

1 **Document: 700.04**
2 **Name: Condemning Apartheid in Palestine and Israel**
3 **Author: Elisa Gatz**
4 **CCFA Action:**
5 **Legislative Section:**
6

7 **Action:**

8 The Northern Illinois Conference publicly supports the efforts of Christians in the Holy Land
9 who seek to help their neighbors understand their shared heritage and to act for peace. We
10 condemn the harm caused by the Israeli National Government’s political and military
11 occupation and the resulting Apartheid conditions imposed on Palestinians in the Occupied
12 Territories.
13

14 **Rationale:**

15 Taking it as accepted that murder, mass arrests, indiscriminate bombing, kidnapping, and
16 withholding of food and water from children are all criminal acts whoever commits them; we
17 also recognize that
18 Israel’s continuing illegal occupation of Palestinian lands degrades their own claims over UN-
19 recognized lands, and increasingly puts all persons in the region at risk from reprisals,
20 including violence; in their Nation State Basic Law of 2018, the Israeli national government
21 granted self-determination exclusively to the Jewish citizens of Israel, and has seized more than
22 three-quarters of the occupied land of Palestine, also known as the West Bank and Gaza, that
23 forces Palestinians in those territories to live under Israeli military law for generations; since
24 2009, no fewer than six authoritative studies have declared Israeli actions as creating an
25 apartheid condition as defined by international law that describes apartheid as a “crime against
26 humanity”. These include the: Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa Report – 2009,
27 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) report – 2017,
28 Yesh Din Report – 2020, B’Tselem Report – January 2021, Human Rights Watch report – 2021,
29 and Amnesty International report – 2022;
30 The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that we “commend and encourage
31 the self- awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to
32 demand their just and equal rights as members of society,” and furthermore “calls the Church
33 to challenge any hierarchy of cultures or identities,” and to declare its opposition to the crime of
34 apartheid, calling it a “heresy” and “a sin” that must be “condemned unequivocally.”

1 Document: 700.05
2 Name: Creation Care Advocate Resolution
3 Author(s): Harriette Cross and Richard Alton
4 CCFA Action:
5 Legislation Section:
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7 Action:
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9 That every local church be encouraged to name at least one Creation Care Advocate who will
10 strengthen the church's existing green actions, and
11

12 Advocate for creation care to be lifted up in all areas of ministry and mission, including
13 preaching, liturgy, communications, education, outreach, administration and advocacy so that
14 the church will become an increasingly effective witness of loving God and neighbor.
15

16 That these actions are to be communicated as an idea exchange and inspiration throughout
17 the connection. They can be reported at charge conference and should be celebrated locally, in
18 the annual conference, and beyond.
19

20 That the Northern Illinois Annual Conference will record the names of the Creation Care
21 Advocates in the Lay Portal and assist these leaders with resources and mentors, as needed.
22 See Examples for Action below.
23

24
25 RATIONALE:
26

27 Scripture proclaims God created all – from Earth's hospitable atmosphere, mighty seas,
28 abundant forests and other plants to nutrient-rich soil, from majestic whales to the tiniest
29 microbes and all sentient and non-sentient beings in between; Scripture also proclaims God
30 called humans to be caretakers of creation (Genesis 1-2). Jesus declared the Greatest
31 Commandments are to love God and to love neighbor, especially the most vulnerable (Luke
32 10:25-37). Persons living in poverty, persons of color, and indigenous people in this country and
33 throughout the world are harmed first and most by the degradation of creation, and these same
34 groups have the fewest resources to recover from that harm. Care for creation is clearly a matter
35 of justice. Creation, including all people, is already or will be affected by the current and coming
36 level of danger from climate change and its consequences that intersect with multiple
37 expressions of injustice. It follows that loving God, the Creator, means loving God's Creation
38 and that loving neighbors in distress requires stopping harm and righting wrongs, in other
39 words, working for justice.
40

41 Tradition for United Methodists includes John Wesley's Three Simple Rules for living
42 faithfully: First, do no harm; second, do all the good you can; and third, stay in love with God.
43 Our proposed 2020 Social Principles begin with "The Community of All Creation," outlining
44 the care and justice work that is needed in the midst of the crises upon crises that are adversely
45 affecting God's creation and our neighbors. The 2009 Pastoral Letter of the Council of Bishops of
46 The United Methodist Church, *God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action*, pledges
47 leadership in addressing the work of renewal. The 2016 *Book of Discipline* (Paragraph 254)

1 includes an Earth Advocacy ministry group as a way “to fulfill the mission of the local church.”
2 It follows that the church provides both a mandate and guidance for doing what is needed.

