

## RESOLUTIONS

### Resolution #1

#### a. ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFERENCE “RULES, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES” - APPROVED

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** Yes (Already Budgeted)

**RATIONALE:** This resolution authorizes Connecting Council to establish governing documents and procedures for the functioning of the annual conference and its structures in a more permanent format.

**WHEREAS** the Great Plains Annual Conference was officially established January 1, 2014, and created as an entirely new entity, formed to fulfill our common mission as United Methodists to make disciples of Jesus Christ from the transformation of the world; and

**WHEREAS** the structure and many of the policies of the conference were established within the Plan of Organization document, approved in August, 2013, which in its contents frequently refers to the policies and practices of the three predecessor conferences; and

**WHEREAS** many of these governing documents have not been significantly revised since their original approval at the Uniting Conference, leading to instances where current policies or processes of the conference are not always clear; and

**WHEREAS** formulating a comprehensive set of conference rules, policies, and procedures will help to clarify the powers and duties of the annual conference and its related and subsidiary groups, allowing for clarity of purpose, accountability and flexibility;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Great Plains Annual Conference authorizes the Connecting Council to develop “Rules, Policies, and Practices of the Great Plains United Methodist Conference,” a controlling document for those policies, procedures, and other documents necessary for the functioning of the annual conference; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Connecting Council shall submit to the 2018 annual conference such a document for consideration and adoption.

## **b. PROPOSAL FOR REVISIONS TO THE POWER AND DUTIES OF THE CONNECTING COUNCIL**

*This policy seeks to refine the powers and duties of the Connecting Council as we continue to live into our new shared life as the Great Plains United Methodist Conference.*

### **Responsibilities of the Connecting Council:**

Review and evaluate the conference's missional progress.

Proposed Changes to Safe Gatherings Policy

- 1) Review and evaluate the conference's missional progress.
- 2) Align major initiatives of the GPUMC.
- 3) Enhance deep communication with all parts of the GPUMC.
- 4) To establish an internal structure necessary for the accomplishment of its work.
- 5) Take such actions between sessions of the annual conference as permitted, including:
  - a) As recommended by the Personnel Team, establish and maintain a comprehensive staffing plan for the Annual Conference, including number of staff, functions of staff, and location(s) of staff, for the fulfillment of the priorities of the GPUMC within the annual budget approved by the annual conference.
  - b) As recommended by the Personnel Team, establish and maintain the Great Plains United Methodist Conference Staff Handbook containing the personnel policies and practices for the staff of the conference.

## **c. PROPOSED CHANGES TO SAFE GATHERINGS POLICY**

Rationale: These changes help to clarify the scope of the policy by defining which persons must be trained.

### **Scope**

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all staff persons, volunteer or paid, lay or clergy, who have any direct contact with children and/or youth and/or adults from vulnerable populations in any activities or events sponsored by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, including its districts and programming agencies.

Under “Definitions”

Direct Contact –with children, youth, or adults from vulnerable populations is defined as the care, supervision, guidance, transportation, or control of such persons or routine interaction with children, youth, or adults from vulnerable populations.

### **Training**

The Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church shall develop and implement training procedures for all individuals who work with children, youth and adult from vulnerable populations at conference and district activities and events. No individual shall have any direct contact with children, youth or members of adult from vulnerable populations until they have completed this training program with the exception that a youth under the age of 16 may assist as long as he or she is working with and under the direct supervision of a certified individual who is at least 21 years of age.

### **d. PROPOSAL FOR DELEGATION**

The delegation to the 2016 General Conference continue as the delegation for the Great Plains Annual Conference through the special session of General Conference in 2019.

## **Resolution #2**

### **CLOSURE OF THE PRAIRIE VIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - APPROVED**

Rev. Bill Ritter, Blue River District Superintendent

**WHEREAS**, the Prairie View United Methodist Church located in Lincoln, Nebraska has had a faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

**WHEREAS**, the church conference of the Prairie View United Methodist Church voted on November 13, 2016 to close the church; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Bill Ritter, Blue River District Superintendent has recommended that the church be closed; and

**WHEREAS**, the consent of the Blue River District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz has been granted; and

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**WHEREAS**, all *Disciplinary* requirements have been complied with;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Prairie View United Methodist Church of Lincoln, Nebraska, Lancaster County, is hereby declared closed as of November 20, 2016, with appreciation for its faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the Prairie View United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closure, and that and memberships not so designated be transferred to St. Luke United Methodist Church of Lincoln.
3. That the assets held by Prairie View United Methodist be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the Prairie View United Methodist church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and history.

