

221st Annual Meeting

of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ

Fairlee, VT

April 29 - 30, 2016

Plenary I

Friday, April 29, 2016

10:00 am

Stage right from the podium stands a small structure, in the shape of an empty church building, clad in blank blue (roof) and white (sides) panels.

Welcome is given by Mr. Malcolm Chase, Moderator of the 221st annual meeting of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ.

A hymn of Invocation is led by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon -- "Come, Lord, Jesus Come." Peter Amidon makes announcement about choir. If you want to be in the choir, please pick up the music and come to practice!

10:10 -- Malcolm Chase gavels the 221st meeting to order. "Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome at this conference,

1

Rev. Lynn Bujnak announces quorum.

Guests to be granted privilege of voice without vote are introduced:

- Keynote speaker -- Bishop Dwayne D. Royster
- Peter and Mary Alice Amidon
- Gary Schulte, conference minister in NH
- Dinny Adamson, Hopkins Bookstore
- Gloria Vicente, global ministries
- Mollie Landers , outdoor ministries

Other guests introduced:

- Rev. Arnold Thomas, former Vermont Conference Minister, and serving now as interim, so he has voice and vote.

It is moved by Andy Nagy-Benson and seconded by Martha Peck to grant voice without vote to those listed as not having it already.

The motion passed unanimously.

Other introductions are made:

- Board of directors:

- Rev. Andy Nagy-Benson, Rev. Debbie Ingram, Ms. Wendy Farrell, Rev. Michael Ford, Mr. Chris Heintz, Rev. Amy Pitton, Ms. Anne Miller, Ms. Sherry Baer
- Annual Meeting Planning Committee:
 - Ms. Gail Compton, Ms. Ann Vivian, Ms. Joanne Hardy, Ms. Liz Sykas-Ringenberg, Rev. Judy Waible, Rev. Amanda Lape Freeberg, Rev. Daniel Cooperrider, Rev. Susan Cooke-Kittredge, Rev. Alan Parker, Ms. Jeanne Zammataro, Mr. Malcolm Chase,
- Conference Staff:
 - Rev. Lynn Bujnak, Rev. James Thomas, Rev. Pamela Lucas, Rev. Mark Pitton, Jesse Davis
- Time keepers: Jeanne Zammataro and Malcolm Chase
Speakout coordinator: Rev. Debbie Ingram

A motion is made to accept:

- Registrars: Jesse Davis, Judy Waible
- Scribes: Rev. Peter Plagge and Mr. David Durfee. David Durfee is also serving as parliamentarian.

Motion passes unanimously.

The Staff of Lake Morey Conference Center is acknowledge and applause given.

10:30 -- The minutes of April 2015 are moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

It is moved and seconded to adopt definitions and procedures for the meeting. (Doc. C)
No discussion. Document C, Definitions and Procedures, passes unanimously.

It is moved and seconded to adopt the Covenant for Dialogue (Doc. D)
Document D, the Covenant for Dialogue is adopted unanimously and read aloud together.

10:40 -- Gloria Vicente gives presentation on UCC Global Ministries

10:50 -- Mollie Landers and Nancy Fowler give presentation on Outdoor Ministries

Nancy -- What and where are sacred spaces? Camp for many is one of those places. Covenant hills no longer offers its former camping program. What to do?

Mollie -- Today is a celebration of camping cooperation between Vermont and New Hampshire. Outdoor ministries about being the church in a different way. What camp is like at Horton Center in Gorham, NH. There will also be a session of UCC camp at Rock Point Vermont. Camp is a place of radical hospitality and where UCC values are lived. "A place I can really by myself."

11:00 am -- Worship

Plenary II

Friday, April 29, 2016

As delegates and guests gather they find, on their seats, simple paper “person” cutouts, to be decorated and put in the offering plates in Plenary III.

1:20 pm -- M. Chase calls us to order with a Bette Midler lyric -- “From a distance”
Peter and Mary Alice Amidon lead us in “I Still Have Joy.”

