

[illegible]

	TOTAL Cabinet							1,260,629	1,245,112	1,270,856	25,745	increase (decrease)
	Conference Committees and Boards											
	Board of Ordained Ministry Expenses							5,687	12,000	12,000		
	Trustee Expenses							59,681	55,000	55,000		repairs to district parsonages
	Property and Liability Insurance							50,391	66,000	66,000		Umbrella, auto, D&O,
	Legal Fees							20,395	40,000	40,000		
	Archives							100	9,200	9,200		rent and supplies for archives
	Audit							31,800	33,500	33,500		
	Administrative Staff and Benefits							427,308	488,394	520,568		Health insurance increases
	Office Expenses, Rent, Copying, Telephone, etc.							259,915	299,780	300,668		details below
	IT purchases, software, support							110,218	119,934	110,218		
	TOTAL Administrative Committees							965,495	1,123,808	1,147,154	23,346	increase (decrease)
	TOTAL CONFERENCE EXPENSES							3,629,956	4,331,931	4,429,763	97,833	increase (decrease)
	Apportionments in support of General Church											
	TOTAL Apportioned Amounts in Support of Ge							502,519	1,722,057	1,643,688	All monies collected from local churches dedicated to these funds shall be forwarded to GCFA	
	General Apportionment: Paid as collected											
	World Service Fund							926,091	980,675	883,946	100%	of 2021 apportionment paid
	Episcopal Fund							274,253	290,418	261,772	100%	of 2021 apportionment paid
	Ministerial Education Fund - General Church							234,593	248,420	223,917	100%	of 2021 apportionment paid
	Black Colleges Fund							124,769	132,123	119,091	100%	of 2021 apportionment paid
	General Church Administration							109,966	116,447	104,961	100%	of 2021 apportionment paid
	Africa University							27,923	29,569	26,652	100%	of 2021 apportionment paid
	Interdenominational Cooperation Fund							24,462	25,904	23,349	100%	of 2021 apportionment paid
	TOTAL General/Jurisdictional Apportionment							1,722,057	1,823,556	1,643,688	(179,868)	increase (decrease)
	GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES							5,352,013	6,155,487	6,073,451	(82,036)	
	2023 Budget Details											
	<i>Below, find details for the totals reported above. These are not additional budget lines, but explanations of the budget lines that appear above.</i>											
								<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Taxes, Cont. Ed.</u>	<u>Parsonages/ Travel</u>	<u>Totals</u>
	District Superintendent Salary and Benefits							459,291	187,590	10,625	76,966	734,472
	Cabinet Staff - District Admins and NCD							231,051	64,325	11,855	10,624	317,855
	Episcopal Support Staff and Benefits							107,424	40,911	6,517	11,430	166,282
	Conference Program Staff and Benefits							317,237	100,869	18,448	20,872	457,426
	Administrative Staff and Benefits							349,721	122,070	32,033	16,744	520,568
	<u>Meetings, Events, and Ministries</u>							2021 Actual	2022 Budget	2023 Budget		

Document: 640.01

Special Sundays with Offerings for 2023

Author(s): Conference Council on Finance and Administration

ACTION:

The Northern Illinois Conference recommends the following Special Sundays with offerings for 2023:

Special Sundays

General Church Offerings 2023

Human Relations Day	January 15, 2023
UMCOR Sunday	March 19, 2023
Native American Ministries Sunday	April 23, 2023
Peace with Justice Sunday	June 4, 2023
World Communion Sunday	October 1, 2023
United Methodist Student Day	November 26, 2023

Conference Offerings 2023

Scouting Ministries	Any Sunday in February or March*
Golden Cross	May 7, 2023
Volunteers in Mission	Any Sunday in July or August
Christian Education	September 3, 2023
Accessibility Sunday	November 5, 2023
HIV/ AIDS Awareness	December 3, 2023
United Voices for Children	Every 5th Sunday (January, April, July, October, December)

* This fund supports Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire, 4-H, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and Amachi programs.

Document: 650.01

Minimum Salaries for Full-Time Clergy

Author(s): CCFA Task Force on Equitable Compensation

ACTION:

- 1) Minimum salaries for full-time clergy appointed in the NIC will be as follows, showing an increase of 3% for the next fiscal year:

YEAR OF INITIAL APPOINTMENT (minimum salary set at the beginning of a new appointment, typically July 1)							
	2017 (\$34,200)	2018 (\$34,450)	2019 (\$34,800)	2020 (\$35,300)	2021 (\$36,360)	2022 (\$36,360)	2023 (\$37,500)
Resolution passed in:							
2017 for FY 2018	\$34,542						
2018 for FY 2019	\$34,887	\$34,795					
2019 for FY 2020	\$35,375	\$35,282	\$35,287				
2020 for FY 2021	\$36,437	\$36,341	\$36,346	\$36,359			
2021 for FY 2022	\$36,437	\$36,341	\$36,346	\$36,359	\$36,360		
Proposed in 2022 for FY 2023	\$37,530	\$37,431	\$37,436	\$37,449	\$37,450	\$37,450	

Chart interpretation: Each year, a minimum salary is set for new appointments. This salary amount is listed in the first row, beneath the year the new appointment is made (which typically begins July 1.) A minimum salary is also set for appointments made in previous years. The number listed in the column beneath each year indicates the minimum salary for the pastor appointed to that charge each fiscal year (which typically begins January 1.) Numbers in bold print in the bottom row are the minimum salaries recommended to the Annual Conference in 2022.

- 2) Local churches are to provide at a minimum of \$5,500* for accountable reimbursements for their appointed pastor. This covers costs related to travel, continuing education, and other expenses incurred in the course of providing pastoral ministry. Information about accountable reimbursements can be found at: Accountable Reimbursement Policy Q&A

**This year, the recommendation is to increase this amount from \$5,000 to \$5,500 to take into account rising fuel costs.*

RATIONALE:

While the cost of living adjustment (COLA) established by the SSA for 2022 is 5.9%, CCFA is recommending an increase in minimum required salaries of 3%, with the following comments:

- A portion of the COLA is due to rising energy/utility costs; a good portion of these costs are already largely assumed by churches as they provide both utility-covered parsonages to clergy and reimbursement for travel expenses. (see Action point 2 for details.)
- The NIC took steps in 2020 to increase the minimum required salary to more closely match the average salary in the North Central Jurisdiction (approving an increase of 3%). In addition, health insurance premiums continue to be fully covered by the local churches at a yearly cost of \$19,200. This benefit helps to make the overall compensation package of full-time clergy in the NIC more equitable to other conferences in the NCJ.
- Together with base compensation, church-paid health insurance premiums, accountable reimbursements, and church-paid pension contributions, the total minimum compensation package for full-time clergy is \$68,200. In addition, churches provide housing through utility-covered parsonages or cash housing allowances, which completes the compensation package. This total has become increasingly difficult for un-yoked churches to maintain full-time clergy. The NIC seeks to maintain as many full-time appointments as possible to fulfill the guarantee of a full-time appointment for our commissioned and ordained elders. As a result, we may continue to see an increase in multiple-point charges for full-time clergy to serve.

Document Number: 680.01

Name: Benefit Programs

Author(s): Lonnie Chafin and Katherine Paisley

CCFA: No action required

Action:

The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, partnering with Wespath recommends the following policies for clergy and other eligible participants enrolled in welfare, health and pension benefits.

I. Health Insurance

The Conference Board of Pensions recommends that the Annual Conference establish the following policies and procedures for administration of the Conference Health Care Program, effective January 1, 2023.

A. Mandatory Coverage

1. The following categories of employees are mandated to participate in the Annual Conference health insurance program. In all cases, the spouses, and dependents (such as children) of eligible employees may enroll in the health plan at the election of the participant.

Category	<i>Discipline 2016</i>
Elder in full connection (including those from another Methodist denomination and those from another conference) appointed to full-time service to a conference local church or campus ministry	338.1, 346.1, .2, &,.3
Associate member appointed to full-time service	321
Provisional Members on elder track appointed to full-time local church service	326.2
A full-time local pastor who is under Episcopal appointment to a charge located in the conference	318.1

2. Elders appointed to disability status prior to age 65 will be covered under the conference plan until they are eligible for Medicare or for Social Security disability at the cost of the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. At age 65 from a premium payment standpoint, each will be treated as retired pastors and subject to the HRA guidelines explained in Section D of this Resolution.

B. Release from Mandatory Coverage - THE PILOT PROGRAM

1. Clergy members may waive mandatory coverage only with the consent of the Conference Board of Pensions when enrolled in an Affordable Care Act plan, Medicare, Tricare, CHAMPUS, or on a plan provided by a spouse's employer. The objective of allowing Churches to opt out of HealthFlex is to provide a means to help Churches lower the cost of medical insurance and be able to maintain the promised medical benefit to NIC pastors. To elect this option the Churches agree to the following:

- a) Agree to pay the monthly HealthCare premium established by the Conference Board of Pensions.

