

1 **Document: 640.01**
2 **Name: Special Sundays with Offerings for 2020**
3 **Author: Conference Council on Finance and Administration**
4 **CCFA Comment: n/a**

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6 **ACTION:**

7 The Northern Illinois Conference recommends the following Special Sundays with
8 offerings for 2020:
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10 **Special Sundays**

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12 **General Church Offering 2020**

13	Human Relations Day	January 19, 2020
14	UMCOR Sunday	March 22, 2020
15	Native American Ministries Sunday	April 26, 2020
16	Peace with Justice Sunday	June 7, 2020
17	World Communion Sunday	October 4, 2020
18	United Methodist Student Day	November 29, 2020

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20 **Conference Offerings 2020**

21	Scouting Ministries	Any Sunday in February or March*
22	Golden Cross	April 26, 2020
23	Volunteers in Mission	Any Sunday in July or August
24	Christian Education	September 6, 2020
25	Accessibility Sunday	November 1, 2020
26	HIV/AIDS Awareness	December 6, 2020
27	United Voices for Children	Every 5th Sunday
28		(April, July, September, December)

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30 * This fund supports Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire, 4-H, Big Brothers and Big Sisters,
31 and Amachi programs.
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37 **Document: 650.01**

38 **Name: Minimum Salaries for Full-Time Clergy**
39 **Author(s): CCFA Committee on Equitable Compensation**
40 **CCFA Comment: n/a**

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42 **ACTION:**

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44 1) Minimum salaries for full-time clergy appointed in the NIC will be as follows:
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YEAR OF INITIAL APPOINTMENT (minimum salary set at the beginning of a new appointment, typically July 1)							
	2014 (\$33,300)	2015 (\$33,800)	2016 (\$34,000)	2017 (\$34,200)	2018 (\$34,450)	2019 (\$34,800)	2020 (\$35,300)
Resolution passed in:							
2014 for FY 2015	\$34,461						
2015 for FY 2016	\$34,474	\$34,138					
2016 for FY 2017	\$34,819	\$34,479	\$34,340				
2017 for FY 2018	\$35,167	\$34,824	\$34,684	\$34,542			
2018 for FY 2019	\$35,519	\$35,172	\$35,031	\$34,887	\$34,795		
Proposed in 2019 for FY 2020	\$36,016	\$35,664	\$35,521	\$35,375	\$35,282	\$35,287	

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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.) Bold, italicized numbers listed in the bottom row are the minimum salaries recommended to the Annual Conference in 2019.

- 2) Local churches are to provide a minimum of \$5,000 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 regarding accountable reimbursements can be downloaded at: https://www.umcnic.org/media/files/ordained%20ministry/AccountableReimbursementPoliciesQ_and_A.pdf

RATIONALE:

This minimum salary schedule continues a very modest increase of 1.4%, which is half of the federal cost of living increase (2.8%).

We recognize a long history of NIC minimum salaries lagging behind the denominational average minimum salary, which was \$42,817 in 2019 for the North Central Jurisdiction. This

1 means newly appointed, full-time NIC elders were paid an average of \$8,017 (or 18.7%) less
2 than other full-time elders in our jurisdiction appointed in 2019. This is not equitable.

3
4 Health insurance premiums will increase from \$18,000 to \$19,000 for FY 2020, which sets the
5 total minimum compensation packages for full-time clergy at \$66,000. This includes base pay
6 (\$35,300), accountable reimbursements (\$5,000), pension contributions (\$6,700), and health
7 insurance (\$19,000). These costs increase pressure on local church budgets.

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9 We recognize that many local churches struggle to afford full-time clergy appointments.

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11 We recognize the desire to maintain the number of full-time clergy positions to match the
12 number of full-time appointments guaranteed to Commissioned and Ordained Elders. This is
13 increasingly unsustainable when we are losing an average of 5 full-time appointments every year.

14
15 In 2020, the CCFA Committee on Equitable Compensation will recommend minimum salaries
16 that move the NIC closer to our Jurisdictional average. This is to further the work of equitable
17 compensation and to encourage the efforts of the Conference to adjust to the financial reality of
18 local churches.

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21 **Document Number: 680.01**

22 **Name: Benefit Programs**

23 **Author(s): Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits**

24 **CCFA Comment:** No Comment

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26 **ACTION:**

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

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31 **I. Health Insurance**

32 The Conference Board of Pensions recommends that the Annual Conference establish the
33 following policies and procedures for administration of the Conference Health Care Program,
34 effective January 1, 2020.

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36 **A. Mandatory Coverage**

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

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Category	<i>Discipline 2016</i>
Elder in full connection (including those from another Methodist denomination and those from another conference) appointed to full-time or 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
Ordained Elder appointed to extension ministries within the connectional structure to a unit of the conference other than a General Agency	344.1, & 346.1

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2 2. Elders appointed to disability status will be covered under the conference plan until
3 they are eligible for Medicare or for Social Security disability at the cost of the Conference
4 Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. The Conference Board of Pensions will cover the
5 full cost of those Elders appointed to disability status and covered by Medicare and
6 Supplemental Social Security disability coverage.

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10 **B. Release from Mandatory Coverage**

11 Based on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and the ability for individuals to gain
12 coverage on the public exchange, churches can elect to opt out of the Wespath/NIC mandated
13 health programs (HealthFlex).

14

15 To elect this option the Churches agree to the following:

- 16 1. Agree to pay the monthly HealthCare premium established by the Conference Board of
17 Pensions.
- 18 2. Each quarter the Churches will receive a rebate of one month's premium of the
19 HealthCare premium.
- 20 3. The maximum amount the Conference Board of Pensions will provide in cash is \$900
21 per month to support clergy to engage a health carrier on the exchange plus and to pay
22 for additional personal taxes. The amount provided by the Conference is considered as
23 cash compensation only.
- 24 4. If Churches fail to make premium payments the Conference holds the right to
25 discontinue the cash support provided to the Pastors.

26 The objective of allowing Churches to opt out of HealthFlex is to provide a means to help
27 Churches lower the cost of medical insurance and be able to maintain the full services of United
28 Methodist clergy.

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30 The Conference Board of Pensions can also release a clergy person from mandatory
31 participation in HealthFlex at its discretion when:

- 32 a. The clergy person is eligible for health coverage through TRICARE, or Champus.
- 33 b. The clergy is enrolled in coverage from a former employer or as a dependent on a
34 spouse's employer-provided coverage. The Conference will treat the participant as if they
35 were enrolled in the pilot program and bill the church as explained above (Section B).

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37 **C. Local Church and Extension Ministry Coverage Options**

38 1. A local church or extension ministry may elect health insurance in the conference plan
39 available to participants in the following categories:

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Category	Discipline 2016	Billed for Active's Premium
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 clergy 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 of the Annual Conference granted Sabbatical Leave for up to one year.	352	Board of Ordained Ministry
Clergy member of the Annual Conference granted Medical leave.	357	Board of Pensions
Deacon in full connection appointed to ¾ or 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 or ¾ time basis to an NIC congregation or to the conference.	326.1	Salary Paying Unit
75% of the 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

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3 2. In accord with Illinois law, state recognized civil union partners of lay employees are
4 eligible for coverage in a manner similar to spouses.

5 3. The option to offer coverage is made by the salary paying unit. The choice to accept the
6 coverage shall be made by the participant. The salary paying unit may elect to offer health
7 insurance to one or all categories of persons listed above in Section C. 1. The salary paying
8 unit must make health insurance available to and will be billed for all persons within any
9 specific category employed with the agency or local church.

10 4. Each salary paying unit must execute annually a sub-adoption agreement with the
11 annual conference, should they desire to offer health coverage to persons in these categories.

12 5. These categories of persons are also eligible for coverage :

Category	Billed for Active's Premium
75% of the Lay Employees of the Annual Conference (and Districts) who normally work 30 hours per week or more	Salary Paying Unit and/or participant
Surviving spouse or dependent children enrolled in the health plan at time of a participant's death	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
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D. Retirement Health Administration -

1. Clergy persons eligible for and enrolled in the health plan or participating in the pilot program, or waived under their spouses plan 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) are eligible for health benefits in retirement through the conference plan. No clergy member retiring under the “20 year rule” (Discipline paragraph 357.2a) is eligible for retiree health coverage.
2. 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 (and 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.
3. 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 under BOD 357.2 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.
4. Annually, the annual conference will provide a benefit equal to \$100 per year of ministerial service. This benefit also extends to the Pastor’s spouse for the duration of their lifetime.
5. This benefit is limited to maximum of 40 years of service is applied to this calculation.
6. Ministerial service years are determined by the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. Only years served in the Northern Illinois Conference are considered in the HRA calculation. Special exceptions may be made based on approval by NIC Board of Pensions.
7. 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.
8. 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 Via Benefits (formally One Exchange).
9. 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 enrolled in Medicare B. Clergy who retire prior to 65 and meet the eligibility rules to retire under BOD 357.2 will have the HRA equivalent deducted from the cost of their medical coverage until they reach Medicare eligibility, enroll in Medicare B and enroll in Supplemental programs through Via Benefits.

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2 **E. Active Health Administration**

- 3 1. Monthly premiums are billed to each charge or salary-paying unit at rates established by
4 the Conference Board of Pensions. Premiums are due the first of each month. Accounts
5 90 days in arrears are subject to termination as explained in the arrearage policy
6 approved by the Board and the NIC Cabinet. This policy describes the efforts that will
7 be made by the Conference office and the Cabinet to work with Churches that are more
8 than 90 days in arrears. If all efforts to receive payment or develop a payment plan have
9 been exhausted then termination of coverage may be the final option. Notification of
10 accounts in arrears will be provided to the District Superintendent, the pastor, the local
11 church PPRC chair, and the local church treasurer prior to termination.

12 Active participants seeking to enroll in the Flexible Spending Account Benefit provided by
13 the plan must enroll in November of the year preceding the year of the agreement. Inquiries
14 on billings and enrollment should be directed to the Conference Benefits Administrator,
15 LaMeise Turner, at (312) 346-9766, ext. 720.

16 Problem resolution and inquiries regarding coverage should be directed to the HealthFlex
17 Team at Wespah 1-800-851-2201.
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19 **II. Pension Programs**

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

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

43 **B. Clergy Retirement Security Program Billing Schedule.** Local Churches shall be billed by
44 the Annual Conference at the following rates (“plan compensation” means compensation as
45 defined by the pension plan documents and includes both cash salary plus consideration for
46 housing):

1 1. **Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP).** The Comprehensive Protection Plan is the
2 primary death and disability benefit for enrolled clergy. The billing rate for CPP will be
3 3% of plan compensation, up to 200% of Denominational Average Compensation.
4 Appointments with compensation less than full time and those that were considered
5 under special arrangements will be covered and billed based on rates established by
6 UMLifeOptions.

7 **2. CRSP - Defined Contribution**

- 8 a. The CRSP pension program includes a defined contribution component. Each
9 clergy member will have 2% of plan compensation deposited in an individual
10 account at the Wespath. All contributions into the account are invested and the
11 enrolled clergy member receives the appreciated value of the account upon
12 retirement.
13 b. 3% of the plan compensation shall be required from each charge for the defined
14 contribution component of the CRSP.
15 c. Clergy persons are encouraged to contribute 1% of their plan compensation into
16 their UMPIP account as a salary deduction. The annual conference will match
17 the first 1% of UMPIP contributions paid into the participants CRSP-DC account.