Speakouts

1. Pat Marshall, Wells River -- Promotion of the sale of book written by Rev. Dr. Mary Elizabeth Waters -- “Testify to the Life -- the spiritual Biography of Andy Gustafson.” It is worth a read.
2. Shout out to Partners in Service, for retirees looking for active retirement.
3. Amy Pitton, Bethany United Church of Christ, Montpelier, -- Our theme for this meeting is being church. We are going to deconstruct a cardboard church building and place pieces of it around the room. Please write on them about the ways the church is the church for you and your congregation. Also, you were given a paper person when you came in after lunch. It is for the offering for tonight -- please decorate the paper person and place it in the offering plate tonight.
4. Danielle Watchford -- Speaking on behalf of UCC disabilities ministry. Helping embrace diversity in congregations and teaching about opening arms to communities that may not walk through the doors otherwise.
5. Amanda Lape-Freeberg -- Thanks for your prayers after my macula surgery. Holding ones head down after surgery so long makes an extraordinary experience. I would also like to pitch my son and husband, Caleb and Bruce. They will come to your church to do music of any kind.

3

1:45 -- Financial Reports

Treasurer’s Report -- Hal Drury.

- I happily report that 2015 was our best year in the past 5 years.
- Friends of the Vermont Conference giving increased to \$18,055 -- a \$4,000 increase.
- Finances continue to be managed expertly and prudently by Jim Thomas.
- In 2015 the portfolio, while down somewhat, remains in good shape currently \$950,580. Neither gloom nor euphoria, just confidence, is an appropriate response.
- The board encourages an addition 1% of local church operating expenses per year be given to OCWM to full tithe and beyond if possible. Please consider sending to conference on monthly or quarterly basis. Please consider personally contributing to Friends of the Conference.
- Divestment from fossil fuel investment. We recognize this concern and are looking at ways to consider green energy and eliminate our hold in fossil fuel companies by the end of 2016. Thank you for your support.

Financial Resolutions -- Jim Thomas

- Please thank Hal Drury who is finishing up three years as conference treasurer. As Hal said, 2015 was a rebound year -- the negative effects of the recession that began in 2008 finally began to reverse. In that span, we dropped more than \$100,000 In OCWM, Per Capita and Friends. In 2015 all three were up.
- We have allowed ourselves to take out \$29,000 out of our endowment. But we did not have to do that this year, and still ended up in the black.
- We have also previously passed a resolution stating that if we do end in a surplus, we will pass a percentage of that along to the national setting of the UCC. This year we sent an extra \$6,800. And so we ended the year with \$3,600 surplus. OCWM increased by more than \$50,000 in 2015!
- We had a good year but we are a long ways from where we could be. If every church contributed 10 percent of their operating budget to OCWM would have brought in \$1.2 million and not \$384,786.
- The proposed 2017 budget anticipates that our strong showing in 2015 will continue. The budget holds expenses constant, except for staff compensation which is increased every year by elements beyond control. Also this year we gave a cost of living (COL) increase. We did not give a COL last year.
- This year we will continue to use trailing formula to draw on unrestricted fund, and deliver 30% to National Setting, and 70% to Vermont Conference.

What do we do with a budget that has expenses of \$688,000? This money is ministry money -- and we stand alongside you in ministry.

- Disaster Relief,
- pastor's convocation,
- New Pastor support Group,
- Continuing Education Events,
- Camp Agape,
- Horton Center,
- Camping Scholarships,
- Vermont Congregational Home,
- Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council,
- Youth Events (NYE this year!),
- Church vitality,
- retreat leadership,
- planning,
- Conference Events.
- Staff -- Search and Call, Pastor Support, Websites, e-newsletters, Facebook, Assistance of pastors in Crisis, being pastors for pastors.

