

GA-1327
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)

CALLING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
A PEOPLE OF GRACE AND WELCOME TO ALL

WHEREAS, we, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), understand ourselves to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, called to welcome others even as we have been welcomed by God¹ and to practice hospitality to one another,² as well as to strangers;³ and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture affirms that all people are created in the image of God and share with all others in the worth that comes from being unique individuals,⁴ which has been reiterated at past General Assemblies (2001, 2005, 2011); and

WHEREAS, we affirm that as Christians we are many members, but are one body in Christ. We are members of one another, each with different gifts.⁵ We affirm that each of us is called by Jesus to love our neighbors as ourselves,⁶ and that we are called to the ministry of reconciliation and wholeness within the world and within the church itself; and

WHEREAS, Disciples affirm baptism as the primary call to ministry, and offer baptism to all who profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior; and

WHEREAS, Disciples profess that the nature of Christian discipleship is profoundly informed by a common table, which is central to the act of worship, calling attention to the radical hospitality extended by Jesus, who welcomes all to be received at the Lord's Table of grace. In centering our worship on the Lord's table, Disciples recall that our very birth as a movement came at Cane Ridge in reaction to limitations being placed on this welcome; and

WHEREAS, Disciples emerged as a movement centered on a call to Christian unity as our "polar star." We recognize that cutting off anyone who seeks the hospitality of the Lord's Table is an act of disunity; and

WHEREAS, Disciples have been engaged in a process of discernment on the question of the participation of all Christians regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the life and ministry of the church since 1997 with mixed results; and

¹ Mark 12:31 [*Statement of Identity of the CC (DOC)*, Disciples.org]

² 1 Timothy 5:10; 1 Peter 4:9

³ Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2

⁴ Genesis 1:26–7

⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:18–20

⁶ Matthew 7:12

WHEREAS, we know there are people who are devalued and discriminated against within society, and more sadly within the church, because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, it is also recognized that we find our identity around the table, holding each other dear even when we disagree; and that the church from its beginning has understood that God's Spirit leads congregations to differing interpretations of scripture, but that each are called to transcend our difference and to claim one another in unity; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) operates with a covenantal polity whereby local congregations have final say in matters of conscience;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly meeting in Orlando, Florida, July 13-17, 2013, calls upon the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to recognize itself as a people of grace and welcome to all God's children—inclusive of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, or physical ability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly calls upon the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to affirm the faith, baptism and spiritual gifts of all Christians regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and that neither are grounds for exclusion from fellowship or service within the church, but are a part of God's good creation; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly calls upon all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as a people of grace and welcome, to acknowledge their support for the welcome of and hospitality to all Christians, regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, physical or cognitive ability.

Douglass Boulevard Christian Church
Louisville, KY
Midway Hills Christian Church
Dallas, TX
Chalice Christian Church
Gilbert, AZ
Fireside Christian Church
Denver, CO
Little White Chapel
Burbank, CA
First Christian Church
Eugene, OR
Tapestry Ministries
Berkeley, CA

St. Andrew Christian Church
Olathe, KS
Lafayette Christian Church
Lafayette, CA
First Christian Church
Concord, CA
University Christian Church
San Diego, CA
First Christian Church
Vallejo, CA
New Covenant Community Church
Normal, IL
First Christian Church
Lynchburg, VA
Central Christian Church
Indianapolis
First Christian Church
Orange, CA
Open Hearts Gathering
Gastonia, NC
Bethany Christian Church
Tulsa, OK
Pine Valley Christian Church
Wichita, KS
Foothills Christian Church
Phoenix, AZ
GLAD-Pacific Southwest Region
Irvine, CA
GLAD Alliance