- b) Each quarter the Churches will receive a rebate of one month's premium of the HealthCare premium.
- c) The clergy person will receive a reimbursement check from the conference equal to the amount of the alternative coverage and an estimate of the taxes owed for the amount. The maximum amount the Conference Board of Pensions will provide in cash is \$1,000 per month to support clergy to enroll with an alternative carrier and to help pay for additional personal taxes. The amount provided by the Conference is considered as taxable cash compensation.
- d) If Churches fail to make premium payments the Conference holds the right to discontinue the cash support provided to the Pastors.

C. Local Church and Extension Ministry Coverage Options

1. A local church or extension ministry may elect health insurance in the conference plan available to participants in the following categories **who meet the required eligibility criteria:**

Category	<i>Discipline 2016</i>	Premium Billed to
Ordained elder appointed to extension ministries within the connectional structure (other than a unit of the conference or general agency), within an ecumenical agency, within a GBHEM endorsed extension ministry or within a special ministry outside the connectional structure	344.1a(3), 344.1a(4), 344.1b, 344.1d	Salary Paying Unit
Ordained elder from another denomination (other than UMC) appointed to half-time or more service to a Conference local church or a unit of the Conference	346.2, 346.3, 338.2, 346.1	Salary Paying Unit
Provisional, Associate or full clergy member granted voluntary leave of absence not to exceed 1 year	354.1 354.2	Participant
Clergy member granted Sabbatical Leave from a local church appointment for up to one year if enrolled in the health program at time of request and Board of Ordained Ministry designates a premium paying unit with their approval.	351	Board of Ordained Ministry or participant
Elder of the Annual Conference granted Medical leave from an appointment with an NIC local church or within the connectional structure for up to one year.	357	Board of Pensions
Deacon in full connection appointed to full-time basis in a conference local church, beyond the local church, or UMC related agencies and schools.	331.1a, 331.1b	Salary Paying Unit
A Provisional member on the Deacon track appointed to serve on a full time basis to an NIC congregation or to the conference.	326.1	Salary Paying Unit
75% of eligible Lay Employees of a local church in the conference normally scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week inclusive of a calendar year		Salary Paying Unit

2. In accord with Illinois law, state recognized civil union partners of lay or clergy employees are eligible for coverage in a manner similar to spouses.
3. The decision to offer coverage is made by the salary paying unit. The choice to accept the offer of coverage shall be made by the participant. The salary paying unit may elect to offer health insurance to one or all categories of persons listed above in Section C. 1. The salary paying unit must make health insurance available to and will be billed for all persons within any specific category employed with the agency or local church. Failure to make prompt payment results in termination of the participant in the plan.
4. Each salary paying unit must execute annually a sub-adoption agreement with the annual conference, should they desire to offer health coverage to persons in these categories.
5. These categories of persons are also eligible for coverage :

Category	Billed for Active's Premium
Surviving spouse or dependent children enrolled in the health plan at time of a participant's death for a period of up to one year	Participant pay 25%, Salary Paying Unit (or Board of Pensions) 75%
Divorced spouse enrolled in the plan at time of divorce for 2 years or in accordance with State and Federal law or court order	Divorced Spouse

D. Retirement Health Administration –

1. For 2023, the Conference extends a program of support for some retired clergy persons in continued clergy relationship to the Conference. The program commitment is for one year only and is a nonvested benefit to certain clergy retirees of the annual conference. To qualify, the retired clergy person must be a member of the Conference on January 1, 2023, or be a dependent of a current clergy member or surviving spouse of a clergy person in good standing at the time of death.
2. Clergy persons enrolled in the health plan or participating in the pilot program (Section B, above), at Mandatory Retirement (Discipline paragraph 357.1), Early Retirement (Discipline paragraph 357.2b), Full Retirement (Discipline Paragraph 357.2c), or Involuntary Retirement (Discipline paragraph 357.3) may be eligible for health benefits in retirement through the conference plan if such enrollment or participation is for the continuous five years prior to retirement. No clergy member retiring under the "20-year rule" (Discipline paragraph 357.2a) is eligible for retiree health coverage.
3. A clergy spouse (or surviving spouse after death of an active member) enrolled in the health plan 5 consecutive years before retirement or enrolled when first eligible for coverage (when prior to participant's retirement) is eligible for coverage after retirement. The family status of the participant cannot change during retirement, except in cases of adoption, childbirth or death. Participants electing to not participate in retirement health plan at time of retirement may not elect to enroll at a later time.
4. Upon retirement the annual conference shall establish a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) for the household in the retiree's name. Participants and their spouses who meet the retiree eligibility rules may use the funds in the HRA to pay for medical expenses including premiums, co-pays, deductibles, dental services, medical services, coinsurance, etc. Like a savings account, the funds do not need to be expended by the end of the calendar year and balances roll forward when unused.
5. For 2023, the annual conference will provide a benefit equal to \$100 per year of ministerial service. This benefit also extends to the Pastor's spouse. This amount is

subject to change based on the needs and circumstances of the Conference and/or participants.

6. Only the first 40 years of service shall be tabulated when determining the amount of benefit. In the case of clergy couples, the clergy member with the highest number of years of service, up to the cap of 40, shall determine the benefit amount.
7. Ministerial service years are determined by the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. Only years served under appointment to Northern Illinois Conference local churches or connectional structure are considered in the HRA calculation. Special exceptions may be made based on approval by NIC Board of Pensions. Any counting of service years earned by service to non-Northern Illinois Conference appointments recognized prior will not be recognized effective January 1, 2022 or after.
8. The Conference at the discretion of their Board of Pension has the right to change or modify the retiree benefit and or contributions at any time. The annual conference does not make a commitment to additional funding in future years.
9. Full Time Lay Conference employees of the annual conference with 5 continuous years of coverage before retirement will have a contribution equal to \$100 per year of service to the annual conference deposited in their HRA annually. Eligibility for the HRA is contingent on a participant's enrollment in Medicare B and engagement with the Conference's selected provider.
10. The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits engages Via Benefits to aid clergy retirees aged 65 and above in selection of suitable Medicare supplement coverage and to act as a patient advocate when necessary. To receive the HRA benefit eligible participants must enroll through the Via Benefits program and be enrolled in Medicare B. Clergy who retire prior to 65 and meet the eligibility rules will have the HRA equivalent deducted from the cost of their conference provided medical coverage until they reach Medicare eligibility, enroll in Medicare B and enroll in Supplemental programs through Via Benefits. Retired clergy will be responsible for costs of coverage in excess of that HRA amount.

E. Active Health Administration

1. Monthly premiums are billed to each charge or salary-paying unit at rates established by the Conference Board of Pensions. Premiums are due the first of each month. Accounts 90 days in arrears are subject to termination as explained in the arrearage policy approved by the Board and the NIC Cabinet. This policy describes the efforts that will be made by the Conference office and the Cabinet to work with Churches that are more than 90 days in arrears. If all efforts to receive payment or develop a payment plan have been exhausted, then termination of coverage may be the final option. Notification of accounts in arrears will be provided to the District Superintendent, the pastor, the local church PPRC chair, and the local church treasurer prior to termination.
2. If a participant enrolls in one of the HealthFlex Exchange programs that require a payroll deduction to the Conference and those deductions are not made the Conference can have the participant placed in a plan that does not require a payroll deduction.
3. Churches should care that tax reporting is correctly administered for all payroll deductions around health insurance provisions.
4. Active participants are able to make choices in the provision of their coverage through the enrollment period, as made available through Healthflex administration.

Problem resolution and inquiries regarding coverage should be directed to the HealthFlex Team at Wespath 1-800-851-2201.

II. Pension Programs

A. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) Eligibility. The General Conference of the United Methodist Church established the CRSP as the primary pension program for United Methodist clergy in 2007. Mandatory participation is required when both 1 and 2 are met:

1. The clergy member relationship to the conference is as a:
 - a. Commissioned Members (Deacon or Elder)
 - b. Elders in Full Connection
 - c. Members of Other Conferences appointed in the Northern Illinois Conference (paragraph 346.1 appointments)
 - d. Full Time Local Pastors
 - e. Deacons in Full Connection
 - f. Members of other denomination, appointed to service in an NIC local church if no other pension is provided by their denomination.
2. The clergy member is under Episcopal appointment half-time or more to the following service types:
 - a. to local churches in the Northern Illinois Conference
 - b. to the Conference (staff or Cabinet)
 - c. to a Conference controlled entity (such as a campus ministry or ORM)
 - d. to Incapacity leave with CPP benefits
3. In order to waive participation, a half-time or more appointed clergy member must sign a waiver form at time of appointment. Please note that persons assigned, but not appointed are not eligible in the program.
4. Local churches are encouraged to enroll as a plan sponsor of UMPIP and to make employer contributions into the accounts of clergy appointed quarter-time.