3
4 **Reason** is a God-given gift. Our reasoning capabilities are informed by modern scientific
5 research and practices. The scientific community has given clear warning that creation is under
6 tremendous strain due to the poisoning of air, water, and land; habitat destruction; the
7 unsustainable consumption of earth’s finite resources; and the rapidly accelerating extinction of
8 species. Scientists have sounded the alarm of catastrophic harm to creation if global warming
9 and associated climate change are not halted and reversed. They point to how rising
10 temperatures have already intensified wildfires, hurricanes, drought, and sea-level rise
11 throughout the world with devastating impacts. Our reasoning capabilities are also informed by
12 the examples of indigenous peoples whose traditional wisdom and practices honor living in
13 harmony with nature. It follows that, globally, humans have the capacity for understanding the
14 damage and danger and for stopping or mitigating the effects. Individuals and congregations
15 have access to trustworthy knowledge and the reasoning ability to discern what is needed and
16 how to carry out plans in their local situations.

17
18 **Experience** is honored by United Methodists as a way of recognizing lifetime gains of
19 knowledge, understanding, perspectives, and practices of individuals, which they all bring to
20 the work before them. Functioning as a team, they become stronger in their efforts (Ecclesiastes
21 4:12). Experience is also honored as the varied ways in which humans encounter God. For many
22 people that meeting is through God’s gift of the natural world. It follows that a group of people
23 who care about creation and justice, working together can use their wisdom and passion to
24 create faithful and meaningful experiences that help others love God and neighbor.

25
26 On June 4, 2018 the Northern Illinois Conference passed resolution 700.01 “Advance our Care
27 for the Earth” to encourage churches to form Green Teams, conduct energy audits and to
28 eliminate use of Styrofoam plastics. In five years many of our churches have not responded to
29 this encouragement. The Net Zero Strategy task force recommends that a leader from each
30 church be named in the Lay Portal to receive materials and coaching.

31 32 **EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS**

33
34 **Resources** may include the monthly newsletter, website, and Creation Justice Tips from the
35 United Methodist Creation Justice Movement (umcreationjustice.org) and the attached listing of
36 examples from “What Churches Are Doing” in addition to others from the general church.

37
38 **Mentors** may choose to use the SMARTIE planning tool below in addition to their own skills
39 and tools.

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41
42 This listing is to encourage Creation Care Advocates with ideas of what a church can do, to give
43 the group a starting point. It is not exhaustive. The gifts and graces of the team members and
44 the local context, needs, and opportunities will be the ultimate inspiration for what they *can* do.

45
46
47 **Worshiping**

- 1 • Praying every Sunday on behalf of God’s Creation
- 2 • Hosting a prayer vigil focused on creation care
- 3 • Observing Earth Day (April 22)
- 4 • Creating an outdoor worship service
- 5 • Putting together a Lenten calendar with actions that connect to faith
- 6 • Writing elements of liturgy focused on creation care
- 7 • Providing a prayer for the whole congregation to pray for a specified time
- 8 • Incorporating personal testimony related to creation care and faith
- 9 • Integrating creation care and justice in sermons and liturgy

10

11 Educating

- 12 • Facilitating regular nature experience events for various age groups and groupings,
13 including walks in the woods, wildflower walks, “I spy” challenges, trip to a beach or
14 waterway, a zoo, and so on to help people love and learn to protect creation
- 15 • Leading a Bible study and programs on creation care
- 16 • Hosting a watch party for a film and discussion related to creation care
- 17 • Writing a resolution for the congregation to consider, which will start a conversation;
18 adopting it will give direction to the church
- 19 • Inviting people from a local congregation largely with members from a different race to
20 learn about how they experience creation justice or injustice
- 21 • Asking Sunday school classes to schedule speakers or follow a curriculum related to
22 creation care
- 23 • Arranging for speakers with environmental expertise, especially about local issues, to
24 speak to church groups
- 25 • Adding “green space” to their websites, with a focus on what the church is doing for
26 creation care
- 27 • Engaging children in recycling conversations through collecting broken and used
28 crayons, which are made of petroleum and would otherwise go into a landfill, and
29 recycling them through Crazy Crayons (crazycrayons.com) into new, fun crayons and
30 then helping to “close the loop” through purchasing the recycled product, which enables
31 the company to stay in business
- 32 • Encouraging clergy and congregational members to participate in the Lay Servant
33 course, *Loving People and Planet in the Name of God*, which is resourced by Discipleship
34 Ministries.
- 35 • Identifying and funding one or more members to become a United Methodist
36 EarthKeeper, trained and certified by Global Ministries

37

38 Practicing

- 39 • Deciding to stop mowing a section of the property, allowing it to go wild for the
40 pollinators and local wildlife
- 41 • Stopping the use of Styrofoam and plastic plates and cups for meals