### **Resolution #3**

#### **CLOSURE OF SYLVIA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - APPROVED**

**Rev. Dennis Livingston, Hutchinson District Superintendent**

**WHEREAS**, the Sylvia United Methodist Church located in Sylvia, Kansas was founded in 1887 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

**WHEREAS**, the church conference of the Sylvia United Methodist Church voted on 21 May 2017 to close the church; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Dennis H. Livingston, the District Superintendent of the Hutchinson District, has recommended that the church be closed; and

**WHEREAS**, the consent of the Hutchinson District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr. has been granted; and

**WHEREAS**, all proper *Disciplinary* requirements have been

complied with;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Sylvania United Methodist Church in Reno County, Kansas, is hereby declared closed as of 30 June 2017, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the Sylvania United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closure, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Stafford United Methodist Church.
3. That title to the real property [and other assets] held by Sylvania United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the Sylvania United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

## **Resolution #4**

### **CLOSURE OF UNIVERSITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - APPROVED**

**Rev. Bruce Emmert, Kansas City District Superintendent**

**WHEREAS**, the University United Methodist Church located in Kansas City, Kansas was founded in 1920 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

**WHEREAS**, the church conference of the University United Methodist Church voted on July 26, 2016 to discontinue the church; and

**WHEREAS**, Bruce Emmert, the District Superintendent of the Kansas City District, has recommended that the church be discontinued; and

**WHEREAS**, the consent of the Kansas City District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr. has been granted; and

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**WHEREAS**, all proper *Disciplinary* requirements have been complied with:

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the University United Methodist Church in Wyandotte County, is hereby declared discontinued as of August 14, 2016, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the University United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to discontinuance, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Central United Methodist Church.
3. That title to the real property [and other assets] held by University United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the University United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

## **Resolution #5**

### **CLOSURE OF THE EBENEZER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - APPROVED**

Rev. Dr. Mitch Reece, Wichita East District Superintendent

**WHEREAS**, Ebenezer Episcopal Methodist Church, commonly known as Ebenezer United Methodist Church, located in rural Butler County, Kansas in the Wichita East District of the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, was founded in 1889 and has had a long and faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

**WHEREAS**, the church conference of the Ebenezer United Methodist Church voted on November 20, 2016 to discontinue the church; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Dr. Mitch Reece, the District Superintendent of the Wichita East District, has recommended that the church be discontinued; and

**WHEREAS**, the consent of the Wichita East District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz has been granted; and

**WHEREAS**, all proper Disciplinary requirements have been complied with;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Ebenezer United Methodist Church in Butler County, Kansas is hereby declared discontinued as of December 24, 2016, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the Ebenezer United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to discontinuance, and that any memberships not so designated by transferred to the Trinity United Methodist Church in Eldorado, Kansas.
3. That title to the real property and other assets held by Ebenezer United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual
4. That the official records and papers of the Ebenezer United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent sfekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

## **Resolution #6**

### **THE RIGHT TO PEACEFULLY ADDRESS INJUSTICE - APPROVED**

**RATIONALE:** Boycotts, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) are constitutionally protected forms of free speech and protest that have often been used by people of conscience to effect positive social and political change. In 2016, the United Methodist General Conference passed strong measures calling for an end to Israel's unjust practices towards Palestinians (UMKR web site press release);

**WHEREAS**, a wave of anti-BDS legislation that has been proposed in the U.S. Congress and in state legislatures and public institutions across the United States threatens to penalize the use of these time-honored nonviolent justice-seeking actions;

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**WHEREAS**, United Methodists and other religious communities have long used the nonviolent methods of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions to stand in solidarity with oppressed people and to work for justice, and such advocacy measures by the United Methodist Church have proven to be useful tools in helping to bring about a wide range of constructive social change, including the strengthening of labor rights for farm workers in the United States and ending of apartheid in South Africa;

**WHEREAS**, in 2009, Palestinian Christians called for boycott and divestment in their landmark document, “Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth,” ~ an ecumenical confession of faith and urgent call to action often compared to the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and other Christian manifestos written in times of crisis ~ that has been signed by thousands of Palestinian Christians and endorsed by the 13 Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem;

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, more than a dozen United Methodist Annual Conferences have called for their own conference and/or the denomination to divest from companies that support and profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land;

**WHEREAS**, in 2012, the United Methodist General Conference approved the resolution “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land,” {#6111} which calls on “all nations to prohibit... the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land,” i.e. calls for an international boycott of the Israeli settlements;

