

# SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

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## 2013

### Resolution Urging Divestment from Fossil Fuels

The 2013 Annual Meeting passed a resolution requiring the Conference's divestment in stocks and bonds of companies on the Carbon Tracker list, a listing of large oil, coal and gas companies, within five years.

Your Finance Committee and its Investment Subcommittee has taken this charge seriously since the passage of this resolution. In 2015, the Minnesota Conference was a founding investor in the “Beyond Fossil Fuels Fund” of the UCC’s United Church Funds. This was an initial and important step forward in our process. We can now very happily report that as of early 2017 the Conference is fully divested from all companies included on the Carbon Tracker list, over one year ahead of the schedule called for in the 2013 resolution.

We are confident that our fund managers and Investment Policy continue to provide the best possible return on our investments for the least amount of risk, while providing the social screens which help express who we are and what we value as the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

## 2014

### To Support Dismantling Racism & Creating Diversity in the MN Conference

The following progress has been made on this important resolution since our last update one year ago:

- Our Annual Meetings since 2014 have featured racially diverse speakers, and two of the three Annual Meetings in the intervening years provided training and facilitated discussion on matters of racial justice.
- We anticipate the roll-out in Fall 2017 of a Conference-wide training on the UCC’s *“White Privilege: Let’s Talk”* curriculum. Several congregations in the Conference have already undertaken their own study of this resource.
- The newly constituted Racial Justice Team of the Conference is meeting regularly and has multiracial representation from greater Minnesota and the metro area. A strategy-building retreat of the Racial Justice Team established these key foci moving forward:

- establishing racial/social justice contacts in as many congregations as possible
- planning a Racial Justice Day of workshops and worship (tentatively scheduled for Sept 30th)
- organizing a workshop for sharing racial justice resources for congregational action at this year's Annual Meeting.

## **2015**

### A Call For The Minnesota Conference Of The United Church Of Christ To Take Actions Toward A Just Peace In The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Working Group on Just Peace in Palestine and Israel has welcomed new members this year, including Daniel Romero and Lanny Kuester who have recently served as Ecumenical Accompaniers with the World Council of Churches program in Israel and Palestine, and Susie George and Jim Bush who traveled with the group led by Shari.

This winter, the Working Group participated in an event focused on Black Lives Matter and Palestine solidarity and had a retreat that enabled us to think more deeply about how the issues we confront regarding Palestine and Israel are showing up so visibly in our own nation and culture as well - immigration, racism, segregation, the rise of for-profit prisons.

The Working Group also engaged the Finance and Investment Committee in discussion about responding to the 2015 resolution, which required these two groups in the Conference to collaborate on any recommendation to move forward with divestment. Representatives of the Working Group met with the Finance Committee in the Fall 2016 to learn about their approach to socially conscious investing. We then communicated throughout the process of writing and submitting the proposal and believe we are bringing forward a faithful and practical way to live out our commitment to work for peace with justice.

The Conference Minister has followed up on this resolution in several ways to strengthen inter-faith dialogue and offer educational opportunities to Conference members:

- Was a member of an 8-person Jewish-Protestant Dialogue convened by the Minnesota Council of Churches
- Arranged for interested parties to meet with Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, foremost Palestinian theologian, author, and founder of one of the UCC's partner organizations in Bethlehem
- Organized and led a "Sacred Journey to Israel-Palestine" in January 2017. 11 members of the Minnesota Conference participated in this study trip that

blended visits to the holy sites with intensive dialogue with UCC global partners and other local organizations in the region working to promote peace, justice, and human rights for all. The group enjoyed intensive dialogue with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders during the trip.

## **2016**

### Calling on the Minnesota Conference UCC and its Congregations to Covenant as Immigrant Welcoming Congregations

Since this resolution was passed last year, the Immigration Team has been very active throughout the Conference providing education and resources to interested congregations. Their outreach has included a large number of congregations with impressive results:

- Presentations of the Immigration Team in 12 congregations in metro and greater Minnesota regions
- Sponsorship and resourcing of a day-long forum held at Robbinsdale UCC in February, attended by 13 congregations
- Three congregations have voted to be “Immigrant Welcoming” churches. Several other congregations have votes scheduled on this matter or are currently in discernment.
- Four congregations have voted to be “Sanctuary Congregations” while four others have voted to be “sanctuary supporting churches”. Additional congregations are in discernment about this.

In addition, this resolution (slightly modified) will be up for consideration by the UCC’s General Synod delegates June 30-July 4. The Minnesota Conference is the lead sponsor of the General Synod resolution, joined by four other Conferences as co-sponsors. Stay tuned!