



RESOLUTION TO ADVOCATE FOR  
LEGISLATION TO AMEND ARTICLE 1 OF  
THE VERMONT CONSTITUTION

2022 Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference

Whereas, in Galatians 3 "In Christ Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female."<sup>1</sup>

Whereas, in Genesis 1 "Humankind was created as God's reflection: in the divine image God created them."<sup>2</sup>

Whereas Jesus prophetic ministry included a call to "bring good news to the poor and to proclaim release to the captives and let the oppressed go free."<sup>3</sup>

Whereas present racial inequity stems from the history of enslavement. Whereas, four hundred years of racism in the United States has divided humanity and denied the dignity of every human being.

Whereas, racism is a human construct, and it is still a pernicious evil in a race conscious society, we need to uproot it from all public and private systems and institutions.

Whereas, United States, Vermont, and the United Church of Christ continues to address the bondage between institutional racism in history and its present forms,

Whereas the white washing of Vermont's history with abolitionist movements has allowed for the myth that it fully eliminated slavery in its constitution. And this whitewashing creates a division between white and Black Vermonters.

When a people try to hide the reality of oppression, it distorts the relationship between people. Racism hinders progress towards the creation of the Beloved Community.

Whereas the Vermont State Constitution does not clearly ban enslavement or indentured servitude by allowing exceptions: "no person born in this country, or brought from oversea, ought to be held by law, to serve any person as a servant, slave or apprentice, after arriving to the age of twenty-one years, unless bound by the person's own consent, after arriving to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like." <sup>4</sup>

Whereas the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the United States' Constitution makes exception for "as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted,"

Whereas indentured servitude can never fully be voluntary. It requires astute attention to relationships between people and their economic agency and worth;

Whereas every human being is created with equality and worth and respect in the presence of God and we are called as students of Jesus to follow in his prophetic path.

Whereas, racism can be eliminated, and it requires conscious attention and action;

Whereas November 2022 voting ballots will provide the voters of Vermont the opportunity to amend Article 1 of the Vermont Constitution to abolish slavery and enslavement in any and all forms;

Therefore, be it resolved we encourage true repentance, a turning of the heart and mind away from white supremacy and privilege;

Therefore, we encourage every Local Church in Vermont and the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ to advocate for direct legislation that amends the Vermont Constitution to abolish slavery and enslavement in all its forms for any person in Vermont;

Finally, and therefore, be it resolved that we encourage voters to vote for passage of the Vermont constitutional amendment and oppose slavery and enslavement in any and every form throughout the United States.

- <sup>1</sup> Galatians 3:28, New Living Translation
- <sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:27, The Inclusive Bible
- <sup>3</sup> Luke 4:18, New Revised Standard Version
- <sup>4</sup> Constitution of the State of Vermont, Chapter 1, Article 1.