

**REAFFIRMING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST'S
DENOUNCEMENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIAN AND GAY
PEOPLE AND CALLING FOR THE INCLUSION OF TRANSGENDER
PEOPLE WITHIN THAT ANTI-VIOLENCE STATEMENT**

[Adopted by the Twenty-fourth General Synod on July 15, 2003.]

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Council for Christian Social Action first issued a policy statement concerning justice for same-gender-oriented people over thirty years ago; and

WHEREAS, the Tenth General Synod in 1975 issued the pronouncement, "Civil Liberties without Discrimination Related to Affectional and Sexual Preference," and similar national statements have been issued in 1969, 1973, and at every General Synod since 1975; and

WHEREAS, the Seventeenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ issued a pronouncement denouncing violence against lesbian and gay people and called on "all local churches, Associations, Conferences, national agencies, instrumentalities, and other institutions to become aware of the oppressive violence against lesbian and gay people within their jurisdictions and to develop ways to put it to an end;" and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Executive Council in 1998 called for enactment of the Federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act; and

WHEREAS, violence against transgender men and women has grown significantly; with an average of more than one transgender murder per month across the United States over the past decade and escalating physical and emotional violence and harassment against those who are transgendered; and

WHEREAS, in a 1998 Pastoral Letter to the United Church of Christ, former President Paul Sherry said, “The story of our pilgrimage with our gay, lesbian, and bisexual members at times has been marked by hesitation, fear and frequent failure of nerve.” He continued, “We have sometimes failed to recognize how the Bible has been used by some to perpetuate prejudice and to justify violence against homosexual persons;”

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod denounces the continued proliferation of hate, violence, and prejudice, extending its denouncement of violence to include violence against transgender persons as well as lesbians, gays, and bisexuals; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod calls for an end of any form of hate, violence, and prejudice based on sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as violence and prejudice based on race, nationality, religion, mental or physical disability; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod reaffirms its stand against the use of scripture to generate hatred and the violation of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender persons; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod urges churches and church members to take the lead in ending discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexual, and transgender persons and to actively counter public perceptions that view the Christian community as supporting such discrimination.

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.