

1 NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST PROPOSED
2 RESOLUTION OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS
3

4 TITLE: CREATION CARE FOR OUR CONFERENCE CHURCHES
5 PARTNERING WITH OUR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP
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8 SOURCE: The Environmental Stewardship Mission Group of the NHC-UCC
9 Note: This resolution is also being submitted to the Peace and Justice Ministry with a
10 request that this body also recommend the adoption of the resolution by the NH
11 Conference.
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13 SUBMITTED ON: August 22, 2017
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19 SUMMARY: This resolution follows the action of the 31st General Synod of the United
20 Church of Christ in July, 2017 In Baltimore, Maryland, which adopted an emergency
21 Resolution of Witness that reads in part: “God’s great gift of Creation – the context in
22 which all life seeks fulfillment – is in crisis. Driven by material aspiration, humanity’s
23 use of fossil fuel since the Industrial Revolution has broken Creation’s balance. The
24 scale of Creation’s demise is dramatically expanding beyond our comprehension. Never
25 has the earth and the climate changed so quickly. While the leaders of every country in
26 the world recognize this reality, our current Administration ignores science, defunds the
27 Environmental Protection Agency, and withdraws from the Paris Climate Accord. As
28 people of faith, recognizing that the earth is the Lord’s, it falls upon our generation to
29 embrace the imperatives set forth in this resolution – imperatives that constitute a new
30 moral era. We view the current climate crisis as an opportunity for which the church was
31 born.”
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33 EMERGENCY STATUS: This resolution merits status as an Emergency Resolution for
34 two reasons. Recent actions by Administration officials, including the Secretary of the
35 Interior and the Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, rolling back critical
36 protections against climate change, have necessitated responses and witness from
37 communities of faith. The General Synod passed an Emergency Resolution of Witness
38 which calls for a response from the Conference and local levels, and the time to take
39 action is now.
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41 BACKGROUND STATEMENTS: The national setting of the UCC has also initiated a
42 two-year program entitled Three Great Loves with the following purpose, mission and
43 vision statement:
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45 We will love the Lord our God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and our
46 neighbor as ourselves. (Purpose)
47 United by the Holy Spirit and inspired by God’s grace we love all, welcome all, and seek
48 justice for all. (Mission)
49 A just world for all. (Vision)
50

51 One of the Three Great Loves is Love of Creation, which has been expressed for years
52 by UCC members and congregations, through participation in such events as the protests
53 against the Keystone (tar sands) pipeline and the Kinder Morgan (fracked gas) pipeline,
54 participation in collective actions such as the People's Climate March, participation in
55 and support of the Water Protectors of Standing Rock, and countless other acts of
56 witness and stewardship.

57
58 The UCC is now making it possible for local congregations to declare themselves
59 Creation Justice Churches, collectively discerning their high calling to care for creation
60 and seek justice for the oppressed. The UCC has recently announced a pilot project to
61 build a partnership with 350.org, the well-regarded earth stewardship organization which
62 has already provided UCC churches and members the opportunity to learn, collaborate,
63 and speak truth to power.

64
65 Through all of these developments, and particularly following the resolution from
66 General Synod, local Conferences and churches are being called upon to prayerfully
67 engage in a number of imperatives, including:

- 68 *Clergy accepting the mantle of moral leadership
- 69 *Incarnating the change we long for, setting a moral example through our words
70 and actions.
- 71 *Proclaiming the truth in the public square, with courage to address the greatest
72 moral challenge that the world has ever faced.

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75 THE RESOLUTION RATIONALE:

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77 Whereas, Psalm 24:1 reminds us that "The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it";

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79 Whereas, the 31st General Synod of the UCC, 2017, approved an emergency
80 "Resolution of Witness" entitled "The Earth is the Lord's-Not Ours to Wreck;
81 Imperatives for a New Moral Era" that views the current climate crisis as an opportunity
82 for which the church was born, calling on communities of faith to address the greatest
83 moral challenge the world has ever faced by committing to resist all expansion of fossils
84 fuel infrastructure and demanding new sources of renewable energy that are accessible to
85 all communities...

86 Whereas, the national setting of the UCC has created a new partnership with 350.org,
87 and created new opportunities for churches to identify themselves as Climate Justice
88 Churches, and identified Care of Creation as one of the Three Great Loves...

