

The Resolution Process

(Revised 10-23-2014)

The Resolution Process shall not supersede the Bylaws of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

A. Introduction to Resolutions:

Resolutions are expressions of opinion, will or intent considered by any convened assembly. Resolutions adopted by the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ in Annual or Special Meeting become the position statements of the Conference. The Conference Minister interprets the views of the Conference in Annual or Special Meeting and conveys to the churches and to others, as directed, the resolve adopted.

Resolutions, other than courtesy, timely and responsive resolutions, must be submitted to the office of the Minnesota Conference in advance of any meeting, in order that copies may be made and sent to clergy and local churches for delegates' study and review. Resolutions intended for General Synod consideration must be adopted in an even-numbered year in order that they may be available to General Synod delegates according to their time-line.

B. The Categories of Resolutions are as follows:

Class I, Social Actions: Proposed resolutions on issues, problems or concerns of society about which the assembly chooses to address itself, either by study within its constituency, or so that the Annual or Special Meeting may adopt a statement expressing a view on the issue, problem or concern.

Class II, Structural: Proposed resolutions designed to change the bylaws, structures or operations of the Minnesota Conference. Any resolution that is meant to amend the bylaws of the Minnesota Conference must follow the rules for an amendment, as outlined in the bylaws of the Minnesota Conference.

Class III, Procedural: Proposed resolutions having to do with the operations of the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference.

Class IV, Church Concerns: Proposed resolutions addressed to the local churches of the Minnesota Conference, or to the United Church of Christ, including its national bodies, on matters other than social issues. This includes actions on structural matters submitted to the Conference by the United Church of Christ.

Resolutions sent from bodies outside the Minnesota Conference must be co-sponsored by an individual or body referred to in Section C.

Class V, Courtesy: Resolutions acknowledging appreciation and gratitude for services such as preparations for the Annual Meeting, years of service, and years ordained. Courtesy resolutions need not be submitted in advance of the Annual Meeting, but shall be submitted to the Moderator and Secretary in writing, at the earliest possible time.

Class VI, Timely: Resolutions dealing with issues, problems or concerns about which there was no possible knowledge or information before the resolution deadlines and where a delay would render the resolution moot. Timely resolutions shall be presented to the Annual Meeting as early as possible or at the time of the adoption of the agenda and accepted for inclusion in the resolution process. The nature of the timely issue, problem or concern shall be specified in the resolution.

Class VII, Responsive: Resolutions that arise out of the sense of resolve within the Annual Meeting. Each responsive resolution shall be submitted in writing to the Moderator and Secretary of the Annual Meeting. Each responsive resolution will be reviewed by the Resolutions Group (see description below) for determination as to whether it will be submitted to the delegates. If so, delegates will vote on whether to admit this resolution to the agenda. Each responsive resolution submitted to the delegates before the Hearing Process on Resolutions shall have a resolution hearing. Each responsive resolution submitted after the Hearings Process will not have a resolution hearing. Each responsive resolution submitted after the Hearing Process will be presented and debated on the floor of the Annual Meeting according to the rules outlined below.

C. Preparations of Resolutions:

Resolutions may be prepared and introduced by the following individuals and/or organizations:

1. Any local church of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, provided the resolution has been approved for submission by the congregation or by the official governing body of that congregation; certification of any vote must be reported by the church when the resolution is submitted;
2. Any structural entity created by the bylaws of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ;
3. The Board of Directors of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ; and/or
4. At least any five delegates certified and/or elected to an Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

D. Submitting Resolutions:

Each resolution must be submitted in writing. Persons or organizations submitting a resolution shall be clearly identified in the body of the resolution. Each resolution shall state clearly what action or position is contemplated. Wording, insofar as possible, shall avoid conflicting or ambiguous interpretation. Each resolution must be concise. Each resolution shall be typed with line numbers. Any improperly drafted resolution will be returned for re-writing. This resolution will be resubmitted to the Conference Office postmarked within two weeks of return postmark. Accompanying statements (“Whereas” statements) must include Biblical and/or theological rationale and must be submitted with the resolution. Any accompanying statements (“Whereas” statements) will be published with the official minutes of the Annual Meeting but will not be subject to action or vote. Persons or organizations submitting a resolution are also encouraged to provide additional resources (articles, websites, etc.) to aid in further study and discernment of delegates and local churches of the Conference. These additional resources will be available online.