Please take what you learn here and share it with your local congregation. You are our local church evangelists -- sharing the good news of the United Church of Christ. We also encourage

involvement in the strengthening of our mutual covenant, by inviting your association and conference into the life of your congregation.

Document F is the financial resolutions document. It is read by Jim Thomas.

1. That the division of undesignated Basic Support for Our Church's Wider Mission income for 2017 be 70% for the Vermont Conference and 30% for the national setting of the United Church of Christ.
2. That the Vermont Conference share with the national setting of the United Church of Christ 70% of any operating budget surplus at the conclusion of the 2017 fiscal year.
3. That the Conference continues to encourage each church to increase its Basic Support for Our Church's Wider Mission by 1% per year of its operating budget expenses; moving toward a full tithe (10%) and beyond if possible.
4. That the 2017 Vermont Per Capita be set at \$12.40. (Note: The association portion of Per Capita is in addition to the Conference amount.)
5. That the churches be encouraged to pay Basic Support for Our Church's Wider Mission and Per Capita at least quarterly.
6. That the Board of Directors be authorized to take funds from the unrestricted reserves for any emergency deficit in 2017.
7. That the Board of Directors be authorized to adjust the 2017 operating budget as unforeseen circumstances require, within the spending limits established in the budget.
8. That the Conference adopt a 2017 Operating Budget of not more than \$668,002 in expense and not less than \$668,002 in income, with the goal of ending 2017 with a balanced budget.

5

Document F is Moved and seconded. Discussion of motion is tabled until Plenary IV.

2:10 --The *Resolution on a Moral Economy* is presented by Rev. Ken White, College Street Congregational Church.

- From Paul's Jerusalem Council, came the agreement, that no matter our disagreements, we all agree to take care of the poor. Roman Emperor Julian later argued that the best way to put an end to Christianity was to let them kill themselves! And to take care of our people as Christians do theirs.
- We now live in a democracy, so we all have responsibilities to move toward things that matter to us, like a Moral Economy. The facts of the resolution are not surprises. You know them.
- What it means to have a moral economy may be open to some debate, but ultimately we say that it is one that uplifts the dignity of human lives, and that, we can all agree on as a goal.

The resolution is read by Rev. White.

Resolution on a Moral Economy

Submitted by College Street Congregational Church

WHEREASE, all the major indicators of poverty in Vermont are trending in the wrong direction; that is, the number of Vermonters on food stamps is going up, the rate of homeless

Vermonters is increasing, the percentage of families, especially single mothers with young children, who live below the federal poverty line is increasing;
WHEREAS, the Vermont economy overall is actually growing, yet real wages are down and real median household income is declining;
WHEREAS, our Scriptural prophetic tradition decries community choices that result in economic impoverishment in times of increasing abundance;
WHEREAS, the Scriptures and teachings of all major faith traditions speak on behalf of those suffering from economic injustice, in which some have more than they need and others do not have enough to live on;
WHEREAS, people of faith from many traditions can agree that we are called to bring about a moral economy, which can be defined as one that honors the dignity of all people in these ways: By providing full opportunity for all to express their gifts and abilities through work and play. By ensuring that all work is justly valued. By ensuring that all who are unable to work because of societal or personal limitations are respected. By ensuring that the most vulnerable among us are respected. By acting as good stewards of the earth and its resources, and preserving life for future generations.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ

1. Call on each of the local churches to educate ourselves about issues that affect our 27 development of a moral economy
2. Engage in the issues to which we are called by listening to congregation members, individuals who utilize our congregations' charitable services, and members of the community to understand ways in which the current economy excludes them
3. Work both within our churches and with other communities of faith to explore and act on ways of honoring the economic dignity of those in our local community
4. Effect change on issues state-wide by supporting the community organizing efforts of Vermont Interfaith Action and other organizations working toward economic justice around specific legislation and budget priorities that will lead to a moral economy

6

The Resolution on a Moral Economy is moved and seconded. Discussion of the motion is tabled until Plenary IV.

