

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

**ACTIVELY AFFIRMING THE HUMAN DIGNITY
OF TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY PERSONS**

A Resolution of Witness

Submitted by the Florida Conference and Southeast Conference ¹

1 **SUMMARY**

2

3 For several decades, political and theological conversations related to LGBTQ+ issues have
4 centered around same-sex relationships for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Even as those
5 conversations have led to significant gains for human and civil rights for LGBTQ+ people, the
6 volume of faith resources dedicated to LGBTQ+ advocacy often have excluded reflection on the
7 unique considerations related to gender identity. Some people have suggested that taking the
8 Bible seriously requires people of faith to stand in opposition to the existence, health, and
9 humanity of transgender and non-binary people. Consequently, gender-expansive people of all
10 demographics and Christian traditions have been made to feel that they must choose between
11 their faith and living a whole, healthy, and authentic life.

12

13 The United Church of Christ has staked its claim to be a diverse community of believers and
14 belief. It is our diversity that creates our strength. This diversity calls us to a radical welcome
15 and to widen the table of welcome to our transgender and non-binary siblings.

16

17 Transgender and non-binary people already are actively preaching, teaching, leading, pastoring,
18 and offering their time, talent, treasure, and a variety of gifts for ministry and service in the
19 United Church of Christ. The question is not if a person can be transgender, or non-binary, and
20 Christian, but how might we as a Christian denomination advocate for and empower those whom
21 God is already working through to enrich the whole life of the body of Christ.

22

23 **PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS**

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25 This resolution builds on the (only) two previous resolutions of witness that support people from
26 the transgender and non-binary communities: 2003’s resolution “Affirming the Participation and
27 Ministry of Transgender People within the United Church of Christ and Supporting their Civil
28 and Human Rights” and 2011’s resolution “Supporting International Human Rights Related to
29 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.” The sharp rise in legislative assaults on the dignity and
30 human rights of people who are transgender and non-binary in our country right now calls for an
31 additional and even stronger response from those who affirm the dignity and rights of people
32 from transgender and non-binary communities.²

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35 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL RATIONALE**

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37 Foundational to our Christian faith is the belief that human beings are created in God’s image
38 (Genesis1:26) and, thus, are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). At our baptisms,
39 God claims us in love and tells us God is well-pleased with us (Mark 1:11). All other tenets of
40 our faith grow out of a commitment to acknowledging and affirming the dignity of every human
41 being.

42
43 Our Scriptures specifically affirm the dignity of people who are gender nonconforming,
44 sometimes referred to as “eunuchs.” In Isaiah, God gives to eunuchs who are faithful to God’s
45 covenant the profound gift of a name, never to be cut off (Is. 56:4-5). In the New Testament,
46 Philip is sent by God to teach and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch. Now, someone who had been
47 denied entrance to the Temple has received complete acceptance (Acts 8:26-40).

48
49 Finally, Paul’s words to the Galatians that in Christ there is no longer male or female
50 demonstrates that God’s love and acceptance transcends human constructs of gender (Galatians
51 3:28).

52 53 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

54
55 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has staked its claim to be an open and affirming
56 denomination³ and has worked hard to maintain a radical welcome to the LGBTQ+ community
57 in many of our churches⁴; and

58
59 **WHEREAS** the human dignity and human rights of transgender and non-binary people are
60 being threatened in at least 30 states through legislation that denies access to life-saving health
61 care, participation in sports, and utilization of gender appropriate bathrooms⁵; and

62
63 **WHEREAS** gender dysphoria is a serious medical condition that, if left untreated, can result in
64 severe anxiety and depression, self-harm, and suicidality⁶; and

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66 **WHEREAS** when appropriately treated, gender dysphoria is easily managed by following
67 appropriate treatment protocols to affirm their gender identity and alleviate distress⁷; and

68
69 **WHEREAS** compassionate parents and medical teams are, in some states, being legally
70 punished for offering, providing, and extending life-saving healthcare to trans and nonbinary
71 youth and adults⁸; and

72
73 **WHEREAS** decisions about gender-affirming medical care must be made between a provider,
74 patient, and the patient’s parents or guardians⁹; and

75
76 **WHEREAS** trans and nonbinary youth and adults face a higher rate of death by suicide than
77 their peers and are more vulnerable to violence and death, specifically and disproportionately
78 transgender women of color¹⁰; and

79
80 **WHEREAS** a Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) survey shows that more
81 than 80% of “gender expansive” students have been harassed and a third feel unsafe in
82 classrooms¹¹; and

83
84 **WHEREAS** research shows that it can be extremely harmful for a transgender person to be
85 excluded from a sports team consistent with their gender identity;¹² and

86
87 **WHEREAS** in a country where transgender people have no federal protections while they face
88 massive discrimination and attacks, civil rights must be spelled out and protected¹³; and