18 3. **CRSP - Defined Benefit program.** With the defined benefit component each enrolled
19 clergy member will receive a monthly cash benefit from the plan upon retirement. The
20 amount of the benefit is determined by the number of full-time-equivalent years in the
21 program and the denominational average compensation at the time of retirement
22 multiplied by 1.0%. Annual contributions made by the conference will be invested by
23 Wespath so that the NIC obligation can be met. 10% of plan compensation is billed to
24 each appointment for the defined benefit component of CRSP. A portion of defined
25 benefit funding accrues to a reserve fund for funding future variation in market results
26 and other benefits to retirees and future retirees.

27 **C. Billing Methods.** The Annual Conference will invoice local churches monthly 16% (3% + 3%
28 + 10%) of clergy plan compensation required for support of the CRSP and CPP programs.
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30 **D.Pre-82 Defined Benefit Past Service Rate for 2020**

31 1. The Conference Board of Pensions recommends that the annual pension rate for
32 service prior to 1982, effective January 1, 2020, be \$605 per service year, an increase of 0% from
33 2019. Surviving spouses shall be supported at the rate of 85% of participant pension benefit
34 amounts. Special grants will be provided as identified in Section F.
35

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

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

- 2 1 For the 2015 Northern Illinois Conference Session the Board of Pensions approved
3 grants for participants meeting the following eligibility criteria:
4 a. Members of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference who retired from an
5 appointment in the conference;
6 b. Who have at least 15 years of service prior to 1982 compensated at the Past
7 Service Rate (excludes those at the DBSM rate); and,
8 c. Who have less than 10 years of service to Northern Illinois Conference
9 appointments served while enrolled in the MPP program.
- 10 2. For those eligible participants the Board of Pensions approved a benefit equal to a 2%
11 annual increase to the established Past Service Rate of \$605 to commence as of 1/1/2016.
12 For 1/1/2020 the amount provided to eligible participants will be \$655 times their pre-
13 82 years of service.
- 14 3. The Conference Board of Pensions also recommends the special grant previously given
15 to Vernon L. Bell be continued for his widow, Enid. Mr. Bell died March 17, 1995. He
16 served 11 years as a full member of the Northern Illinois Conference from June 13, 1954,
17 to August 15, 1965. He took voluntary Leave of Absence from 1965 and Honorable
18 Location in 1966. The service rate at the time of his voluntary location was \$77. Thus, we
19 recommend for the year commencing July 1, 2018, to June 30 2019, a grant be paid to
20 Mrs. Bell of \$847, actuarially reduced in the same manner as if this grant was paid under
21 the Methodist Ministers Reserve Pension Fund for payments commencing after early
22 retirement date and prior to normal retirement date. Payments shall be paid monthly.
- 23 4. The Conference Board of Pensions also recommends that a special grant be made to
24 James W. French for his 3.5 years of service with this Annual Conference from June 1,
25 1978 through December 31, 1981. We recommend for the year commencing July 1, 2018
26 to June 30, 2019, a grant of \$140.95 monthly be paid based on the present pension rate,
27 but actuarially reduced since payments are starting prior to full retirement age.

28 III. Group Life Insurance

29 The Conference Board of Pensions enrolls in the UMLifeOptions program. Every eligible
30 retired clergy person will be enrolled in the plan with a benefit of \$5,000 at no cost to the
31 participant. Active clergy persons have \$10,000 in coverage at the NIC expense when an
32 application is filed during the open enrollment period. Coverage beyond this amount is at the
33 cost of the participant and will be billed directly from UMLifeOptions.

34
35 **Document: 700.01**

36 **Name: Task Force to Explore a New Methodist Expression**

37 **Authors: Rev. Chris Winkler, Rev. Brian Smith, Church Council of North Shore UMC in**
38 **Glencoe, Church Leadership Council of Barrington UMC in Barrington, New Hope UMC in**
39 **Chicago, First UMC of Elmhurst in Elmhurst, Church Council of North Shore UMC in**
40 **Glencoe, Euclid Avenue UMC of Oak Park, Northern Illinois Conference Council on Finance**
41 **and Administration, Chicago Northwestern District Committee on Ordained Ministry,**
42 **Church Council of Trinity UMC of Wilmette, Northern Illinois Reconciling Ministries Task**
43 **Force, Northern Illinois Conference Chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action, First**
44 **United Methodist Church of Lombard, Northern Illinois Conference Board of Church and**
45 **Society, Church of the Three Crosses UMC of Chicago, First UMC of Savanna, Northbrook**
46 **UMC, First UMC of Elizabeth, Elgin District Committee on Ordained Ministry**

47 **CCFA Comment:** The 2019 NIC budget includes travel reimbursement funding up to \$8,000.

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ACTION:

- (1) The Northern Illinois Conference hereby joins our voice and witness, along with an increasing number of other United Methodist Annual Conferences and congregations in expressing our disappointment that the “Traditional Plan” that many find hurtful and punitive was adopted by the 2019 Special Session of General Conference;
- (2) We are grieved by the prohibitions that remain in the “Traditional Plan” against marriage and ordination for our LGBTQ siblings, and we implore our Bishop and Cabinet to refrain from enforcing such prohibitions and pursuing related complaints, investigations, and trials;
- (3) We reaffirm our 1986 decision to be a reconciling conference and our commitment to be a church for all people, including traditionally-minded persons; and
- (4) We authorize the Bishop to form a task force to explore a way forward for the Northern Illinois Conference including the possibility of new Methodist expression. The task force is directed to receive input from churches within our Conference and to work with other jurisdictions, conferences, and churches who are also exploring new options and opportunities. The task force shall include at least 3 LGBTQ laity or clergy, 3 persons from the 2020 General Conference delegation from Northern Illinois, and others as determined necessary by the Bishop. The task force shall report on its initial conversations at the special session of the Northern Illinois Conference in November 2019.

RATIONALE:

The Northern Illinois Conference is a diverse conference with a tradition of promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ for all people, striving for racial justice, equality for women, and advocacy for immigrants, as well as affirming the sacred worth of LGBTQ persons.

However, the “Traditional Plan” requires agreement on marriage and ordination where many Christians of good conscience do not agree, and it sets mandatory penalties for those who see themselves following the teaching and example of Christ. The “Traditional Plan” creates an untenable situation for many in the Northern Illinois Conference and beyond who aspire to be a church with “open hearts, open minds, and open doors.”

Moreover, the “Traditional Plan” substantially hinders the ability of the Northern Illinois Conference to carry out the mission of The United Methodist Church in our mission field, and it prevents the Northern Illinois Conference from deploying some of our best ordained leadership.

Finally, the “Traditional Plan” urges Annual Conferences to disaffiliate if they are unwilling to abide by the prohibitions against LGBTQ marriage and ordination.

1 **Document: 700.02**
2 **Name: Exclude Sovereign Debt (also known as Government Debt) of Countries Involved in**
3 ***Prolonged Military Occupations in Violation of International Law***
4 **Authors: NIC Church and Society**
5 **CCFA Comment: CCFA sees no financial impact.**

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7 **ACTION:**

8 (1) Northern Illinois Conference urges its own investment managers, as well as the boards and
9 agencies throughout the connection, to add to their human rights guidelines the same language
10 concerning “sovereign debt” (government bonds) as that of the Human Rights Investment
11 Guideline of Wespath Benefits and Investments (formerly named the General Board of Pension
12 and Health Benefits) (“Wespath”), an administrative agency of the United Methodist Church,
13 and therefore to exclude the purchase of bonds from three governments that maintain a
14 *prolonged* military occupation and that have been the subject of United Nations Security Council
15 resolutions and/or International Court of Justice rulings until the time when each government
16 ends their occupation and ceases their human rights violations.

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18 **RATIONALE:**

19 “Sovereign debt” (also called “government debt”) is a term used to describe bonds that are
20 issued by a nation’s government as a means of borrowing money from organizations or persons
21 who purchase the bonds. Because money raised from the sale of such bonds can be used at the
22 discretion of the government that issues the bonds, holders (buyers) of government bonds are
23 therefore on record as supporting, through their purchase, whatever activities the country that
24 issues (sells) the bonds may choose to do.

25 Wespath’s the Human Rights Investment Guideline states: “Wespath also may exclude from
26 investment the sovereign debt of any country demonstrating a prolonged and systematic
27 pattern of human rights abuses...”¹ In addition, the United Methodist Church, through its
28 general agencies and annual conferences, strives to be accountable to our Social Principles
29 through screening against investment in military occupations.²

30 The UMC’s Social Principles state: “...we endorse the United Nations, its related bodies, the
31 International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court as the best instruments now
32 in existence to achieve a world of justice and law...”³

33 Three nations have held subject populations under *prolonged* military occupation: Morocco has
34 occupied Western Sahara since 1976; Turkey has occupied Northern Cyprus since 1974; Israel
35 has occupied the Palestinian territories since 1967, thus denying the subject populations their
36 self-determination in violation of Article 73 of the Charter for the United Nations,⁴ Moreover,

¹ https://www.wespath.com/investment_philosophy/human-rights/guideline/

² <https://mondoweiss.net/2017/07/united-methodists-boycott/>;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/pressrel_umc_divests_g4s.html;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/pr_umc_divests_israeli_banks_jan2016.html;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/pr_acs_divestment_2015.html;
https://www.kairosresponse.org/annual_conference_successes_2017.html

³ United Methodist Social Principles, ¶ 165.D <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/the-world-community>

⁴ <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-xi/index.html>

1 the above-named occupying powers have been named by the United Nations Security Council
2 and/or the International Court of Justice as having engaged in prolonged military occupations
3 and are thereby violators of international law and responsible for human rights abuses
4 generally including reduction of food assistance to refugees, failure to protect civilian persons,
5 land confiscation, home demolition, and violence against civilians.⁵
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8 **Document: 700.03**

9 **Name: Discontinuance of United Methodist Church of Elmwood Park, Elmwood Park IL**

10 **Author(s): Rev. Brittany Isaac, District Superintendent, Chicago Northwestern, UMC**

11 **CCFA Comment:** No Comment
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13 **ACTION:**

14 WHEREAS the UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF ELMWOOD PARK, located in the
15 Village of Elmwood Park, Cook County, Illinois was chartered as Westwood Community
16 Methodist Episcopal Church in 1932, changed its name to Elmwood Park First Methodist
17 Church in 1946 and to the United Methodist Church of Elmwood Park in 1969, and has
18 witnessed to Jesus Christ and served its community and the world for 87 years; and
19

20 WHEREAS the United Methodist Church of Elmwood Park faithfully served the
21 community in the village of Elmwood Park and boldly risked themselves in this effort; and
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23 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph 2549 of *The Book of Discipline of The*
24 *United Methodist Church 2016*, the Chicago Northwestern District Superintendent has
25 recommended with the approval of the District Strategy Team that the church be
26 discontinued effective June 30, 2019. The Chicago Northwestern District Committee on
27 Building and Location has voted to concur with the District Superintendent's
28 recommendation to discontinue said church and the presiding Bishop and the majority of
29 the District Superintendents of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United
30 Methodist Church have consented to the District Superintendent's recommendation to
31 discontinue said church;
32

33 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that to minimize the risk of loss of future bequests to the
34 Conference, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference recommends that the said Church,
35 though discontinued under the Canon Law of The United Methodist Church, nevertheless
36 be maintained in perpetuity under the Illinois civil law by adopting a reincorporation
37 thereof by the Bishop under Section 46b of the Illinois Religious Corporation Act, with the
38 incumbent Conference Board of Trustees names as trustees of the Discontinued Church
39 under the procedure established by Article VII "Discontinued or Abandoned Church
40 Reincorporation" of the By-laws of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United
41 Methodist Church; and
42

⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2004/07/108912-international-court-justice-finds-israeli-barrier-palestinian-territory-illegal#.WItesTLMzfY>; [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2430\(2018\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2430(2018)); [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2414\(2018\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2414(2018));
[http://undocs.org/S/RES/2334\(2016\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2334(2016)); <https://tinyurl.com/ya48dl45>

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the property of said Church, including, but not limited to
2 its existing and future gifts, devises, and bequests, its existing personal property and
3 accounts and its real property commonly known as 3000 N. 77th Court, Elmwood Park, IL
4 60707 and legally described as follows:

5 Blocks 1 thru 6, inclusive, Blocks 10 thru 35, inclusive, and Blocks 38 thru 47, inclusive, of
6 Westwood, being Mills and Sons Subdivision in the West ½ of Section 25, Township 40
7 North, Range 12, East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois. Also the
8 North 50 feet of Lot 1, and Lot 2 thru 12, inclusive, in Elmwood Park Gardens, being a
9 Subdivision of the South ½ of the Southwest ¼ of the Northeast ¼ of Section 25, Township
10 40 North, Range 12, East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

11 Also Lots 1 and 2 in the Rasmussen's Resubdivision of Lot 1 (except the North 50 feet
12 thereof) in Elmwood Park Gardens, being a Subdivision of the South ½ of the Southwest ¼
13 of the Northeast ¼ of Section 25, Township 40 North, Range 12, East of the Third Principal
14 Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois. Also any existing alley lying within or continuous to the
15 above described properties

16 Shall, in the discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet, be either:

- 17 a. Retained by the reincorporated shell Illinois religious corporation referred to above
18 pending sale or other disposition; or
19 b. Transferred to The Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The
20 United Methodist Church; and
21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual
23 Conference of The United Methodist Church be authorized and directed to provide for the
24 care, maintenance, and disposition of the said assets and shall dispose of said assets in
25 accordance with the relevant provisions of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist
26 Church 2016; and that any monies or other assets received from the sale or other
27 disposition of the assets of said discontinued Church be used to pay off all monetary
28 obligations and arrearages with any remaining monies to be deposited in the Closed
29 Church Fund as directed by Standing Rule 11, Part A, Section V of the Standing Rules of
30 the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church; and
31

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the said Church shall be transferred to
33 the FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF FRANKLIN PARK, Franklin Park, Illinois,
34 unless any such members shall inform the pastor of the transferee church otherwise; and
35

36 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the appropriate officers of The Northern Illinois Annual
37 Conference of The United Methodist Church are authorized and directed to execute on
38 behalf of the said Conference any and all such additional documents as legal counsel shall
39 recommend to effectuate the above.
40

41 **RATIONALE:**

42 After many faithful years of service, ministry and mission in the name of Jesus Christ, the
43 United Methodist Church of Elmwood Park has come to a place of transition and closure as
44 membership and attendance have declined. The congregation has expressed its desire to
45 celebrate its past ministry but to no longer remain in service as The United Methodist
46 Church of Elmwood Park. The closure has been recommended by the Chicago

1 Northwestern District Strategy Team, the Chicago Northwestern District Board on Church
2 Location and Buildings and the District Superintendent.

3
4
5 **Document: 700.04**

6 **Name: Discontinuance of New Hope United Methodist Church, Chicago IL**

7 **Author(s): Rev. Brittany Isaac, District Superintendent, Chicago Northwestern, UMC**

8 **CCFA Comment:** No Comment

9
10 **ACTION:**

11 WHEREAS the NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, located in Chicago, Cook
12 County, Illinois is the merged body of Mayfair United Methodist Church and Norwood
13 Park United Methodist Church since 2000, and has witnessed to Jesus Christ and served its
14 community and the world for 129 years; and

15
16 WHEREAS the New Hope United Methodist Church faithfully served the community on
17 the northwest side of Chicago and boldly risked themselves in this effort; and

18
19 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph 2549 of *The Book of Discipline of The*
20 *United Methodist Church 2016*, the Chicago Northwestern District Superintendent has
21 recommended with the approval of the District Strategy Team that the church be
22 discontinued effective June 30, 2019. The Chicago Northwestern District Committee on
23 Building and Location has voted to concur with the District Superintendent's
24 recommendation to discontinue said church and the presiding Bishop and the majority of
25 the District Superintendents of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United
26 Methodist Church have consented to the District Superintendent's recommendation to
27 discontinue said church;

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

38
39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the property of said Church, including, but not limited to
40 its existing and future gifts, devises, and bequests, its existing personal property and
41 accounts shall, in the discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet, be either:

42 a. Retained by the reincorporated shell Illinois religious corporation referred to above
43 pending sale or other disposition; or

44 b. Transferred to The Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The
45 United Methodist Church; and

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual
2 Conference of The United Methodist Church be authorized and directed to provide for the
3 care, maintenance, and disposition of the said assets and shall dispose of said assets in
4 accordance with the relevant provisions of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist
5 Church 2016; and that any monies or other assets received from the sale or other
6 disposition of the assets of said discontinued Church be used to pay off all monetary
7 obligations and arrearages with any remaining monies to be deposited in the Closed
8 Church Fund as directed by Standing Rule 11, Part A, Section V of the Standing Rules of
9 the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church; and

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

15
16 **RATIONALE:**

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

24
25
26 **Document: 700.05**

27 **Name: Discontinuance of Pilgrimage Protestant Church, University Park, IL**

28 **Author(s): Rev. Dr. Jacques A. Conway, District Superintendent, Chicago Southern**
29 **District, UMC**

30 **CCFA Comment:** No Comment

31
32 **ACTION:**

33 WHEREAS the PILGRIMAGE PROTESTANT CHURCH located in University Park, Will
34 County, Illinois was formed in 1972 as a multi-denominational church comprised of the
35 United Church of Christ, Presbyterian USA, and The United Methodist Church, and has
36 witnessed to Jesus Christ and served its community and the world for 45 years; and

37
38 WHEREAS the Pilgrimage Protestant Church faithfully served the community in the city of
39 University Park and boldly risked themselves in this effort; and

40
41 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provision of Paragraph 2549 of *The Book of Discipline of The*
42 *United Methodist Church 2016*, the Chicago Southern District Superintendent has
43 recommended with the approval of the District Strategy Team that the church be
44 discontinued effective January 29, 2017. The Chicago Southern District Committee on
45 Building and Location has voted to concur with the District Superintendent's
46 recommendation to discontinue said church and the presiding Bishop and the majority of
47 the District Superintendents of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United

1 Methodist Church have consented to the District Superintendent’s recommendation to
2 discontinue said church;

3
4 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that to minimize the risk of loss of future bequests to the
5 Conference, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference recommends that the said Church,
6 though discontinued under the Canon Law of The United Methodist Church, nevertheless
7 be maintained in perpetuity under the Illinois civil law by adopting a reincorporation
8 thereof by the Bishop under Section 46b of the Illinois Religious Corporation Act, with the
9 incumbent Conference Board of Trustees names as trustees of the Discontinued Church
10 under the procedure established by Article VII “Discontinued or Abandoned Church
11 Reincorporation” of the By-laws of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United
12 Methodist Church; and

13
14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the property of said Church, including, but not limited to
15 its existing and future gifts, devises, and bequests, its existing personal property and
16 accounts and its real property commonly known as 1100 University Parkway, University
17 Park, Illinois 60484 and legally described as follows: THE E 200 FT OF THE W 520 FT OF
18 LOT 2, BEING A SUB OF PRT OF THE SE 1/4 OF SEC 11, T34N-R13E.

19 Shall, in the discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet, be either:

- 20 a. Retained by the reincorporated shell Illinois religious corporation referred to above
- 21 pending sale or other disposition; or
- 22 b. Transferred to The Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The
- 23 United Methodist Church; and

24
25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual
26 Conference of The United Methodist Church be authorized and directed to provide for the
27 care, maintenance, and disposition of the said assets and shall dispose of said assets in
28 accordance with the relevant provisions of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist
29 Church 2016; and that any monies or other assets received from the sale or other
30 disposition of the assets of said discontinued Church be used to pay off all monetary
31 obligations and arrearages with any remaining monies to be deposited in the Closed
32 Church Fund as directed by Standing Rule 11, Part A, Section V of the Standing Rules of
33 the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church; and

34
35 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the appropriate officers of The Northern Illinois Annual
36 Conference of The United Methodist Church are authorized and directed to execute on
37 behalf of the said Conference any and all such additional documents as legal counsel shall
38 recommend to effectuate the above.

39
40 **RATIONALE:**

41 After many faithful years of service, ministry and mission in the name of Jesus Christ,
42 Pilgrimage Protestant Church has come to a place of transition and closure as membership
43 and attendance have declined. The congregation has expressed its desire to celebrate its
44 past ministry but to no longer remain in service as the Pilgrimage Protestant Church. The
45 closure has been recommended by the Chicago Southern District Strategy Team, the
46 Chicago Southern District Board on Church Location and Buildings and the District
47 Superintendent.

1 **Document: 700.06**
2 **Name: Suspend Payments to General Administration Fund**
3 **Author(s): Conference Council on Finance & Administration**
4 **CCFA Comment: n/a**
5

6 **ACTION:**

7 The NIC will not pay the General Administration Fund until changes are made to the structure
8 and practices of the General Conference. The Conference Treasurer shall communicate this
9 decision and rationale to the Presidents and General Secretaries of the General Council on
10 Finance & Administration and the Connectional Table.
11

12 **RATIONALE:**

13 The purpose of the General Administration Fund is to pay for General Conference. In 2019, we
14 are apportioned \$117,559 for this fund.
15

16 Currently, General Conference is composed of 864 delegates, from 58 countries. Written
17 materials are translated into 4 official languages and voice interpretation is provided
18 simultaneously in at least 8 different languages. The vast number of delegates, wide range of
19 cultural contexts, and multiplicity of languages, make the General Conference's decision-
20 making process extremely difficult to navigate.
21

22 Decisions of the General Conference are not universally binding. Central Conferences are
23 permitted to adapt the *Book of Discipline* to their ministry contexts¹, but the U.S. cannot. Ministry
24 in the U.S. is bound to the decisions of General Conference, but Central Conferences have the
25 liberty to change General Conference decisions based upon its relevancy to their particular
26 ministry and cultural contexts. This is highly problematic, especially when 42% of General
27 Conference delegates are from Central Conferences, but vote on rules that apply only to the U.S.
28 We agree that the *Book of Discipline* ought to be lived out in relevant, culturally appropriate
29 contexts. Therefore, just as Central Conferences are afforded autonomy in their unique ministry
30 contexts, so should the U.S. be able to address ministry needs in a U.S. context.
31

32 There is a long history concerning the integrity of General Conference. Financial incentives
33 offered in exchange for votes are familiar and questioned every quadrennium. Delegates have
34 reported being antagonized or physically threatened to impel votes on certain petitions. In
35 Central Conferences, where clergy appointments are not guaranteed, some clergy delegates
36 have lost appointments as sanction for their vote.
37

38 Presiding Bishops need to continually remind delegates that votes are anonymous, because
39 rumors are falsely and intentionally spread to delegates that votes are recorded by name, as a
40 means of coercion.
41

42 Concerns regarding the integrity of the decision making process reached the pages of the New
43 York Times.² They conducted their own investigation into General Conference and exposed
44 multiple fraudulent votes and several irregularities. As a result, a task force is now investigating
45 voter credentials and allegations of improper voting.
46

1 Homophobia is routinely leveraged to incentivize voter fraud. For example, a bishop's son was
2 an unauthorized delegate seated on the floor as a voter of General Conference, even though he
3 lived on another continent. The unauthorized delegate reported to the New York Times, "I
4 came here because my dad asked me to come vote against the lesbians."²
5