2:20 -- The *Resolution to Support Refugee Resettlement In Vermont* is presented by Rev. Bert Marshall, Brattleboro Centre

- Gov. Shumlin spoke of accepting resettling refugees into Vermont, specifically, Syrian refugees coming this fall. The Board of Mission sent a short letter to the Governor -- the essence of which was acknowledgment of the Vermont United Church of Christ's support of those efforts. Growing out of that letter is this resolution to consider refugee resettlement on a broad basis.

Lise Sparrow reads the resolution.

Resolution To Support Refugee Resettlement in Vermont

Submitted by the Mission Committee of the Vermont Conference of the United Church Of Christ.

Class I

WHEREAS, the National United Church of Christ has claimed itself to be a church of “extravagant welcome”, and put forth the slogan “No Matter who you are or where you are on your journey, you are welcome here”, and

WHEREAS, the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ is itself a Just Peace Conference and is supporting the theme “Be The Church” in 2016 which includes caring for the poor, rejecting racism, fighting for the powerless, sharing earthly and spiritual resources and embracing diversity, and

WHEREAS our forefathers and mothers were themselves refugees from religious and political oppression and economic scarcity, and

WHEREAS we remember the history laid down in scripture in which the Jewish people were refugees out of Egypt, and later taken captive in Babylon and even Jesus, his mother and father were exiled into Egypt, and

WHEREAS we know Jesus has said “where you have done this to the least of these you have done it to me”, and

WHEREAS Vermont presently receives and supports refugees from some 80 countries around the world and is going to receive refugees from Syria in the next two years who will need support of many kinds.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Vermont Conference of the UCC

1. Make known to Governor Shumlin and the legislators and representatives of Vermont that UCC churches are in support of welcoming Syrians refugees and those from other countries.
2. Call on churches throughout the State of Vermont to educate ourselves about the religious and cultural differences, as well as, the profound physical, psychological and spiritual needs of refugees as they enter our communities.
3. Work both within our churches and with other communities of faith to explore and act on ways of honoring the religious and cultural diversity of the refugees who arrive and live in our state.
4. Work collaboratively with the Vermont Department of Refugee Resettlement to identify and communicate specific and immediate needs of refugees to our churches and communities and to provide creative solutions to those needs, where and whenever possible,
5. To make visible the welcome we are providing, while keeping the confidence and welfare of the refugees in mind.

Authors: Lise Sparrow, Jeremy Kirk, Sally May and Laurel Cashman

**2:27 -- The Resolution to Support Refugee Resettlement is moved and seconded.
Discussion of the Motion was tabled until Plenary IV.**

The keynote address, given by Bishop Dwayne Royster, concludes Plenary II’s business.

Plenary III

Friday, April 29, 2016

The meeting is called to order at 7:00 pm

Jim Thomas explains that offering taken at the Vermont Conference Annual Meeting will go to the Vermont Recovery Network, an organization devoted to helping people find, maintain and enhance their recovering from opioid addiction through peer support and other services. Turning Point Centers throughout the state are parts of the network. For more information, visit: www.vtrecoverynetwork.org

Jim Thomas prays and the offering is received.

Rev. Mark Pitton reminds attendees to write good things their churches are doing to “Be the Church” on the panels which once covered the little church but are now around the room.

Speakouts

1. Grace Cleary -- The summer lunch grant program is a part of our Department of Mission. I work with the summer lunch grant coordinator Mary Lou Decosta. Approximately 35 UCC congregations have ongoing summer lunch programs. Not all need money, but conference wants to give you money! 44% of children who go to school have insufficient food in Vermont.
2. Cathy Clark -- Member of the Clergy Convocation planning committee. This is a great three day event schedule for September, 19-21. It will be held at Rockpoint this year. Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer will be our keynote speaker.
3. Cleopace Mukeba -- From the Vermont Ibutwa Initiative. Money from a Make a Difference Campaign started the Genesis Fund of our Global Ministries and the Vermont Ibutwa Initiative just received a \$12,000 grant from the Genesis Fund.. I simply want you to visit our table and to invite you to invite us to your churches.
4. Lori Chipman and Nancy Fowler -- On behalf of Mollie Landers, thanking the VT Conference for your warm welcome. We are looking for clergy volunteers for the week at Rockpoint. Because the Horton Center has a safe conduct policy requiring two counselors per cabin, we also need volunteers there.

