

RESOLUTION: TO ABOLISH TORTURE NOW – WITHOUT EXCEPTIONS.

WHEREAS, we are all created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and bear the image of the divine inscribed in our bodies and very souls; and

WHEREAS, Jesus teaches that whatever we do to the least of those who are members of God's family, we do to Jesus (Matthew 25:40); and

WHEREAS, Jesus also teaches his followers, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44)"; and

WHEREAS, the writer of Hebrews exhorts all to "Remember.... those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured (Hebrews 13:3)"; and whereas, we remember that Jesus was tortured by the Roman state; and

WHEREAS, the United States has sworn to abide by, the Geneva Conventions, specifically Common Article 3 which prohibits "violence to life and person, in particular.... cruel treatment and torture," and "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment"; and

WHEREAS, Congress has passed and President Bush has signed into law the Military Commission Act of 2006, which makes these time honored and universally accepted protections of Common Article 3 irrelevant and unenforceable, and eviscerates the War Crimes Act of 1996 which defines any violation of Common Article 3 as a war crime; and

WHEREAS, nearly 500 detainees who are being held in Guantanamo, and still others in undisclosed secret prisons around the world, by this legislation, will be denied due protection under the law, including the right of habeas corpus; and

WHEREAS, the effect of this legislation is to decriminalize torture retroactively to September 11, 2001, thereby creating immunity and impunity for those ordering it and those carrying it out; and

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ nationally is a participating member of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture which is calling for the United States to "abolish torture now – without exceptions"; and

WHEREAS, at a press conference on Tuesday, September 19 our Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, joining with an interfaith group of CT religious leaders, spoke out, declaring torture a moral and religious issue and stating that "the moral character and the security of our nation and its people are at stake";

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we the delegates to the 139th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, express our unequivocal opposition to our government's use of and tolerance for torture, in all its forms and methods, including extraordinary rendition and torture by proxy. We oppose torture as a violation of the will and laws of God. We affirm the rule of law, including the War Crimes Act of 1996 and the Geneva Conventions, as the guiding compass for our nation, in times of peace and times of war; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on our Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree and the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference UCC to communicate this stand of the Annual Meeting to President Bush and to the members of CT's Congressional delegation, and we urge the clergy and members of our CT congregations individually to communicate such to these same elected representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CT Conference designate Human Rights Day which falls this year on the second Sunday of Advent (December 10) as a Sunday to remember those who are being tortured around the world and to pray for the abolition of torture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge that the Connecticut Conference, as a Conference, join the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, becoming either a participating or endorsing member of that Campaign, and we urge congregations to consider joining as well; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage all members, clergy and lay, of Connecticut UCC congregations to sign the National Religious Campaign Against Torture statement and in their own way to work without ceasing to oppose torture and to restore respect for the rule of law and the dignity and rights of all human beings, each and all bearers of God's divine image.