

**A FORMAL MOTION OF AFFIRMATION OF RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
AND  
THE FELLOWSHIP OF AFFIRMING MINISTRIES**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** That the 29<sup>th</sup> General Synod affirm the relationship between the United Church of Christ and The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries as stated below.

**BACKGROUND:** The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries is a trans-denominational, theologically diverse fellowship of primarily African American Christian leaders and laity representing churches and faith-based organizations globally. The major purpose of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries is to support religious leaders and laity in moving towards a theology of radical inclusivity.

A unique relationship exists between the United Church of Christ and The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries. There are United Church of Christ congregations and clergy who are active participants in The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries. There are also congregations and clergy within The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries that have a desire to become affiliated with the UCC, and still others that value and support the relationship between the United Church of Christ and The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries but choose not become a part of the United Church of Christ.

The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries has a long history of witness and connection with the United Church of Christ in all settings of the wider church. This formal motion of affirmation of relationship acknowledges the relationship between the United Church of Christ and The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, which is unique in many ways, and seeks to deepen and strengthen the mutual commitment to learning and growing in common witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The proposed formalization of the relationship between The Fellowship and the UCC will enrich the lives and ministries of our communities in many areas including – ecumenical, ministry, mission, commitment to justice and congregational life.

**THE RELATIONSHIP:**

WHEREAS The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries has been a faithful witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries reflects a broad theological perspective that embraces aspects of the Pentecostal, Holiness and Charismatic traditions; and

WHEREAS there are United Church of Christ congregations, authorized ministers and laity who are active participants in The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries; and

WHEREAS there are participants in The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries who exhibit a bold Christian witness but are not a part of the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries provides strong leadership and bold witness in urban ministries; and

WHEREAS The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries is an advocate and witness for justice globally and continues to provide leadership with its HIV/AIDS ministry; and

WHEREAS The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries is a full participant with ministries within the United Church of Christ such as the UCC Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns; and

WHEREAS The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries promotes intentional inclusivity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the United Church of Christ in all its settings commit itself to a relationship of deepening friendship, continuing dialogue, and joint public witness with The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage the United Church of Christ's Covenanted Ministries, Associated and Affiliated Ministries, Conferences and Associations, including Committees on Ministry, to be intentional in learning about The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries and engaging with congregations, clergy, and leadership of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage dialogue between the United Church of Christ and The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries to discern where the ministry of both might be enhanced by further cooperation and collaboration; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage the seminaries and other settings of the church to familiarize themselves with The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries and disseminate information about The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries in their respective institutions in order to deepen understanding of the faithful witness of The Fellowship of Ministries as a partner working in and with the United Church of Christ; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage further conversation on matters related to ministerial and congregational standing, sacramental life, theology, polity and ecclesiology throughout the life of the church; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage all settings of the United Church of Christ to exercise intention in learning about the witness of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries and its part in the Holiness, Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions and how that witness informs its participation within the United Church of Christ; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage all settings of the United Church of Christ to invite participation by The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries in national, regional and local events; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage the development of resources and other educational events and tools to foster deeper learning and understanding of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries and its role and relationship with the United Church of Christ; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Synod encourage leaders in the United Church of Christ to seek to make common public witness with leaders of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries on issues of national and international concern and collaborate wherever possible on works of public witness and justice-making; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and The Presiding Bishop of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries appoint members to create and sustain an on-going working group to facilitate and encourage the continued growth and development of this relationship between the United Church of Christ and The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries.