and our work in the world for justice and peace. Decisions made by the Synod, particularly those in the form of resolutions, are not binding on UCC's congregations but our governing documents, our UCC Constitution and Bylaws, and our covenantal relationships, with each other and God, expect serious consideration be given to them.

There are two types of General Synod resolutions. Prudential resolutions that establish policy, institutes or revises structures or approves directions, are adopted by majority vote. A Resolution of Witness is an expression of the General Synod concerning a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, the nation, or the world. They are adopted for the guidance of the officers and affiliated ministries and must receive 2/3's vote.

The Synod may also adopt a pronouncement, a statement of Christian conviction on a matter of moral or social principle or A Proposal for Action, which is a recommendation for specific directional statements and goals implementing a Pronouncement. Both require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

Eleven resolutions will come to the floor of this year's first entirely virtual General Synod—1 prudential resolution and 10 resolutions of witness. Thirty-five representatives from our conference will be there to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit and the manner in which they will speak to each one. You will hear a few of their voices now provide very simple introductions to very some very complex resolutions.

General Synod Resolutions

The Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ Request to Be Recognized As A Formal Group

The only Prudential Resolution comes from the Iowa, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and South Dakota Conferences. It seeks the formal establishment of the Alliance of Associate Conference Ministers, a Self-Created Group serving to support those who serve in a staff or called positions doing conference ministry in the support of the conference minister and conference.

A Resolution to Advocate and Act to Change the Cash Bail Bond System to Eliminate Racial and Social Injustices Inherent in the Present System

Submitted by the Southern Conference calls upon all settings of the church to raise their consciousness of the theological, social, racial, ethnic and economic inequities which make possible the existence of the unfair and unjust bail bond systems.

A Resolution To Ban The Practice Of Conversion Therapy
Submitted by the Open and Affirming Coalition and the Mental Health Network urges parents, authorized ministers and care-givers in the United Church of Christ to protect those in their care from any practice or program that purports to "cure" their sexual orientation or gender identity, and urges congregations and all other settings of the church to advocate for state and federal laws protecting adults, youth and children from "conversion therapy" by banning the practice.

A resolution calling for a Commitment To Gender Safety & Equity In Ministry Settings affirms the physical and sexual autonomy of women and non-binary persons and encourages all settings of the UCC to commit to gender equity in staff compensation and urges all settings to address inequities (in pay, benefits, senior leadership, etc.) for clergy and lay women and non-binary persons.

A Resolution Encouraging The End 128 Years Of War Between The United States Of America And The Hawaiian Kingdom has been submitted by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches of the Hawaii Conference—One of five Associations in the 150 congregation Conference spread out over six of more than 137 islands of Hawaii. It asks the United Church of Christ to strongly urge the Mayors for the counties of the State of Hawaii, the State's Governor and members of Congress and the President "to begin to comply with international humanitarian law in its prolonged and illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Islands."

A resolution seeking a Declaration For A Just Peace Between Palestine And Israel is a lengthy resolution and a timely one given the recent fighting between both peoples. It was submitted by several congregations in Connecticut, New Hampshire, and California. It upholds several principles represented in previous Synod resolutions that affirm the Palestinian right to self-determination and the right of refugee return. It also affirms the biblical narrative beginning with creation and extending through the calling of the Israelites to their home such that peace and justice would reign between them and their neighbors. It asks that all settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to receive this Declaration as a prophetic call for renewed and continued advocacy for a just peace in Palestine and Israel.

A Resolution on the Rights of Nature titled "Who Will Speak for the Trees?" was submitted by the New Hampshire Conference call on all settings of the church to promote compassionate care, foster love, and co-live responsibly with the Earth, safeguard the common goods, space and shared resources of the Earth, uphold the rights of ecological integrity, biodiversity, and healthy bioregions. Advocate intergenerational responsibility for the community of the Earth and gratitude of the natural world as divine gift. The resolution includes nine specific courses of action the individuals, congregations and conferences can take to be allies to the earth.

A resolution calling on the United Church of Christ to become a Church of "contemplatives in action" is submitted by a group of congregations in Massachusetts, Ohio, New York in Vermont. It seeks to balance the UCC's heavily weighted social justice ministry with an intentional commitment to the life of prayer and encourages local churches to become churches of contemplatives in action. It advocates for the training of future clergy and lay leaders in the ways of contemplation, spiritual practice, and Christian

mysticism and calls on the church to invest in curriculum and resources that teach a foundational life of spiritual practice modeled on the life of Jesus.

A Resolution To Declare And Respond To Racism As A Public Health Crisis was submitted by The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM) and the Council on Racial and Ethnic Ministries (COREM). It calls on the church to recognize racism as a public health crisis; to monitor and advocate for public policies that work toward health equality; to discover ways in which current ministries and mission connect with and can address racism as a public health crisis; examine in radical honesty, past and current organizational policies and practices and how they contribute or create barriers to racial justice and calls upon the U.S. Congress and state legislatures to do the same.

A Resolution To Recognize The United Nations International Decade For People Of African Descent submitted by the New Hampshire and Southwest Conferences encourages all settings of the church to increase awareness of the United nations decade for people of African descent end to adopt the themes of recognition, awareness of the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, and engagement in the fight for the rights of people of African descent.

A Resolution On Protecting Workers At Churches And Other Religious Institutions was submitted by the Central Atlantic Conference and the New Jersey Association of the Central Atlantic Conference. It calls on all settings of the church to discern and implement appropriate measures to protect their employees from discrimination, and to be attentive to the ways that religious freedom, including the “ministerial exception defense” gives churches and religious institutions wide latitude in adhering to the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities act, the Age Discrimination In Employment Act, and The Family and Medical Leave Act. While these laws generally protect employees, churches and religious institutions are not always legally bound to them and therefore do not honor them. This resolution calls on all settings of the church to do so.

Approximately 225 resolutions have been adopted by General Synod since 1957. Some of them have been widely unpopular and created more division than unity in our United Church of Christ. Some have been incredibly formative for the traditions that they have maintained and the values they embody that are core to our fellowship. Each one represents some portion of our small part of the body of Christ attempting to remain faithful to the movement of the Holy Spirit as they have discerned it. We will not always agree with what is called for in any given resolution. We will debate the merits of accomplishing the mission of the church through the resolution process. But each one is an invitation to conversation and to deepen our connections with God and with each other; to expand our awareness of how God is working in the lives of people beyond our own congregations and how God might work in ours.