89 Whereas, the struggle of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and its allied water protectors
90 against the Dakota Access Pipeline exposed the trampling of indigenous rights and
91 treaties, the desecration of sacred land, the endangerment of the Missouri River which is
92 the source of water of the Standing Rock Reservation, the building of fossil fuel
93 infrastructure that would accelerate climate change, and the militarized response of law
94 enforcement to peaceful acts of protest...

95 Whereas, the UCC Council for American Indian Ministries called for Active Solidarity
96 with Standing Rock in 2016...

97 Whereas, the Standing Rock Movement has a successful tactic in divesting banks that
98 fund pipelines....

99 Whereas, a central point of focus for the clergy who gathered at Standing River was the
100 Repudiation of the "Doctrine of Discovery" which authorized Christians to kill non-
101 Christians and possess their land and resources....

102 Whereas, the Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC presented its major social
103 justice award called the "Movement Makers Award" at the 2017 General Synod, to the
104 International Indigenous Youth Council that launched a Movement at Standing Rock....
105

106 Whereas there is evidence that actions of witness and education and protest have made a
107 difference in affecting the actions of politicians and civic and corporate entities, and that
108 communities of faith have a clearly-defined moral responsibility to take a leadership role
109 at such a time as this,
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111 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire
112 Conference of the United Church of Christ join its brothers and sisters within the UCC
113 Environmental Justice Ministries in prophetic witness locally and nationally to advocate
114 for the healing of the earth, our home and God's gift for all living things.
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116 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire
117 Conference, with the leadership of the Environmental Stewardship Mission Group and
118 its partners in ministry, support local congregations in their efforts of identify as Climate
119 Justice churches, and participate fully in the Three Great Loves initiative, and the
120 350.Org partnership...
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122 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Annual Meeting of the NHCUCC demonstrate
123 its Love of God's Creation by engaging in the following practices to protect all of God's
124 Creation, including the members of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and its allied Water
125 Protectors:

126 a-Encourage our clergy to preach about our moral obligation to protect God's Creation;

127 b-Provide the impetus for our congregations to form Green Teams or Environmental
128 Stewardship Ministries and to learn about our personal and communal responsibility to
129 care for the earth;

130 c-Charge those responsible in our homes, churches, and communities to actively practice
131 conservation of energy, to decrease our need for fossil fuel, and to encourage the use of
132 renewable energy;

133 d-Actively advocate for citizens, especially those from the Standing Rock Sioux Nation
134 and their allied Water Protectors, who are struggling to protect their land and their
135 precious water resources, a necessity of life;

136 e-Participate in the Standing Rock Movement to divest from fossil fuel and from the
137 banks that fund gas pipelines that pollute the rivers and aquifers which are their sources
138 of drinking water;

139 f-Give moral and financial support to the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and its Water
140 Protector allies in their battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline from the North Dakota
141 Baakan Fields, that risks polluting their drinking water and that of many in the Mid-
142 Western States.

143 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Hampshire Conference will support the
144 partnership between the Environmental Stewardship Mission Group and the Faith
145 Formation Ministry to plan and promote an Environmental Justice youth event in the
146 Spring of 2018.

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148 **PLAN OF ACTION IMPLEMENTING BODY:** The Environmental Stewardship
149 Mission Group of the NH Conference, United Church of Christ will be responsible for
150 supporting and advising the Conference in the implementation of this resolution and in
151 undertaking the plan of action noted below.

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153 **ANTICIPATED COSTS:** Although implementing this Resolution will depend in large
154 measure on volunteer labor, there are several anticipated expenses. These include
155 several NH Conference-wide mailings, expenses associated with promoting the film by
156 Jehann at the Annual Meeting and beyond, and expenses associated with the
157 Environmental Justice Youth Event in 2018, with a ceiling of \$1,200 for all items.

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159 **PLAN OF ACTION:** The Environmental Stewardship Mission Group will work with
160 the NHCUCC staff to maximize the exposure of the Standing Rock film at the Annual
161 Meeting and beyond, and establish partnerships to support the further editing and
162 showing of this film; The Environmental Stewardship Mission Group will work with the
163 Faith Formation Ministry to plan for a Spring 2018 Environmental Justice Youth Event;
164 The Earth Stewardship Mission group will continue its regular communication with the
165 UCC Minister for Environmental Justice, The Rev. Brooks Berndt, to support the work
166 of local congregations to identify as Climate Justice Congregations and to partner with
167 350.Org; The Environmental Stewardship Mission group will seek partners in working
168 with the national setting of the UCC as they promote and support the Three Great Loves
169 initiative.