

20 March 2015

To the Members and Congregations of the United Church of Christ, grace and peace to you in Jesus Christ,

On Thursday, March 19, 2015 the United Church of Christ Board affirmed the recommendation of the Search Committee and nominated the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer as the next General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Dr. Dorhauer's nomination will now be placed before this summer's General Synod Thirty in Cleveland.

Prior to discussing this particular candidacy, the Board was invited into a conversation regarding Article 3, Paragraph 214 of the United Church of Christ Bylaws. That paragraph reads in part, "the affirmative action commitment of the church is to be fully respected in this search process and diversity maintained in the membership of the Collegium of Officers."

During the Board's open discussion information was provided regarding steps taken by the search committee in order to comply with the denomination's affirmative action and diversity commitments. We were assured that we were in legal compliance with this provision. However, our conversation included questions about whether this nomination is consistent with the spirit of our denomination's commitment to diversity.

In the end we were not all in agreement about whether we are in accord with the spirit of our denomination's commitment to diversity with this nomination. We acknowledge that this is not just our conversation, but is a conversation that is happening in many parts of the church. As a Board we acknowledge the reality of systemic oppression, including in church settings. We also acknowledge the real need for diversity in our leadership, and the real gifts that our diverse life experiences bring to the church.

The purpose of this letter is not to invalidate concerns around diversity raised by many. The purpose of this letter is to provide a transparent account to the wider church of the Board's discussion around these concerns, and to express our continued commitment to living into the spirit of diversity and inclusion in the United Church of Christ. We believe that the commitment to these things is not just a good idea, but in fact central to our faith life.

It was only after this prolonged discussion that we turned to the question of the nomination of the Rev. Dr. Dorhauer. Within the Board we held our concerns for diversity and process in tension with the search committee's recommendation. After hearing from the Rev. Dr. Dorhauer, his sense of call and vision for the church the Board deliberated in executive session. Returning to open session, the United Church of Christ Board voted and overwhelming accepted the recommendation of the search committee and nominated the Rev. Dr. Dorhauer as our next General Minister and President.

We commend to you the Rev. Dr. Dorhauer as a faithful servant and gifted leader of the church, and we ask your prayers for him, for the Board, and for the United Church of Christ.

That we may all be one,
The United Church of Christ Board