6 This climate of corruption, fear, intimidation, coercion, and fraud has led to deep distrust of the
7 General Conference process itself. Our current system of governance is profoundly broken and
8 has strayed far from the principles of Christian Conferencing and the General Rules of the
9 United Methodist Church to do no harm, to do good, and stay in love with God.
10

11
12 **Document: 700.07**

13 **Name: Discontinuance of Lindenhurst Trinity United Methodist Church of Itasca**

14 **Author(s): Rev. Darneather Murph-Heath, District Superintendent, Elgin District, UMC**

15 **CCFA Comment:** No Comment
16

17 **ACTION:**

18 WHEREAS the TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH located in Lindenhurst, Lake
19 County, Illinois was established as a EUB congregation in 1961, and became a United Methodist
20 Church with the merger in 1968, and has witnessed for Jesus Christ and served its communities
21 and the world both as a EUB and UMC congregation for 58 years; and
22

23 WHEREAS the Trinity United Methodist Church faithfully served the community in the city of
24 Lindenhurst and boldly risked themselves in this effort; and
25

26 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provision of Paragraph 2548.2a of The Book of Discipline of The
27 United Methodist Church 2016, the Elgin District Superintendent has accepted the
28 recommendation of the Church with the approval of the District Strategy Team that the church
29 be discontinued effective January 31, 2019. The Elgin District Committee on Building and
30 Location has voted to concur with the District Superintendent's recommendation to
31 discontinue said church and the presiding Bishop and the majority of the District
32 Superintendents of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church
33 have consented to the District Superintendent's recommendation to discontinue said church;
34

35 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that to minimize the risk of loss of future bequests to the
36 Conference, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference recommends that the said Church, though
37 discontinued under the Canon Law of The United Methodist Church, nevertheless be
38 maintained in perpetuity under the Illinois civil law by adopting a reincorporation thereof by
39 the Bishop under Section 46b of the Illinois Religious Corporation Act, with the incumbent
40 Conference Board of Trustees names as trustees of the Discontinued Church under the
41 procedure established by Article VII "Discontinued or Abandoned Church Reincorporation" of
42 the By-laws of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church; and
43

44 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the property of said Church, including, but not limited to its
45 existing and future gifts, devises, and bequests, its existing personal property and accounts and
46 its real property commonly known as 101 S. Beck Road., Lindenhurst, Illinois 60046 and legally
47 described as follows:

1 All that part of Government Lot-2 in the north West quarter of Section 1, Township h5 North,
2 Range 10, East of the- 3rd P. M., in Lake County, Illinois, described as follows, to-wit:
3 Commencing at a point on the North line of Section 1 aforesaid 33.0 feet East of the North West
4 corner thereof, being a point in the East line of Beck Road; thence South parallel with the West-
5 line of Section 1 and 33.0 feet East there from, 550.0 feet to the place of beginning; thence East
6 parallel with the North line of Section 1, 200.0 feet; thence South parallel with the West line of
7 Section 1, a distance of 0.7 of a foot to a point of curve; thence Southerly and Easterly, along a
8 curve of 120.08 feet radius -tangent--to; the last described line at the last described , point and,
9 convex South Westerly, a district of IL, 3.5"2 feet measurement 2.57 feet measured in 50 foot
10 chords) to a point; thence South parallel with the East line of the West half of Government Lot 2
11 in the North West quarter of Section 1, a distance of 239.6k feet; thence West along a line
12 perpendicular to the East line of the West half of Government Lot 2, aforesaid, 33 feet to a point
13 of curve; thence Westerly and Southerly along a curve of .393'85 feet, radius, convex North
14 Westerly and tangent to the last described line at the last described point, a distance of 208.63
15 feet measured in 100 foot chords to a point of reverse curve; thence Southerly and Westerly
16 along a curve of 180.29 feet radius, convex South Easterly and tangent-to the last described
17 curve at the last described point, 71.0 feet long chord measurement, to a point of compound
18 curve; thence Westerly, North Westerly and Northerly along a curve of 22.77 feet radius,
19 convex South Westerly and tangent to the last described curve at the last described point, a
20 long chord distance of 3 feet to a point of tangency located 33 feet East of the West line of
21 Section 1; thence North parallel with the West line of Section 1, a distance of 110.2 feet, more or
22 less, to the place of beginning, in Lake County, Illinois

23
24 Shall, in the discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Cabinet, be either:

- 25 a. Retained by the reincorporated shell Illinois religious corporation referred to above
26 pending sale or other disposition; or
27 b. Transferred to The Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of
28 The United Methodist Church; and
29

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois Annual
31 Conference of The United Methodist Church be authorized and directed to provide for the care,
32 maintenance, and disposition of the said assets and shall dispose of said assets in accordance
33 with the relevant provisions of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016;
34 and that any monies or other assets received from the sale or other disposition of the assets of
35 said discontinued Church be deposited in the Closed Church Fund as directed by Section V,
36 Part A, Rule 11 of the Standing Rules of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United
37 Methodist Church; and
38

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the said Church shall be transferred to the
40 Antioch United Methodist Church in Antioch, Illinois, unless any such members shall inform
41 the pastor of the transferee church otherwise; and
42

43 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the appropriate officers of The Northern Illinois Annual
44 Conference of The United Methodist Church are authorized and directed to execute on behalf of
45 the said Conference any and all such additional documents as legal counsel shall recommend to
46 14 effectuate the above.
47

1 **RATIONALE:**

2 After many faithful years of service, ministry and mission in the name of Jesus Christ, Trinity
3 United Methodist Church of Lindenhurst has come to a place of transition and closure as
4 membership and attendance have declined. The congregation has expressed its desire to
5 celebrate its past ministry but to no longer remain in service as Trinity UMC of Lindenhurst.
6 The closure has been recommended by the Elgin District Committee on Location and Buildings
7 and the District Superintendent.

8
9
10 **Document: 700.08**

11 **Name: To Hold Accountable Northern Illinois Conference Entities That Intentionally**
12 **Affiliate with or Identify with an Outside Organization Contrary to Judicial Council Rulings**
13 **Author(s): Jeff Neufeld, member at Barrington United Methodist Church**
14 **CCFA Comment:** Our clergy benefit program prevents the isolation of any particular
15 congregation as called for in this legislation.

16
17 **ACTION:**

18 The Northern Illinois Conference (NIC) of the United Methodist Church (UMC) shall explicitly
19 and materially hold accountable any local church, board, agency, or mission (hereafter,
20 “entity”) within the borders of the NIC and subject to its oversight and authority, that explicitly
21 identifies as or formally affiliates with an outside organization in violation of Judicial Council
22 ruling #871. Such outside organizations include but are not limited to Reconciling Ministries
23 Network, Wesleyan Covenant Association, etc.

24
25 Within thirty (30) days of the Bishop receiving written notice of an entity’s identification or
26 affiliation, the Bishop shall inform the entity in writing that it shall have ninety (90) days to
27 desist, rescind and remove its non-UMC identification(s) and affiliation(s). If the entity fails to
28 comply with the Bishop’s written notice and desist, rescind and remove its identification(s) or
29 affiliation(s) within the ninety (90) days, this Bishop shall notify the Council on Finance and
30 Administration (CFA) in writing, and the CFA shall immediately suspend the distribution of
31 any apportionment monies or any other funds or material support to the entity for no less than
32 thirty (30) days and no more than ninety (90) days.

33
34 If the entity continues to so identify and/or affiliate with an outside organization after the initial
35 financial suspension, the Bishop shall direct the CFA to indefinitely suspend any and all
36 distribution of apportionment monies or any other funds or material support to the entity until
37 such time as the entity has rescinded and removed all identification and affiliation with the
38 RMN.

39
40 All apportionments, monies or other material support subjected to the suspension and for its
41 duration are forfeited by the entity and are not recoverable.

42
43 **RATIONALE:**

1 United Methodist leaders often speak of the denomination as “the connection.” This concept
2 has been central to Methodism from its beginning. Today, our denomination continues to be
3 organized in a “connectional” system, which “enables us to carry out our mission in unity and
4 strength” (*Book of Discipline*, ¶ 701). Every local church is linked to an interconnected network of
5 organizations that join together in mission and ministry, allowing us to accomplish far more
6 than any one local church or person could alone.⁶ Unity in our connection is a key part of our
7 identity as evidenced in our denomination’s name. The main way we support the ministries of
8 the church is through our apportioned funds, a method of giving that proportionally allocates
9 the churchwide budget to conferences and local churches.⁷

10
11 The Judicial Council (JC), in its decision #871, has ruled that “A local church or any of its
12 organizational units may not identify or label itself as an unofficial body or movement. Such
13 identification or labeling is divisive and makes the local church subject to the possibility of
14 being in conflict with the *Discipline* and doctrines of The United Methodist Church.”⁸

15
16 In Decision 847, the Judicial Council held that the adoption of a resolution by an Annual
17 Conference to identify or label itself with an unofficial organization is in conflict with the
18 Constitution. The identification or labeling of an Annual Conference, local church or any other
19 constitutional or Disciplinary entity of the Church implies acceptance and affirmation of
20 doctrines, purposes and agendas of such unofficial organizations. Such action subjects United
21 Methodist organizations to being in conflict with the Articles of Religion, the Confession of
22 Faith and the General Rules which are protected by the Restrictive Rules.⁹ Although this
23 decision #847 was regarding an Annual Conference, decision #871 affirmed the same logic is
24 applicable to local churches.

25
26 By an entity’s explicitly identifying or affiliating with an outside organization including but not
27 limited to the use of the organization’s logos and slogans, or labeling itself as “a _____
28 congregation” with anything other than “United Methodist,” the entity is intentionally breaking
29 its unity with the rest of the United Methodist Church and placing the agenda of a partisan
30 organization above its own connectionalism.

31
32 The Judicial Council has also held in decision #871 that an Annual Conference has the right to
33 correct what it determines to be actions by its local churches identifying or labeling themselves
34 as unofficial bodies or movements which are not in compliance with the *Discipline* and the
35 Constitution.

36
37 As there is an epidemic level of unaccountability and flouting of rules within the UMC and the
38 NIC, and in order to preserve our unity, the NIC must take proactive steps to correct this
39 intentional disunity and set an example for other annual conferences by holding entities

⁶ <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/organization-church-as-connection>

⁷ <http://www.umc.org/how-we-serve/apportioned-funds>

⁸ http://archives.umc.org/interior_print.asp?mid=263&JDID=910&JDMOD=VWD&SN=801&pagemode=print

⁹ <http://www.umc.org/decisions/41763>

1 accountable when those entities place a partisan identity equal to or above their identity as the
2 United Methodist Church.

3
4 **Document: 700.09**

5 **Name: Northern Illinois Conference Discontinuance of Creating Unsafe and Unprotected**
6 **Zones In Any of Its Churches Or Gathering Spaces Through the Infringement of Members’**
7 **and Guests’ Constitutional Right To Bear Arms and Right To Self-Defense.**

8 **Author(s): Jeff Neufeld, member at Barrington United Methodist Church**

9 **CCFA Comment:** A radical increase of property insurance premiums for all churches would
10 result in having to provide the suggested additional coverage.

11
12 **ACTION:**

13 The Northern Illinois Conference (NIC) of the United Methodist Church will discontinue any
14 official or implied policy that creates unsafe and unprotected zones in any of its churches or
15 other gathering spaces through the practice of restricting the Constitutional rights of citizens to
16 bear arms or execute their personal right to self-defense.