B. Clergy Retirement Security Program.

1. **Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP).** The Comprehensive Protection Plan is the primary death and disability benefit for enrolled clergy. The billing rate for CPP will be established by the Conference office. Appointments with compensation less than full time and those that were considered under special arrangements will be covered and billed based on rates established by UMLifeOptions.

2. CRSP - Defined Contribution

- a. The CRSP pension program includes a defined contribution component. Each clergy member will have 2% of plan compensation deposited in an individual account at the Wespath. All contributions into the account are invested and the enrolled clergy member receives the appreciated value of the account upon retirement.
- b. Clergy persons are encouraged to contribute 1% of their plan compensation into their UMPIP account as a salary deduction. The annual conference will match the first 1% of UMPIP contributions paid into the participants CRSP-DC account.
3. **CRSP - Defined Benefit program.** With the defined benefit component each enrolled clergy member will receive a monthly cash benefit from the plan upon retirement. Funds collected from local churches are used for annual contributions made by the conference will be invested by Wespath so that the NIC obligation can be met. A

portion of defined benefit funding may accrue to a reserve fund for funding future variation in market results and other benefits to retirees and future retirees.

C. Billing Methods. The Annual Conference will invoice local churches monthly **16% (3% (CPP) + 3% (CRSP DC) + 10% (CRSP DB)** based on clergy plan compensation required for support of the CRSP and CPP programs. Currently, churches are being billed 16% of clergy plan compensation. **Increases may be necessary in the future.**

D.Pre-82 Defined Benefit Past Service Rate for 2021

1. The Conference Board of Pensions recommends that the annual pension rate for service prior to 1982, effective January 1, 2023, be \$605 per service year, an increase of 0% from 2022. Surviving spouses shall be supported at the rate of 85% of participant pension benefit amounts. Special grants will be provided as identified in Section F.

E. Excludable Housing allowance for retired clergy. In accordance with the Private Ruling Letter from the Internal Revenue Service, the Northern Illinois Conference Annual Conference Session reaffirms the limits to housing allowance exclusion for retired and disabled clergy found in the Standing Rules, at Section IV. C. 1, which states: *Disabled clergy have the same legal relationship to an Annual Conference as do the retired clergy and, thus, this Conference is also the appropriate organization to designate a housing/rental allowance for disabled ordained or local pastors who are members of this Conference.*

An amount equal to 100% of the pension payments received by a retired clergy, or 100% of the disability payments received by a disabled clergy, is designated as rental/housing allowance respectively for each retired or disabled ordained or local pastor of The United Methodist Church who is or was a member of the Northern Illinois Conference at the time of retirement or disability.

F. Special Grants

1. Beginning in 2020 Northern Illinois Conference Session the Board of Pensions approved grants for participants meeting the following eligibility criteria:
 - a. Members of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference who retired from an appointment in the conference;
 - b. Who have at least 15 years of service prior to 1982 compensated at the Past Service Rate (excludes those at the DBSM rate); and,
 - c. Who have less than 10 years of service to Northern Illinois Conference appointments served while enrolled in the MPP program.
2. For 1/1/2023 the amount provided to eligible participants will be \$700 times their pre-82 years of service calculated at the PSR. This amount will remain in place until otherwise changed by the Board of Pensions
3. The Conference Board of Pensions also recommends that a special grant be made to James W. French for his 3.5 years of service with this Annual Conference from June 1, 1978 through December 31, 1981. We recommend for the year commencing July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, a grant of \$140.95 monthly be paid based on the present pension rate, but actuarially reduced since payments are starting prior to full retirement age.

III. Group Life Insurance

The Conference Board of Pensions enrolls in the UMLifeOptions program. Every eligible retired clergy person will be enrolled in the plan with a benefit of \$5,000 at no cost to the participant. Active clergy persons have \$10,000 in coverage at the NIC expense when an

- 1 application is filed during the open enrollment period. Coverage beyond this amount is at the
- 2 cost of the participant and will be billed directly from UMLifeOptions.

Document: 700.01

Name: Advocating for the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation

Authors: United Methodists for Kairos Response, Paula Roderick; NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators

Action:

The Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church joins the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society, as well as numerous other Christian denominations and organizations, in endorsing H.R. 2590, Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act; and

The Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church

- calls upon all clergy and laity of the Conference to educate themselves about the plight of Palestinian children and families living under Israeli military occupation and the reasons for Christians to oppose U.S. funds being used to detain, torture, and imprison Palestinian children in military detention, to subject Palestinian families to widespread home evictions and demolitions, and to annex Palestinian territory; and
- encourages all clergy and laity of the Conference to write, call, or meet with their legislators in Congress, to urge their Representative to co-sponsor H. R. 2590 and to urge their Senators to introduce, co-sponsor, and support a companion bill to H. R. 2590; and,
- directs the Conference Secretary to write to all legislators representing the region of the Conference in the U.S. Congress, informing them that the Conference has endorsed H.R. 2590 and that the Conference urges them to co-sponsor and support H.R. 2590 in the House of Representatives or to introduce, co-sponsor, and support a companion bill in the Senate. A full copy of this resolution should be provided with that correspondence.

Rationale:

In April 2021, Rep. Betty McCollum (MN-4) legislation to the U.S. Congress: H.R. 2590, the Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act.¹

The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society has joined over 170 human rights and faith-based organizations in endorsing H.R. 2590.

This bill “seeks to promote justice, equality and human rights for Palestinian children and families by prohibiting Israeli authorities from using U.S. taxpayer funds to detain and torture Palestinian children, demolish and seize Palestinian homes, and further annex Palestinian Land in the occupied West Bank,” in violation of international law.

Israel is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes children in military courts, where each year approximately 700 Palestinian children enter the abusive Israeli military detention system that a UNICEF report has described as “widespread, systemic, and institutionalized”, where children as young as twelve have been subjected to arrest and

1 imprisonment, are often held and interrogated for hours or days with no attorney and without
2 the presence or knowledge of their parents, and where a large majority of these children report
3 severe physical and emotional abuse during their detention.³

4
5 United Methodists have repeatedly adopted resolutions and endorsed measures to protect the
6 rights of Palestinian children, at both the general church and annual Conference levels.

7
8 1. The bill, H.R. 2590: Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living
9 Under Israel Occupation Act

10 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2590/>

11 3. Defense for Children International–Palestine (DCIP) No Way To Treat A Child campaign:
12 <http://nwttac.dci-palestine.org;>

13 3. United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR) resource: Palestinian Children & the Israeli
14 Occupation: https://www.kairosresponse.org/quick_facts_series.html

Document: 700.02

Name: Affirming “A Call to Grace”

Author: NIC General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation

CCFA Comment:

ACTION:

The Northern Illinois Annual Conference affirms “A Call to Grace” (please see complete text below, www.acalltoGrace.com), written by a grassroots movement and released November 1, 2021. In support of this affirmation the Northern Illinois Annual Conference:

- directs its bishop, the Cabinet, and clergy to provide the resources and support for congregational discernment as described in “A Call to Grace”; and,
- directs the Conference Secretary to sign “A Call to Grace” on its behalf.

RATIONALE:

As the writers posited, “that continued delay in making decisions about the future of The United Methodist Church hurts our mission and is especially harmful to our central conference and LGBTQIA+ siblings who are caught up in this conflict.” The Body of Christ is best served by honoring how people are called to be in ministry. The North Central Jurisdiction, at its Special Session November 10-11, 2021, affirmed “A Call to Grace” with 80.5% in support.

A CALL TO GRACE

“For everything, there is a season.” Ecclesiastes 3:1

We recognize that COVID 19 continues to spread globally and that many throughout our global connection continue to suffer from the inequitable distribution of vaccines. Given the safety considerations that result from this tragedy, it appears likely that the General Conference, scheduled for August-September 2022, may be postponed again.

As the writer of Ecclesiastes notes, “For everything there is a season,” and the season for waiting on General Conference legislative solutions as the only way forward has passed. We recognize that continued delay in making decisions about the future of The United Methodist Church hurts our mission and is especially harmful to our central conference and LGBTQIA+ siblings who are caught up in this conflict.

Therefore:

- We call the church to a pastoral response to the anxiety generated by having to delay decisions that impact peoples’ lives and ministries.

1 - We call on bishops and annual conferences to develop resources to assist local churches in
2 discerning their future, including resources on how to have difficult conversations in ways that
3 reduce harm.

