RESOLUTION

2019 Annual Gathering of the Northern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ

Title: Survival and Revitalization of the California Council of Churches and California Church IMPACT

Submitted by: Greg deGiere, Pioneer Congregational UCC.

a) Brief Title: Survival and Revitalization of the California Council of Churches and California Church IMPACT

b) Brief Summary: Renew Northern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ commitment to the social justice advocacy work of the California Council of Churches and California Church IMPACT, asks the Conference Minister to initiate or participate in discussions with other Council and IMPACT judicatories and with the Council and IMPACT leadership about how better to support this work, and calls on UCC member churches in Northern California, as their resources and passions allow, to consider way to support this work.

c) Biblical, Theological and Historical Grounding:

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus purposefully and passionately addresses specific, diverse and complicated conflicts of the time, shattering the status quo, Jesus wasn’t just preaching a universal salvation message for the world, he also is addressing specific political, social, and racial issues that today we sum up under the term “social justice.”

The United Church of Christ and its predecessors, as much as and in some respects more than any other Christian denomination, has attempted to follow Jesus’s social justice teachings. In California, it has been an active member and supporter of the California Council of Churches and its public policy advocacy sister ministry, California Church IMPACT.

d) Text of the motion:

As Christians we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King taught us that love, without power, is mere sentimentality.

In 1913 the mainline Protestant and Orthodox denominations in California formed the California Council of Churches to harness the power of love in society by acting as a
prophetic witness to the Gospel for justice and peace, educating and mobilizing church members to advocate effectively for Christian faith principles in the field of state and federal public policy.

For 106 years, the California Council of Churches and, more recently, its 401(c)(4) advocacy sister ministry, the California Council of Churches IMPACT have carried out direct advocacy to legislators and executive-branch decision makers in Sacramento and occasionally Washington, also sometimes engaging in litigation, coordinated with mobilizing grassroots advocacy in our churches and communities throughout the state.

The Council and IMPACT have made a difference in policy fields including racial justice, LGBTQ equality, labor rights, environmental protection, consumer protection, health care, poverty, law enforcement and prison reform, immigration, disability rights, opposition to the death penalty, restorative justice, women’s rights, religious freedom and separation of church and state, economic justice, homelessness, and world peace, working cooperatively with other faith and secular organizations on most issues and standing alone when necessary.

The IMPACT board, through study and prayerful discernment, has taken stands on state ballot propositions and made church members aware of them through mailings and, more recently, its IMPACT Sundays fliers that some churches have distributed to their members.

The Council and IMPACT have been forced to suspend most of their functions this year due to lack of financial support from member denominations and other judicatories and may be forced to close completely soon, showing the need for a closer, ongoing relationship between the member judicatories and the Council and IMPACT.

This is precisely the time in American and world history when bold advocacy of and organizing for our faith principles is needed most and when many church members are seeking ways to increase their civic participation in ways that will make a real difference.

Position To Be Voted:

Now therefore be it resolved that the 2019 Annual Gathering of the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, speaking to, not for, the church:

1. Renews the Northern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ support of the vital work of the Council and IMPACT.
2. Respectfully asks the Conference Minister to initiate or participate in discussions with our judicatory partners and the leadership of the Council and IMPACT to find ways to renew financial and grassroots activist support for the work of educating and advocating for social justice in California, building on the work already being done in our various faith communities. This could include the possibility of some restructuring of the Council and IMPACT to strengthen their connection with the member judicatories.

3. Calls on the Northern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ member churches, as their resources and passions allow, to consider how they can renew or increase their financial support of the Council and IMPACT through steps might include but are not limited to:

   - Identifying and asking justice-minded members to commit to make monthly offerings to the church to be forwarded to the Council and/or IMPACT;
   - Scheduling annual special offerings in worship services;
   - Budgeting annual church contributions to the Council or IMPACT.

The Annual Gathering suggests, as the Council has done, that churches be clear that any offerings to the Council and IMPACT be second-mile offerings, in addition to and not instead of any offerings individuals would otherwise give their own churches or the UCC.

The Annual Gathering respectfully asks the Conference Minister to bring this to the attention of the UCC churches in California

4. Calls on Annual Gathering members, too, to bring these matters to the attention of their local churches with the aim of helping achieve the survival and revitalization of the Council and IMPACT that this resolution envisions.

Contact Person:

Greg deGiere, member, Pioneer Congregational United Church of Christ, P.O. Box 163192, Sacramento, CA 95816, 916-223-7319, greg.degiere@gmail.com.