

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF VERMONT.

WHEREAS the prophet Micah declares that God requires us to “do justice and love kindness” (6:8) and

WHEREAS our beloved United Church of Christ has adopted as words on the official symbol of our church “that they may all be one” (John 21:17ff), and

WHEREAS we remember Jesus’ instruction that if we are about to offer our gift to God at the altar and there remember that our brother or sister has something against us, we are to leave our gift there in front of the altar, go at once and be reconciled to our brother or sister and then come back and offer our gift to God (Matthew 5:23, 24), and

WHEREAS, conditions of racism, racial intolerance and negative stereotyping exist within our communities, schools, homes, workplaces, and even within our churches, and these conditions and attitudes contradict the message of the Gospel and the life, ministry, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and

WHEREAS, a variety of interpretations of Vermont history are coming forth and there is a growing body of research and an expanding knowledge-base regarding the history of indigenous people, including the Abenaki, of Vermont.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ acknowledges that even though some steps have been taken by the Conference to reach out to indigenous peoples, including the Abenaki, we admit we have often not been either as understanding or respectful as we might have; for this we grieve and for this we intend to make amends.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, as the Vermont Conference, take seriously our obligation to speak on behalf of and with the dispossessed and disenfranchised people in our midst, including the indigenous people of Vermont.

FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference calls upon its ministers, laity, committees, administrators and local churches to make a strong and faith-centered effort to remove the burden of racism, racial intolerance and negative stereotyping that has been the experience of the indigenous peoples of Vermont for over 200 years, and calls upon the Department of Mission to further implement this resolution.