4
5 - Honoring the expressed desire of some churches and church leaders to leave The United
6 Methodist Church and participate in other denominations, we call bishops and annual
7 conferences to use existing disciplinary authority to find grace-filled ways for these leaders and
8 churches to follow their call now, allowing them to take their church property with them where
9 appropriate.

10
11 - We further call upon churches and leaders who wish to leave and join other denominations to
12 engage their bishops in dialogue about how they can realize their hoped-for future.

13
14 - In this time of great transition, we call on our episcopal leaders to continue a grace-filled
15 approach and hold in abeyance any complaints related to ministry with LGBTQIA+ persons
16 and matters concerning the future direction of the church.

17
18 Those who have decided to remain in The United Methodist Church wish to begin doing the
19 work now of envisioning the future UMC. To be able to do that requires the ability to graciously
20 release others to their own future. As our Book of Discipline notes, "We make disciples as we...
21 send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick,
22 feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a
23 compassionate caring presence and working to develop social structures that are consistent
24 with the gospel." (Paragraph 122)

Document: 700.03

Name: Affirming “A Narrative for the Continuing United Methodist Church”

Author: NIC General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation

CCFA Comment:

ACTION:

The Northern Illinois Annual Conference affirms “A Narrative for the Continuing United Methodist Church” (please see complete text below), released by the Council of Bishops on November 4, 2021.

RATIONALE:

The Northern Illinois Annual Conference experiences ministry in all the ways described below and believes it will be most fruitful if it can continue to do so. The North Central Jurisdiction, at its Special Session November 10-11, 2021, affirmed “A Narrative for the Continuing United Methodist Church” with 80.9% in support.

A Narrative for the Continuing United Methodist Church

United Methodists all over the globe are liturgical, contemporary, charismatic, social activists, urban, suburban, small town, rural and much more. We are children, youth, young adults, senior adults, new Christians, and mature Christians. We are present on four continents, in more than 45 countries, and we comprise an unknown number of cultures and languages. We are a holy communion of different races, ethnicities, cultures, and perspectives united by the Holy Spirit, driven by the mission of Christ, and bearing the good news of an unmerited grace that changes lives and transforms communities.

Christ’s prayer for our unity and command to gather all to the table, to make space for one another, appreciate one another, and look for Christ in each other, prohibit us from creating individual tables only for those who think, act, look, and perceive the world like we do. We cannot be a church that fractures its identity and commitment to Christ by aligning itself with political parties. We cannot be a traditional church or a progressive church or a centrist church. We cannot be a gay or straight church. Our churches must be more than echo chambers made in our own image arguing with each other while neglecting our central purpose. This is the way of the world.

Instead, we must be one people, rooted in scripture, centered in Christ, serving in love and united in the essentials. It is hard work. It is sacred work. It is the ministry of reconciliation that Christ gave to each of us. Our best witness is to love each other as Christ loves us, to show the world the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to bind us

1 together despite our differences. This is living out the gospel.

2
3 We are a church:

- 4 • Confident in what God has done in Christ Jesus for all humankind
- 5 • Committed to personal and social salvation/transformation
- 6 • Courageous in dismantling the powers of racism, tribalism, and colonialism

7
8 All of our members, clergy, local churches, and annual conferences will
9 continue to have a home in the future United Methodist Church, whether they consider
10 themselves liberal, evangelical, progressive, traditionalist, middle of the road,
11 conservative, centrist, or something else. We hold on to our Wesleyan heritage that “the
12 living core of the Christian faith is revealed in Scripture, illuminated by tradition,
13 vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason”.

14
15 We are longing for a United Methodist Church that will move towards new forms of
16 being a connectional church, a General Conference focused on global essentials, and an
17 empowerment of regions for contextually relevant forms of living our common mission
18 mandate. Deeply rooted in the Doctrinal Standards of the UMC,
19 we pledge to exercise our episcopal role in ways that enable as many United Methodists,
20 lay and clergy, as are willing to remain in the UMC and – together – to continue in
21 making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. And, because we
22 are part of the Church Universal, we seek to be united visibly and in ministries with
23 other parts of the Body of Christ in God’s mission for the human family and creation.

24
25 We are committed to strengthening every local church, where the word is preached and
26 Christ is offered, and where the table is set before all who hunger and thirst for
27 righteousness, confident in the prayer we have learned to say and share:

- 28
- 29 • Make us one with Christ – this is faithfulness.
- 30 • Make us one with each other – this is unity.
- 31 • Make us one in ministry to all the world – this is fruitfulness.

32
33
34 This is the United Methodist Church we love and serve!

Document: 700.04

Name: Affirming *Covenant to Build BeLoved Community* passed by the North Central Jurisdiction

Author: NIC General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation

CCFA Comment:

ACTION:

The Northern Illinois Annual Conference affirms *Covenant to Build Beloved Community* written and passed by the North Central Jurisdictional Conference. The Northern Illinois Annual Conference:

- recommends that local congregations use *Covenant to Build BeLoved Community* in ways that are contextually appropriate;
- receives the challenge of using annual conference resources in ways that counters racism in the world and within our conference;
- encourages the Bishop and Cabinet to continue to be intentional in their support of clergy and churches that are cross-cultural appointments to ensure their success and strengthen the vitality of our conference; and,
- affirms sending the Commission on Religion and Race and Anti-Racism Task Force to the Jurisdictional gathering that *Covenant to Build BeLoved Community* creates.

RATIONALE:

At its Special Session November 10-11, 2021, the North Central Jurisdiction passed *Covenant to Build BeLoved Community* (see complete text below) with 80.8% of voting delegates. This is an aspirational covenant casting a vision for what the future of the United Methodist Church can look like as we live together in relationship with one another. By affirming *Covenant to Build BeLoved Community*, we are agreeing to participate with the other annual conferences of the North Central Jurisdiction to create a United Methodist Church that is the work of dismantling racism, welcoming all to the table of Christ, and building a community together that lives into the scriptural call to “draw near with a genuine heart with the certainty that our faith gives us, since our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies are washed with pure water. Let’s hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, because the one who made the promises is reliable. And let us consider each other carefully for the purpose of sparking love and good deeds. Don’t stop meeting together with other believers, which some people have gotten into the habit of doing. Instead, encourage each other, especially as you see the day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10: 22-25)

Covenant to Build BeLoved Community

United Methodism is at a crucial inflection point – facing the challenges of a global pandemic, racial injustice, impacts of climate change, denominational decline, and interdenominational strife. More than ever, we need to lean into the call of Hebrews 10:22-25 (CEB): “Therefore, let’s draw near with a genuine heart with the certainty that our faith gives us, since our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies are washed with pure water. Let’s hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, because the one who made the promises is reliable. And let us consider each other carefully for the purpose of sparking love and good deeds. Don’t stop meeting together with other believers, which some people have gotten into the habit of doing. Instead, encourage each other, especially as you see the day drawing near.” As the North Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church (NCJ), we covenant to Build BeLoved Community.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We request that the Mission Council, in conjunction with the NCJ College of Bishops,

develop an exercise for the NCJ delegates to engage in a conversation during the next session of the NCJ that seeks to understand the impact of white supremacy and Christian nationalism/white nationalism within The United Methodist Church.

We request the Mission Council evaluate their budget and demonstrate, and report at the next Jurisdictional Conference, how the budget incorporates antiracism work and healing institutional trauma.

The Mission Council must designate sufficient NCJ funds for the purpose of convening Conference Commissions on Religion and Race and Annual Conference antiracism task force representatives in 2022 to operationalize and share a report at the next Jurisdictional Conference:

- A racial analysis of: local church's total budgets, clergy salaries, new church starts/revitalizations, church closures, Conference staff, board, task force and committee members, and delegates to GC/JC.
- Alignment of Annual Conference budget with antiracism work, creation of whistleblower policies, on-going training and support for cross racial/cross cultural appointments, prioritization of new church starts and congregational revitalization in communities of color, resources to support the recruitment and development for leaders of color (lay and clergy) and developing programs for youth/young adults of color.

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

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

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

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

1
2 *According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's*
3 *holy Church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world?*

4
5 **We will.** We who will remain and continue to be faithful members of The United Methodist
6 Church, commit to leading the NCJ through this difficult moment. We remain committed
7 to our continuing call to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world
8 and by sharing and living the Gospel.