17
18 A memorandum shall be issued from the NIC Bishop’s office directing all local churches and
19 properties owned or operated by NIC churches, missions, agencies, etc., to:

- 20 1) Remove any sign, placard or notice that prohibits duly trained and licensed individuals
21 from concealed carry of firearms, including but not limited to the sign proscribed by 430
22 ILCS 66/65;
- 23 2) In the case where a local church or property owned or operated by NIC churches,
24 missions, agencies, etc., also operates or houses a school or pre-school pursuant to 430
25 ILCS 66/65(a)(1) and 430 ILCS 66/65(a)(2) and wishes to retain the prohibitive signage
26 allowed by Illinois statute, they must place additional signage specifying the hours and
27 locations explicitly “under control” of the school or pre-school in such a manner that it is
28 clear when and where duly trained and licensed persons are and are not prohibited from
29 exercising their Constitutional rights;
- 30 3) Where any local church, or property owned or operated by NIC local churches,
31 missions, agencies, etc., wishes to independently retain the signage described by Illinois
32 statute and thereby continue infringing on the Constitutional rights of its members and
33 guests, the Bishop’s memorandum shall require said organization to provide in writing
34 to the Bishop and for public dissemination within ninety (90) days of the date of the
35 Bishop’s memorandum a detailed plan for implementing armed security for its facilities
36 in lieu of guests exercising their constitutional rights, or a certified copy of an insurance
37 policy which provides a minimum of \$1,000,000 of coverage per member on the church’s
38 roll or the maximum capacity of the building/facility/room as determined by the state
39 Fire Marshal, whichever is greater, or of a coverage amount determined by the
40 Conference Board of Trustees.

41
42 **RATIONALE:**

43 The Constitution of the United States declares in part, “...the right of the people to keep and
44 bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” The Constitution of the State of Illinois likewise states,

1 "Subject only to the police power, the right of the individual citizen to keep and bear arms shall
2 not be infringed."

3
4 The Illinois State Assembly has exercised its police power in 430 ILCS 66/65 and has proscribed
5 a process whereby residents of the state may undergo training and receive licensing to carry
6 concealed weapons on their person subject to certain place restrictions. Pursuant to 430 ILCS
7 66/65, churches and buildings controlled or operated by a church are not specified as
8 prohibited places for concealed carry except where it is "[a]ny building, real property, and
9 parking area under the control of a pre-school or child care facility, including any room or
10 portion of a building under the control of a pre-school or child care facility" [430 ILCS
11 66/65(a)(2)].

12
13 The key phrase in the above state legislation is "under the control of". For instance, on a day
14 which a church's pre-school is in operation, a prohibition applies only during those hours and
15 only in the specific places under its control and would not extend to other areas of the church
16 building or other days and times in which other church activities occur, such as Sunday
17 morning worship, an evening Bible study or music rehearsal, etc.

18
19 The existence of "gun-free zones" (areas where guns are prohibited) has been shown to be a
20 major catalyst in the propagation of mass-shootings by people intent on doing substantial harm
21 with the least resistance. According to the Crime Prevention Research Center, gun free zones
22 have been the target of more than 98% of all mass shootings¹⁰. Since 1950, all but six mass
23 public shootings in America have occurred where citizens were banned from carrying weapons
24 themselves. In Europe, which has suffered three of the four worst K-12 school shootings in
25 history, every single mass public shooting has occurred in a gun-free zone. Unsurprisingly,
26 killers try to avoid armed resistance.¹¹

27
28 Jesus himself urged followers to prepare for their own defense: "He said to them, "But now, the
29 one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell
30 his cloak and buy one.'" (Luke 22:36 NRSV). By continuing to unilaterally and universally ban
31 all concealed carry at all times, the various entities of the NIC are infringing on their members'
32 and guests' Constitutional rights; and the assembly of dozens, if not hundreds or even
33 thousands, of unarmed individuals at a Sunday morning service, for instance, creates a clear
34 and present danger for the safety of all assembled. The NIC must take the lead among the
35 various jurisdictions, annual conferences and central conferences in upholding its members'
36 and guests' universal human right of self-defense and cease allowing or directing its local
37 churches, boards, agencies and other mass gatherings from becoming unarmed, defenseless
38 killing zones.

39
40

¹⁰ <https://crimeresearch.org/2014/09/more-misleading-information-from-bloombergs-everytown-for-gun-safety-on-guns-analysis-of-recent-mass-shootings/>

¹¹ <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/gun-free-school-zones-not-protect-kids-article-1.3786452>

1 **Document: 700.10**
2 **Name: Affirming Dignity**
3 **Author(s): David Aslesen and Krista Paradiso**
4 **CCFA Comment: No Comment**
5

6 **ACTION:**

7 The Northern Illinois Conference celebrates the beloved community we create in the midst of
8 our diversity and therefore,

- 9 1. We affirm the inherent beauty and dignity of every lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,
10 queer and straight (lgbtq+) person, and the evolving diversity in which God creates us
11 as persons of sacred worth.
- 12 2. We affirm the process and hope for an authentic life born of grace and established by
13 faith in God in all persons of every sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 14 3. We honor the work of God's Spirit in the lives of individuals and families in the coming
15 out process. It is a courageous and spiritual act. We believe that God rejoices when we
16 reveal to the world our full selves.
- 17 4. We support each person's journey of integrating spirituality and sexuality which leads
18 to wholeness.
- 19 5. We honor the relationships of love and commitment made by lgbtq+ couples that serve
20 to model God's love and give expression to the diversity of families in our world.
- 21 6. We take responsibility and encourage local congregations and spiritual leaders to lead,
22 protect, and affirm lgbtq+ people of all ages and their families. We believe God inspires
23 and calls us as leaders to do this work.
- 24 7. We celebrate the resiliency, faithfulness, and determination of lgbtq+ laity and clergy
25 who are part of our United Methodist past, present, and future. The body of Christ is
26 blessed by their commitment to God, service within the church and ministry among
27 God's people in the world.

28
29 **RATIONALE:**

30 The adoption of the Traditional Plan by the recent Special Session of The General Conference of
31 The United Methodist Church reinforces and strengthens Discipline-sanctioned discrimination
32 and harm of lgbtq+ persons. This is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ and harms both lgbtq+
33 Christians and our United Methodist witness to the world. We reject continued exclusion by the
34 church and the misappropriation of Christian theology that may lead lgbtq persons to feel as if
35 God and the church only condemns and rather than honoring the discovery of personhood,
36 identity and expressions of healthy sexuality as found in the life of lgbtq+ persons.

37
38 God's Spirit has created each of us as God's children, made in the image of God, beloved by
39 God, and called us all to serve in the wholeness of mind, body, soul and expressions thereof to
40 build the kingdom of God on earth. The church of Jesus Christ is best served by the full
41 participation and inclusion of all God's people. The United Methodist Church, its congregations
42 and leadership are most faithful when all can serve as they are called in all areas of church life.

43
44 **Document: 700.11**
45 **Name: Affirming Our Theological Task**
46 **Author(s): David Aslesen**
47 **CCFA Comment: No Comment**

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ACTION:

The Northern Illinois Conference affirms the following portion of The Book of Discipline, Par. 105, Section 4 - Our Theological Task, as found on page 80, which states:

1. Theology is our effort to reflect upon God’s gracious action in our lives. In response to the love of Christ, we desire to be drawn into a deeper relationship with “faith’s pioneer and perfecter.” Our theological explorations seek to give expression to the mysterious reality of God’s presence, peace, and power in the world. By so doing, we attempt to articulate more clearly our understanding of the divine-human encounter and are thereby more fully prepared to participate in God’s work in the world.
2. The theological task, though related to the Church’s doctrinal expressions, serves a different function. Our doctrinal affirmations assist us in the discernment of Christian truth in ever-changing contexts. Our theological task includes the testing, renewal, elaboration, and application of our doctrinal perspective in carrying out our calling “to spread scriptural holiness over these lands.”
3. While the Church considers its doctrinal affirmations a central feature of its identity and restricts official changes to a constitutional process, the Church encourages serious reflection across the theological spectrum.
4. As United Methodists, we are called to identify the needs both of individuals and of society and to address those needs out of the resources of Christian faith in a way that is clear, convincing, and effective. Theology serves the Church by interpreting the world’s needs and challenges to the Church and by interpreting the gospel to the world.

Therefore, all local churches and faith communities are urged to study this section in whatever ways fit the context and culture of the church or faith community.

RATIONALE:

The Northern Illinois Conference stands as a leader in cross-cultural and multi-contextual ministry in the denomination with a spectrum of Christian thought, perspective and practice. Undergirding our life together is the work of our theological traditions and doctrinal affirmations which enable us to do our theology as a critical and constructive task, as an individual and communal task, as a contextual and incarnational task and an essentially practical task.

Whatever the future may hold for The United Methodist Church, the work of theology should continue to be a prayerful, graceful, intellectual, faithful, contextual, mindful and practical endeavor for each member, every congregation and this annual conference.

In all expressions of Methodism, past, present and future, the wise use of scripture, tradition, experience and reason will provide us with steps to engaging the present challenges of our church and world.

1 **Document: 700.12**
2 **Name: Do No Harm: Limiting Complaints and Trials**
3 **Author(s): NIC RMN Taskforce, NIC MFSA, Rev. Dr. Anne Hampson, Broadway United**
4 **Methodist Church, Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, Faith United Methodist Church**
5 **in Dolton, First UMC of La Grange, First United Methodist of Elgin, Galena United**
6 **Methodist Church, Northbrook UMC, SOWers of Broadway United Methodist Church**
7 **CCFA Comment: No additional cost anticipated.**
8

9 **ACTION:**

10 As the Northern Illinois Conference, we affirm our commitment to do no harm and stand
11 with our LGBTQIA+ family, as we call upon:

- 12 - Our conference to condemn the decision of the 2019 General Conference to pass
13 the Traditional Plan and apologizes for the harm that it has caused LGBTQIA+
14 persons, their families, their friends, and the body of Christ. "We affirm that all
15 persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God," but we also
16 assert and affirm that no human being is incompatible with Christian teaching.
- 17 - Our conference to allow no NIC funds or monies (either directly through
18 payments or indirectly through the time of employees of the conference) to be
19 expended in legal fees for the purpose of background investigations, complaints,
20 just resolutions, or clergy trials pertaining LGBTQIA+ ordination and officiating
21 same sex marriages or unions.
- 22 - Our Bishop in Residence to limit complaints and trials against clergypersons
23 (unless they specifically request such) for the accusations of being a self-avowed
24 practicing homosexual or officiating same sex marriages or unions.
- 25 - The clergy and lay persons of the Northern Illinois Conference to refrain from
26 bringing complaints upon those in our connection for the accusations of being a
27 self-avowed practicing homosexual or officiating same sex marriages or unions.

