WHEREAS, 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 (Genesis 1:26-7); and

WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that as Christians we are many members, but are one body in Christ each with different gifts, called by Jesus to love neighbors as ourselves and called to the ministry of reconciliation and wholeness within the world and within the church (2 Corinthians 5:18); and

WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that as Christians we are called to be compassionate, rejoice in hope, care for the needs of others, weep with those who weep... (Romans 12:9-15); and

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 20% of adults experience a mental illness in a given year and 20% of teenagers experience a severe mental illness in the United States,1 and, according to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, 20% of adults experience a mental illness and 10-20% of teenagers experience a mental illness in Canada2; and

WHEREAS, according to the Canadian Mental Health Association, suicide accounts for 24% of all deaths among 15-24 year olds and is one of the leading causes of death in both men and women from adolescence to middle age in Canada3, and, according to National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), mood disorders are the third most common cause of hospitalization for adults ages 18 to 44, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death and the second leading cause of death for ages 15 to 24 years in the United States4; and

WHEREAS, loved ones and caregivers of people who have a mental illness are also affected and need support; and

WHEREAS, recovery is not a cure; but “a deeply personal, unique process..., a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with limitations caused by the illness and involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness5”; and

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1 http://1.usa.gov/1b4VkCw
2 http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/the-facts/
3 http://bit.ly/1GUf3Cz
4 http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers
5 http://www.mhrecovery.com/definition.htm
WHEREAS, according to NAMI, recovery is not only possible but probably for people because, with a combination of pharmacological and psychosocial treatments and support, 70-90% of people with a serious mental illness have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life; and

WHEREAS, people who have a mental illness often do not seek help because they fear the associated stigma, do not know how to access services and/or can’t afford services (especially therapy); and

WHEREAS, a recent study from Baylor University, concluded, “clergy, not mental health professionals, are the most common source of help sought in times of psychological distress”; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, calls upon all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada to strive to become a people of welcome and support to all God’s children despite their mental health status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that church leaders become more knowledgeable so they can fight stigma, be supportive of recovery, and provide information about mental health, recovery and available resources for treatment; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, calls upon the Disciples Home Missions to encourage and help enable the education of church leaders (lay and clergy) by putting on its website and in print information to enable regions and congregational leaders to fight stigma, be supportive of recovery, educate church members about mental health, and provide information on available resources in order that people affected by a mental illness, their loved ones, and caregivers will experience welcome, support and recovery.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona

The General Board recommends the General Assembly
ADOPTS GA-1523. (Discussion time: 12 minutes)

6 http://bit.ly/1HANTQc
7 http://bit.ly/1aDP4kM
8 http://bit.ly/1EagufN
9 http://bit.ly/1PYs0xQ