9
10 We value episcopal leadership and commit to electing bishops as soon as possible. If
11 and only if the 2020 General Conference, currently scheduled for August 29-September
12 6, 2022, is postponed or canceled, and the regular session of the jurisdictional conference
13 is subsequently proposed to be postponed or canceled, this special session of the NCJ
14 Conference authorizes the duly elected heads of the conference delegations and the
15 NCJ College of Bishops to work together to call a special session of the jurisdictional
16 conference for November 2-5, 2022, the time currently scheduled for the regular session
17 of the jurisdictional conference, for the purpose of the election of bishops, acting on
18 nominations for jurisdictional committees and general agencies, budgeting and other
19 necessary matters.

20
21 We encourage conferences and local churches to strive for reconciliation and
22 understanding. However, some congregations and clergy may feel called to a different
23 future in the faith. We respect our siblings who depart and desire to do no harm as we
24 anticipate cooperative ecumenical efforts in the future. We grieve each separation. NCJ
25 annual conferences should use existing disciplinary and conference provisions to
26 accommodate local congregations and clergy seeking disaffiliation.

27
28 We stand in solidarity with United Methodists around the world who long for a world-
29 wide contextual and regional denominational structure.

30
31 We call on the NCJ College of Bishops and Mission Council to immediately begin working
32 with other Jurisdictions, Central Conferences, and the Connectional Table to make
33 regional equity and contextualization a reality. We fully support polity changes, such as
34 the Christmas Covenant or Connectional Table's US Regional Conference proposals, that
35 will lead to regional equity and contextualization.

36
37 We recommend Annual Conferences engage in conversations about regional equity and
38 contextualization.

39
40 Covenanting to Build the BeLoved Community, we look to 2024 with promise. We pledge
41 ourselves to God's call upon our lives, to each other, and to the future of The United
42 Methodist Church.

43
44 *With God's help we will proclaim the good news*

- 1 *and live according to the example of Christ.*
- 2 *We will surround each other*
- 3 *with a community of love and forgiveness,*
- 4 *that we may grow in our trust of God,*
- 5 *and be found faithful in our service to others.*
- 6 *We will pray for each other,*
- 7 *that we may be true disciples*
- 8 *who walk in the way that leads to life.*

Document: 700.05

Name: Closure - Cortland UMC

Author(s): Brian Gilbert

Action:

WHEREAS the Cortland United Methodist Church located in the Village of Cortland, DeKalb County, Illinois has witnessed to Jesus Christ and served its community and the world; and

WHEREAS the Cortland United Methodist Church faithfully served the community and Village of Cortland and boldly risked themselves in this effort; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provision of Paragraph 2539 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016, the Prairie South District Superintendent has recommended with the approval of the District Strategy Team that the church be discontinued effective June 30, 2022. The Prairie South District Committee on Building and Location has voted to concur with the District Superintendent's recommendation to discontinue said church and the presiding Bishop and the majority of the District Superintendents of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church have consented to the District Superintendent's recommendation to discontinue said church;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, to minimize the risk of loss of future bequests to the Conference, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference recommends that the said Church, though discontinued under the Canon Law of The United Methodist Church, nevertheless be maintained in perpetuity under the Illinois civil law by adopting a reincorporation thereof by the Bishop under Section 46b of the Illinois Religious Corporation Act, with the incumbent Conference Board of Trustees named as trustees of the Discontinued Church under the procedure established by Article VII "Discontinued or Abandoned Church Reincorporation" of the By-laws of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all properties and assets of said Church, including, but not limited to its existing and future gifts, devises , and bequests, its existing personal property and accounts and its real property commonly known as 45 W. Chestnut, Cortland , Illinois 60112, shall become the properties and assets of the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church and shall , in discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet , be either:

- Retained by the reincorporated shell Illinois Religious corporation referred to above pending sale or other disposition; or
- Transferred to the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church be authorized and directed to provide for the care, maintenance, and disposition of said assets and shall dispose of said assets in accordance with the relevant provisions of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016; and that any monies or other assets received from the sale or other disposition of the assets of said

1 discontinued Church be used to pay off all monetary obligations and arrearages with any
2 remaining monies to be deposited in the Closed Church Fund as directed by Standing Rule 11,
3 part A, Section V of the Standing Rules of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The
4 United Methodist Church; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the said Church shall be transferred to the
6 DEKALB FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH in Dekalb, Illinois, unless any such members
7 shall inform the pastor of the transferee church otherwise; and

8 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVES that the appropriate officers of The Northern Illinois Annual
9 Conference of The United Methodist Church are authorized and directed to execute on behalf of
10 the said Conference any and all such additional documents as legal counsel shall recommend to
11 effectuate the above.

12
13 Rationale:

14 After many faithful years of service, ministry and mission in the name of Jesus Christ. Cortland
15 United Methodist Church has come to a place of transition and closure as membership and
16 attendance have declined. The congregation has expressed its desire to celebrate its past
17 ministry but to no longer remain in service as Cortland United Methodist Church. The closure
18 has been recommended by the Cortland Church Council, Prairie South District Strategy Team,
19 the Prairie South District Board on Church Location and Buildings and the District
20 Superintendent.

1 **Document: 700.06**

2 **Name: Closure - Flowing Forth UMC**

3 **Author(s): Jeffry Bross**

4
5 WHEREAS the Flowing Forth United Methodist Church, located in Aurora, Illinois was formed
6 out of the merger of Flowing Grace United Methodist and Fourth Street United Methodist
7 Church in 2018; and

8
9 WHEREAS the merged churches faithfully served not only the community of Aurora but
10 adjacent communities as well; and

11
12 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provision of Paragraph 2549 of the Book of Disciplines of the
13 United Methodist Church 2016, the Prairie Central District Superintendent has recommended
14 with the approval of the District committee on Building and Location has approved that the
15 church be discontinued effective July 1, 2022. The presiding Bishop and the majority of the
16 District Superintendents of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of the United Methodist
17 Church have consented to the recommendation to discontinue said church;

18
19 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that to minimize the risk of loss of future bequests to the
20 Conference, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference recommends that the said Church, though
21 discontinued under the Canon Law of the United Methodist Church, nevertheless be
22 maintained in perpetuity under the Illinois civil law by adopting a reincorporation thereof by
23 the Bishop under Section 46b of the Illinois Religious Corporation Act, with the incumbent
24 Conference Board of Trustees names as trustees of the Discontinued Church under the
25 procedure established by Article VII "Discontinued or Abandoned Church Reincorporation" of
26 the By-laws of the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church; and

27
28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of said Church who reside north of Highway 88
29 shall be transferred to Batavia United Methodist Church and those who reside south of
30 Highway 88 shall be transferred to Wellspring United Methodist Church; and

31
32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all remaining assets of said Church, including, but not limited
33 to its existing and future gifts, devises, and bequests, shall become the assets of the Northern
34 Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church and shall in the discretion of the Bishop in
35 consultation with the Cabinet, be either:

- 36
37 a. Retained by the reincorporation shell Illinois religious corporation referred to above
38 pending sale or other disposition; or
39 b. Transferred to the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of the
40 United Methodist Church; and

41
42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual
43 Conference of the United Methodist Church be authorized and directed to provide for the care,
44 maintenance and disposition of the said assets and shall dispose of said assets in accordance
45 with the relevant provisions of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016; and
46 that monies or other assets received from the sale or other disposition of the assets of said
47 discontinued Church be used to pay off all monetary obligations and remainder monies to be

1 deposited in the Closed Church Fund as directed by Standing Rule 11, Part A, Section V of the
2 Standing Rules of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church;
3 and

4
5 BE IT FINALLY RESEOLVED that the appropriate officers of the Northern Illinois Annual
6 Conference of the United Methodist Church are authorized and directed to execute on behalf of
7 the said Conference and all such additional documents as legal counsel shall recommend to
8 effectuate the above.

9
10 RATIONALE:

11
12 After many faithful years of service, ministry and mission in the name of Jesus Christ, Flowing
13 Forth UMC has come to a place of transition and closure. The congregation has expressed its
14 desire to celebrate the past ministry but no longer can remain in service as a chartered United
15 Methodist Church. The closure has been recommended by the appropriate District leadership
16 teams and the District Superintendent.

Document: 700.07

Name: Help Us Find Our Shawnee Children

Authors: Shawnee Tribe, Ben Barnes, Tribal Chief, Thomas Rawlinson, member of Shawnee Tribe; NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators

Action:

- The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church acknowledges the harm done to the Shawnee people at the Shawnee Methodist Mission and Indian Manual Labor School.
- The conference, individually and collectively, pledge its support in finding the remains of the missing Indigenous children. This may include a time of prayer and remembrance and an education of the history of Indian Boarding Schools in local congregations. It also calls on the UMC to acknowledge their part in this history, repent to the Shawnee people, and be open participants in the search for these missing children.
- Furthermore, the NIC will sponsor similar legislation supporting the Shawnee people's search for their missing children at the 2024 General Conference.

