

1 The Business Committee of the Thirty-first General Synod has recommended this proposed
2 resolution be sent directly to a previously established implementing body.
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5 **CALLING FOR PARTICIPATION WITH THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**
6 **THROUGH INCLUSIVE SCOUTING PROGRAMS**
7

8 **A Resolution of Witness**
9

10 **Submitted by**

11 **First Congregational Church, Guilford, Connecticut, Connecticut Conference**
12 **First Plymouth Congregational Church, Englewood, Colorado, Rocky Mountain Conf.**
13 **First United Church of Oak Park, Oak Park, Illinois, Illinois Conference**
14 **Irvine United Congregational Church, Irvine, California, California-Nevada So. Conf.**
15 **Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Carlsbad, California, California-Nevada So. Conf.**
16 **United Church of Broomfield, Broomfield, Colorado, Rocky Mountain Conf.**
17 **United Church of Christ Petaluma, Petaluma, California, California-Nevada So. Conf.**
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20 **SUMMARY**

21 This resolution acknowledges the membership policy changes of the Boy Scouts of America
22 (BSA) enacted in 2013 and 2015, ending decades of discrimination against gay or bisexual youth
23 and adult leaders and professional staff. This resolution reaffirms the work of the 24th General
24 Synod to end discrimination through the resolution “The United Church of Christ and the Boy
25 Scouts of America” and further calls for for BSA to welcome all youth and adults without
26 discriminating based on belief, faith, creed, race, ability, gender, gender identity, sex, or sexual
27 orientation by the BSA. In the same way it urges the National Council of the BSA to strengthen
28 its inclusive welcome to all youth members and adult leaders. The resolution calls on the United
29 Church of Christ (UCC) through its members, authorized ministers, congregations, associations,
30 conferences, national and other settings to support inclusive scouting programs, utilizing the
31 UCC Scouting Working Group and other organizations that promote inclusive scouting.
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33 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

34 The United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America have a history of working together
35 to shape our youth into mature and dedicated citizens. James West, the first Chief Scout
36 Executive, was a long-time member and Christian Education Superintendent of the Mount
37 Pleasant Congregational Church of Washington, D.C., which continues today as Westmoreland
38 Congregational UCC, an Open and Affirming Congregation of the UCC.
39

40 Among BSA faith-based chartered partners, the UCC is the 7th largest supporter of BSA
41 programs. UCC congregations serve more than 35,000 youth and their families in approximately

42 1100 units. Troop 3, chartered by the New England Congregational Church of Aurora, Illinois, is
43 one such unit we welcome and support in our congregations. The New England Congregational
44 Church, an Open and Affirming congregation of the UCC, has chartered Troop 3 continuously
45 for 106 years, since the founding of BSA. The UCC affirms that the principles taught in the
46 Scout Oath and Law are important values guiding the physical, emotional, and psychological
47 development of youth, and are important in developing young people as servant leaders.

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49 Biblical text that speaks to the importance of welcoming and inclusive scouting units include
50 Jesus' prayer, "That they may all be one." (John 17:21). Paul wrote, "The body is one and has
51 many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with
52 Christ...Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:12,
53 27). These texts speak to God's love for all people.

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55 The theological principle that has served as a foundation for the UCC's extravagant welcome and
56 inclusive ministries is found in the pronouncement adopted by the 10th General Synod in 1975,
57 "Civil Liberties without Discrimination" which stated, "as a child of God, every person is
58 endowed with worth and dignity that human judgment cannot set aside." For years the BSA
59 violated that principle and remained resolute in their policies of exclusion. Many in the United
60 Church of Christ chose to step back from participation, including the national setting. However
61 the policy changes of 2013 and 2015, while they could have gone further, have nevertheless
62 opened the door for inclusive scouting.