- 1 • Encouraging meatless dishes for potlucks; providing copies of recipes
- 2 • Setting up a compost system for food waste after meals or events
- 3 • Establishing a compost site for members and neighbors to use
- 4 • Including Creation Justice Tips in newsletters and bulletins
- 5 • Adding a focus on creation actions on the church website
- 6 • Installing a rain barrel system for watering
- 7 • Being more conscious of water use and practicing water conservation
- 8 • Placing recycling bins where needed and visible
- 9 • Touring the building and grounds to identify potential energy-efficiency projects,
10 including caulking leaking windows, changing to LED lighting, adding motion-sensor
11 lights and smart thermostats
- 12 • Taking steps toward renewable and just energy sources (solar, geothermal, wind) to
13 minimize fossil fuel usage that contributes to climate change
- 14 • Purchasing bamboo toilet tissue with no plastic wrapping
- 15 • Adding a bicycle rack to encourage reducing emissions
- 16 • Preparing a pizza garden by planting the ingredients, such as oregano, tomatoes,
17 jalapeño peppers, banana peppers, mushrooms, basil, and thyme, and then having a
18 pizza party celebration featuring the homegrown ingredients
- 19 • Creating a rain garden
- 20 • Adding new trees to the church property
- 21 • Landscaping for a neighbor whose home is being rebuilt after a tornado
- 22 • Choosing native plants for butterflies and other pollinators
- 23 • Developing a community garden with vegetables and flowers to give away to both those
24 near the church, those who come to help, and to local organizations that provide food in
25 the community
- 26 • Adopting a nearby road or stream and picking up the litter and other trash as part of a
27 one-day event or a regular practice; then advocating for change
- 28 • Hosting a recycle day event in the church parking lot
- 29 • Going through items that are no longer in use and stuffed in church closets and
30 recycling or donating for reuse
- 31 • Arranging a collection of items that would otherwise be sent to the landfill and sending
32 them instead to an alternative service, such as ReTold (fabric), Terracycle (numerous
33 items), prescription drugs (police departments), for example
- 34 • Learning from and working with the conference Green Team
- 35 • Finding out from other churches what they are doing, learning from their experiences,
36 and possibly joining their efforts
- 37 • Seeking support and possible funding from the annual conference

38

39 Speaking Up

- 40 • Encouraging planning groups to use the lens of creation care
- 41 • Researching an issue, identifying the change-makers, and communicating with them

- 1 • Informing the congregation on local issues related to creation care and encouraging
- 2 them to communicate their values to the appropriate decisionmakers
- 3 • Putting together a letter-writing or calling advocacy event around a local issue
- 4 • Preparing a resolution for the annual conference agenda
- 5 • Making available reusables, such as mugs, shopping bags, or T-shirts, printed with a
- 6 creation care or justice message
- 7 • Inviting another nearby church to join in and work together on creation care efforts
- 8 • Making a list of sustainability decisions to use as criteria in planning events
- 9 • Writing “letters to the editor” about an issue

10

11 Signatures:

12 NIC Net Zero Task Force: Rev. Harriette Cross and Richard Alton

13

14 The Creation Justice Annual Conference Support Team, Model Resolutions sub-team, Rev.
15 Richenda Fairhurst (Pacific Northwest Annual Conference) and Mr. Bob Downs (West Ohio
16 Annual Conference.

17

1 **Document: 700.16**
2 **Name: Discontinuance of THORNTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
3 **Author: District Superintendent, Dr. Audrea F. Nanabray, Lake South District, UMC**
4 **CCFA Action:**
5 **Legislative Section:**

6
7 **ACTION:**

8 WHEREAS the THORNTON UMC located in the City of Thornton, Illinois at the
9 **commonly known address** 712 Chicago Road, Thornton IL 60476 in Thornton
10 Township of Cook County, Illinois was formed and has witnessed to Jesus Christ
11 and served its community and the world for many years and having closed on June 30, 2024
12 and

13 WHEREAS the Thornton UMC faithfully served the community in the City of Thornton,
14 IL and boldly risked themselves in this effort; and

15 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provision of Paragraph 2549 of *The Book of Discipline of The United*
16 *Methodist Church 2016*, the Lake South District Superintendent has recommended with the
17 approval of the District Strategy Team that the church be discontinued effective June 30, 2024.
18 The Lake South District Committee on Building and Location has voted to concur with the
19 District Superintendent's recommendation to discontinue said church and the presiding Bishop
20 and the majority of the District Superintendents of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of
21 The United Methodist Church have consented to the District Superintendent's
22 recommendation to discontinue said church;

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

31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all properties and assets of said Church,
32 including, but not limited to its existing and future gifts, devises, and bequests,
33 its existing personal property and accounts and its real property commonly
34 known as 712 Chicago Road, Thornton, IL 60476,
35 Shall become the properties and assets of the Northern Illinois Conference of The
36 United Methodist Church, and
37 Shall, in the discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet, be either:
38 a. Retained by the reincorporated shell Illinois religious corporation
39 referred to above

1 pending sale or other disposition; or
2 b. Transferred to the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual
3 Conference of The United Methodist Church; and
4

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the said Church shall be transferred to **First**
6 **UMC** in **Lansing**, Illinois, unless any such members shall inform the pastor of the transferee
7 church otherwise; and

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

12 **RATIONALE:**

13 After many faithful years of service, ministry and mission in the name of Jesus Christ,
14 **Thornton UMC** has come to a place of transition and closure as membership and
15 attendance have declined. The congregation has expressed its desire to celebrate its past
16 ministry but to no longer remain in service as **Thornton UMC**. The closure has been
17 recommended by the **Lake South** Board on Church Location and Buildings and the District
18 Superintendent.