EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS FOR ALL:
A RESOLUTION CALLING THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE
TO ADVOCATE FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY

A RESOLUTION OF WITNESS

TEXT OF THE MOTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits government from
depriving any person of liberty without “due process of law”; and
WHEREAS, the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits a State from denying “to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws”; and

WHEREAS, the right to enter into marriage with the person of one’s choosing without interference from the state is crucial to one’s pursuit of happiness and free exercise of liberty; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Supreme Court’s December 19, 2013 decision to uphold the issuance of marriage licenses to same-sex couples by county clerks has made same-gender marriage legal in New Mexico, which is geographically over one-half of the Southwest Conference; and

WHEREAS, the advocacy of United Church of Christ congregations in New Mexico, who have been advocates for same-gender equality for as long as twenty-five years has been a factor in such decisions in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the right to marry whom one chooses is a fundamental right, the denial of which creates a second class status and strips some of significant access to institutional support, rights, and benefits afforded others; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has long advocated that all persons are entitled to full civil liberties and equal protection under the law without discrimination related to sexual preference:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates assembled for the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ declare their full support for marriage equality, which is the right for all persons to pursue happiness in marriage without interference from any governments and regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the delegates assembled for the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ declare their full support that children of families headed by same-gender couples should receive all legal rights and protections.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the covenant partners of the Southwest Conference to prayerfully organize, advocate, agitate, preach and teach for marriage equality, including local, state and national legislation to grant equal marriage rights to couples regardless of gender, and to work against legislation, including constitutional amendments, which denies civil marriage rights to couples based on gender.