

1 TITLE OF RESOLUTION: Supporting People with Disabilities and/or Mental  
2 Disabilities  
3 DATE SUBMITTED: March 15, 2000  
4 SUBMITTED BY: Minnesota Conference Prophetic Ministries  
5 Committee

6 SUMMARY OF INTENT:

7 To call United Church of Christ congregations, campus ministries, and  
8 other UCC committees and organizations to improve accessibility for  
9 people with mental and/or physical disabilities; to support the Americans  
10 with Disabilities Act; and to promote a philosophy of independent living for  
11 people with physical and/or mental disabilities.

12 BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

13 Whereas the United Church of Christ 1981 Revision of the Statement of  
14 Faith testifies that God has created all persons in God's own  
15 image; and

16 Whereas the Biblical vision of the Great Messianic Banquet is of all  
17 gathered at the table with bounty for all; and

18 Whereas any attitude that limits the wholeness of all is oppressive; and

19 Whereas one in three Minnesota families includes a relative with mental  
20 and/or physical disabilities; and

21 Whereas many hundreds of people with physical and/or mental disabil-  
22 ities are members of Minnesota UCC churches; and

23 Whereas the overwhelming majority of people with mental and/or physi-  
24 cal disabilities want the right to choose how and where they live,  
25 work, and worship;

26 TEXT OF RESOLUTION:

27 Therefore, be it resolved by the 2000 Annual Meeting of the  
28 Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ that congregations,  
29 campus ministries, and other UCC committees and organizations are  
30 called to improve accessibility for people with physical and/or mental  
31 disabilities; to support the Americans with Disabilities Act, and to promote  
32 a philosophy of independent living for people with mental and/or physical  
33 disabilities.

34 Recognizing that discrimination against people with physical  
35 and/or mental disabilities is complex and pervasive and remembering  
36 that the UCC is multicultural, multiracial, anti-racist, and welcoming and  
37 affirming of all persons, the Minnesota Conference urges congregations,  
38 campus ministries, and other UCC committees and organizations to de-  
39 velop both short- and long-range accessibility plans, which may include  
40 some or all of the following activities:

41 (a) Establish a local Accessibility Task Force charged with needs assess-  
42 ment and planning;

43 (b) Join the free National Organization on Disability's Accessible Congre-  
44 gations Campaign;

45 (c) Continue to make improvements to UCC buildings and facilities as  
46 necessary for full physical accessibility;

47 (d) Develop ways to ensure that all people can participate in worship  
48 services and other parts of the community life of the church, e.g.,  
49 establish partnerships between people with and without sight and  
50 hearing; invite people with mental and/or physical disabilities to help  
51 lead in worship services; consider whether meetings and social  
52 events held outside the church in people's homes, restaurants, and  
53 other spaces are accessible; provide ways for able-bodied and

54 people with disabilities to meet and talk on the same physical level at  
55 coffee hours and other gatherings;

56 (e) Reach out to people with physical and/or mental disabilities in the  
57 community and invite them to worship;

58 (f) Be open to calling pastors with disabilities and employing staff with  
59 disabilities;

60 (g) Consider creating a formal or informal group within the congregation  
61 to assist people with physical and or mental disabilities to find  
62 employment (only 29 percent of people with disabilities work, where-  
63 as 72 percent want to);

64 (h) Become familiar with the provisions of the Americans with Disability  
65 Act and with the current "states rights" threats to the ADA by federal  
66 district courts and the Supreme Court and encourage the State of  
67 Minnesota to support the integration requirement of the ADA and to  
68 refrain from joining in any lawsuit filed by the National Governors'  
69 Association or the National League of Cities that opposes the integra-  
70 tion requirement.

71 Postage and paper to support this resolution are to be included within the  
72 budget of Prophetic Ministries Committee.