

1 Resolution in Support of a Continuing Education Policy for Authorized Ministers

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3 Title: A General Resolution supporting excellence for authorized Ministers through requirements
4 for continuing education to maintain standing in an Association of the New Hampshire
5 Conference of the United Church of Christ (Conference).

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7 Source: This resolution is proposed by the Clergy Support Ministry of the Conference in support
8 of a requirement for continuing education for authorized ministers. The Clergy Support Ministry
9 voted to affirm this resolution on May 12, 2015.

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11 Submitted On: The materials were submitted to the Conference Minister on May 14, 2015.

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13 Contact: The contact person is Rev. Rebecca Werner Maccini, member of the Clergy Support
14 Ministry (603-428-7685; revrwm@tds.net).

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16 Summary: It is common practice that people in professional positions be required to submit to
17 their professional organizations hours for continuing education. Members in congregations
18 assume that their pastors are required to participate in ongoing education and are surprised to
19 hear that continuing education is not a requirement for authorized ministers to maintain standing.
20 The Clergy Support Ministry of the Conference seeks to support the efforts for the establishment
21 of a common continuing education policy for authorized ministers who hold standing in the
22 Associations of the Conference.

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24 Background Statement: At Synod 25 in 2005 a ministry issues pronouncement was adopted. In
25 the pronouncement was the following sentence: “Continuing education is one way to encourage
26 authorized ministers to participate in life-long learning.” One of the results of the ministry issues
27 pronouncement was a paper by the Ministry Issues Implementation Committee entitled “The
28 Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministries of the United Church of Christ” (Marks).
29 The Marks are gifts and skills for ministry; and authorized ministers are asked to assess their
30 strengths and weaknesses in the Marks throughout their lifetime. A November 2010 document
31 entitled *Ministry in the United Church of Christ*, which was also a result of the ministries issues
32 pronouncement, says, “Every authorized minister is expected to continue to learn and grow—
33 spiritually, personally, and professionally.”

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35 Rationale: Through the ministry issues work done at the level of the national United Church of
36 Christ, a culture of life-long learning is being cultivated in the United Church of Christ. It is
37 expected that in time, all authorized ministers will be asked to use the “Marks to Faithful and
38 Effective Ministry” to assess their gifts and skills and then address needed areas of growth. The
39 goal is that authorized ministers will be life-long learners.

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41 The Conference staff, leadership, and ministries support and seek to cultivate a culture of life-
42 long learning for authorized ministers. At present, a fund for continuing education is available
43 for authorized ministers. Educational workshops and events are scheduled throughout the year
44 for authorized ministers: Clergy Convocation; Clergy Day; Lectionary Preaching Events; and
45 Prepared to Serve, which is also for the enrichment of laypeople. The Conference is working to

46 establish the New Hampshire School of Ministry for the training of licensed ministers,
47 continuing education for authorized ministers, and faith formation opportunities for laypeople.
48 Discussion at recent meetings of the chairs of the Association Committees on Church and
49 Ministry (CoCM) is positive in support of formalizing a requirement for continuing education for
50 authorized ministers.

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52 The Merrimack CoCM recommended to the chairs of the Committees on Church and Ministry of
53 the Conference at the February 2015 meeting that a committee be formed to work and draft a
54 standard of continuing education for authorized ministers that would be used in all the
55 Associations.

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57 Biblical scriptures call for growth in love, faith, and knowledge:

- 58 • “The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight.
59 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her”
60 (Proverbs 4: 7-8).
- 61 • “The gifts Christ gave were that some would be ... pastors and teachers, to equip the
62 saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to
63 the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure
64 of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- 65 • “I pray that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight”
66 (Philippians 1:9:).
- 67 • “May you be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and
68 understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord ... as you bear fruit in every
69 good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:9-10).
- 70 • “Give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching.... Put these
71 things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close
72 attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things” (1 Timothy 4:13-16).
- 73 • “Continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you
74 learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to
75 instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14-15).
- 76 • “Make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge”
77 (2 Peter 1:5).
- 78 • “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18)

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80 Statement: Be it resolved that the committee of the chairs of the CoCMs of the Conference will
81 be responsible for developing a single policy outlining requirements for continuing education for
82 authorized ministers among the seven Associations’ CoCMs in the Conference by June 2016.

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84 Once developed, the policy will be disseminated to the CoCMs. In the fall of 2016 the policy
85 will be introduced to Association delegates at fall meetings or through mailings. The policy will
86 be included in the packet to Conference delegates at the October 2016 Annual Meeting of the
87 Conference. The policy will be placed in the Weekly News in the month of November. The
88 policy will be implemented in January 2017.