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church announced that five Israeli banks would be excluded from their investment portfolios, explicitly because of those banks’ involvement in settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territories;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church oppose any state or federal legislation that seeks to restrict the right to address injustice through boycotts, divestment, and sanctions and joins the Rabbinical Council of Jewish Voice for Peace in calling on our elected officials “to resist efforts to stifle the movement toward justice for Palestinians through the current wave of ‘anti-BDS’ legislation”;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Great Plains Conference Secretary write a letter to the President of the United States and to the Governors, the congressional representatives and members of the legislatures of Kansas and Nebraska, informing those elected officials of this resolution and attaching the full text of the resolution, said letter to include the approximate number of congregations and church members within the Great Plains Conference and/or within the respective state of the recipient;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the members of the Great Plains Conference urge congregations and church members to contact their local, regional and national elected officials, to communicate this resolution and to advocate against anti-BDS legislation appearing anywhere in our country.

## **Resolution #7**

### **WELCOMING MIGRANTS IN OUR MIDST - APPROVED**

**RATIONALE:** The United Methodist Church affirms the worth, dignity, and inherent value and rights of all persons regardless of their nationality or legal status. Yet we have neighbors, co-workers, and friends who have been separated from their loved ones or are living in fear of their families being torn apart through our broken immigration system. We have sisters and brothers around the world fleeing violence and hunger and searching for a safe place.

**WHEREAS,** Kansas and Nebraska are made up of many immigrants who have migrated to our states seeking safety, security, and prosperity; and

**WHEREAS,** immigrants and refugees are contributing members of our communities and many of them sit in the pews and are behind the pulpits of United Methodist Churches in the Great Plains Conference; and

**WHEREAS,** we have benefitted by the leadership of immigrants and refugees. They have added to our witness for Christ as we have all dedicated ourselves to the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and Whereas, the writer of Leviticus commands the love of the immigrant, who "shall be to you as the citizen among you." (Leviticus 19:33-34); and

**WHEREAS** early in Jesus' life, he was a refugee to Africa fleeing persecution and violence in his homeland (Matthew 2:13-15). Jesus told us that nations would be judged on the basis of the way they fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, and cared for the prisoner (Matthew 25:31-46); and

**WHEREAS**, hateful and divisive rhetoric and actions by leaders in our government and others have ignited xenophobic and racist attitudes and actions among some of our fellow citizens including government employees;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we in the Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church, as followers of Jesus, commit ourselves to work to eliminate racism and violence directed toward newly arriving migrants from all parts of the world as well as those who have lived and worked among us for some time and that we express our opposition to any immigration policy that excludes refugees solely on the basis of their religion or national origin;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Great Plains Conference encourages all churches to educate and equip their members to provide hospitality and welcome to migrants and refugees in their communities (the Resolution approved by General Conference "Welcoming the Migrant to the United States" would be an excellent resource); and to take further actions and advocate for just policies through prayer and discernment;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Great Plains Conference calls upon our political leaders and policy makers to assure our laws affirm the worth, dignity, inherent values, and rights of immigrants.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Great Plains Conference calls upon our political leaders and policy makers to continue to accept refugees and grant asylum based on the need of those seeking our help, such as victims of natural disaster, innocent victims of war, or persons whose lives are in danger due to political issues, and not based on how a person might benefit the United States.

## **Resolution #8**

**CREATION OF A COVENANT PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN  
THE GREAT PLAINS CONFERENCE AND THE NIGERIA  
EPISCOPAL AREA OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
- APPROVED**

**RATIONAL:** After a call went out from the Council of Bishops to build orphanages and schools for children in Africa, the Nebraska Conference and the United Methodist Church in Nigeria entered into a covenant. It was approved by the Nebraska Annual Conference in the summer of 2001 and focused on building and supporting an orphanage in Jalingo, Nigeria. It is time to update and renew this covenant.

**WHEREAS,** the mission of The United Methodist Church is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” Whereas, the Great Plains Conference is called “to equip and connect congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ,” with a commitment to “Christ-centered excellence” and strong global mission partnerships,

**WHEREAS,** the Nigeria Episcopal Area seeks to “raise faithful and fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ who are passionate to transform the world through preaching, teaching and the provision of services to care for the spiritual and physical needs of the church and the society,”

**WHEREAS,** Jesus sent his disciples out in mission “two by two” (Luke 10:1-2, NIV), and

**WHEREAS,** The United Methodist is a connectional church both with partners locally and globally and we continue to support the original mission of the Council of Bishop’s call to provide orphanages and schools for the orphaned children of Africa;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Great Plains Conference and the Nigeria Episcopal Area renew their covenant of solidarity in Christ and mutually commit ourselves to:

1. Work together in a supportive and mutual relationship for the wholistic education and leadership development of Nigerian children who have been orphaned.
2. Uplift one another in prayer on a regular basis.
3. Help people in our conferences learn about—and from—one another, including our history and culture, our blessings and challenges, and our faith and life; with a focus towards helping the orphanage students.
4. Communicate through approved channels, as established by the conferences.
5. Develop a procedure for an accountable and transparent transfer of funds for use in implementing the projects and activities made possible through this covenant.