Rationale:

The Shawnee Methodist Mission and Indian Manual Labor School operated in Kansas from 1830-1870, near present-day Fairway. As with other mission schools such as the Kamloops Indian Mission School in British Columbia, Native children were taken from their parents and forced into a system that has been called "cultural genocide." The discovery last year of hundreds of unmarked graves at Kamloops has forced an international reckoning of the role churches played in such atrocities.

In the words of Tribal Chief Ben Barnes, "It was here that the Methodists running the mission forced young Shawnee children to work as field hands and manual laborers. In the windowless attics of the still-standing dormitory, you can see where our children were forced to sleep and carved messages left behind on the rafters. During our research, we discovered that parents arrived at the school to check in on their children, only to learn right then they had died. We are concerned because there is no cemetery at the Shawnee Indian Mission. We do not know where these children of ours have been buried."

In 2012, the UMC initiated the Acts of Repentance. The Council of Bishops statement begins: "As the Council of Bishops, we are here to repent and express remorse for the church's past conduct in its relationships with Native and indigenous peoples in all the places where we have extended the mission of the church for over two hundred years. We are here to commit ourselves to addressing the wrong and asking for the forgiveness of those who have been wronged by failing them so profoundly. We confess to God, acknowledging our guilt, resolving to cease the harm, pledging ourselves to live differently, reversing the damage that has been done through our participation in violence, maltreatment and neglect of Native and indigenous peoples so that we may bring about healing and restoration to all."

Document: 700.08

Name: Identifying and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land

Authors: United Methodists for Kairos Response, Paula Roderick; NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators

Action:

The Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church affirms that apartheid is antithetical to the Gospel message and that we recognize and oppose Israeli apartheid as we strive to "resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves," and

The Conference calls on the U.S. government to condition U.S. funding to Israel upon Israel's willingness to dismantle its apartheid system and implement all the rights due to Palestinians under international law, and

The Conference urges all United Methodist clergy and laity to listen to the voices of Palestinians regarding their situation, by meeting with them in their homeland, by seeking opportunities to hear from them at online events, and through the study of the Palestinian Christians' landmark 2020 document entitled "Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action."

Rationale:

In most of the region between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, Israel is the sole governing power, and, in the remainder, Israel maintains primary control over Palestinians' lives. Israeli authorities have demonstrated a clear intent to maintain domination over Palestinians by enacting a system of laws and policies that grant full self-determination exclusively to Jewish Israelis and enforce systematic oppression of Palestinians, which is the essence of an apartheid system.

Apartheid is named as a "crime against humanity" under international law and the primary features of apartheid include:

- codifying into law a preferred group of people and giving that group preferential access to resources, benefits and services,
- segregating the population into geographic areas based on identity, and
- establishing laws and policies designed to suppress opposition to the regime and enforcing domination through arbitrary imprisonment, torture, cruel and inhumane treatment, and other violations of human rights.

Israel has seized more than three-quarters of the land of its Palestinian citizens and continues their dispossession today, and Palestinians in the OPT have lived under Israeli military law for generations without any protected civil rights.

If apartheid is to be opposed and abolished, it is essential for the international community to recognize and name apartheid where it exists. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that United Methodists "commend and encourage the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society," and furthermore "call the Church to challenge any hierarchy of cultures or identities."

Document: 700.09

Name: Let's Overcome Christian Nationalism

Authors: NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators

Action:

- The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church condemns the use of Christian symbols and prayers by the attackers on the U.S. Congress at the Capitol on January 6, 2021. We invite our clergy and lay leaders to condemn that attack, as well as any future attacks.
- The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church disavows the lies spread about the 2020 Presidential Election that incited the mob carrying Christian symbols to violently attack Congress while it was certifying the Electoral College votes on January 6, 2021. We assert that the election of President Biden was free, fair, and legal.
- We call upon our pastors and lay leaders to lead studies of Christian nationalism using resources including www.ChristiansAgainstChristianNationalism.org; "The Capitol Insurrection Was as Christian Nationalist as It Gets," www.nytimes.com/2021/02/28/opinion/christian-nationalists; Taking America Back for God by Whitehead and Perry; The Power Worshippers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalists by Katherine Stewart; and White Too Long, The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity by Robert Long.

Rationale:

Members of the Northern Illinois Conference were horrified at the assault on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. We were dismayed by the use of Christian symbols during the violent attack on the Congress. The sight of the cross, the Christian flag, "Jesus Saves" signs, and a "Jesus 2020" flag modeled on the Trump campaign flag – along with the prayers professing a belief in God empowering the insurrectionists onto victory – abused Christianity. We became more aware of the dangerous ideology of Christian nationalism.

Our United Methodist faith compels us to recognize that Christian nationalism fuses Christian and American identities so as to dishonor both the Christian faith and America's constitutional democracy. We understand that Christian nationalism often overlaps white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, authoritarianism, and militarism. We believe that no religion, including Christianity, should be privileged by government policies. "The United Methodist Church has for many years supported the separation of church and state." (UM Social Principles)

We must stand up to and speak out against Christian nationalism, especially when it inspires acts of violence and intimidation – including vandalism, bomb threats, arson, hate crimes, and attacks on houses of worship – against religious communities at home and abroad.

Document: 700.10

Name: Opposition to Unjust Theology Regarding the Holy Land

Authors: United Methodists for Kairos Response, Paula Roderick; NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators

Action:

The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church declares its opposition to any theology or biblical interpretation that would justify denying or violating the human rights of Palestinians and other religious and ethnic minorities in Israel/Palestine.

The Northern Illinois Conference calls on its bishop to establish a task force to explore and identify the biblical and theological reasons for opposing Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people and to submit a report to the 2023 annual conference session which shall include recommendations for actions the Conference should take in light of those findings.

Rationale:

Many Christians adhere to the theology of Christian Zionism, believing that the modern state of Israel is a continuation of biblical Israel and a fulfillment of biblical prophecy and that "it is the responsibility of Christians to support the State of Israel and its policies."¹

The New Testament does not prophesy a modern Israeli state controlled by any single group of people, but does envision a time when Christ will have eliminated "the dividing wall of hostility" between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14).

A statement endorsed by thirteen bishops and patriarchs of Palestinian Christian churches says that Western Christians have attached "biblical and theological legitimacy to the infringement of our rights" and calls on their fellow Christians to "deepen their reflection on the Word of God and to rectify their interpretations" and avoid "any use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice."²

For decades, the United Methodist Church has opposed Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people, including: "the continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a 'Greater Israel' that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings."³

Christian Zionism is having a significant and dangerous impact on U.S. policy regarding Israel, by obstructing efforts to achieve a just peace and promoting U.S. acceptance of unjust treatment of Palestinians, and the Israeli government is increasingly reliant on Christians in the United States who adhere to this theology for political support.⁴

1. www.christianzionism.org

- 1 2. The Kairos Palestine Document – Paragraphs 2.3.3 and 2.4
- 2 https://www.kairosresponse.org/kairos_palestine_document.html
- 3 3. Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land, UMC Book of Resolutions 2016, #6111
- 4 [https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/opposition-to-](https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/opposition-to-israeli-settlements-in-palestinian-land-6111)
- 5 [israeli-settlements-in-palestinian-land-6111](https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/opposition-to-israeli-settlements-in-palestinian-land-6111)
- 6 4. Christian Zionism and the Formation of Foreign Policy
- 7 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24915906>

Document: 700.11

Name: Support of the Christmas Covenant legislation

Author: NIC General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation

CCFA Comment:

ACTION:

The Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church recognizes, supports, and celebrates the leadership of our Central Conferences in the creation of the Christmas Covenant (please see www.christmascovenant.com) and endorses its legislative language, including the creation of a U.S. Regional Conference along with the Central Conferences as Regional Conferences.

RATIONALE:

The Christmas Covenant legislation was written primarily by United Methodists from Africa, Europe and the Philippines. In February, 2020, it was passed by the Philippines Annual Conference - Cavite and submitted to the next General Conference. The Connectional Table (CT) affirms the Christmas Covenant as an “expression of the CT’s commitment to institutional equity and to dismantling historic, systemic colonialism.” (CT press release, Nov. 3, 2020) It calls on The United Methodist Church to structure itself into Regions, with local autonomy, to address issues particular to their own unique contexts, at the same time, continuing its structure as a global connection. This allows us to address common global issues and give cross-regional help to each region so that we may be more effective in dealing with the unique challenges that we face in our own regions of the world.

1 **Document: 700.12**

2 **Name: Resolution - Elections for General Conference**

3 **Authors: Hwa-Young Chong, Brian Gilbert**

4
5 **Action:**

6 The Northern Illinois Annual Conference will hold elections at the 2023 Annual Conference for
7 delegates to the next General Conference held in 2024.

