

TITLE: A Resolution in Support of Marriage Equality for Couples Regardless of Gender

DATE SUBMITTED: June 5, 2011

SUBMITTED BY: ONA/LGBT Team of the Minnesota Conference
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Resolution Class: Class VI – Timely. A vote of the Minnesota House of Representatives was held on May 21, 2011 to place an amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution which defines marriage as “*the union between one man and one woman.*” Because the date of this vote, this resolution’s need could not be determined by the March 1, 2011 deadline for submission.

SUMMARY STATEMENT: Because the Minnesota legislature has chosen to place a Constitutional Amendment on the 2012 ballot which, if approved, would make discrimination a part of the Minnesota Constitution, the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ needs to urgently and loudly reaffirm our support for marriage equality for couples, regardless of gender.

FISCAL NOTE: Letter postage is the only funding implication.

BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

WHEREAS the life and example of Jesus of Nazareth provides a model of radically inclusive love and abundant welcome for all: and

WHEREAS recognition of marriage carries with it significant access to institutional support, rights and benefits; and

WHEREAS access to civil contracts of marriage, which strengthen the union of committed couples by adding to their economic, emotional and social stability, is a civil right currently denied to same-gender couples; and

WHEREAS children of families headed by same-gender couples should receive all legal rights and protections; and

WHEREAS legislation to ban recognition of same-gender marriages undermines the civil liberties of caring committed couples participating in civil, state-sanctioned aspects of marriage; and contributes to a climate of misunderstanding and polarization, increasing hostility against lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender persons; and

WHEREAS the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ (2005) passed the “Equal Marriage Rights for All” resolution which affirmed “equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender;” and

WHEREAS the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ passed a “Resolution to be an Open and Affirming Conference” at its 2008 Annual Meeting, resolving to “continue a committed, prayerful and respectful dialogue with one another” and to be in “covenant with God and one another to seek God’s guidance for greater Biblical and theological understanding of important issues;” and

WHEREAS the 2010 Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting members voted to affirm and support marriage equality for couples regardless of gender; and

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WHEREAS the Minnesota Conference resolved to “study and be in conversation about...the sacredness of all relationships;” and

WHEREAS the Minnesota Conference also resolved to “struggle to be: a Body of Christ in which there is no dissension, but where members may have the same care for one another, so that if one member suffers, all suffer together with it, and if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26-27); and

WHEREAS at least three local churches in the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ have passed wedding policies in support of marriage equality for couples regardless of gender; and

WHEREAS the Minnesota Legislature has chosen to place a Constitutional Amendment question on the 2012 ballot, asking the people of the State of Minnesota to make discrimination a part of our Minnesota Constitution; and

WHEREAS such Amendment may be seen to limit not only personal but also religious freedom for all people; and

WHEREAS all of God’s children ought to and must have equal access to all of the responsibilities and benefits of our State; and

WHEREAS we hope for the day when the way of God’s justice will be followed by all of the peoples of the world;

1 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the members of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of
2 Christ, declare that we reaffirm the action of the 2010 Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting which affirms and
3 supports marriage equality for couples regardless of gender; and
4

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ encourages its
6 member churches to engage in serious, respectful, and prayerful discussion of the covenantal relationship of
7 marriage and equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender; and, if led by God’s guidance, to take action
8 in support of marriage equality for couples regardless of gender; and
9

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ calls upon its
11 member churches, after prayerful biblical, theological, and historical study, to consider adopting wedding policies
12 that do not discriminate against couples based on gender; and
13

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference Minister of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church
15 of Christ, be instructed to communicate to the general public, that the delegates of the 2011 Annual Meeting of
16 the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ reaffirms our support for marriage equality for couples,
17 regardless of gender, and urge action toward that end, to include repudiation of Constitutional amendment
18 proposals that limit marriage rights based on gender
19

20 LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the 2011 annual meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United
21 Church of Christ declares a stand in opposition to the Minnesota Constitutional Marriage Amendment on the 2012
22 ballot and encourages local congregations to work toward education and advocacy to defeat this unjust
23 amendment.

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