

RESOLUTION ON INSTITUTIONALIZED HOMOPHOBIA WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

[Adopted by the Fourteenth General Synod, United Church of Christ, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 24-28, 1983. Vote: 95% Majority]

Whereas, social institutions have historically embodied the prevailing prejudices and mores of their age; and

Whereas, the United Church of Christ has been called on in the past to assess the extent to which its structures and Instrumentalities reflect the prevailing values (e.g., racism and sexism); and

Whereas, homophobia (defined as the irrational fear of same-gender feelings, identification, and/or social-sexual expression which can be either conscious or subconscious) prevails in our culture and society; and

Whereas, lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons suffer from institutionalized homophobia through isolation, devaluation, and discrimination to such an extent that they lead lives that are either hidden or ridiculed within the institutional church; and

Whereas, such treatment fosters emotional strain, alienation, a lack of self-worth, and, in some cases, a life where suicide appears to be the only option; and

Whereas, these same persons have gifts of ministry and faith to offer the United Church of Christ; and

Whereas, some Conferences, local churches, Associations, and national Instrumentalities have taken steps in addressing institutionalized homophobia; and

Whereas, the United Church of Christ has, at times, demonstrated to lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons, lay and clergy, that they are not persons of equal worth in the life of the

church by turning these persons away from access to jobs, decision-making processes, and other aspects of institutional life which are available with little constraint to those who are heterosexual;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Fourteenth General Synod denounces institutionalized expressions of homophobia in all its forms, and calls upon all levels of the United Church of Christ to expose, to address, and in the light of the Gospel, to transform institutionalized homophobia eliminating its effects within the church.