8
9 **Rationale:**

10 The process of the NIC is to elect delegates for a 4-year term, and the NIC standing rules
11 (section 2.B.1-2) state that elections are to be held no earlier than two years prior to the next
12 General/Jurisdictional Conference.

Document: 700.13

Name: Resolution for Korea's Peace

Author(s): Hwa-Young Chong

Action:

1. The Northern Illinois Annual Conference pray for Korea's peace as part of worship, Bible Study, or special presentation during the 184th annual conference in 2023 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War.
2. The Bishop of the Northern Illinois Conference appoint a committee to work on this prayer time during the 2023 annual conference and on educational and spiritual formation resources for the congregations and individuals to use.
3. The Northern Illinois Conference encourage all local churches to consider taking a moment in worship to pray for peace in Korea, preferably around the 70th anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War.

Rationale:

Christians affirm Christ is our peace, as widely witnessed in the New Testament including the following passage: "For he [Christ] is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2:14).

The year 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War in 1953. The political and military tensions have continued since then, threatening peace on the Korean peninsula as well as threatening global peace.

The Korean War, which started on June 25, 1950 and lasted for three years, was an international war fought on the Korean peninsula, involving military forces from China, the Soviet Union, the United States, and United Nations (UN) Forces. An estimated 3 million civilians and combatants lost their lives in the war, with countless others injured in body and spirit. The descendants of those killed, survivors, veterans, the injured, and war refugees and orphans now live all over the world, bearing the pain of the war.

The armistice treaty of the Korean War on July 27, 1953 served as a military ceasefire and resulted in the division of Korea into two: North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) and South Korea (Republic of Korea). North and South Koreans share one language, common history, and cultural heritage. Since the national division in 1953, civilian communication or visits have not been allowed. During these years, husband and wives were separated. Parents and children were pulled apart. People in both North and South Korea have lived under the threat of war, political demonization of each other, and the pain of family separation.

The United States forces still are stationed in South Korea. The peace of Korea is not only a concern of the Korean people. It involves U.S. army (militarily); surrounding nations (geopolitically); and many other nations in this increasingly globalized world community. An escalation of tension in Korea can affect global peace. At the same time, a more peaceful situation in Korea can expand a sense of wellbeing for others.

1 Praying for peace is an important part of Christian discipleship. Specific prayer requests for
 2 Korea's peace may include the following:

- 3 • Praying for replacing the armistice treaty with a peace treaty
- 4 • Praying for peace and reconciliation for Korea's separated families and their
- 5 descendants
- 6 • Praying for the descendants of those who were killed in the Korean War, those who
- 7 were injured in the Korean War and still live with the wounds from the war, and all who
- 8 were affected by the Korean War
- 9 • Praying for transforming the demilitarized zone into a peace park
- 10 • Praying for the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas
- 11 • Praying for the world community to work for greater peace in the world; and

12
 13 Christ calls us to be peacemakers. Our prayers for peace will connect us with all who yearn for
 14 peace in Korea and in the world.

15
 16
 17 **Submitted by:**

18 Hwa-Young Chong, Clergy, Community UMC, Naperville

19
 20 Eunbae Doh, Clergy, Channahon UMC, Channahon; President, NIC Korean-American Clergy
 21 Association

22
 23 Sang Hun Han, Clergy, Good Samaritan UMC, Addison; Executive Director, NIC Korean-
 24 American Clergy Association

25
 26 Hyewon Sophia Hyon, Clergy, First (Temple) UMC, Chicago; Treasurer, NIC Korean-American
 27 Clergy Association

28
 29 Hogun Kim, Clergy, South Suburban Korean UMC, Flossmoor; Secretary, NIC Korean-
 30 American Clergy Association

Document: 700.14

**Name: Separation Resolution for Local Church -- Clear, Transparent, Fair, and Collaborative:
Guidelines for Congregations Considering Leaving the Northern Illinois Annual Conference
Author(s): Scott Field**

RESOLVED:

That the 2022 Session of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference (NIC), out of respect for one another, a desire to do no harm, and a commitment to allow congregations and their members grace and space freely to consider their options for the future, encourages all officials and entities of the Annual Conference to be governed by the following principles, policies and processes when engaging congregations considering withdrawal from the NIC to join "one of the other denominations represented in the Pan-Methodist Commission or ... another evangelical denomination" (*Book of Discipline*, paragraph 2548.2), or to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church "for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provision of *The Book of Discipline* related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexual persons as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow" (Paragraph 2553).

1. Congregations considering their relationship with the NIC shall undertake a deliberate and intentional process of informed, prayerful discernment.
2. Congregations joining one of the denominations represented in the Pan-Methodist Commission or another evangelical church may, at their sole discretion, choose to withdraw for purposes of transfer under the provisions of Paragraph 2548.2.
3. Congregations disaffiliating to an independent status shall be required to use the provisions of Paragraph 2553. All churches, regardless of their theological position, should be permitted to disaffiliate pursuant to Paragraph 2553 so long as they meet the requirements of Paragraph 2553.
4. Any required support for unfunded pension liability shall be based on Wespath calculations of the aggregate unfunded liability of the Annual Conference. The formula for the proportion of the aggregate liability allocated to particular congregations shall be determined by the appropriate group within the NIC. Actuarial reports, financial statements, audit reports, and calculations supporting both the aggregate amount of unfunded pension liability as determined by Wespath as well as the NIC formula for apportioning the aggregate amount of unfunded pension liability to local churches shall be provided to all churches.
5. Northern Illinois Annual Conference officials and entities are encouraged to abide by the following guidelines in administering Paragraph 2548.2:

- 1 a. Any allocation, exchange of property, or comity agreement shall include the
2 following requirements. No additional sums, "exit fees", or penalties shall be
3 required.
 - 4 i. The local church retains all its assets and liabilities.
 - 5 ii. The local church shall repay previously documented loans from the
6 Annual Conference.
 - 7 iii. The local church shall either remain under Wespath and carry its
8 unfunded pension liability forward with it or owe the Northern
9 Illinois Conference for the local church's proportional share of the
10 unfunded liability. The liability shall include unfunded obligations
11 related to The United Methodist Church's pre-1982 pension plan, the
12 Ministerial Pension Plan, and/or the Clergy Retirement Security
13 Program. Actuarial reports and financial statements from Wespath
14 documenting any unfunded liability shall be provided to departing
15 churches. This liability may be satisfied by direct payment to the NIC
16 before the effective date of withdrawal, by partial payments over time
17 until the liability is fulfilled, or a promissory note approved by the
18 conference chancellor or another attorney retained by the Conference
19 in the sum of the withdrawal liability.
 - 20 iv. The local church shall be current in its apportionment payments to the
21 NIC for the current year.
 - 22 v. No additional sums will be required to obtain release of all the
23 congregation's property and assets from the trust clause.
 - 24 b. The local church shall make the decision about its future relationship with
25 the NIC at a church conference duly called according to the provisions of *The*
26 *Book of Discipline*. The Church Council (or its equivalent) shall determine
27 whether a simple majority or a two-thirds super majority shall be required
28 for approval of a motion to separate from the NIC. If the motion is to
29 disaffiliate to an independent status, a two-third majority will be required per
30 paragraph 2553 of the *Book of Discipline*.
 - 31 c. The district superintendent shall approve the request of the Church Council
32 (or its equivalent) for a church conference and shall preside or choose another
33 elder to preside at a church conference to take place no later than sixty days
34 after the request is made.
- 35 6. Matters pertaining to the role of the currently appointed or assigned pastoral
36 leadership, as well as any other church staff, will be addressed in the withdrawal
37 agreement. Further, professing members of the withdrawing church who desire to
38 continue in a United Methodist congregation shall have the option of transferring

membership to another United Methodist congregation congruent with paragraphs 229 and paragraph 2549.2 of the *Book of Discipline*.

7. A written agreement detailing the requirements of departure and, in the case of withdrawal to align with another eligible denomination, the reception of the congregation into its new denomination, is to be signed by the NIC, the local congregation, and, if applicable, the receiving denomination after review by the NIC chancellor or attorney retained by the NIC for this purpose.
8. All agreements for separation are undertaken with the consent of the presiding bishop and shall be presented to the Annual Conference at a regular or specially called session for final approval. Any congregations seeking disaffiliation under paragraph 2553 must complete the process by December 31, 2023, per the requirements of that section of the *Book of Discipline*. The process for withdrawal to align with another eligible denomination under paragraph 2548.2 will have no time limit imposed or implied.