8

7:30 pm -- Jim Thomas recognizes church who met the goals for OCWM and also churches who were five for five.

5-For-5 Churches:

Bennington Second Congregational UCC Brandon Congregational Church Brattleboro, First Congregational UCC Charlotte Congregational Church	Jeffersonville, Second Congregational Church Lyndonville, First Congregational Church First Congregational Church of Newbury UCC United Church of Northfield
---	---

Malletts Bay Congregational Church Cornwall, First Congregational UCC United Church of Craftsbury Danville Congregational Church UCC United Church of Dorset & E. Rupert East Arlington Federated Church East Corinth Congregational Church Essex Junction, First Congregational Church Greensboro United Church of Christ	Pittsford Congregational Church UCC Randolph Center, First Congregational Church UCC Richmond Congregational Church UCC Congregational Church of S. Hero UCC Springfield, First Congregational Church UCC Congregational Church of Vergennes UCC Waitsfield United Church of Christ Wells River Congregational Church UCC Weybridge Congregational Church UCC
--	---

Last year there were sixteen churches who met the 5-for-5 challenge; this year, twenty -six!

We had eleven churches make the conference OCWM set goals last year; this year, thirty!

Bennington Second Congregational UCC Brandon Congregational Church Brownington Village Congregational UCC Castleton, Federated Malletts Bay Congregational Church United Church of Craftsbury Danville Congregational Church UCC Dummerston Congregational UCC East Arlington Federated Church East Corinth Congregational Church Greensboro United Church of Christ Hardwick, United Church Greater Hartford UCC Hartland, First Congregational Church UCC Hinesburg United Church UCC Lyndonville, First Congregational Church	Marlboro Meeting House Montpelier, Bethany UCC Newport, United Church Post Mills Congregational Church Randolph, Bethany Church UCC Randolph Center, First Congregational Church UCC Richmond Congregational Church UCC Rutland, Grace Congregational UCC Sharon Congregational Church UCC Springfield, First Congregational Church UCC Underhill, United Church Waitsfield United Church of Christ West Dover Congregational Church Windham Congregational Church
---	---

Ministerial Compensation Guideline (Document I) is presented by Jim Thomas. Please see the Vermont Conference website for the 15 page document.

The Ministerial Compensation Guidelines for 2016 are moved and seconded. Discussion of the Guidelines is tabled until Plenary IV.

Nominating Report - Lucy Samara, chair

L. Samara introduces rest of the committee:

We are excited about the final slate of people who have agreed to serve. I thank both the people who so carefully and thoughtfully either accepted or declined our invitations. Please see the Vermont Conference website for this 12 page document.

7:40 L. Bujnak offers recognitions or ordinations, anniversaries, retirements, resignations, transitions.

Deaths. We remember:

Quechee Community Church

Rev. Malcolm S. Crook

Rev. David E. Person,

Rev. W. William Crawford

Rev. Michael D. Henkle

Rev. Richard Miller

Rev. Lynda J. Hadley

Rev. Dr. Meredith Brook Handspicker

Rev. Dr. Jean Andrews

Rev. Gordon R. Naser

Lois Peeler

Frank Horgan

Lucy Parker

Carol George

Pat Morgan

David Damcott

and numerous others named from the floor.

L. Bujnak leads us in prayer.

7:53 -- Rev. Bujnak, offers the State of the Conference address.