63
64 The Open and Affirming movement of the UCC has taught us to live the theological principle of
65 graceful engagement. It is consistent with a historical motto that finds resonance throughout the
66 church and which creates the space for diversity, "In essentials—unity, in nonessentials—diversity,
67 in all things—charity." Welcoming and inclusive scouting units embody these values, which so
68 resonate with the core values deep within us. The UCC has no rigid formulation of doctrine or
69 attachment to creeds or structures. Its overarching creed is love and justice...Even so, love and
70 unity in the midst of our diversity are our greatest assets. Jesus' prayer, "that they may all be
71 one" (John 17:21) offers the guiding vision of the UCC and invites us to celebrate the gifts and
72 graces of all God's children."

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74 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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76 WHEREAS, Jesus' prayer, "that they may all be one" (John 17:21) offers the guiding vision of
77 the United Church of Christ and invites us to celebrate the gifts and graces of all God's children;
78 and

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80 WHEREAS, Paul wrote, “The body is one and has many members, and all the members of the
81 body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ....Now you are the body of Christ and
82 individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27); and

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84 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith declares, “[God] calls us into
85 [God’s] church ...to be [God’s] servant in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the
86 world.

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88 WHEREAS, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has consistently called all
89 settings of the church to be multiracial, multicultural, open and affirming, and accessible to all,
90 proclaiming a gospel that welcomes all and affirms all; and

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92 WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America has offered generations of youth and adults
93 opportunities to build friendships and foster mentoring relationships, develop leadership skills,
94 and embody values that encourage a reverence for the earth and service on behalf of others; and

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96 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ, through its members and local churches, have
97 participated in the Boy Scouts of America at the local, regional, and national levels since its
98 founding as members of units, by chartering and leading local units, by serving in volunteer
99 positions, and by leading as professional Scouters; and

100

101 WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America changed its membership policies in May, 2013, and
102 July, 2015, by votes of its membership and executive board, ending their ban against youth and
103 adult participation in Scouting based on sexual orientation and allowing religious chartering
104 organizations the autonomy to set membership policies for adult leaders according to the
105 organization’s values; and

106

107 WHEREAS, ending policies of discrimination is an important step to ending discrimination, yet
108 ongoing work is required to create a culture of inclusion; and

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110 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ and Boy Scouts of America in October, 2015 renewed
111 their relationship through execution of a Memorandum of Understanding.

112

113 THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that we, the delegates to the Thirty-first General Synod
114 of the United Church of Christ reaffirm our belief that discrimination against anyone based on
115 belief, faith, creed, race, ability, gender, gender identity, sex, or sexual orientation is contrary to
116 our understanding of the teachings of Christ; and

117

118 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that we reaffirm the work of the members of the United
119 Church of Christ in their efforts to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the

120 Boy Scouts of America with the resolution “The United Church of Christ and The Boy Scouts of
121 America” approved by the 24th General Synod; and

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123 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that we direct the Collegium and encourage other settings
124 of the church to urge the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America to strengthen its
125 inclusive welcome to all youth and adults as members or leaders, respectively, regardless of
126 belief, faith, creed, race, ability, gender, gender identity, sex, or sexual orientation; and

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128 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on the members of the United Church of
129 Christ, local churches, Associations, Conferences, National, and other settings of the United
130 Church of Christ to engage with inclusive scouting programs, and to actively support and
131 promote non-discrimination in Scouting, and to develop and promote inclusive Scouting
132 programs; and

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134 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the engagement of local churches of the
135 United Church of Christ to utilize the expertise, assistance and resources available from the UCC
136 Scouting Working Group and inclusive scouting associations, such as Scouts for Equality, for
137 developing and strengthening inclusive Scouting programs; and

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139 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call for the development of resources to assist
140 congregations and other settings of the United Church of Christ to charter new and strengthen
141 existing inclusive scouting units and urge conferences, associations and other settings of the
142 United Church of Christ to make these resources available to their members, including through
143 their various meetings, gatherings, and communications; and

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145 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on local churches to use inclusive Scouting
146 programs as outreach to youth within the local church, as well as, their community; and

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148 LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that we invite authorized ministers and other qualified
149 members within the United Church of Christ to provide leadership for inclusive scouting
150 programs including chaplaincy in local, council or national scouting settings; and

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152 **FUNDING**

153 Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall
154 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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156 **IMPLEMENTATION**

157 The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the
158 United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.