Rationale:

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church contains two options for congregations choosing to separate from the United Methodist Church: 1) Paragraph 2548.2 relating to release of the trust clause for a local congregation to join a church “represented in the Pan-Methodist Commission or another evangelical denomination;” or 2) Paragraph 2553 which grants the limited right, until December 31, 2023, for United Methodist congregations to disaffiliate for reasons of conscience over the practice of ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals; and

The Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace through Separation and its legislation submitted to the now postponed 2020 General Conference offers a proposal to restructure the United Methodist Church by separation as a means to resolve our differences, allowing each part of the Church to remain true to its theological understanding, while recognizing the dignity, equality, integrity, and respect for every person; and

The Covenant to Build BeLoved Community, adopted by the North Central Jurisdictional Conference (November 2021) and affirmed by the NIC General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation states,

We encourage conferences and local churches to strive for reconciliation and understanding. However, some congregations and clergy may feel called to a different future in the faith. We respect our siblings who depart and desire to do no harm as we anticipate cooperative ecumenical efforts in the future. We grieve each separation. NCJ annual conferences should use existing disciplinary and conference provisions to accommodate local congregations and clergy seeking disaffiliation.

(<https://www.ncjumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NCJ-Covenant-to-Build-BeLoved-Community-1.pdf>)

The prolonged delay of General Conference, and uncertainty whether the *Protocol* will be enacted, as well as limited information about requirements in the Northern Illinois

1 Annual Conference for congregations desiring to disaffiliate or withdraw for purpose of
2 transfer contributes to anxiety, loss of trust, and distraction in our local churches.

3 Clear guidance by Annual Conference action regarding the separation process and
4 expected requirements will reduce anxiety, allow for open, peaceable, and informed
5 consideration by local churches, their pastors, and NIC leaders, and empower local
6 churches to make better decisions about their futures if and when they choose to do so.

7
8 Submitted by:

9 Rev. Scott N. Field

10 NIC Clergy (Retired)

Document: 700.15

Name: Supporting the Rights of Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers to Justice Equity and Right to Counsel

Author(s): Northern Illinois Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC RMN, Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators; and NIC Methodist Federation for Social Action, Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs.

Action:

1. Calls upon its clergy, lay leaders, and members to educate themselves about the plight of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees attempting to enter this country and particularly here in the Northern Illinois conference.
2. Urges its clergy, lay leaders, and members to consider ways to support Justice for Our Neighbors and other advocacy and support groups such as Interfaith Immigration Coalition, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and CLASP, whose missions are to offer free high-quality legal services to low-income immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees; to engage in education and advocacy efforts; and, to provide hospitality and needed childcare, and other related necessary services to aid them in feeling welcomed and supported.
3. 4. Urges its clergy, lay leaders, and church members, on their own behalf to contact (write, call, or meet) their State Representatives and Senators to urge them to co-sponsor HB 0025 and SB 3144 respectively, the Immigration Right to Counsel Act.
5. Directs the Conference Secretary [or other appropriate Conference rep] to write our State legislators to vote for and support the Immigrant Right to Counsel Act, and advocate for better state laws to promote the health, welfare and security of immigrants.
6. Urges its clergy, lay leaders, and members to continue to call upon our U.S. representatives, to continue to pursue more and better decisions to care for the health, welfare, and security of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, such as the recent decision to terminate the federal law, Title 42, which was misused to block migrants from seeking asylum at our southern borders and elsewhere in the U.S.

Rationale:

United Methodists, at the conference and General Conference level, have consistently passed resolutions and endorsed measures to protect the rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers..[1]

We are grateful that, Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON), was created initiated by the General Board of Global Ministries in 1999 to help serve thousands of immigrants across the United States. . The JFON network effectively provides services to our community here within the Northern Ill. Conference, and also is a strong forum for advocacy on behalf of immigrant rights. See, nijfon.org. We appreciate the work of JFON and other organizations to advocate on the state level for passage of a state law providing immigrants rights to counsel. On the Federal level, we note with joy that the Interfaith Immigration Coalition has released a statement in support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), announced plans to terminate Title 42 by May 23. The public health order, first invoked by the Trump

administration and continued by the Biden administration, has been misused for over two years to block migrants from seeking asylum at the U.S. southern border under the guise of protecting public health. Title 42 has resulted in approximately 1.7 million expulsions of asylum seekers back to harm, which has disproportionately impacted Black migrants. Over 10,000 documented incidents of kidnapping, torture, rape, and other violent attacks against vulnerable migrants have been reported since the start of the Biden administration due to Title 42. This is indeed a great step in support of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, and we also know that more is required of faith communities to support the advocacy and humanitarian work of JFON, Interfaith Immigration Coalition, [should we include CLASP?] and comparable organizations

We are called to these actions because as Jesus said “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” Matthew 25:35B; and “do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2; “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien.” Leviticus 19:33.

^[1] We call upon all UM churches to welcome newly arriving migrants, to treat them as one of our native born, see in them the presence of the incarnated Jesus, show hospitality to the migrants in our midst, oppose unfair and inhumane immigration policies, such as those that support family separation. See, 2016 Book of Resolutions, #3281 (Welcoming the Migrant to the US); 2016 Book of Discipline, Social Principles par. 162.

Document: 700.16

Name: Supporting the Right to Free Speech and to Engage in Nonviolent Actions including Boycotts

Authors: Northern Illinois Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC RMN, Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators; and NIC Methodist Federation for Social Action, Luis F. Reyes and Elisa Gatz, co-chairs.

Action:

1. Calls upon its clergy and laity to support the right to engage in nonviolent resistance including the use of boycotts and divestments.
2. Urges its clergy and laity to educate themselves about the damage anti-BDS laws have done to free speech rights and other nonviolent actions.
3. Urges its clergy and laity ,to consider the dangers posed by an Illinois statute that penalizes companies for engaging in actions critical of Israel, even when those actions are taken out of concern for human rights.
4. Urges its clergy and laity, on their own behalf to contact (write, call, or meet) their State Representatives and Senators to urge them to review Illinois 'anti-BDS law and proposed U.S. legislation and consider whether these efforts to protect the State of Israel justify the chilling of and actual infringement on free speech, and chilling the efforts of companies to comply with international law and human rights.

Rationale:

In 2005, after years of occupation and oppression, Palestinian civil society issued an urgent cry to the international community to use boycott divestment and sanctions ("BDS") actions until Israel: 1) provides equal rights to Palestinian/Israeli citizens inside Israel, 2) recognizes the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and 3) ends the occupation of Palestine.

In recent years, this Palestinian-led movement has garnered international support from churches — including the United Methodist and Presbyterian churches - universities and other institutions as it seeks to apply economic pressure on Israel over its treatment of Palestinians.

United Methodists, at both Annual and General conference levels, have consistently passed resolutions and endorsed measures to protect the rights of Palestinians. The NIC was the first US conference to pass a divestment resolution in 2006.

On May 3, 2012, the UMC passed the resolution "Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land," calling for a boycott of all products produced in Israel's illegal settlements on Palestinian land. The GC also asked "*all companies* that profit from and/or support settlements through their business activities to examine these and stop any business that contributes to serious violations of international law, promotes systemic discrimination or otherwise supports ongoing military occupation."

The UMC Resolution foreshadowed the 2014 U.N. Human Rights Council's resolution urging businesses to avoid supporting the establishment and maintenance of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territories.

1 Since then, at both State (including Illinois) and Federal levels, there have been massive
2 efforts aimed at suppressing criticism of Israel through the use of boycott or divestment
3 initiatives (see, <https://palestinelegal.org/righttoboycott>). These efforts are disturbing given
4 that over 30 years ago, the Supreme Court held that boycotts are a form of free speech
5 protected by the First Amendment (*NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware*), such laws have been
6 declared unconstitutional by Federal courts (see [https://www.aclu.org/letter/aclu-letter-](https://www.aclu.org/letter/aclu-letter-opposing-revised-version-israel-anti-boycott-act)
7 [opposing-revised-version-israel-anti-boycott-act](https://www.aclu.org/letter/aclu-letter-opposing-revised-version-israel-anti-boycott-act)).

8 Laws that seek to punish companies for engaging acts perceived as critical of the State, or to
9 cease profiting from or supporting the illegal settlements, go too far. Efforts to silence,
10 infringe, or simply to chill First Amendment free speech rights, including bills that target the
11 use of boycotts or divestment for social justice issues, regardless of whether to support the
12 rights of Palestinians to life with dignity, freedom of movement, and basic human rights, or
13 for other social justice issues, are inappropriate and must not be condoned.

14
15 Illinois 'anti-BDS statute permits a seven-member board to determine that a company is
16 "boycotting" Israel and/or "any territory controlled by Israel," and place that company on the
17 prohibited investment list. In just the past few years, this Board has invoked the statute
18 threaten Air BnB, Ben and Jerry's, Air Canada.