

Baptism and Membership Resolution from Sharing Love In Mission Congregation, Chatham, ON

Whereas, Community of Christ's "Sharing in Community of Christ," 4th Edition, 2018 states that "Christ's Mission is our Mission" and calls the church to "Invite People to Christ"; and

Whereas, Our Enduring Principles of Grace and Generosity, Worth of All Persons, All Are Called, Unity in Diversity, Pursuit of Peace, and Blessings of Community speak to the role model of Jesus and his relationship with all of God's people; and

Whereas, Growth in discipleship is a lifelong journey in response to God's grace, which has led "...some people already committed to Jesus Christ through Christian baptism to further focus their response through church membership" (Doctrine and Covenants 164:2b); and

Whereas, Many of these committed Christians embrace their previous baptism as the first step on their journey as a disciple of Christ; and

Whereas, While policy changes from 2011 affirm some previous baptisms, the majority of the world's Christians, having been baptized before the age of eight, are still excluded from Community of Christ membership without rebaptism, (Baptism, Confirmation, and Church Membership Policy, effective 1 October, 2011 and revised 14 February, 2012); and

Whereas, Community of Christ's formal participation in the ecumenical movement, as embodied, for example, in its membership in the National Council of Churches, attests an institutional commitment to valuing the faith and shared witness of our ecumenical partners; and

Whereas, Claiming our "unique and sacred place within the circle of those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ" (Doctrine and Covenants 161:1b) is not in any way endangered by accepting the variety of baptismal forms expressed in the universal Body of Christ; and

Whereas, As expressed by the Theology Formation Team in its report to the 2016 World Conference on WCR 1301, Doctrine and Covenants 164 expanded the church's understanding of baptism by reminding us that "the redemptive action of God in Christ—while uniquely and authoritatively expressed through the church—is not confined solely to the church" (164:2a); and

Whereas, Our Enduring Principle of Continuing Revelation calls us to "assess past instruction in the light of new knowledge" and to "see sacraments not as rigid forms but as vehicles of the Spirit" (Theology Formation Team report to the 2016 World Conference on WCR 1301); and

Whereas, We invite all to participate in the Lord's Supper "in the love and peace of Jesus Christ" regardless of "different or added understandings within their faith traditions" (Invitation to Communion, 2019); and

Whereas, Our current practice of welcoming all Christians to the Lord's Table (Communion) while denying the validity of some baptisms is theologically incongruent and diminishes our affirmation of the Spirit of God present in other Christian faith traditions; and

Whereas, "The One who created all humankind grieves at the shameful divisions within the human family. A prophetic people must work tirelessly to tear down walls of separation and to build bridges of understanding" (Doctrine and Covenants 162:6b); and

Whereas, President Veazey states that "given the massive changes in culture and people's perceptions of church, spirituality, faith, and their own participation in such endeavors, we are in a new time that includes unprecedented change" ("Metamorphosis," *Herald*, January/February 2020); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the World Conference request the President of the Church to give additional prayer and study seeking divine guidance on the issue of the acceptability of persons who were baptized before the age of eight becoming members of Community of Christ via confirmation.