

1 Covenant to Build BeLoved Community

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3 United Methodism is at a crucial inflection point – facing the challenges of a global pandemic,
4 racial injustice, impacts of climate change, denominational decline, and interdenominational
5 strife. As the North Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church (NCJ), we covenant to
6 Build.

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8 Baptism is the foundation of the BeLoved Community, as through it we are called into a
9 covenantal relationship with God, with each other, and with all of God’s creation. It is in the spirit
10 of this covenantal relationship that we affirm our baptismal vows ...

11
12 ***Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world,
13 and repent of your sin?***

14
15 **We do.** We confess our need for God’s grace as we struggle to renounce and reject the spiritual
16 forces and evil powers of colonialism, racism, classism, and heterosexism. We apologize for the
17 ways the NCJ has and continues to harm people who live in other parts of the world, Black,
18 Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC), people who live in poverty, and LGBTQIA+
19 people.

20
21 Now is the moment to repent of these sins and turn toward the future to which God is calling the
22 NCJ.

23
24 ***Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and
25 oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?***

26
27 **We do.** We pray for God’s freedom and power to resist colonialism and racism in all the forms
28 they present themselves.

29
30 We stand in solidarity with ongoing efforts of many, who have worked tirelessly to end racism.
31 We recognize this is a journey; that the work of ending racism is ongoing because it is a way of
32 being - as the body of Christ. All of our work as a Church should be done in an anti-racist
33 manner.

34 We request the NCJ Bishops of Color convene all BIPOC delegates to discuss how to begin to
35 address the trauma in communities of color.

36 We request that the Mission Council, in conjunction with the NCJ College of Bishops, develop
37 an exercise for the NCJ delegates to engage in a conversation during the next session of the
38 NCJ that seeks to understand the impact of white supremacy and Christian nationalism/white
39 nationalism within The United Methodist Church.

40 We request the Mission Council evaluate their budget and demonstrate how the budget
41 incorporates antiracism work and healing institutional trauma.

42 The Mission Council must designate sufficient NCJ funds for the purpose of convening
43 Conference Commissions on Religion and Race and Annual Conference antiracism task force
44 representatives in 2022 to operationalize:

- 45 ● A racial analysis of: local church's total budgets, clergy salaries, new church
46 starts/revitalizations, church closures, Conference staff, board, task force and committee
47 members, and delegates to GC/JC.
- 48 ● Alignment of Annual Conference budget with antiracism work, creation of whistleblower
49 policies, on-going training and support for cross racial/cross cultural appointments,
50 prioritization of new church starts and congregational revitalization in communities of
51 color, and developing programs for youth/young adults of color.

52 ***Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and***
53 ***promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to***
54 ***people of all ages, nations, and races?***

55
56 **We do.** We also affirm Christ has opened the Church to people of all sexual orientations and
57 gender identities. All people are of sacred worth.

58 LGBTQIA+ clergy and laity are a gift to the Church. We implore all in the NCJ to do no harm
59 and to create a culture in which abundance and diversity can be celebrated and lived.
60 Therefore, we urge all members of the NCJ to avoid pursuing charges for LGBTQIA+ clergy and
61 allies, and request our episcopal leaders dismiss charges related to LGBTQIA+ identity or
62 officiating same gender weddings. Because we are all beloved children of God, we, in the NCJ,
63 implore all our conference leaders, boards and agencies, to bring no harm to LGBTQIA+
64 people. We will not restrict God's calling based solely on a candidate's sexual orientation or
65 gender identity. We commit to doing good by pursuing healing and reconciliation with all who
66 have experienced harm and exclusion related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

67 We request the Mission Council in conjunction with the NCJ College of Bishops develop an
68 exercise for the NCJ delegates to engage in conversation to understand the impact of
69 homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism within United Methodist Churches during the next
70 meeting of the jurisdiction.

71 ***According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's***
72 ***holy Church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world?***

73
74 **We will.** We who will remain and continue to be faithful members of The United Methodist
75 Church, commit to leading the NCJ through this difficult moment.

76
77 We value episcopal leadership and commit to electing bishops as soon as possible. If and only
78 if the 2020 General Conference, currently scheduled for August 29-September 6, 2022, is
79 postponed or canceled, and the regular session of the jurisdictional conference is subsequently
80 proposed to be postponed or canceled, this special session of the NCJ Conference authorizes
81 the duly elected heads of the conference delegations and the NCJ College of Bishops to work
82 together to call a special session of the jurisdictional conference for November 2-5, 2022, the
83 time currently scheduled for the regular session of the jurisdictional conference, for the purpose
84 of the election of bishops, acting on nominations for jurisdictional committees and general
85 agencies, budgeting and other necessary matters.

86
87 We encourage conferences and local churches to strive for reconciliation and understanding.
88 However, some congregations may feel called to a different future in the faith. We grieve each
89 separation. NCJ annual conferences should use existing disciplinary and conference provisions
90 to accommodate local congregations seeking disaffiliation.
91

92 We stand in solidarity with United Methodists around the world who long for a world-wide
93 contextual and regional denominational structure.

94
95 We call on the NCJ College of Bishops and Mission Council to immediately begin working with
96 other Jurisdictions, Central Conferences, and the Connectional Table to make regional equity
97 and contextualization a reality. We fully support polity changes, such as the Christmas
98 Covenant or Connectional Table's US Regional Conference proposals, that will lead to regional
99 equity and contextualization.

100
101 We recommend Annual Conferences engage in conversations about regional equity and
102 contextualization.

103
104 Covenanting to Build the BeLove Community, we look to 2024 with promise. We pledge
105 ourselves to God's call upon our lives, to each other, and to the future of The United Methodist
106 Church.

107
108 ***With God's help we will proclaim the good news***
109 ***and live according to the example of Christ.***
110 ***We will surround each other***
111 ***with a community of love and forgiveness,***
112 ***that we may grow in our trust of God,***
113 ***and be found faithful in our service to others.***
114 ***We will pray for each other,***
115 ***that we may be true disciples***
116 ***who walk in the way that leads to life.***

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