

1992

RESOLUTION: IN SUPPORT OF EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF AIDS

WHEREAS, AS members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we affirm the worth and dignity of each child of God's creation, and are committed to justice and compassion in all relationships, especially with the dispossessed and the suffering; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ has called us to love God and our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22: 37-39); and

WHEREAS, We do not condone the use of illegal drugs, but do believe strongly that our society must deal with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) as expeditiously as possible through human understanding, education, and legislation; and

WHEREAS, The largest group of AIDS victims in Connecticut consists of intravenous drug users, their spouses, and their children; and

WHEREAS, All active intravenous drug users are in danger of developing AIDS through the use of contaminated needles; and

WHEREAS, The Connecticut Legislature has repealed, effective July 1, 1992, Statute 21a-65, which makes the non-medical possession of hypodermic needles a criminal offense; and

WHEREAS, A pilot needle-exchange program in New Haven is proving viable in reducing the spread of AIDS through intravenous drug use and in providing counseling and referral to drug treatment for the participants;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 125th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, call upon the Department of Church in Society to urge the Connecticut legislature to encourage and to fund the establishment of centers where needles and syringes may be exchanged anonymously and without fear of intimidation and where participants are offered education, counseling and referral to drug treatment; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage local churches:

- 1) To educate themselves about AIDS in their communities; and
- 2) To support local efforts such as needle exchange centers to reduce the spread of the AIDS virus.