Following the address, it is noted that the annual meeting offering total for tonight is \$2101

10

M. Peck asks Rev. Bujnak about her sabbatical.

L. Bujnak -- "The sabbatical is mid-May through mid-September. I had what I thought were great plans, but the Board of Directors asked me to rewrite the plan with more of "what makes my heart sing," included within it. So I have. It now includes a guided retreat, watercolor instruction and time for painting, an enneagram course and several things to do with music. I very much appreciate this opportunity.

Also, Carole Carlson will be with the Conference at half-time.

Announcements:

- Peacemakers breakfast is at 7:15 is in Terrace Ballroom.

Meeting recessed until 8:45am April 30.

After the meeting was recessed members of the Board and the Annual Meeting Planning Committee gather the cutout persons from the offering and place them so they may be seen in the open little church structure.

Plenary IV

Saturday, April 30, 2016

8:50 am -- The Rev. Katelyn Macrae calls us into order and into morning worship.

9:00 -- Speakouts

- Amy Pitton -- Friends of the Conference. George Clooney is here by the Friends of the Conference table and if you make a donation to the Friends of the Conference, you can have a selfie with him and be put on the list of the Walk of Fame.
- Susanna Griefen -- On Pentecost, I am retiring. I am so grateful to all of my associates. S. Griefen leads us in prayer for all of those churches in transition.
- Jim Thomas -- Recognizes Dinny Adamson who will be retiring this summer. The Hopkins bookshop has been part of Vermont Conference events for 30 years. Dinny has been here for 32 of those years and has owned the Hopkins bookshop for 29 of them. A standing ovation is offered.

9:10 -- Jim Thomas opens discussion for the Ministerial Compensation Guidelines (Doc. I) which was moved in Plenary III.

There is no discussion. The vote is unanimous.

Financial Resolutions

Yesterday we presented and moved the 8 resolutions

11

Chris Heintz -- Grace Church in Rutland -- I have had the honor of serving on the BOD for several years. One of the difficult things we had to do was to reduce one of the Conference Ministers to part time. Now that we've had this rebound year, I hoped that we had replenished that position to full time, but in fact it is still part time. I am speaking to the Board to raise that position to full time. We have a huge time of transition in front of us with 42 churches seeking new leadership. We need full time ministry and more. I encourage the conference to reinstate.

J. Thomas -- the Board struggled long and mightily with this question. We ended up where we left it last year. Because this surplus and increase in OCWM is new, we want to wait and see how it holds. We believe we went through the process in the best way possible.

Betty Edson -- wonders if we might change the 30%- 70% split of giving OCWM money to 60% - 40%.

J. Thomas -- That would be another \$50,000 to our budget and the budget is currently balanced. Where we find that other \$50,000 is a question. The rebound allowed us to stabilize even with the three-quarters move in one of the associate positions. I would argue that we do not want to change yet, but maybe next year. That said, this is up to you.

No further discussion. The motion carries unanimously.

Resolution on a Moral Economy -- presented by the Rev. Ken White, pastor of College Street Church.

The Resolution was presented and in Plenary II and recorded there.

There is no discussion. The resolution passes unanimously.

Resolution To Support Refugee Resettlement -- presented by the Rev. Lise Sparrow, pastor of Guilford Community Church

Rev. Sparrow notes that she has been apprised of two changes:

1. I did not list the name of the Vermont refugee resettlement program correctly. Number 4 in the Be It Resolved section -- Instead of Vermont Department of Refugee Resettlement -- **it is corrected to be the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. The Correction is agreed to as a friendly amendment; there is no objection.**

2. Marsh Hudson Knapp from Fairhaven -- **I stand to offer a friendly amendment to number 1 in the Be It Resolved Section.**

Number 1 currently reads: "Make known to Governor Shumlin and the legislators and representatives of Vermont that UCC churches are in support of welcoming Syrian refugees and those from other countries."