28
29 **RATIONALE:**

30 In our baptismal vows, we promise to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms
31 they present themselves. Our founder, John Wesley, suggested the first general rule for the
32 people called Methodist was to "do not harm." The language affirmed by the General
33 Conference in the 2019 Special Session is evil, homophobic, and an attack on the Body of Christ.
34 By passing the Traditional Plan, the denomination has done great, and perhaps irreparable
35 harm to our LGBTQIA+ siblings and members. Despite the fact that much of the Traditional
36 Plan had already been ruled unconstitutional before it was voted upon. As an act of resistance,
37 the Northern Illinois Conference has stood as a Reconciling Conference, in spite of being ruled
38 out of order by the Judicial Council. We have many LGBTQIA+ clergy and lay persons who are
39 gifted and qualified for ministry, sacrificially serving our congregations, our Conference, and
40 our world from the Northern Illinois Conference, and they should be able to do so unhindered
41 by fear. If clergy feel called to officiate same sex weddings and unions, they should be able to
42 faithfully minister without being fearful of a complaint or trial.
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1 **Document: 700.13**
2 **Name: Do No Harm: Candidates for Ministry**
3 **Author(s): NIC RMN Taskforce, NIC MFSA, Rev. Dr. Anne Hampson, Broadway United**
4 **Methodist Church, Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, Faith United Methodist Church**
5 **in Dolton, First UMC of La Grange, First United Methodist of Elgin, Galena United**
6 **Methodist Church, Northbrook UMC, SOWers of Broadway United Methodist Church**
7 **CCFA Comment: No Comment**

8
9 **ACTION:**

10 As the Northern Illinois Conference, we affirm our commitment to do no harm and stand
11 with our LGBTQIA+ family, as we call upon:

- 12
- 13 - Our Board of Ordained Ministry to consider candidates for ministry, as
14 commissioned or ordained deacons and elders or licensed local pastors, ALL
15 persons who come before them, regardless of sexual orientation or gender
16 identity.
- 17 - The Board of Ordained Ministry shall not inquire about a candidate’s sexual
18 orientation or gender identity, and if a candidate discloses information about such,
19 that information will not be taken into consideration when evaluating fitness for
20 ministry.

21

22 **RATIONALE:**

23 In our baptismal vows, we promise to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms
24 they present themselves. The language affirmed by the General Conference in the 2019 Special
25 Session is evil, homophobic, and an attack on the Body of Christ. As an act of resistance, the
26 Northern Illinois Conference has stood as a Reconciling Conference, in spite of being ruled out
27 of order by the Judicial Council. We have many LGBTQIA+ clergy and lay persons who are
28 gifted and qualified for ministry, sacrificially serving our congregations, our Conference, and
29 our world from the Northern Illinois Conference, and they should be able to do so unhindered
30 by fear. Candidates for ministry have enough anxiety about articulating call and theological
31 positions without having to worry that their very personhood could exclude them from
32 fulfilling God’s call on their life.

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40 **Document: 700.14**
41 **Name: Reaffirm Commitment to Inclusion**
42 **Author(s): NIC RMN Taskforce, NIC MFSA, Rev. Dr. Anne Hampson, Broadway United**
43 **Methodist Church, Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, Faith United Methodist Church**
44 **in Dolton, First UMC of La Grange, First United Methodist of Elgin, Galena United**
45 **Methodist Church, Northbrook UMC, SOWers of Broadway United Methodist Church**
46 **CCFA Comment: In the past, trials have cost the conference upwards of \$150,000. There is no**
47 **existing line item for such an expense.**

48

1 **ACTION:**

2 The Northern Illinois Conference reaffirms its commitment to inclusion as a Reconciling
3 Conference. We dissent with the vote of General Conference that imposes the Traditional Plan
4 on the denomination, and we encourage the NIC Bishop to only pursue trial for clergy that
5 perform same sex weddings or self avowal at the request of the clergy person.
6
7

8 **RATIONALE:**

9 In light of the recent vote by the General Conference at the Special Session, this conference is
10 standing with our lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and queer siblings. We believe that all
11 persons are beloved children of God, worthy of full inclusion in the United Methodist Church.
12

13 In 1986, this annual conference voted to become a Reconciling Conference. Currently, fifty-
14 three congregations and communities in Northern Illinois Conference are reconciling, as well as
15 hundreds of individuals. We dissent with the decision made by General Conference and
16 continue to support churches, pastors, and laypersons who welcome all into full relationship
17 and membership with UMC congregations.
18

19 As a Reconciling Conference, we have and we will continue to address the intersections of
20 oppression, such as: speaking out for immigration reform and an end to deportations;
21 speaking out for a fair wage; divesting from unfair trade; standing with displaced
22 Palestinians and all native persons; engaging in national conversations on racism; and
23 empowering other marginalized people or others who experience injustice. We are in
24 ministry with young people who suffer violence, physical or verbal, who are led to believe
25 that they are not beloved by God because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We
26 celebrate with loving couples and value the ministry of LGBTQIA+ persons. We believe in
27 people before doctrine and love before rules.
28
29

30 **Document: 700.15**

31 **Name: Restructure the UMC**

32 **Author(s): NIC RMN Taskforce, NIC MFSA, Rev. Dr. Anne Hampson, Broadway United**
33 **Methodist Church, Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, Faith United Methodist Church**
34 **in Dolton , First UMC of La Grange, First United Methodist of Elgin Galena United**
35 **Methodist Church, Northbrook UMC, SOWers of Broadway United Methodist Church**

36 **CCFA Comment: No Comment**
37

38 **ACTION:**

- 39
- 40 • Northern Illinois Conference notify the Council of Bishops that the stipulations of the
41 Traditional Plan are not acceptable for our Conference.
 - 42 • We encourage the Board of Ordained Ministry and other structures and individuals not
43 to follow the chosen way of controlling people in their disposition and imposing stricter
44 penalties.
 - 45 • Northern Illinois Conference shall call on the 2020 General Conference to adopt a
46 structural realignment of the United Methodist Church that creates an expression of
47 Wesleyan Methodism that allows for both traditional and progressive understandings of
LGBTQIA+ Clergy and same-gender weddings to co-exist within the Church

1
2 **RATIONALE:**

3 In light of the 2019 General Conference, it is time to restructure the UMC.

- 4 • The Council of Bishops, The Commission on a Way Forward, and the 2019 General
5 Conference were unable to find a satisfactory resolution to the Impasse in the United
6 Methodist Church around LGBTQIA+ Clergy and same-gender weddings in our
7 churches.
- 8 • Enormous cultural and theological gaps remain in our global church that require
9 structural separation to allow all Annual Conferences and Local Churches to effectively
10 Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.
- 11 • The Traditional Plan passed at the 2019 General Conference serves as a rejection of
12 compromise and a theologically big-tent denomination.

13
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15 **Document: 700.16**

16 **Name: Strategic Goals for the Northern Illinois Annual Conference of The United Methodist
17 Church**

18 **Author: Annual Conference Shepherding Team**

19 **CCFA Comment:** The implementation of this legislation is covered in existing budget funds for
20 2019 and will also be accounted for in the 2020 budgeting process.

21
22 **ACTION:**

23 Affirm the prioritization and focus of resources of the Northern Illinois Conference on the
24 implementation of three inter-related strategic goals:

25
26 **Goal 1: To Grow and Reach New Disciples of Jesus Christ**

- 27 • By encouraging individuals in the life-long practice of developing and strengthening a
28 personal relationship with God;
- 29 • By supporting congregations in fostering discipleship in all of their ministries; and
- 30 • By sharing the Good News with people who do not know Jesus.

31
32 **Goal 2: To Live Out the Conviction that Racism is Incompatible with Christian Teaching**

- 33 • By encouraging individuals to engage in ongoing self-reflection, cross-cultural sharing,
34 and growth;
- 35 • By challenging the structures, practices and policies of the NIC and instituting necessary
36 changes to ensure equity; and
- 37 • By educating and equipping congregations, districts and the NIC to be prophetic leaders
38 pursuing equity in society.

39
40 **Goal 3: To increase the Number of Highly Vital Congregations**

- 41 • By actively and intentionally practicing stewardship of the NIC's ministry resources;
- 42 • By conducting a comprehensive assessment of ministry resources and the future
43 potential of every congregation; and
- 44 • By creating and executing a plan with each congregation, in collaboration with the
45 district, for its future.

1 **RATIONALE:**

2 Years before the recent Special Session of General Conference, the Northern Illinois Conference
3 of the United Methodist Church (“NIC”) began a process that has led to a strategic plan focused
4 on three primary goals. Such a plan is more important now than ever.

5
6 By way of background, the NIC created the Annual Conference Shepherding Team (“ACST”)
7 and charged it with the following key responsibilities:

- 8
9
 - 10 ●Providing coordination of the ministry, mission and vision of the NIC.
 - 11 ●Discerning a 5-year vision plan; presenting it for approval by NIC; communicating it
12 throughout the NIC, monitoring and adapting it on an annual basis.
 - 13 ●Focusing NIC resources to equip local churches and ministry settings to make disciples
14 of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
 - 15 ●Advocating, monitoring and celebrating diversity at every level of leadership
16 throughout the NIC.

17 To fulfill its charge, the ACST embarked on a strategic planning initiative from March through
18 November 2018. Strategic planning is an organizational development activity that is used to set
19 a clear vision and establish priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure
20 that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement
21 around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in
22 response to a changing environment.

23
24 As a result, the NIC will prioritize and focus its resources on the implementation of three goals.
25 By focusing on discipleship, we will strengthen our faith as individuals, and we will nurture
26 and grow our faith communities in love of God and love for our neighbor. By pursuing anti-
27 racism, we will build upon our history of diversity and inclusion, hold ourselves to a higher
28 standard of equity and challenge ourselves to prophetic witness in our communities. By
29 exercising stewardship over our ministry resources, we will position ourselves to move forward
30 into a new expression of United Methodism.

31
32 Pursuit of these goals will be challenging and will require discipline, self-evaluation and self-
33 sacrifice, mutual support and strengthened connection. This pursuit will be transformational for
34 individuals, congregations and our Annual Conference.

35
36
37 **Document: 702.01**

38 **Name: Amend Consent Calendar Committee Members**

39 **Author: Rev. Katie Voigt, Chair of Daily Proceedings**

40 **CCFA Comment:**

41
42 **ACTION:**

43 In Section I.D.5.a.1 of the Standing Rules, replace “Program Council” with Annual Conference
44 Shepherding Team, so it would read:

45
46 A Consent Calendar Committee will be formed annually with one representative from the
47 Annual Conference Committee, ~~Program Council~~, Annual Conference Shepherding Team

1 representing the program areas, Trustees, CFA, the cabinet, and the Board of Pensions with the
2 Treasurer, DCM, lay leader, conference secretary, and Chair of the Daily Proceedings along
3 with other at-large members as needed. The Consent Calendar Committee will determine a
4 preliminary consent calendar for the annual conference in consultation with the bishop.
5
6

7 **RATIONALE:**

8 This brings the membership of the Consent Calendar Committee into alignment with our
9 current conference structure.
10
11

12 **Document: 900.01**

13 **Name: Petition to General Conference 2020 to Amend Sustainable and Socially Responsible**

14 **Investments, Discipline Paragraph: Discipline ¶ 717**

15 **Author: NIC Church and Society**
16

17 **ACTION:**
18

19 The Northern Illinois Conference encourages submission of this petition to General Conference
20 2020 to amend Discipline Paragraph 717 to add language to include restriction on purchase or
21 acquisition of sovereign or government debt from countries that are engaged in *prolonged*
22 military occupations, in violation of international law. Proposed language is underlined:
23

24 Amend ¶ 717: In the investment of money, it shall be the policy of The United Methodist Church
25 that all general boards and agencies, including the General Board of Pension and Health
26 Benefits, and all administrative agencies and institutions, including hospitals, homes,
27 educational institutions, annual conferences, foundations, and local churches, make a conscious
28 effort to invest in institutions, companies, corporations, governments, or funds with policies
29 and practices that are socially responsible, consistent with the goals outlined in the Social
30 Principles. All United Methodist institutions shall endeavor to seek investments in institutions,
31 companies, corporations, governments, or funds that promote racial and gender justice, protect
32 human rights, prevent the use of sweatshop or forced labor, avoid human suffering, and
33 preserve the natural world, including mitigating the effects of climate change. In addition,
34 United Methodist institutions shall endeavor to avoid investments in companies engaged in
35 core business activities that are not aligned with the Social Principles through their direct or
36 indirect involvement with the production of anti-personnel weapons and armaments (both
37 nuclear and conventional weapons), alcoholic beverages or tobacco; or that are involved in
38 privately operated correctional facilities, gambling, pornography or other forms of exploitative
39 adult entertainment. United Methodist institutions should similarly not hold sovereign or
40 government debt in states conducting prolonged military occupations as they violate
41 international law and human rights standards. The boards and agencies are to give careful
42 consideration to environmental, social, and governance factors when making investment
43 decisions and actively exercise their responsibility as owners of the companies in which they
44 invest. This includes engaging with companies to create positive change and hold them
45 accountable for their actions, while also considering exclusion if companies fail to act
46 responsibly.
47