Resolutions in Classes I, II, III, and IV must be received by the office of the Minnesota Conference by the first Monday following the first Saturday of March prior to the Annual Meeting or eight weeks prior to a Special Meeting, so that all delegates, local churches and other parties may have adequate time for their consideration.

All resolutions will be referred to the Resolutions Group. The Resolutions Group is made up of the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group Chair or designee, the Moderator or designee from the Board of Directors, and the Conference Minister. The Resolutions Group may also consult with the Conference Finance Committee when there are possible financial implications; or with other entities within the Conference if they may be impacted by passage of the resolution. If the Resolutions Group receives more than one resolution with essentially the same position or action on the same issue, the Resolutions Group will seek to arbitrate, through the writers and/or representatives involved an acceptable single resolution for presentation to the delegates. The Resolutions Group may edit any resolution for form and clarity, so long as the substance of the resolution is not changed. If the resolution repeats substantively an earlier resolution adopted by the Minnesota Conference in an Annual Meeting or Special Meeting or current policy of the Conference, it will be returned to the sponsor with the earlier resolution or policy and not be forwarded to the Annual or Special Meeting. Resolutions will not be forwarded if they duplicate current policy, contain personal attacks or blatantly offensive language, or are inconsistent with the polity of the Minnesota Conference and the United Church of Christ. People who wish to dispute the ruling of the Resolutions Group may ask for agenda time to present their resolution to the Board of Directors prior to the Annual or Special Meeting.

The Resolutions Group will report each acceptable resolution to the Annual or Special Meeting delegates without recommendation. As soon as a resolution is approved, the accompanying statements (“Whereas” statements), the resolution (“Therefore” statements”) and any additional resources will be posted online. Each resolution shall be included in written form both in a mailing to clergy and each local church for distribution to Delegates and in the packet received at the meeting. Delegates and local church pastors are encouraged to share each resolution with their local church governing bodies and engage in discussion with governing body members and other members of their local church where possible.

E. Procedure at Annual or Special Meeting:

The procedure for presenting a resolution at Annual or Special Meeting shall be as follows: Each resolution must have a person who represents the delegate or group submitting the resolution present at the plenary and hearing session of the Annual or Special Meeting to serve as spokesperson for that resolution. A resolution without a spokesperson present will not be considered. When the resolution is initially presented in plenary session, the spokesperson shall have two minutes to communicate the need for the resolution and why the action called for by the resolution meets that need, all in the nature of explication not advocacy. The spokesperson will then read at least the “Therefore statements” of the resolution or the spokesperson may defer the reading to the Board/Annual Meeting Secretary. Only clarifying questions will be permitted at this plenary session. Where relevant, the Conference Minister or designee may provide short and long term implications of any commitments, primarily financial and staff time, expected of the Conference. No vote will be entertained at this initial presentation.

Thereafter, there will be at least one hearing session for each resolution. A neutral Hearing Moderator designated by the Resolutions Group shall convene each hearing session. A hearing will be for informational purposes and for amendment or modification to the resolution with the consent of the resolution spokesperson. Each Hearing Moderator will be trained or familiarized with the role by AMPWG Chair or designee.

Each amendment and/or substitute resolution agreed upon during a hearing session shall be brought to the Board/Annual Meeting Secretary (preferably in typed form). The Board/Annual Meeting Secretary shall prepare digital slide(s) to be projected onto the video screen(s) and/or provide one hard copy per delegate when deemed necessary. Any amendment and/or substitute resolution will be brought to the floor of the Meeting for action at the time the resolution is scheduled for discussion.

The Hearing Moderator will provide an oral report on the results of the hearing. This report should include a summary of the diverse perspectives offered at the hearing.

