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

DENOUNCING ACTS OF VIOLENCE, HATRED, AND RACISM CARRIED OUT IN THE NAME OF NEO-NAZI AND WHITE SUPREMACIST IDEOLOGIES

A Resolution of Witness

Submitted by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

SUMMARY: This resolution arose in response to the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, VA, in August 2017. It notes the increase in hate speech and hate crimes since 2016, and calls upon United Church of Christ congregations to three kinds of action. First, denounce all forms of white supremacist hatred; second, stand in solidarity with those who are the targets of such hatred, lastly, to collaborate with other faith communities in such efforts.

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING: Scripture calls people of faith to love. From the commandments to love God, and love neighbor as found in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, to the prophetic writings, to Jesus’ message of love in the gospels, to God’s vision of the church in the book of Revelation; scripture calls us to love. Love calls people of faith to practice and proclaim love in word and deed.

WHEREAS scripture offers important teachings such as:

- God’s call and commandment to love God with all of one’s being (Deut. 6:5), and to love one’s neighbor as one’s self (Matthew 22:37-40)
- God’s call through the prophets to “act justly and love mercy” (Micah 6:8)
- God’s call through Jesus “to do unto others . . .” (Matthew 7:12), to see the despised and oppressed as children of God, as in the story of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-30), and in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)
- God’s vision of the church as a people “drawn from every nation, all tribes, peoples, and languages” (Revelations 7:9); and

WHEREAS the church has understood itself to be called by God to speak and act on behalf of the outcast and oppressed in many times and cultures; and

WHEREAS since 2016, we have witnessed significant increases in the incidents of hate speech, hate crimes, assault, and harassment, directed at many minority peoples including immigrants, Native Americans, Muslims, Jews, LGBTQ people and more; and

WHEREAS we recognize that all persons have a constitutional right to free speech, nonetheless the open display of Nazi and white supremacist regalia (swastika and Confederate flags), the overt hateful and racist behavior in the white nationalist “Unite the Right” demonstration (Charlottesville VA, Aug. 12th, 2017), and the increasingly frequent expression of hateful, extremist views in many forms of media is both profoundly disturbing to us and diametrically opposed to our mandate from God; and

WHEREAS on September 12th, 2017, both Houses of the United States Congress unanimously passed a joint resolution condemning white nationalists, white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and other hate groups.
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the congregations of the United Church of Christ to denounce all forms and expressions of white supremacist hatred as displayed by neo-Nazi groups, the Ku Klux Klan, and others; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ exhorts all congregations of the United Church of Christ to speak and act stand in solidarity with all those who are so often the targets of such hate speech and actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges all members, congregations, and ministry settings of the UCC to engage in reflection, learning, self-examination, and repentance for the ways in which white supremacy has influenced, and continues to influence, our personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural lives; and to seek out opportunities for transformative dialogue and relationship with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, including both targets and supporters of white supremacist rhetoric and action, with special attention to assisting congregants of white and/or European descent to acknowledge their responsibility to use their privilege to disrupt bigotry rooted in whiteness; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Thirty-Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages each congregation of the United Church of Christ to join with other communities of faith to proclaim our shared commitment to Racial Justice.

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

IMPLEMENTATION: the Executive Ministers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

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