1 **RATIONALE:**
2

3 When we buy sovereign debt (government bonds) we are lending our funds to governments
4 without any formal mechanism for advocacy. Governments conducting prolonged military
5 occupations are violating international law and human rights standards. Such investments are
6 morally wrong and financially risky.
7
8

9 **Document: 900.02**

10 **Name: Petition to General Conference 2020 to Amend Paragraph 543.7**

11 **Author: Lonnie Chafin**
12

13 **ACTION:**

14 Amend paragraph 543.7 by addition such that it would read, "A central conference shall have
15 power to make such changes and adaptations of the Book of Discipline as the special conditions
16 and the mission of the church in the area require...connectional relationship is kept between the
17 local and the general church. The central conference shall prepare and the General Council on
18 Finance and Administration shall publish online the Book of Discipline as adapted operative in
19 each central conference or an annual conference in the central conference within 120 days of the
20 conclusion of each central conference session. Subject to this restriction...
21

22 **RATIONALE:**

23 The adaptations in central conferences should be known by all to assure consistency in
24 administration. Online publishing is affordable and makes decisions of central conferences
25 known to the whole church.
26
27

28 **Document: 900.03**

29 Removed by the author
30
31

32 **Document: 900.04**

33 **Name: Remove Discriminatory and Exclusionary extra-Biblical Restrictions on Election to the**
34 **Episcopacy.**

35 **Author(s): Jeff Neufeld, Barrington United Methodist Church**
36

37 **ACTION:**

38 The Northern Illinois Conference (NIC) of the United Methodist Church calls upon the General
39 Conference to remove all restrictive language and conditions for election to the United
40 Methodist Episcopacy not supported by clear and explicit Biblical requirements.
41

42 The NIC further calls upon the General Conference to ensure the office of Bishop is open to all
43 professing members in good standing, pursuant to whether Lay, Certified, Deaconess, Diaconal
44 Minister, Home Missioner, Licensed Local Pastor, Deacon, or Elder, etc.
45

1 The NIC further calls upon the General Conference to amend paragraph 403 of the Book of
2 Discipline as follows, specifically for making the office of Bishop fully inclusive, and by
3 extension, doing the same for the office of District Superintendent:
4

5 ¶ 403. The Role of Bishops and District Superintendents – Bishops and superintendents
6 are ~~elders in full connection~~ professing members in good standing.

- 7 1. Bishops are elected from the ~~elders~~ professing members in good standing and set
8 apart for a ministry of servant leadership, general oversight and supervision
9 (¶401).
- 10 2. District superintendents are ~~elders in full connection~~ professing members in good
11 standing appointed by the bishop to the cabinet as an extension of the
12 superintending role of the bishop...
13

14 **RATIONALE:**

15 The *Book of Discipline* currently requires for election to the office of Bishop that [they] are elders
16 in full connection (¶403) and are elected from the elders and set apart... (¶403.1). Scripture
17 describes specific qualifications for the office of Bishop (from the English derivation of the
18 Greek ἐπίσκοπος meaning “overseer” or “guardian”) in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
19
20

21 Various caucuses within the UMC frequently use the phrase “No Such Law” as a slogan to
22 represent and justify the premise there are no specific Biblical prohibitions to LGBTQIA+
23 persons serving in various UMC positions including ordination as a Deacon or Elder, or in
24 election to the office of Bishop. By this popular and oft-used rationale, there is also no Biblical
25 basis for requiring that any person meet the UMC’s current discriminatory and exclusionary
26 man-made qualifications of being an ordained Elder first before being elected to the episcopacy.
27 There is *no such law* in Scripture that requires a person to hold a bachelor’s degree, a Master of
28 Divinity degree or any other graduate degree, or be “licensed” as an “Elder in full connection”
29 to an annual conference before being nominated and elected to the office of Bishop.
30

31 In 2016, the Western Jurisdiction (WJ) of The United Methodist Church elected the Rev. Dr.
32 Karen Oliveto to the office of Bishop. In April 2017, the Judicial Council (JC) of The United
33 Methodist Church ruled that Rev. Dr. Oliveto was not eligible for the office of Bishop due to not
34 meeting the sexual ethics standards proscribed in the *Book of Discipline*, and for these same
35 reasons that her position of ordained Elder in full connection was further subject to the
36 disciplinary proceedings proscribed therein. However, Rev. Dr. Oliveto’s continued status as a
37 Bishop in the Western Jurisdiction proves that persons need not meet the current standards
38 imposed by the *Book of Discipline* in order to hold the office of Bishop.
39

40 All members of Christ’s universal church are called to share in the ministry which is committed
41 to the whole church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each member of The United Methodist Church is
42 to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community (*Discipline*, ¶220).
43 The UMC is filled with persons who carry extensive experience and training in law, finance,
44 administration, and in leadership of a variety of for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Any one
45 of these persons would be eminently qualified to lead an organization as diverse and
46 complicated as an Episcopal Area or Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. As

1 the “No Such Law” proponents have established, there is no Biblical basis for restricting the
2 office of Bishop to only those who already hold the status of “Elder”. Instead, the artificial, man-
3 made restraints invented by previous General Conferences should be removed, and the office of
4 Bishop should be open to all baptized, professing members in good standing who otherwise
5 meet the Biblical standards established by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to Timothy.
6
7

8 **Document: 900.05**

9 **Name: A Simple Plan - #1**

10 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**

11
12 **ACTION:**

13
14 Amend ¶161.C as follows:

15 C) *Marriage* – We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual
16 support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity ~~between a man and a woman~~. We believe
17 that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union.
18 We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage.
19 ~~We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.~~
20

21 **RATIONALE:**

22 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
23 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
24 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
25 LGBTQIA+ people.
26
27

28 **Document: 900.06**

29 **Name: A Simple Plan - #2**

30 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**

31
32 **ACTION:**

33 Amend ¶161.G as follows:

34 G) *Human Sexuality* – We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call
35 everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.
36

37 ~~Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are~~
38 ~~affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.~~
39

40 We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict
41 global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate
42 protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age,
43 gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights
44 ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in
45 providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality, to children, youth, and adults.
46

1 We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All
2 persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the
3 spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God,
4 with others, and with self. ~~The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of~~
5 ~~homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~ We affirm that
6 God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community,
7 welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We
8 implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends.
9 We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

10
11 **RATIONALE:**

12 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
13 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
14 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
15 LGBTQIA+ people.

16
17
18 **Document: 900.07**

19 **Name: A Simple Plan - #3**

20 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**

21
22 **ACTION:**

23 Amend ¶304.3 as follows:

24 304.3. [Reserved] ~~While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all~~
25 ~~the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain~~
26 ~~the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is~~
27 ~~incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not~~
28 ~~to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United~~
29 ~~Methodist Church.~~

30
31 **RATIONALE:**

32 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
33 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
34 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
35 LGBTQIA+ people.

36
37
38 **Document: 900.08**

39 **Name: A Simple Plan - #4**

40 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**

41
42 **ACTION:**

43 Amend footnote 3 of ¶310.2(d) as follows:

44 In adopting the statements in ¶¶ 304.2 and 310.2d on the moral and social responsibility
45 of ordained ministers, the General Conference seeks to elevate the standards by calling for a
46 more thoroughgoing moral commitment by the candidate and for a more careful and thorough
47 examination of candidates by district committees and boards of the ministry. The legislation in

1 no way implies that the use of tobacco is a morally indifferent question. In the light of the
2 developing evidence against the use of tobacco, the burden of proof would be upon all users to
3 show that their use of it is consistent with the highest ideals of the Christian life. Similarly,
4 regarding beverage alcohol, the burden of proof would be upon users to show that their action
5 is consistent with the ideals of excellence of mind, purity of body, and responsible social
6 behavior.

7 Therefore, the changes here do not relax the traditional view concerning the use of
8 tobacco and beverage alcohol by ordained ministers in The United Methodist Church. Rather
9 they call for higher standards of self-discipline and habit formation in all personal and social
10 relationships. They call for dimensions of moral commitment that go far beyond any specific
11 practices which might be listed. (See Judicial Council Decision 318.)

12 ~~The General Conference, in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding
13 homosexuality and ordination, reaffirms the present language of the *Discipline* regarding the
14 character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.~~

15 For more than 200 years candidates for ordination have been asked Wesley's Questions,
16 including " . . . Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of
17 God; a just conception of salvation by faith? . . ." (§ 310). All candidates agree to make a
18 complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life and to this end
19 agree "to exercise responsible self-control, by personal habits conducive to bodily health,
20 mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and
21 celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love
22 of God" (§ 304.2).

23 The character and commitment of candidates for the ordained ministry is described or
24 examined in six places in the *Book of Discipline* (§§ 304, 310.2, 324, 330,
25 333, and 335). These say in part: "Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of
26 unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of
27 Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties" (§ 333).

28 The statement on ordination (§ 304.2) states: "*The Church expects those who seek ordination to
29 make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life . . . [and to] agree to
30 exercise responsible self-control by personal habits. . . .*"

31 There are eight crucial steps in the examination of candidates. They are:

- 32 (1) The self-examination of the individual seeking ordination as he or she responds to
33 God's call in personal commitment to Christ and his church.
- 34 (2) The decision of the committee on pastor-parish relations, which makes the first
35 recommendation to the charge conference when a member seeks to become a candidate for
36 ordained ministry.
- 37 (3) The decision of the charge conference, which must recommend the candidate.
- 38 (4) The decision of the district committee on ordained ministry, which must recommend
39 the candidate to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and, where applicable, the
40 decision of the district conference.
- 41 (5) The decision of the Board of Ordained Ministry, which must recommend deacon's
42 ordination and provisional membership. See Judicial Council Decisions 513, 536, 542.
- 43 (6) The decision of the clergy members of the annual conference, who must elect
44 candidates to provisional membership.
- 45 (7) The recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry for deacon's or elder's
46 ordination and full membership.

1 (8) The election to deacon's or elder's ordination and full membership by the clergy
2 members of the annual conference.

3 All clergy members of the annual conference are accountable as to character and
4 effectiveness to the annual conference throughout their entire ministry.

5 The General Conference has made it clear in the "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological
6 Task" (Part III of the *Discipline*) that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are our
7 guidelines. "United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the
8 primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine."
9

10 In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that we "~~do not condone the practice~~
11 ~~of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~"
12 ~~Furthermore, the Principles state that~~ "we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is
13 expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity ~~between a man~~
14 ~~and a woman~~. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there
15 are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women
16 than for men in marriage." Also, "we affirm the integrity of single persons, and we reject all
17 social practices that discriminate or social attitudes that are prejudicial against persons because
18 they are single."
19

20 The General Conference affirms the wisdom of our heritage expressed in the disciplinary
21 provisions relating to the character and commitment of ordained ministers. The United
22 Methodist Church has moved away from prohibitions of specific acts, for such prohibitions can
23 be endless. We affirm our trust in the covenant community and the process by which we
24 ordain ministers.
25

26 In our covenant we are called to trust one another as we recommend, examine, and elect
27 candidates for the ordained ministry and conference membership. *See* Judicial Council Decision
28 480.
29

30 **RATIONALE:**

31 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
32 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
33 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
34 LGBTQIA+ people.
35
36

37 **Document: 900.09**

38 **Name: A Simple Plan - #5**

39 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**
40

41 **ACTION:**

42 Amend ¶341.6 as follows:

43 341.6. ~~[Reserved] Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our~~
44 ~~ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~
45

46 **RATIONALE:**

1 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
2 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
3 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
4 LGBTQIA+ people.

