

1 **EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS FOR ALL:**
2 **A RESOLUTION CALLING THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE**
3 **TO ADVOCATE FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY**

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5 **A RESOLUTION OF WITNESS**

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7 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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9 WHEREAS, God creates all people and pronounces them good; and

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11 WHEREAS, the Bible affirms and celebrates human expressions of love and partnership, calling
12 us to live out fully that gift of God in responsible, faithful, committed relationships that
13 recognize and respect the image of God in all people; and

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15 WHEREAS, the life and example of Jesus of Nazareth provides a model of radically inclusive
16 love and abundant welcome for all; and

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18 WHEREAS, we proclaim ourselves to be listening to the voice of a Still Speaking God and that
19 at all times in human history, in the words of Pilgrim Pastor John Robinson, we are “verily
20 persuaded the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth from His [sic] holy word”; and

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22 WHEREAS, equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender is an issue deserving of
23 serious, faithful discussion by people of faith, taking into consideration the long, complex history
24 of marriage and family life, layered as it is with cultural practices, economic realities, political
25 dynamics, religious history and biblical interpretations; and

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27 WHEREAS, one’s sexual orientation and gender identity are gifts from God to be discovered
28 without interference from ecclesial authority; and

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30 WHEREAS, God calls many to live in committed, covenanted relationships with partners of
31 their choosing; and

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33 WHEREAS, many UCC pastors and congregations have held commitment services for gay and
34 lesbian couples for some time, consistent with the call to loving, long-term committed
35 relationships and to nurture family life; and

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37 WHEREAS, the United States of America proclaimed in its Declaration of Independence “We
38 hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [sic] are created equal, that they are endowed by
39 their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit
40 of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men [sic], deriving
41 their just powers from the consent of the governed”; and

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43 WHEREAS, the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits government from
44 depriving any person of liberty without “due process of law”; and
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46 WHEREAS, the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits a State from
47 denying “to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws“; and
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49 WHEREAS, the right to enter into marriage with the person of one’s choosing without
50 interference from the state is crucial to one’s pursuit of happiness and free exercise of liberty;
51 and
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53 WHEREAS, the New Mexico Supreme Court’s December 19, 2013 decision to uphold the
54 issuance of marriage licenses to same-sex couples by county clerks has made same-gender
55 marriage legal in New Mexico, which is geographically over one-half of the Southwest
56 Conference; and
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58 WHEREAS, the advocacy of United Church of Christ congregations in New Mexico, who have
59 been advocates for same-gender equality for as long as twenty-five years has been a factor in
60 such decisions in New Mexico; and
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62 WHEREAS, the right to marry whom one chooses is a fundamental right, the denial of which
63 creates a second class status and strips some of significant access to institutional support, rights,
64 and benefits afforded others; and
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66 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has long advocated that all persons are entitled to full
67 civil liberties and equal protection under the law without discrimination related to sexual
68 preference:
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70 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates assembled for the 2014 Annual
71 Meeting of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ declare their full support
72 for marriage equality, which is the right for all persons to pursue happiness in marriage without
73 interference from any governments and regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
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75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the delegates assembled for the 2014 Annual Meeting of the
76 Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ declare their full support that children of
77 families headed by same-gender couples should receive all legal rights and protections.
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79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the covenant partners of the Southwest
80 Conference to prayerfully organize, advocate, agitate, preach and teach for marriage equality,
81 including local, state and national legislation to grant equal marriage rights to couples regardless
82 of gender, and to work against legislation, including constitutional amendments, which denies
83 civil marriage rights to couples based on gender.