The spokesperson for the resolution will move adoption of the resolution to be voted upon. If the resolution has been amended at the hearing, the spokesperson shall read the amended resolution (“Therefore” statements) or the spokesperson may defer the reading to the Board/Annual Meeting Secretary. The spokesperson shall then be granted up to three minutes to advocate for the passage of the resolution as described in Section F. 1 of this document. An amendment or substitute resolution may also be made from the floor. No amendment or substitute resolution will be considered until it is presented to the Annual Meeting Moderator in clearly written (preferably typed) form.

F. Debate on Resolutions: (This is a guideline based on previous passed rules, but this rule must be voted on at the beginning at the next Annual Meeting as part of the Standing Rules)

- a. When necessary, due to the number of resolutions to be considered in the time available at the Annual Meeting, the Moderator may recommend, subject to the agreement of two-thirds of the voting delegates, the following limits on time:
 - 1) Debate on each resolution shall be limited to three minutes each for opening statements, pro and con.
 - 2) Additional debate shall be limited to speeches of not more than two minutes each.
 - 3) Debate on any amendment shall be limited to two minutes for any opening argument, pro and con, and to one minute for any supporting argument, pro and con, per amendment;

4) Debate shall alternate between pro and con and shall be closed after up to three pro and three con speakers.

b. By agreement of two-thirds of the voting delegates, the body may reconsider previous action and extend as well as limit debate.

G. Forums:

Some issues or concerns may not be ready for presentation as a resolution; in which case a forum may be held where issues or concerns are presented and discussed. Forum leaders may seek definitions and help to illuminate alternatives, allowing sufficient time for questions and suggestions from the participants and encouraging involvement in all aspects of the forum. Any forum, if a consensus exists among the participants, may present a Class VII Responsive resolution to the Annual Meeting.

Any church group or individual wanting to hold a forum shall contact the Chairperson of the Annual Meeting Planning Work Group to make the necessary arrangements.

H. Rules for Presentation in Plenary:

A motion to postpone temporarily, “lay on the table,” may be followed by a motion to resume consideration, “to take from the table,” at the same or any subsequent plenary session during that Annual Meeting. All resolutions and motions, including amendments thereto, other than those dealing with procedural matters, shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Annual Meeting immediately following presentation. *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, unless otherwise provided for, shall govern all proceedings of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Annual Meeting Planning Work Group shall propose to the assembled delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ such other rules as it deems necessary for the orderly processing of business regarding resolutions.

I. Publication of Resolutions

Approved resolutions (“Whereas” statements and “Therefore” statements) will be posted online as soon as possible following the Annual Meeting. Delegates and local pastors are encouraged to report back to their local church governing bodies and/or membership gatherings regarding these resolutions. All approved resolutions (“Whereas” statements and “Therefore” statements) will be included in the minutes of the Annual Meeting.

J. Resolution Accountability

The Conference Minister or designee will report back to future Annual Meetings the activities that have been carried forth related to past resolutions. The report will be included as part of the written reports submitted to the Annual Meeting or be given orally during the plenary prior to the introduction of new resolutions. Updates on implementation of resolutions may also be provided through other regular communications of the Conference.

The Resolution Process: A Worksheet (Revised October 2014)
Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ

Any proposed resolution must be submitted to the Minnesota Conference Office prior to the first Monday of March. Any improperly drafted resolution will be returned for re-writing. A re-written resolution must be re-submitted with postmark no later than two weeks of return postmark. Please complete the following information. Please be brief. Each resolution should be typed, with numbered lines in no smaller than ten point type. For further assistance, see the enclosed materials on the Resolution Process.

Title of Resolution:

Date Resolution is Submitted:

Name of Submitting Body or Persons (including an identified Spokesperson):

(Please include complete names, mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of submitters.)

Summary Statement of Intent of the Resolution:

Background and Supporting Statement:

(In the “Whereas” statements, please include reasons for the proposed action, historical facts concerning the issue or concern, as well as biblical and theological statements.)

Resolution:

(In the “Therefore” statements provide text of the resolution to be voted upon, which shall include the specific action(s) to be taken.)

Additional Resources:

(Consider providing a listing of resources { articles, websites, etc. } for further study and answering questions.)

The resolution will conclude with the following standard statements:

Funding: Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected entities and the funds available.

Implementation: The Conference Minister, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the Minnesota Conference UCC will determine the implementing body.