

1 The following resolution has been received by the Office of General Minister and President prior
2 to the June 9, 2017 deadline established by the Standing Rules of the Thirtieth-first General
3 Synod regarding issues which could not have been anticipated. Receipt of this resolution should
4 not be considered an indication it will come before delegates to the General Synod. The
5 resolution is now being researched by the Board of Director's Committee on Disposition and its
6 staff before consideration by the full Board of Directors prior to the start of the Thirty-first
7 General Synod. Any resolution must meet all of the requirements of the Standing Rules. The
8 Board of Directors will decide prior to the start of Synod whether this resolution meets those
9 requirements and make a determination as to its disposition.

10
11
12 **THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S – NOT OURS TO WRECK**
13 **IMPERATIVES FOR A NEW MORAL ERA**

14
15 **Submitted by the Southern California, Nevada Conference**
16 **A Resolution of Witness**

17
18 **SUMMARY:**

19
20 God's great gift of Creation – the context in which all life seeks fulfillment – is in crisis. Driven
21 by material aspiration, humanity's use of fossil fuel since the Industrial Revolution has broken
22 Creation's balance. The scale of Creation's demise is dramatically expanding beyond our
23 comprehension. Never has the earth and the climate changed so quickly. While the leaders of
24 every country in the world recognize this reality, our current Administration ignores science,
25 defunds the Environmental Protection Agency, and withdraws from the Paris Climate Accord.
26 As people of faith, recognizing that the earth is the Lord's, it falls upon our generation to
27 embrace the imperatives set forth in this resolution – imperatives that constitute a new moral era.
28 We view the current climate crisis as an opportunity for which the church was born.

29
30 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

31
32 Psalm 24

33
34 **John 18:37-38 (NRSV)**

35 ³⁷ *Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I*
36 *was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the*
37 *truth listens to my voice."* ³⁸ *Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went*
38 *out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him."*

39
40
41 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

42
43 WHEREAS the leaders of over 190 countries have signed the Paris Climate Accord,
44 acknowledging the critical role every country must play if the life-sustaining climate of the earth
45 is to continue to sustain life as we have always known it;
46

47 WHEREAS the mayors of 30 American cities, the governors of numerous states and leaders of
48 hundreds of American companies have publicly committed the institutions they lead to reducing
49 greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with the Paris Climate Accord;

50
51 WHEREAS over the past 50 years the UCC, along with religious leaders from other faiths and
52 denominations, have issued countless statements on the goodness of Creation and our call to act
53 as responsible stewards, all of which has been an insufficient witness;

54
55 WHEREAS the Core Purpose of the United Church of Christ states (in part): "... we serve God
56 in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world as made manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,"

57
58 WHEREAS this historic moment provides Christian communities with a powerful opportunity to
59 bear witness to the sacredness of God's Creation and the urgent call to preserve it, and
60 responding to this call expresses the new mission initiative of the UCC known as [the three great](#)
61 | [loves](#)ⁱ, one of which is love of creation;

62
63
64 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of
65 Christ raises its prophetic voice regarding the urgency of healing the climate of the earth, our
66 home and God's gift for the future of all life, both human and all other life,

67
68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thirty-first General Synod of the United Church of
69 Christ calls upon the whole of the church to prayerfully engage the following imperatives as we
70 seek to initiate a new moral era:

71
72 **Let our clergy accept the mantle of moral leadership**

73 Now is the time for clergy to speak from their pulpits about the moral obligation of our
74 generation to protect God's creation. Let the world know that whatever the current American
75 administration may say or do, we who follow Jesus will not back away from God's call to protect
76 our common home.

77
78 **Let all of us incarnate the changes we long for**

79 Now is the time for congregations and for every person of faith to set a moral example through
80 our own words and actions. As individuals and as communities, let us commit to making
81 decisions of integrity in our energy choices, even as we commit to hold our political leaders
82 accountable to do the same.

83
84 **Let us proclaim truth in the public square**

85 We are now living in a John 18:37 moment, in which we must hold to the truth we understand
86 from our two Testaments and from the sacred book of nature, recognizing that when truth is
87 compromised, only power prevails.

- 88
- 89 • Let our communities of faith be bold and courageous as we address the greatest moral
90 challenge that the world has ever faced.
 - 91 • Let us commit to resist all expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and demand new sources
of renewable energy that are accessible to all communities.

- 92 • Let us do all we can to change America's understanding of the story that our generation is
93 writing. Let us begin a new story – a story that is not dependent on fossil fuel or on
94 wealth for the few and misery for the many.
95

96 Accepting that it is up to us – we the people – whether in the streets, at the State House, in the
97 halls of power, with our phones and emails, by committing our time, financial resources and
98 prayers – let us pour ourselves out to bend the moral arc of justice, with joy in our hearts, beauty
99 in our sights, and hope for the children.

100

101 **FUNDING**

102 Funding for the implementation of this Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall
103 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

104

105 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

¹ http://www.ucc.org/commentary_three_great_loves_04272017