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6. Report each year to our respective Annual Conferences through normal existing channels and agencies, as seen fit by each conference.
7. Cooperate together in developing and implementing various projects and activities that support sustainability or benefits the students of the Jalingo Orphanage Ministry as stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) below.

**Memorandum of Understanding  
BETWEEN THE GREAT PLAINS UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE  
AND THE NIGERIA EPISCOPAL AREA OF THE UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that our current priority remains the education and wellbeing of the Jalingo Orphanage children and youth to which both parties make the following commitments:

The Nigeria United Methodist Episcopal Area shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Assume full responsibility of feeding and caring for the Jalingo Orphanage children.
2. Provide clothing and other personal needs for the Jalingo Orphanage children.
3. Identify and account for income from all other sources and non-monetary donations.
4. Identify and account for income that comes from school fees paid by non-orphans.
5. Ensure transparency in communication by including the Jalingo Board Chair, the Nigeria Project Coordinator and the Jalingo Orphanage Director.
6. Ensure that an annual audit is conducted at the Jalingo Orphanage and shared with all the partners working with the Jalingo Orphanage, including the Great Plains Conference.
7. Work toward sustainability and transition the Orphanage Ministry into a self-reliant operation over four years.
8. Ensure that the Jalingo Orphanage board and management (Director) do the following:
  - i. Prepare an Annual Budget for the expenses of the Orphanage by October 30 for the next fiscal year. This budget will indicate the cost of individual student educational expenses (the cost of teacher salaries and educational materials) for orphan and non-orphan students and the cost of annual housing, food and personal care for orphan students.
  - ii. Create a funding plan to pay teachers and support staff based on the revenue of tuition, room and board for both orphan and non-orphan students.

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- iii. Spell out a plan for sustainability to take full responsibility of the education, feeding and caring for the orphan children. The plan will include how progress will be measured.
- iv. Identify the ideal number of orphans the orphanage has the capacity to educate, house, feed and care for.
- v. Identify the number of non-orphans the orphanage school has the capacity to educate.

The Great Plains United Methodist Conference shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Create awareness of the orphanage ministry among churches and individuals of the Great Plains Conference.
2. Focus on raising funds to support the educational expenses of the Jalingo Orphanage children.
3. Assist with tuition for orphans attending the Orphanage School and outside secondary school.
4. Transfer funds on a quarterly basis to the Jalingo Orphanage Advance.
5. Continue and grow support for post-secondary education costs for Jalingo Orphanage graduates by bringing greater awareness to Great Plains congregations.
6. Work with the Jalingo Orphanage board to determine criteria for receiving post-secondary scholarships to attend vocational schools, colleges and universities.

**Note: This covenant shall be considered effective once approved or ratified by each of the Annual Conferences. It shall then be in effect for at least four years, at which time it MAY be renewed for an additional four years.**

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ....So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”  
Galatians 6:2, 10

## Resolution #9

### CLOSING OF LIVING WATER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Rev. Bruce Emmert, Kanas City District Superintendent

**WHEREAS**, the Living Water United Methodist Church located in Kansas City, Kansas was founded in 2011 and has a faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

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**WHEREAS**, the church conference of the Living Water United Methodist Church voted on May 21, 2017 to close the church; and

**WHEREAS**, Bruce Emmert, the District Superintendent of the Kansas City District, has recommended that the church be closed; and

**WHEREAS**, the consent of the Kansas City District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet, and Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr. has been granted; and

**WHEREAS**, all proper Disciplinary requirements have been complied with:

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

1. That the Living Water United Methodist Church in Wyandotte County, is hereby declared closed as of June 4, 2017, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of the Living Water United Methodist Church be transferred as determined by each member prior to closing, and that any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Wyandotte UMC United Methodist Church.
3. That title to the real property [and other assets] held by Living Water United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and that the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to hold, sell, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate, and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.
4. That the official records and papers of the Living Water United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.