A RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION CALLING FOR ANTI-RACISM AND RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING FOR CLERGY

Submitted by the Racial Justice Ministries Team of the CT Conference UCC, the Spring Glen Church UCC in Hamden, the First Congregational Church of Guilford, & Immanuel Congregational Church in Hartford

WHEREAS, Jesus instructed us in the gospels to reconcile with our neighbor before approaching God’s altar (Matt:5:24); and to remove the log from our own eye before removing the speck from our neighbor’s eye (Matt:7:3); and

WHEREAS, the Hebrew Scriptures teach us that God delights in diversity, that all humanity bears God’s image (Gen:1:26), that Sabbath protections extend to all people in the land (Ex. 20:8-11 and Dt. 5:12-15), that love of neighbor is commanded (Lv. 1:17); and

WHEREAS, the Epistles teach us that Christ came to break down the dividing wall that is the hostility between us that we might be reconciled as one body with diverse members (Eph 2); and

WHEREAS, the Missionary Society of Connecticut has a long history of working on the forefront of racial justice, boasting the first known African American Christian minister to be formally ordained in a predominantly white mainline denomination, having played an active role in the fight to free the captives of the Amistad, and having taken public stands against segregation both here in America and abroad in the recent decades; and

WHEREAS, in the year 2017, the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution calling on all judicatory and educational settings of the denomination to include the study of cultural diversity/sensitivity and institutional racism in clergy preparation and continuing education, and as a requirement for maintaining standing for all persons engaged in authorized ministry within and on behalf of the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, nearly 30 years after the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ became an Open & Affirming body and adopted its Inclusive Non-Discrimination Policy, people of color still experience racism in local churches and at the Conference, racism that is intentional and unintentional, personal and institutional, interpersonal and cultural, offenses that are often committed, condoned, or ignored by clergy; and

WHEREAS, our country has seen both the resurgence of overt white supremacy and continued covert racism embodied in white privilege, sins that require repentance, confession and education in order to be redeemed.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 151st Annual Meeting
of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ urge the Associations of the Conference and their Committees on Ministry to adopt a policy requiring all Authorized Ministers (including Ordained, Limited Standing, Licensed, and Commissioned) to participate in, at minimum, a one-day workshop on racism and racial justice within three years of adoption of the policy or within three years of being granted standing by the Association, and repeat training within each subsequent three to five year period; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Associations of the Conference and their Committees on Ministry to adopt a policy requiring Members In-Discernment to participate in, at minimum, a one-day workshop on racism and racial justice as a prerequisite for ordination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Connecticut Conference to make its Racial Justice Training available for Members-in-Discernment and Authorized Ministers at least twice during each calendar year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Connecticut Conference, working with the Racial Justice Ministries, Regional Ministers, Regional Ministry Teams, and local churches to expand its Racial Justice Training for Christian Educators, Youth Leaders, Sunday School Teachers, Music Directors, Organists, Choir Directors, and other Lay Leaders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Connecticut Conference make available resources to help congregations build allies and better support, encourage, and nurture clergy of color and lay leaders of color; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Connecticut Conference make available resources for clergy to connect their congregations with active anti-racist movements locally, nationally, and globally.