

45 05-GS-31 VOTED: The Twenty-fifth General Synod adopts the resolution “Calling the United Church of Christ to
46 Declare Itself to be a “Fair Trade” Denomination” as amended.

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48 **CALLING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO DECLARE ITSELF TO BE A “FAIR TRADE”**
49 **DENOMINATION**

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51 WHEREAS for the past fifteen to twenty years there has been a growing human and environmental disaster in
52 coffee growers that has devastated farms and families and towns and threatened the stability of nations in the global
53 south and our city streets in the global north; and

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1 WHEREAS parallel with that has been an emerging “fair trade” movement that seeks to help farmers by
2 highlighting their plight and by purchasing products directly from local coops adhering to the following
3 internationally recognized principles:

- 4 • Pay prices which establish a living wage for producers;
- 5 • Work with democratically run cooperatives, governed by the farmers themselves, and dedicated to
6 equitable distribution of income and services;
- 7 • Develop producer capacity, which means working with farmers to enhance their management skills and
8 marketing independence.
- 9 • Buy direct, meaning that benefits and profits go to the farmers and their communities;
- 10 • Promote gender equality, meaning valuing and rewarding the work of women;
- 11 • Encourage ecologically sustainable farming practices; and
- 12 • Promote decent working conditions, meaning (among other things) that if children are involved, their
13 working conditions conform to UN Conventions on the rights of the Child; and

14 WHEREAS today several colleges (including Brown, Yale, Georgetown and Dartmouth) have voted to become fair
15 trade institutions, several faith groups (including Catholics, Lutherans and Presbyterians) have established
16 partnerships with the fair trade organization, Equal Exchange, and several major grocery chains and coffee
17 companies now offer a line of fair trade coffee.

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19 WHEREAS nation-wide, hundreds of UCC congregations have already joined with over 9,000 places of worship
20 and faith-based organizations who support small coffee farmers in developing nations by using fair trade coffee and
21 other products and have developed programs to foster purchase of fair trade coffee by their members to help
22 impoverished family farmers in the developing world provide for their families; and

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24 WHEREAS the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries partnered in March 2004 with Equal
25 Exchange to launch a denomination-wide coffee program (the “UCC Coffee Project”) through which Equal
26 Exchange, in addition to the benefits of paying fair trade prices to farmers, will also make a donation to the “UCC
27 Small Farmer Fund” each time a UCC church or member buys a product through the project; and

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29 WHEREAS the Jubilee Justice Taskforce of the Commission on Mission and Justice of the Massachusetts
30 Conference of the United Church of Christ is sponsoring a nation-wide delegation to Chiapas, Mexico, in January of
31 2006, for members and friends of the United Church of Christ to witness first hand the causes and effects of the
32 devastation of the coffee industry and the hopes for a new future based on fair trade coops;

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34 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ covenants
35 together to become a “Fair Trade denomination,” meaning that it will strive to offer fairly traded certified coffee and
36 other fairly traded products at official meetings and functions, including those of affiliated seminaries, colleges,
37 camp and conference grounds, etc., and will thereby become a moral example for other denominations and faith
38 groups, and

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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages
41 churches in the denomination to offer certified coffee, purchased through companies that follow the widely
42 established and commonly agreed upon principles of justice and fairness for coffee farmers and their communities.
43 We encourage churches in the denomination to offer fairly traded certified coffee as the standard coffee at their
44 “Fellowship Hour,” and offer it for sale in their churches; and

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46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod supports the January, 2006 delegation, and all
47 groups who have and will participate in mission and outreach trips with our prayers, our endorsement, our
48 encouragement, and our offerings, and that we call upon members of those groups to help educate us about, and
49 connect us with, our global family members in the coffee crisis upon their return; and

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51 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that churches also be called upon to take this approach of purchasing fairly traded
52 certified products, first as an education project and second as a mission project to help their members learn the
53 potential negative impacts of some global economic practices, and how our small economic choices can adversely
54 affect peoples' lives in other countries.

1 The implementing bodies include all settings of the United Church of Christ (local churches, agencies, and
2 ministries; Associations and Conferences; seminaries and national offices), however primary responsibility will be
3 placed with the Economic Justice Team of the Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ.
4 Implementation will involve developing programs and ministries to make known the vision and goals of this
5 resolution.

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7 Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds
8 available.