

K. PETITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED BY 2015 ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Petitions appear in final form and in the order listed below. Petitions not listed were not adopted.

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PETITIONS**AC01: District Superintendent, Director of Mission and Ministry and Treasurer/Benefits Officer/Director of Support Services Compensation**

A. Base compensation for District Superintendents will not exceed 1.7 times the Conference Average Compensation. The 2016 base compensation for District Superintendents is proposed to be \$102,283, which includes cash salary and a cash-based housing allowance. This amount is 1.65 times the 2016 Conference Average Compensation.

B. A District Superintendent serving more than six consecutive years shall receive an additional \$1,000 in the seventh consecutive year. For the eighth consecutive year, an additional amount of \$250 shall be provided, for a total of \$1,250.

C. Base compensation for the Director of Mission and Ministry and the Treasurer/Benefits Officer/Director of Support Services is established at the same amount as the base compensation for District Superintendents. The Director of Mission and Ministry and Treasurer/Benefits Officer/Director of Support Services positions shall receive an annual service year increment of \$250 for each completed year of service – up to a maximum of \$3,500.

D. The Conference, through its Council on Finance and Administration and in consultation with each clergyperson, shall designate a cash-based housing allowance applicable to such clergyperson in accordance with Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. The designation shall be made on or prior to January 1, 2016, or if employed after January 1, 2016, upon commencement of employment.

E. Car expense shall be reimbursed at the 2016 IRS business rate for basic automobile use. Where annual business-related travel exceeds 23,000 miles, the above positions will be provided with a leased vehicle, which is a more cost effective option.

F. HealthFlex (health insurance), CPP (death and disability benefit) and CRSP (Clergy Retirement Security Program) payments shall be made by the Rocky Mountain Conference in accordance with guidelines established by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. In addition, \$1,200 for continuing education from accountable reimbursement funds shall also be provided.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2016

TERMINATION DATE: December 31, 2016

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION: Personnel Policies and Practices Committee

AC02: Health Insurance Programs and Funding**Section I – Health Insurance Provider, Plan Sponsor, Plan Availability and Plan Eligibility**

As Plan Sponsor, the Conference will provide and/or make health insurance programs available consistent with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2012*, Paragraph 639.6 (Retiree Health Care Access) and Paragraph 639.7 (Group Health Care Plans). For 2016, this program will be provided through the HealthFlex health insurance plan for active clergy and lay staff. For retired clergy and their spouses, and retired lay staff, the program will be provided through OneExchange.

Plan availability, eligibility and participation for active clergy and lay staff are subject to the terms and conditions of the applicable documents for the coverage period, and are available from the Conference Treasurer and Benefits Officer or the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Coverage and plan participation information for retired clergy and their spouses, and retired lay staff, is available from the individual plans selected by each participant.

Eligibility will be established by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits for active clergy and lay staff. Eligibility for retired clergy and their spouses, and retired lay staff, will be established by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

A. ACTIVE CLERGY

1. HealthFlex shall be available for all clergy serving full-time in a Rocky Mountain Conference local church or in the Conference office or any other unit of the Conference which provides pension contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), with the exception of clergy described in I.A.3.
2. HealthFlex shall be available for active clergy serving full-time who are Medicare-eligible but do not qualify under the Multiple Small Employer Exception (serving a church with 20 or more employees).
3. OneExchange shall be available for active clergy serving full-time who are Medicare-eligible and qualify under the Multiple Small Employer Exception (serving a church with 19 or less employees).

B. RETIRED CLERGY

OneExchange shall be available for all retired clergy and spouses meeting the qualification guidelines established by the Conference.

