

1 RESOLUTION ON PRISON REFORM AND EDUCATION

2 Submitted by Interfaith Prison Partnership, a Recognized group of the Connecticut
3 Conference UCC
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5 WHEREAS, holy scripture tells us that God dreams of liberty for the prisoners and
6 freedom for those held captive: “Happy is he who.... executes justice for the
7 oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free”
8 (Psalms 146: 7 Revised Standard Version), “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
9 because he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives.” (Isaiah 61:1, Luke
10 4:18 RSV); and

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12 WHEREAS, statistics show that approximately 50% of inmates in all Connecticut prisons
13 have no High School diploma or General Education Diploma¹; and

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15 WHEREAS, the prisoners’ lack of knowledge or skills keep them captive, both in and out
16 of prison; and

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18 WHEREAS, women who have successfully experienced educational opportunities during
19 incarceration are more likely to pursue education upon release, have an increased
20 sense of self esteem, want to live their lives in the present, enjoy the freedom and
21 richness that life offers and are less likely to return to prison; and

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23 WHEREAS, there is no doubt that higher education for prisoners is one of the most
24 effective ways to reduce repeat offenses, reduce crime and lessen the tax payer
25 burden, and

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27 WHEREAS; while statistics from York Correctional Institution concern only the women
28 of that facility, the plight of men in other facilities is similar concerning lack of
29 encouragement to further their educational status while incarcerated; and

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31 WHEREAS, ignorance of the plight of inmates in the Connecticut prison system keeps
32 the situation from changing;

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34 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we the delegates to the 136th Annual Meeting of
35 the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, ask that the Justice
36 and Witness Ministry Team of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church
37 of Christ gather materials and provide all churches in the Conference with
38 resources that will assist them in becoming better informed about the plight of
39 women and men in the Connecticut prison system, helping our churches to
40 become advocates and agents for real change in the lives of offenders from each
41 and every town in Connecticut; and

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43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our Public Policy Advocate inform the churches of
44 upcoming legislation concerning prison reform; and
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46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Connecticut Conference Board of Directors and the
47 Conference Minister are requested to communicate frequently with the
48 Department of Corrections recommending the establishment of incentive
49 programs that will encourage inmates to continue their education while in prison.
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51 ¹Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee, *Recidivism in Connecticut*
52 (Hartford: Connecticut General Assembly, December 2001), 31.