

1 The Business Committee of the Thirty-first General Synod has recommended this
2 proposed resolution be sent to a Committee of the General Synod.

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5 **ON BECOMING AN IMMIGRANT WELCOMING CHURCH**

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7 **Resolution of Witness**

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9 **Submitted by the Minnesota, Wisconsin, Northern California-Nevada,
10 Massachusetts and Central Pacific Conferences**

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13 **SUMMARY**

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15 This resolution calls on the United Church of Christ and its congregations to become
16 Immigrant Welcoming as it recognizes the ongoing struggles of refugees and migrants
17 who come to the United States seeking safety, security, freedom and opportunity but
18 instead experience suffering as they fear raids, deportation, and witness their families
19 being torn apart. It further encourages the development of policies to facilitate this.

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21 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

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23 Our Jewish and Christian traditions honor the text from Leviticus 19:33-34 (adapted from
24 NRSV): “When an immigrant resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the
25 immigrant. The immigrant who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among
26 you; you shall love the immigrant as yourself, for you were immigrants in the land of
27 Egypt.” In Matthew 25 Jesus speaks of those who will receive the kingdom: “When I was
28 hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to
29 drink. When I was a stranger you welcomed me...” Jesus also says (Mark 12:31,
30 NRSV) “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

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32 This resolution is in keeping with the commitment of the United Church of Christ to
33 provide extravagant welcome to all God’s Children. As negative stereotyping of
34 immigrants increases, becoming an “immigrant welcoming” church provides a critical
35 alternative witness rooted in Biblical and theological principles the United Church of
36 Christ deeply values.

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39 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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41 WHEREAS the International Association for Refugees has stated, "The world is in the
42 midst of a long-term refugee crisis;" and

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44 WHEREAS thousands of refugees and migrants come from throughout the world to the
45 United States seeking safety, security, freedom, and opportunity; and
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47 WHEREAS our immigrant brothers and sisters continue to suffer as they fear raids,
48 deportation, and seeing their families torn apart; and

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50 Whereas migrants bring us as offerings their stories and experiences, dreams and hopes,
51 energy and skills; and

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53 Whereas our new neighbors experience difficulties adjusting to life in a new country;
54 difficulties such as language barriers, culture shock, a sense of loss and isolation; and

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56 Whereas the welcome and support immigrants receive helps in the building of safe
57 communities and future prosperity; and

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59 Whereas the United Church of Christ (UCC) declares “No matter who you are or where
60 you are on life’s journey, you are welcomed here;”

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62 Whereas the twenty-ninth General Synod passed a compassionate immigration resolution
63 that included encouraging “congregations to further engage in education work on
64 immigration from a faith perspective, participating in border delegations and working
65 toward making your congregation an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation;”

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67 Therefore be it resolved that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of
68 Christ in Baltimore, Maryland in 2017 declares itself an Immigrant Welcoming
69 Denomination.

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71 Be it further resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
72 encourages the development of U.S. policy dedicated to facilitating the respectful
73 welcome and inclusion of all immigrants;

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75 Be it further resolved that Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
76 encourages the National Setting, Conferences and Associations to call on their members
77 to become active Immigrant Welcoming Congregations;

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79 Be it finally resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
80 asks the National setting to provide resources such as, "Becoming an Immigrant
81 Welcoming Congregation - The Journey is Made by Walking," to assist congregations in
82 this process;

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84 **FUNDING**

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86 The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with
87 the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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89 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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