Clergy must be Medicare-eligible and have been in the active plan for five consecutive years in the Rocky Mountain Conference or Yellowstone Conference immediately prior to their retirement to be eligible to participate in the OneExchange plan sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Conference. An exception shall be made for clergy who retire prior to the age of Medicare-eligibility and elect to have qualified group plan coverage or coverage through a private plan outside of the Conference. Other exceptions may be requested for consideration and approval by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Retirees who have been granted exceptions and who are not enrolled in HealthFlex when they attain the age of Medicare-eligibility shall be offered a one-time opt-in privilege 30 days prior to attaining the age of Medicare-eligibility. If this opt-in privilege is not exercised at least 30 days prior to attaining the age of Medicare-eligibility by contacting the Conference Benefits office, the retiree is not eligible to participate in the OneExchange plan.

Clergy who have opted out of Social Security will need to be enrolled in both Medicare Parts A and B to be eligible to participate in the OneExchange plan.

C. CLERGY ON MEDICAL LEAVE

HealthFlex shall be available for clergy on Medical Leave and receiving disability benefits from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, until such time as the clergy becomes Medicare-eligible. When these clergy become Medicare-eligible, the OneExchange plan shall be available for them.

D. LAY EMPLOYEES

HealthFlex shall be available for all eligible full-time lay employees of the Rocky Mountain Conference meeting the qualification guidelines established by the Conference. OneExchange shall be available for all eligible retired lay staff. Lay employees must have been in the HealthFlex plan for five consecutive years immediately prior to their retirement to be eligible to participate in the OneExchange plan.

Section II - Plan Participation, Coverage, Costs and Conditions

A. ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Every charge in the Conference shall be direct-billed monthly for the insurance cost for single coverage for every elder, deacon in full connection, local pastor, associate member, or provisional member appointed full-time serving that charge and eligible for HealthFlex, regardless of participation. The cost includes vision and dental coverage.

Less than full-time clergy are not eligible to enroll in the HealthFlex plan; however the local church may choose to provide other coverage for its $\frac{3}{4}$ time and $\frac{1}{2}$ time appointed clergy. For $\frac{3}{4}$ time and $\frac{1}{2}$ time appointments the local church, working with its respective District Superintendent, may contribute up to \$4,000 annually to provide health insurance coverage outside of HealthFlex. Costs for this coverage will be borne totally by the local church and/or appointed pastor. This is in addition to the minimum salary, housing, pension and allowable professional reimbursable amounts for pastors serving less than full-time. Per the Affordable Care Act, funding provided by employers to assist employees in purchasing individual health insurance is considered taxable compensation.

Each charge shall be direct-billed monthly for the insurance cost of its lay staff participants. The Conference shall

pay the portion of the insurance cost for single coverage under HealthFlex for lay staff as specified by Personnel Policies for lay staff.

Active clergy serving full-time who are Medicare eligible and who qualify under the Multiple Small Employer Exception (serving a church with 19 or less employees) will participate in OneExchange. It is recommended that the employing church reimburse the clergy for medical, dental, Medicare and pharmacy premiums as applicable. Such reimbursement is considered taxable income.

B. RETIRED PARTICIPANTS

Each eligible retired participant and eligible spouse shall work with a Licensed Benefit Advisor at OneExchange to identify the appropriate coverage and cost-effective plan most suitable to the individual needs and requirements of the participant. Each eligible participant shall be provided a monthly stipend established as a fixed dollar amount which shall be deposited in a personal Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) to be used by the participant to pay for health insurance premiums and other qualifying medical expenses. Any HRA money unused in one calendar year will be rolled over for use in subsequent years – consistent with then-existing tax laws.

The stipend amount will be reviewed at least every two years. The review will take into account the two categories of HRA contribution levels.

- a. Retired eligible participants with 20 or more years of Pre-82 service
- b. Retired eligible participants with less than 20 years of Pre-82 service

The spouse’s eligibility is determined by the retired participant’s eligibility. However, a non-HealthFlex participant spouse of a retired eligible participant may take advantage of the OneExchange program but will not receive a stipend payment to a Health Reimbursement Account.