89
90 **WHEREAS** public discourse perpetuating the myth of the gender binary causes great harm
91 when used as the rationale for discrimination and punitive legislation;¹⁴ and

92
93 **WHEREAS** efforts of allies sometimes fail to provide the support intended for our transgender
94 and non-binary siblings, including UCC Open and Affirming congregations¹⁵;

95
96 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church
97 of Christ reaffirm the historic commitment of this church to recognize and affirm that every
98 human being is created in the image of God and is due respect for their human dignity; and

99
100 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
101 Christ proclaim and affirm people of transgender and non-binary experience are beloved by God
102 and are among the neighbors Jesus commanded his followers to love and treat with worth and
103 dignity; and

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105 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
106 Christ encourages all settings to promote full equality at every level of law that protects the
107 rights of transgender and gender non-conforming persons; and

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109 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
110 Christ re-affirm our commitment to lift up our religious text and stand in solidarity with
111 transgender and gender non-conforming persons against the harm done, often through the use of
112 religious language, and;

113
114 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
115 Christ calls on the United Church of Christ in all of its settings to create educational curricula
116 and informational opportunities to learn how to affirm and inform congregations, communities,
117 policy-makers and activists to develop gender-affirming space and inclusion in all aspects of the
118 United Church of Christ.

119
120 **FUNDING:** The funding the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with
121 the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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123 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries
124 or other entities with the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

¹ Significant contributions to this resolution came from Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ, located in Dallas, TX and part of the South Central Conference.

² <http://synod.uccpages.org/archive.html>

³ United Church of Christ. *Resolution: Calling on United Church of Christ Congregations to Declare themselves Open and Affirming*, adopted by the Fifteenth General Synod, United Church of Christ, Ames, Iowa, June 28-July 2, 1985.

⁴ United Church of Christ. *Resolution: Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People Within the United Church of Christ and Supporting Their Civil and Human Rights*, adopted by the Twenty-Fourth General Synod, United Church of Christ, Minneapolis, MN, July 11-15, 2003.

⁵ United Church of Christ Transgender/Nonbinary Strategy Team. *Transgender and Nonbinary Dignity and Rights Under Attack: Talking Points for Faith Leaders*, p. 3. <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Transgender-Talking-Points-for-Faith-Leaders.pdf>.

⁶ ACLU. *Hecox V Little – Adkins Declaration*, p. 5 <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/hecox-v-little-adkins-declaration>.

⁷ ACLU. *Hecox V Little – Adkins Declaration*, p. 6, <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/hecox-v-little-adkins-declaration>.

⁸ American College of Physicians. *Attacks on Gender-Affirming and Transgender Health Care*, November 11, 2022, <https://www.acponline.org/advocacy/state-health-policy/attacks-on-gender-affirming-and-transgender-health-care>, and:

ACLU. *Four Myths About Trans Athletes, Debunked*, <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/four-myths-about-trans-athletes-debunked>.

⁹ United Church of Christ Transgender/Nonbinary Strategy Team. *Transgender and Nonbinary Dignity and Rights Under Attack: Talking Points for Faith Leaders*, p. 3. <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Transgender-Talking-Points-for-Faith-Leaders.pdf>.

¹⁰ HRC. *Fatal Violence Against the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Community in 2021*, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/fatal-violence-against-the-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-community-in-2021>, and

HRC. *Human Rights Campaign Foundation Marks Ten Years of Tracking Violence Against Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People, Recording 32 Fatalities in 2022*, <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/human-rights-campaign-foundation-marks-ten-years-of-tracking-violence-against-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-people-recording-32-fatalities-in-2022>, and;

The Trevor Project, *Facts About LGBTQ Youth Suicide*, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>.

¹¹ Movement Advancement Project and GLSEN. *Separation and Stigma: Transgender Youth & School Facilities*, April 2017. <http://lgbtmap.org/transgender-youth-school>.

¹² ACLU. *Four Myths About Trans Athletes, Debunked*, <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/four-myths-about-trans-athletes-debunked>

¹³ United Church of Christ Transgender/Nonbinary Strategy Team. *Transgender and Nonbinary Dignity and Rights Under Attack: Talking Points for Faith Leaders*, p. 3. <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Transgender-Talking-Points-for-Faith-Leaders.pdf>

¹⁴ Intomore. *Anti-LGBTQ Activist Admits Bathroom Predator Myth Was ‘Concocted’ As Cover for Transphobic Hate*, Dawn Ennis, Intomore.com, Dec. 4, 2018

¹⁵ PFLAG. *Guide to Being a Trans Ally*, <https://openandaffirming.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/PFLAG-Guide-to-Being-a-Trans-Ally.pdf>, and;

HRC. *What Does the Bible Say About Transgender People*, Austen Hartke, Myles Markham, produced by the HRC Foundation, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-transgender-people>