Because of Congregational Polity being as it is, I would suggest we consider the language be changed to read: "Therefore let it be resolved that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ, urge all churches within the Conference to make known to Governor Shumlin and the legislators and representatives of Vermont that UCC churches are in support of welcoming Syrians refugees and those from other countries."

12

Chris Heintz -- suggests we remove Governor Shumlin's name, since he will soon no longer be governor.

Mark Pitton -- I am opposed to the amendment. I think it would be better to amend by saying that "At our annual meeting on April 30, 2016 the delegates of local churches of the Vermont Conference of the UCC, voted to make known to the governor and the legislators and the representatives of Vermont that we are in support of welcoming Syrian refugees."

Marshall Hudson- Knapp accepts the friendly amendment to his friendly amendment.

Alan Perkins of Grace Church, Rutland -- I would suggest the addition of a word --- before support, add "enthusiastic."

Carole Carlson - suggests that Lise Sparrow wordsmith this and bring it back to be voted on. **C. Carlson moves to lay the motion on the table. Motion is seconded and approved unanimously.**

9:32 -- Keynote Address is offered by Bishop Dwayne Roster

10:00 -- Lise Sparrow presents a revised version of the Resolution to Support Refugee Resettlement in Vermont.

L. Sparrow Reads the Resolution

WHEREAS, the National United Church of Christ has claimed itself to be a church of “extravagant welcome”, and put forth the slogan “No Matter who you are or where you are on your journey, you are welcome here”, and

WHEREAS, the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ is itself a Just Peace Conference and is supporting the theme “Be The Church” in 2016 which includes caring for the poor, rejecting racism, fighting for the powerless, sharing earthly and spiritual resources and embracing diversity, and

WHEREAS our forefathers and mothers were themselves refugees from religious and political oppression and economic scarcity, and

WHEREAS we remember the history laid down in scripture in which the Jewish people were refugees out of Egypt, and later taken captive in Babylon and even Jesus, his mother and father were exiled into Egypt, and

WHEREAS we know Jesus has said “where you have done this to the least of these you have done it to me”, and

WHEREAS Vermont presently receives and supports refugees from some 80 countries around the world and is going to receive refugees from Syria in the next two years who will need support of many kinds.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ

1. At the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ, on April 30th, 2016, the delegates of the local churches declare to the Governor and Legislators of Vermont our enthusiastic support for the welcome of Syrian refugees and those from other countries.
2. Call on churches throughout the State of Vermont to educate ourselves about the religious and cultural differences, as well as, the profound physical, psychological and spiritual needs of refugees as they enter our communities.
3. Work both within our churches and with other communities of faith to explore and act on ways of honoring the religious and cultural diversity of the refugees who arrive and live in our state.
4. Work collaboratively with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program to identify and communicate specific and immediate needs of refugees to our churches and communities and to provide creative solutions to those needs, where and whenever possible,
5. To make visible the welcome we are providing, while keeping the confidence and welfare of the refugees in mind

Speaker from Danville -- tells about taking on a refugee in their community. It's hard work. Don't vote yes, unless you're willing to participate.

Susan Maginniss, Westmore Church --Number 1 should read, so as to avoid redundancy -- "at the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference of the UCC, on April 30th, 2016, the delegates of the local churches declare to the Governor and the legislators of Vermont our enthusiastic support for the welcome of Syrian refugees and those from other countries. **This proposed change to Lise Sparrow's amendment to the wording of the resolution is accepted without objection. The amended moved amendment to the wording of the resolution is passed unanimously.** There is no further discussion on the amended full resolution. **The amended resolution is passed unanimously.**

10:15 The meeting recesses for workshops.

Plenary V

Saturday, April 30

Before the session begins, the panels, now with messages about the church being the church, are brought near the structure, now filled with persons, each unique yet all the same in important ways, and taken from there out into the community.