Retirees, spouses and surviving spouses eligible to receive pensions but not yet eligible for Medicare who choose to remain in HealthFlex shall receive a subsidy from the Conference up to 20% of their applicable active rate. These retirees may also choose to enroll in another qualified group plan or in a private plan, but this coverage will not be subsidized by the Conference. If they choose to enroll in a private plan, it may have a negative impact on their ability to obtain coverage for pre-existing conditions when they move to the OneExchange plan.

The Conference shall not provide a health insurance stipend for retired lay employees from a local church. Eligible retired employees of the Conference office shall be eligible for a stipend as specified in Section II.B.

C. CLERGY ON MEDICAL LEAVE

Health insurance for clergy on Medical Leave and receiving disability benefits from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall be provided through HealthFlex and paid 100% by the Conference. Spousal and dependent coverage shall be made available but not subsidized in any manner by the Conference. Clergy on Medical Leave and receiving disability benefits will be required to participate in the OneExchange program upon Medicare eligibility, and will receive an HRA as specified in Section II.B. When clergy on Medical Leave and receiving disability benefits who have opted out of Social Security retire, they will need to be enrolled in both Medicare Parts A and B to be eligible to participate in the OneExchange plan.

Section III - Plan Administration and Mandatory Payments

- A. The Conference benefits staff, working with HealthFlex, will process active participant enrollments, collect premiums, reconcile funds and help coordinate plan activities. Retired participants will work directly with OneExchange advisors on an annual and as needed basis.
- B. The monthly payment of the health premiums specified in Section II. A. is mandatory for all full-time clergy appointed to serve a local church in the Rocky Mountain Conference. If a church is delinquent in health premium payments, the Conference Treasurer’s office will initiate action and notify the respective District Superintendent and Bishop of the delinquency. The Conference Cabinet will be kept apprised of all communication regarding the delinquency. The affected charge will continue to be direct-billed for the monthly premiums throughout this entire period.
- C. The 2016 active insurance rates will be established by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits after premium rate information is received from HealthFlex.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2016

TERMINATION DATE: December 31, 2016

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION: Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits

AC03: 2016 Equitable Compensation

The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference defines the following compensation terms:

Minimum Base Compensation (MBC) is the specific amount of cash salary, housing, benefits and reimbursable expense amounts set by annual petition for all clergy (Elders, Deacons, Associate Members and Local Pastors) who are in good standing and appointed to full-time service according to the provisions of the current *Book of Discipline*.

Effective January 1, 2016, this will be:

Cash salary of \$35,241, which is 57% of the 2016 Conference Average Compensation (CAC) of \$61,827. This is lower than 59% of the CAC as in previous years. For clergy who are in good standing and appointed to less than full-time service in the local church, the cash salary shall be adjusted in one-quarter increments as follows: $\frac{3}{4}$ time = \$26,431, $\frac{1}{2}$ time = \$17,620, $\frac{1}{4}$ time = \$8,810.

Housing is provided either by a parsonage or a cash housing allowance that allows the clergy to obtain housing in their community that meets conference parsonage standards. In 2016, depending upon the location, the allowance is *suggested* to be an annual amount of no less than \$10,636 for a full time appointment. For those communities where housing equivalent to conference parsonage standards costs less than \$10,636 per year, it is suggested that the annual amount be no less than \$10,636 for a full-time appointment.

Benefits are established by other annual conference petitions and by the current *Book of Discipline* and include health insurance, CRSP pension funding, UMPIP pension funding, and CPP death and disability funding.

Reimbursable expenses are those expenditures made by the clergy in the fulfillment of their responsibilities that are allowed, by IRS regulations, to be reimbursed as business expenses. These include travel (including to Annual Conference), continuing education, books and periodicals, and meeting expenses. These amounts should be agreed upon by the local church and the clergy. For full-time appointments, it is *recommended* that this amount be set at an annual minimum of \$2,500.

