

**RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING INCLUSIVENESS ON ASSOCIATION
CHURCH AND MINISTRY COMMITTEES 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, St. Paul admonished the church in Rome to cease condemnation with these words:

“Who will be the accuser of God’s chosen ones? It is God who pronounces acquittal; then who can condemn? It is Christ—Christ who died, and, more than that, was raised from the dead—who is at God’s right hand, and indeed pleads our cause.” [Romans 8:31-34]; and

Whereas, St. Paul affirmed the inclusive nature of God’s grace and love with these words:

“Then what can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or hardship? Can persecution, hunger, nakedness, peril, or the sword? ‘We are being done to death for thy sake all the day long,’ as Scripture says; ‘we have been treated like sheep for slaughter’—and yet, in spite of all, overwhelming victory is ours through him who loved us. For I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths—nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” [Romans 8:35-39]; and

Whereas, throughout the history of the Christian Church, God has called persons of every sexual orientation to the Christian ministry and such persons have brought to the ministry commitment to the Gospel of Christ, selfless dedication in the service of humanity, and the clarity and strength of their personal faith in Christ and the all-sufficient truth of God’s abiding love and grace, irrespective of their individual sexual orientation; and

Whereas, there is growing awareness within the United Church of Christ that same-gender oriented persons called by God to ministry have faithfully proclaimed the Gospel and served the church with honor and dedication while enduring immeasurable suffering because the church has been unwilling to affirm their full personhood, inclusive of their same-gender orientation, and has perpetuated discriminatory practices causing such ministers to fear the loss of employment and the violation of Christian vocation as ordained ministers; and

Whereas, lesbian and gay United Church of Christ seminarian, many of whom have been baptized and nurtured in the Christian faith in UCC congregations, have responded to God's call to ministry and are preparing themselves for Christian vocations, including the ordained ministry; and

Whereas, many such seminarians have already affirmed their lesbian and gay identities, have a comprehensive knowledge of their personal sexual orientation, live responsible and socially conscious lifestyles, and understand the dynamics of homophobic oppression in their own lives, in the church, and in the society as a whole; and

Whereas, United Church of Christ Associations which have elected lesbian and gay laypersons and clergy to Church and Ministry Committees have found their contributions to the work of those committees to be invaluable in bringing understanding and sensitivity to the inclusive nature of God's love and God's liberating activity in calling same-gender oriented persons to the Christian ministry; and

Whereas, the church has a responsibility to affirm the inclusive nature of God's love for all persons and to cease its discriminatory practices towards persons seeking to serve God and humanity through Christian vocation; and

Whereas, lesbian and gay clergy within the United Church of Christ have been called to specific ministries, including parish ministry, and have and are demonstrating that irrational fears about their ability to exercise their ministries responsibly are unfounded;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Fourteenth General Synod calls upon congregations, Associations, and Conferences of the United Church of Christ to be faithful in continuing educational efforts designed to increase understanding of same-gender oriented persons and their commitment to the Christian faith and to the church; and

Recommends that Associations throughout the UCC be open to consideration of the nomination and election of avowed lesbian and gay laypersons and clergy to their Church and Ministry Committees.