

1 **Document: 700.05**
 2 **Name: Closure - Cortland UMC**
 3 **Author(s): Brian Gilbert**

4
 5 **Action:**

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

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

10 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provision of Paragraph 2539 of The Book of Discipline of The
 11 United Methodist Church 2016, the Prairie South District Superintendent has recommended
 12 with the approval of the District Strategy Team that the church be discontinued effective June
 13 30, 2022. The Prairie South District Committee on Building and Location has voted to concur
 14 with the District Superintendent's recommendation to discontinue said church and the
 15 presiding Bishop and the majority of the District Superintendents of the Northern Illinois
 16 Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church have consented to the District
 17 Superintendent's recommendation to discontinue said church;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12

13 Rationale:

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

1 **Document: 700.06**
2 **Name: Closure - Flowing Forth UMC**
3 **Author(s): Jeffry Bross**
4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9

10 RATIONALE:

11

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

1 **Document: 700.12**

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

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

4

5 **Action:**

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

8

9 **Rationale:**

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

1 **Document: 700.14**

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

5
6 **RESOLVED:**

7 That the 2022 Session of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference (NIC), out of respect for
8 one another, a desire to do no harm, and a commitment to allow congregations and their
9 members grace and space freely to consider their options for the future, encourages all
10 officials and entities of the Annual Conference to be governed by the following principles,
11 policies and processes when engaging congregations considering withdrawal from the
12 NIC to join "one of the other denominations represented in the Pan-Methodist
13 Commission or ... another evangelical denomination" (*Book of Discipline*, paragraph
14 2548.2), or to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church "for reasons of conscience
15 regarding a change in the requirements and provision of *The Book of Discipline* related to
16 the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing
17 homosexual persons as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the
18 actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow"
19 (Paragraph 2553).

- 20 1. Congregations considering their relationship with the NIC shall undertake a
21 deliberate and intentional process of informed, prayerful discernment.
- 22 2. Congregations joining one of the denominations represented in the Pan-Methodist
23 Commission or another evangelical church may, at their sole discretion, choose to
24 withdraw for purposes of transfer under the provisions of Paragraph 2548.2.
- 25 3. Congregations disaffiliating to an independent status shall be required to use the
26 provisions of Paragraph 2553. All churches, regardless of their theological position,
27 should be permitted to disaffiliate pursuant to Paragraph 2553 so long as they meet
28 the requirements of Paragraph 2553.
- 29 4. Any required support for unfunded pension liability shall be based on Wespath
30 calculations of the aggregate unfunded liability of the Annual Conference. The
31 formula for the proportion of the aggregate liability allocated to particular
32 congregations shall be determined by the appropriate group within the NIC.
33 Actuarial reports, financial statements, audit reports, and calculations supporting
34 both the aggregate amount of unfunded pension liability as determined by Wespath
35 as well as the NIC formula for apportioning the aggregate amount of unfunded
36 pension liability to local churches shall be provided to all churches.
- 37
- 38 5. Northern Illinois Annual Conference officials and entities are encouraged to abide by
39 the following guidelines in administering Paragraph 2548.2:

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

- 1 membership to another United Methodist congregation congruent with paragraphs
2 229 and paragraph 2549.2 of the *Book of Discipline*.
- 3 7. A written agreement detailing the requirements of departure and, in the case of
4 withdrawal to align with another eligible denomination, the reception of the
5 congregation into its new denomination, is to be signed by the NIC, the local
6 congregation, and, if applicable, the receiving denomination after review by the NIC
7 chancellor or attorney retained by the NIC for this purpose.
- 8 8. All agreements for separation are undertaken with the consent of the presiding
9 bishop and shall be presented to the Annual Conference at a regular or specially
10 called session for final approval. Any congregations seeking disaffiliation under
11 paragraph 2553 must complete the process by December 31, 2023, per the
12 requirements of that section of the *Book of Discipline*. The process for withdrawal to
13 align with another eligible denomination under paragraph 2548.2 will have no time
14 limit imposed or implied.

15 **Rationale:**

16 *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* contains two options for
17 congregations choosing to separate from the United Methodist Church: 1) Paragraph
18 2548.2 relating to release of the trust clause for a local congregation to join a church
19 “represented in the Pan-Methodist Commission or another evangelical denomination;”
20 or 2) Paragraph 2553 which grants the limited right, until December 31, 2023, for United
21 Methodist congregations to disaffiliate for reasons of conscience over the practice of
22 ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals; and

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

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

31 *We encourage conferences and local churches to strive for reconciliation and*
32 *understanding. However, some congregations and clergy may feel called to a different*
33 *future in the faith. We respect our siblings who depart and desire to do no harm as we*
34 *anticipate cooperative ecumenical efforts in the future. We grieve each separation. NCJ*
35 *annual conferences should use existing disciplinary and conference provisions to*
36 *accommodate local congregations and clergy seeking disaffiliation.*
37 ([https://www.ncjumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NCJ-Covenant-to-](https://www.ncjumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NCJ-Covenant-to-Build-BeLoved-Community-1.pdf)
38 [Build-BeLoved-Community-1.pdf](https://www.ncjumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NCJ-Covenant-to-Build-BeLoved-Community-1.pdf))

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

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

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

7

8 Submitted by:

9 Rev. Scott N. Field

10 NIC Clergy (Retired)