In addition, we define **Equitable Compensation** as the Minimum Base Compensation plus a consideration of the following factors:

- Experience and years of service
- Cost of living in the community
- Years of education
- Work load
- Attainment of goals agreed upon by clergy and the SPR/PPR Committee.
- Each clergy's housing equity goals

Redistribution within the compensation package – Because it affects both the Conference and the Denominations Average Compensation, as well as the pastor's pension funding, no more than 20% of the pastor's cash salary can be moved from taxable salary to tax-exempt reimbursable expenses.

Equitable Compensation Fund is the amount budgeted in the Conference annual budget for emergency supplementation of clergy salaries in churches or charges that are unable to provide minimum compensation. As defined in ¶342, ¶624, and ¶625, this fund, and any disbursements from it, is overseen by the Commission on Equitable Compensation.

Student Local Pastors – Student local pastors as defined in ¶318.3 of *The Book of Discipline 2012* under appointment are to receive base compensation, prorated for less than full time work as agreed between the local church, the student pastor, and the district superintendent. Professional expenses of the student or the actual costs incurred while working at the church are recommended to be reimbursed by voucher. For travel expenses student pastors are to be reimbursed by voucher at the 2016 IRS Rate.

Vacation – Pastors should be provided with four (4) weeks’ vacation every year. Churches are encouraged to discuss vacations with their pastor(s), particularly during the first year of reappointment.

Study Leave/Sabbatical

1. Full time pastors, to continue their education, should be allowed study leave of at least one week each year and at least one month each quadrennium (§351.2, *Book of Discipline 2012*). Such study leave shall not be considered vacation.
2. Full -time pastors (after 6 [six] years of full-time appointment) be allowed up to 6 [six] months formation and spiritual growth leave. (*Book of Discipline 2012* §351.3 and §352)

Sick Leave

The policy for clergy sick leave is at the discretion of the local church in consultation with the District Superintendent.

Maternity/Paternity Leave

Pastors may be allowed up to a maximum of eight weeks of paid maternity/paternity leave. Such leave shall comply with the guidelines established in §356 of *The Book of Discipline 2012*.

Each Rocky Mountain Conference annual budget shall include an amount that is to be used for the purpose of pulpit and pastoral supply during the absence of a pastor on maternity/paternity leave. During such leave, the local church will be responsible for continuing all clergy compensation. The church may request conference financial support to help defray pulpit supply costs. The cabinet shall direct the use of these funds and, normally, such assistance will provide only partial funding of the total costs that may be involved. For 2016, the Rocky Mountain Conference budgeted amount shall be \$1,000.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2016.

TERMINATION DATE: December 31, 2016

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION: Commission on Equitable Compensation

AC05: Council on Finance & Administration Moving Expense Reimbursement Policy

WITHIN CONFERENCE MOVING EXPENSES

Those appointed or assigned as either full-time pastors or upon approval of the Cabinet as less than full time pastors in a local church of the Annual Conference, or those appointed to Conference staff, shall be entitled to the provision of the fund on the following basis:

A. ALLOWED:

Moving of furniture, personal property, and equipment not to exceed 16,000 pounds. This same allowance for clergy couples will not exceed 20,000 pounds. Cost of insurance at the regular rate of \$5.00 per pound (with a \$250.00 deductible) is included. Any change of deductible will be at the expense of the pastor making the move. However, a lump sum value for the entire shipment must be included at the time of shipment. Based on moving industry standards mattresses must be professionally packed, and the Conference will cover the cost of this packing. In addition, \$500 will be allowed for cartons and packing materials. All above this amount will be charged to the pastor making the move.

B. NOT ALLOWED:

1. Professional packing or unpacking (with the exception of mattresses and the \$500 allowed for packing materials).
2. Costs for items requiring special handling (such as musical instruments).
3. Storage of any items other than transportation cost of moving furniture, personal property and equipment.
4. Cost of transportation of persons.
5. Appliance service.

C. ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES:

1. Certified weights and a detailed bill of lading are required for payment by the Conference Office.

2. One stop at the pastor's residence and one stop at the church will be allowed for pickup and delivery when necessary. Clergy couples, with multiple charge appointments, will be allowed an additional stop as necessary.
3. A recommended list of moving vendors will be maintained in the office of the Treasurer, Benefits Officer and Director of Support Services. Payment of the Conference share of moves should be based on a bid accepted by the Conference Office. A minimum of two bids is required. The Conference is available to assist in arrangements for moving and will receive copies of the bids prior to the move. The District Superintendent and the clergy family will consult as to the requirements and needed assistance in the move. Claim for this benefit must be made within one year of appointment.
4. Pastors entering the retired relationship from itinerant appointments shall be entitled to their moving expenses within the Conference one time. Retiree moves outside the Conference will be funded at a level not to exceed the average cost to the Conference of retiree moves within the Conference for the last five years. These expenses will be paid from the Conference Moving Expense Fund. Claim for this benefit must be made within five years of the date of retirement.
5. If a pastor in retirement is reappointed, the clergy person is entitled to a conference paid move to the local church housing and then also to retirement housing upon completion of that appointment. These expenses will be paid from the Conference.
6. Pastors entering the voluntary transition program from itinerant appointments shall be entitled to their moving expenses within the Conference one time. Moves outside the Conference will be funded at a level not to exceed the average cost to the Conference of moves within the Conference for the last five years. These expenses will be paid from the Conference Moving Expense Fund. Claim for this benefit must be made within one year of the effective date of the transition.

MOVING EXPENSE FUND:

1. The local church will reimburse the Rocky Mountain Conference \$500 for moving/transportation cost of each incoming pastor.
2. A surviving spouse of a pastor who is in active service at the time of the pastor's death shall be entitled to moving expenses as for a retired pastor. Claim for this benefit must be made within five years of the clergy's death.

OUT OF CONFERENCE EXPENSES

- A. Moving expenses of full time pastors or upon approval of the Cabinet less than full time pastors moving into this Conference and full time approved supply pastors from outside the bounds of the Conference accepting their first appointment shall be eligible for a refund from the Conference Moving Expense Fund for an amount not to exceed the average cost to the Conference of moves within the Conference for the last five years. The refund shall be paid after providing original receipts for moving expenses.
- B. Funding for inter-conference moves between the Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain Conferences will be determined on an individual basis.

ADMINISTRATION OF MOVING EXPENSE FUND

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall be responsible for administering the Moving Expense Fund and shall be authorized to make such adjustments within the structure of the plan as it deems necessary. The Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall bring this petition forward once every quadrennium. The Cabinet, following coordination with the Conference Treasurer and President of the Council on Finance and Administration, may on a case-by-case basis make exceptions to these policies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2016

TERMINATION DATE: December 31, 2019

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION: Council on Finance & Administration

AC06: DESIGNATION OF MISSION CONGREGATIONS

Be it resolved that congregations deemed to have strategic missional significance to the RMC may be designated as mission congregations under the following conditions:

- A. The congregation consists of a non-English language worshiping community that focuses on the spiritual and cultural needs of a specific immigrant ethnic group. Such congregations, though usually small, may be strategic ministries for the RMC. In the case that it is important to provide clergy leaders in such congregations that are "full pastors" with sacramental authority, the bishop and cabinet, with written consent of the pastor, may choose to make appointments to a mission congregation, where the compensation is less than the Rocky Mountain Conference minimum RMC salary.
- B. The congregation has geographical significance to the RMC. It may be located in an area otherwise unreached by the UMC. Such a church may be unsustainable on its own. With the designation of mission congregation, the RMC may choose to seek supportive partnerships for the congregation with conference agencies or congregations.
- C. The congregation is located in a financially distressed community, or is focused on a demographic group with limited resources. In such circumstances, the designation of mission congregation may open up the possibility of financial support from other conference entities or, at the bishop's and cabinet's discretion and approval of CFA, the Conference may partner to support a mission congregation by adjusting connectional giving expectations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015.