14

1:15 -- Speakouts

1. Peter Amidon -- My advice on how to do choir: The choir at our church is a drop in choir. We have choir all months of the year. We have a few different people who take the choir directors place for vacations, etc.. We rehearse once per week at 9am on Sunday. We have a repertoire of anthems. We teach singing and do singing acapella, often. We have a hospice choir. It works!
2. Lynn Wickberg, United Church of Strafford, -- In a prior life, I was involved in community mental health services. Public service announcement: please go home and clean out your medicine cabinets. You will de-clutter your space, and be safer..
3. Cindy, West Newbury Congregational Church -- The Vermont Conference established an affordable retirement home in the area many years ago. Please visit or volunteer at anytime. We are currently full with 13 residents and a waiting list. It's a wonderful place.
4. Val Austin, Second Congregational Church, Londonderry -- I am putting in a plug for increasing volunteers in prison ministry. There are many opportunities to volunteer in Vermont.
5. Robin Junker-Boyce -- First Congregational Church, Thetford Hill, we are looking for a part time musician. We are a growing, fun loving congregation. Contact me!
6. Demaris Tyler, Post Mills Church -- She is paying a tribute to Roger Young who died recently. He hired her to work at Post Mills as musician. She then read a poem about

Holy Humor Sunday she'd recently experienced at Richmond United Church of Christ.
Written by herself.

1:30 -- Elections and Commissioning

There are 2 additions made to the slate of officers presented in the Nominating Report during Plenary III.

Rev. Andy Nagy-Benson, and Jackie Davies of Congregational Church of Middlebury are being nominated for the Addison County representatives to General Synod.

The additions to the Nominating Report are accepted unanimously.

There is no further discussion or comment.

The slate of officers with the added names is passed unanimously.

The body joins together in a commissioning of elected leaders of the Vermont Conference.

1:35 --Rev. Debbie Ingram presents gifts to Bishop Dwayne Royster.

- Vermont notecards
- obligatory maple syrup from Morrisville
- CD of Phish
- CD Grace Potter
- Chris Bohjalyian -- Buffalo Soldier
- Archer Mayor -- Chat
- Piece de resistance -- all 22 episodes of Newhart

15

The assembled body offers a rousing round of applause in appreciation of Bishop Royster's words and presence.

1:40 -- Mal Chase passes the gavel on to Rev. Debbie Ingram.

There is another round of applause.

D. Ingram steps forward and offers Mal his "just rewards" -- a bag of peanut M&M's.

She thanks to the following people:

Bishop Dwayne Royster for his ministry to us and to his congregation and to God's people.

Peter and Mary Alice Amidon for their gifts of ministry of music.

Seth Stoddard for all his help with the technology that helps us see, hear, sing and pray together.

Ann Vivian for making our presentations beautiful and alive.

Rev. Amanda Lape-Freeburg, Rev. Tracy Weatherhogg and Rev. Jared Hamilton and the Worship Well Committee for our liturgies.

The bakers for their gifts of communion bread to become the body of Christ.

Malcolm Chase for his steadfast leadership as this year's Moderator.

Rev. Peter Plagge and David Durfee for serving as this year's scribes.

David Durfee for serving as this year's Parliamentarian.

Our workshop leaders for their wisdom and generosity.

Our Conference Staff for their patient and generous guidance and presence notably Jesse Davis, our Conference staff's Annual Meeting Planning Committee liaison.

The members of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee who spent countless hours working together to bring their passion, experience and energy to make this annual meeting a joyous one:

- Malcolm Chase
- Rev. Debbie Ingram
- Jeanne Zammataro
- Rev. Judy Waible
- Rev. Daniel Cooperrider
- Rev Katelyn Macrae
- Rev. Amanda Lape-Freeberg
- Diane Holme
- Rev. Mary Kay Schueneman
- Ann Vivian
- Rev. Tracy Weatherhogg

Melissa Seaver, Erin O'Shaugnessy and the staff of Lake Morey Resort for their gracious hospitality.

1:42 -- A motion to adjourn following worship is passed with one nay vote.

Worship.

Thanks be to God.