5
6
7 **Document: 900.10**

8 **Name: A Simple Plan - #6**

9 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**

10
11 **ACTION:**

12 Amend ¶613.19 as follows:

13 ~~613.19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council~~
14 ~~shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to~~
15 ~~promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The UMC~~
16 ~~“not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶ 161C). The council shall~~
17 ~~have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church’s ministry~~
18 ~~in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogs or educational events~~
19 ~~where the Church’s official position is fairly and equally represented.~~

20
21 **RATIONALE:**

22 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
23 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
24 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
25 LGBTQIA+ people.

26
27
28 **Document: 900.11**

29 **Name: A Simple Plan - #7**

30 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**

31
32 **ACTION:**

33 Amend ¶806.9 as follows:

34 ~~9. It shall be responsible for ensuring that no board, agency, committee, commission, or council~~
35 ~~shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to~~
36 ~~promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The United~~
37 ~~Methodist Church “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶ 161C).~~
38 ~~The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. It shall not limit the Church’s~~
39 ~~ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.~~

40
41 **RATIONALE:**

42 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
43 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
44 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
45 LGBTQIA+ people.

1 **Document: 900.12**
2 **Name: A Simple Plan - #8**
3 **Author(s): Jack Ryder and Gregory Gross**
4

5 **ACTION:**

6 Amend ¶2702.1 as follows:

7 1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable
8 or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the
9 statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: ~~(a) immorality~~
10 ~~including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual~~
11 ~~marriage; (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with~~
12 ~~Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual;~~
13 ~~or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex~~
14 ~~wedding ceremonies; (ea) crime; (bd) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United~~
15 ~~Methodist Church; (ec) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of~~
16 ~~doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (fd) relationships and/or behavior that undermines~~
17 ~~the ministry of another pastor; (ge) child abuse; (fh) sexual abuse; (gi) sexual misconduct~~
18 ~~including the use or possession of pornography, (hj) harassment, including, but not limited to~~
19 ~~racial and/or sexual harassment; (ik) racial, or gender discrimination; or (jl) fiscal malfeasance.~~

20
21 **RATIONALE:**

22 In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of
23 the Book of Discipline that prevent people from being full participants in the life of the United
24 Methodist church alleviates some of the harm the United Methodist Church causes to
25 LGBTQIA+ people.
26

27 **Document: 900.13**

28 **Name: The Book of Discipline re: ¶304.2&3 Qualification for Ordination**

29 **Author(s): Rev. Mark Harkness, serving at Cherry Valley United Methodist Church**
30

31 **ACTION:**

32 The Secretary of the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church will petition
33 the 2020 General Conference to amend ¶304.2&3 *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist*
34 *Church* by addition and deletion as follows:
35

36 2. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to
37 the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence of an ordained minister on the lives
38 of other persons both within and outside the Church, the Church expects those who seek
39 ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian
40 life. To this end, they agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to
41 bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, sexual
42 chastity including fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and
43 growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.

44 3. While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties
45 of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest
46 standards of holy living in the world including full chastity through fidelity in marriage
47 including refraining from sexual behavior incompatible with Christian teaching and celibacy in

1 singleness, and refraining from sexual activity incompatible with Christian teaching. The
2 practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed
3 practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or
4 appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. Therefore, no persons openly engaging in
5 such activity are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in
6 The United Methodist Church.

7
8 **RATIONALE:**

9 “The practice of homosexuality” and therefore “practicing homosexuals” are vague terms.
10 Is the reference to specific sexual acts and those who engage in those acts? Would it also
11 include activities that might otherwise not be considered sexual? As an example, it is common
12 for male friends in some regions to hold hands while they walk together, but in other regions
13 this would be perceived as a homosexual act. Furthermore, sexual chastity should be expected
14 of all clergy regardless of sexual orientation. Therefore this language should be struck.

15 As Christians we look to Scripture for guidance while allowing Tradition, reason and our
16 experience of the ongoing inspiration of the Holy Spirit to inform our understanding.

17 Furthermore, the testimony of God’s persistent mercy and grace throughout Scripture, and
18 his reluctance to exact punishment upon human beings and his decision to impart us with free
19 will means that God’s laws and directives are reasonably understood to be instructions meant
20 for our well-being rather than the controlling whims of a capricious deity.

21 However, Scripture does prohibit particular sexual activity regardless of gender or marital
22 status. All clergy whether male or female regardless of sexual orientation are expected to live
23 lives of self-control for the sake of the church and to aspire to the highest standards of living.

24
25
26 **Document: 900.14**

27 **Name: Amend Social Principles re: ¶161-II-G Human Sexuality**

28 **Author: Rev. Mark Harkness, serving at Cherry Valley United Methodist Church**

29
30 **ACTION:**

31 The Secretary of the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church will petition
32 the 2020 General Conference to amend ¶161-II-G of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist*
33 *Church* by addition and deletion as follows:

34
35 **¶161-II- G) Human Sexuality**— We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We
36 call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

37 Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are
38 affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

39 **We recognize that Scripture proscribes particular sexual interactions regardless of gender**
40 **or marital status, including incest (whether by consanguinity or familial relation), sodomy,**
41 **bestiality, and sexual relations which exploit a difference of power or maturity between the**
42 **participants. Such acts are incompatible with Christian teaching.**

43 We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for
44 strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for
45 adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of
46 age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil

1 rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in
2 providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

3 We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All
4 persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the
5 spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God,
6 with others, and with self. ~~The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of~~
7 ~~homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~ We affirm that
8 God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming,
9 forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families
10 and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit
11 ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

12 **RATIONALE:**

14 "(T)he practice of homosexuality" is a vague term. Does it refer to a particular sexual
15 practice? Would it also include activities that might otherwise not be considered sexual? As an
16 example, it is common for male friends in some regions to hold hands while they walk together,
17 but in other regions this would be perceived as a homosexual act.

18 As Christians we look to Scripture for guidance while allowing Tradition, reason and our
19 experience of the ongoing inspiration of the Holy Spirit to inform our understanding.

20 God's persistent mercy and grace throughout Scripture accompanied by our free will
21 signifies that God's laws are reasonably understood to be instructions meant for our well-being
22 rather than control.

23 When we find in Scripture and the Tradition of the church that some forms of sexual
24 expression (are prohibited, it is reasonable to conclude that those activities should be
25 discouraged for the sake of persons' wellbeing.

26 Leviticus 18:4-5 says, "My ordinances you shall observe and my statutes you shall keep,
27 following them: I am the Lord your God. You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by
28 doing so one shall live: I am the Lord." This indicates that unlike passages that refer to the
29 emission of semen (Lev 15:16-32) which speak to ceremonial purity, the sexual behaviors which
30 follow are more broadly applicable.

31 In the first covenant, these acts include:

32 Incest (a culturally universal taboo) – sexual interaction between close
33 relatives (via blood or marriage). (Lev. 18:6-18)

34 Sodomy – anal sexual penetration (Lev. 18:22)

35 Bestiality – sexual relations with animals (Lev. 18:23)

36 The second covenant confirms that illicit sexual activity (fornication) continues to be a rule
37 for the church in Acts 15:19-20 when James (speaking on behalf of the apostles) says, "Therefore
38 I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God,
39 but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and *from fornication*
40 (emphasis added) and from whatever has been strangled and from blood," clarifying that
41 Christians are subject to the moral instructions of the law.

42 Paul chastises the church for its willingness to ignore and celebrate a violation of Leviticus
43 18:8 in Romans 5:1-2, indicating that the prohibition against incest continues.
44 Because the prohibition against sodomy in Leviticus 18 is fitted between the prohibitions of
45 incest and bestiality, it is reasonable to conclude that the prohibition continues and applies
46 regardless of gender.

1 Paul's reference to pederasty confirms that any sexual relationship which one participant
2 exploits a disparity of power or developmental maturity is also incompatible with Christian
3 teaching.

4 These specific behaviors are prohibited in Scripture and therefore incompatible with
5 Christian teaching.

6 Loving relationships, including marriages, are grounded in more than sexual behavior. By
7 accepting that God's instructions are for our own well-being, it is appropriate for the church
8 dissuade persons from behavior explicitly forbidden, while at the same time insisting that the
9 identity of all persons rests not in any behavior or inclination but in the image of God.

10
11
12 **Document: 900.15**

13 **Name: The Book of Discipline re: ¶314.4 Unauthorized Conduct**

14 **Author: Rev. Mark Harkness, serving at Cherry Valley United Methodist Church**

15
16 **ACTION:**

17 The Secretary of the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church will petition
18 the 2020 General Conference to amend ¶314.4 *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist*
19 *Church* by addition and deletion as follows:

20
21 6. Ceremonies that ~~celebrate homosexual unions~~ profess to bless or affirm sexual expression
22 incompatible with Christian teaching shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be
23 conducted in our churches.

24
25 **RATIONALE:**

26 The current language regarding the celebration of homosexual unions is meant to affirm the
27 Church's teaching that certain sexual behaviors are incompatible with Christian teaching.

28 Stating that sexual expression is only clearly affirmed in the context of heterosexual
29 marriage does not limit marriage to sexual expression.

30 Marriage and similar unions bind persons to one another in a mutually affectionate and
31 caring bond, and unites their families to one another.

32 Genesis 1:27-28b states. "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he
33 created them, male and female he created them. God blessed them and, God said to them, 'Be
34 fruitful and multiply on the earth and subdue it,'" indicating that all persons regardless of
35 gender are made in the divine image, and establishing a means for propagation.

36 Genesis 2:18-23 reveals God's intention that the man should have a partner as it says:

37 "18Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I
38 will make him a helper as his partner." ... 20The man gave names to all cattle, and
39 to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was
40 not found a helper as his partner.

41 "21So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept;
42 then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.22And the rib that
43 the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her
44 to the man. 23Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my
45 flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."

46 That God brought every living creature before the man in a quest for identifying a suitable
47 partner clearly implies that God's main purpose in seeking a partner had nothing to do with

1 sexual expression. God's state impetus for creates another human being from the man's own
2 body so that a woman is created as a partner and considered of one kind ("flesh bone of my
3 bone and flesh of my flesh") with the man was to complete him and to complement him in his
4 work.

5 Relationships in which two persons commit themselves to perpetual fidelity in order to
6 complement their partners should be valued and honored, within appropriate boundaries.

7
8 Such relationships have been recognized in various contexts such as practice of Nyumba
9 Nthobu in Tanzania in which women marry other women for life-long committed partnership
10 absent any intention for sexual expression.

11 Many civil jurisdictions place restrictions on who may or may not act on behalf of another
12 based on familial relationship. Therefore, ceremonies which allow persons to form lifelong
13 partnerships grounded in fidelity and chastity may be a means by which the Church can enable
14 persons to live out the fullness of God's image within the world.

15 Clergy officiating such acts should refrain from blessing or affirming sexual practices
16 incompatible with Christian teaching.