TERMINATION DATE: June 30, 2019

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION: Rocky Mountain Conference Appointive Cabinet

AC11: Local Church Insurance Wind and Hail Deductibles

Whereas Church Mutual, our required local church insurance provider, is requiring a 1% of the **total replacement value of your building and contents** as a deductible for all **hail or wind damage** for most churches in the front range area (12 counties, Ft Collins to Pueblo, 113 churches), and does not offer any set deductibles (\$1,000, \$5,000, \$20,000) and only a few buy-back policy options;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Rocky Mountain Conference Board of Trustees be directed to:

1. Negotiate with Church Mutual Insurance or another carrier to provide an All-Property Deductible limited to a fixed dollar amount; and/or
2. Negotiate with additional insurance carriers to provide Buy-Back Policies for **any** of our churches where deductibles may be covered through the purchase of a separate policy; and/or
3. Establish a Rocky Mountain Conference self-insurance pool as a Buy-Back policy for the purpose of helping member churches with hail and wind deductibles with premiums based on building replacement values; and/or
4. Look for a new Conference insurance company that could meet the Minimum Coverage Standards of Insurance as approved in the 2013 Annual Conference Journal, which could offer fixed dollar deductibles and/or Buy-Back Policies to cover hail and wind deductibles for all our churches at reasonable prices

A report shall be made to the 2016 Annual Conference Session.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015.

TERMINATION DATE: June 30, 2016

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION: Jeffrey Babb

RESOLUTION**AC04: Sixth Annual Valentine’s Resolution on Global HIV and AIDS**

Since global health is a United Methodist priority, emphasizing that HIV and AIDS is a “disease of poverty” in many places around the world, the 2015 Rocky Mountain Annual Conference:

Endorses the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund as a “mission of the month” for February, 2016;

1. Urges every congregation on February 14 or 21, 2016, to take a special collection to support the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund (Advance No. 982345) and send those funds to the Rocky Mountain Conference Treasurer;
2. Reaffirms the previous theme of “Have a Heart – Reach Out,” emphasizing the relationship of Valentine’s Day (February 14, 2016) and Christian love and care;
3. Reminds our congregations of the biblical mandate to “care for the widow and the orphan” and how Jesus “went about all the cities and villages, . . . curing every disease and every sickness” (Matthew 9:35) and instructing his disciples also “to cure every disease and sickness” (Matthew 10:1) without condition or qualification;
4. Combines the offering with a special presentation in each church that notes how personal and social injustice is perpetuated by stigma and discrimination against persons infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, demonstrating how Christian love overcomes hate and how Christian hope heals;
5. Directs the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference Global AIDS Fund Committee to specifically use a portion of the offering to help (a) AIDS orphans in Meru, Kenya, and (b) support a rural Women and Children’s Center in Namakkal, India;
6. Authorizes the Rocky Mountain Global AIDS Committee to invite others to join them in jointly developing materials, flyers, videos, bulletins, etc. promoting the 6th Annual “Have a Heart – Reach Out” Sunday, and to help provide education information and sermon ideas related to our efforts at becoming known as an anti-stigma and anti-discrimination church committed to global health;
7. Encourages communications by email and other ways to educate the church about this opportunity to celebrate Valentine’s Day with a focus on those living with HIV who too often experience not hope, but hostility, not acceptance, but alienation, not love but hate;
8. Plans several “Have a Heart” Training Days for clergy and laity so they can be prepared to educate others about HIV and AIDS and the church’s global response, and
9. Invites the District Superintendents and Bishop Elaine Stanovsky to send out pastoral letters related to global HIV and AIDS and the church’s response.
10. Requests members across the Conference to remember in prayer those living with HIV and AIDS.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015.

TERMINATION DATE: June 30, 2017

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION Donald E. Messer, Youngsook Kang, Rocky Mountain Global AIDS Fund Committee

GENERAL CONFERENCE PETITION**GC01: Removing Exclusive Language from 161F**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church will petition the 2016 General Conference of The United Methodist Church to amend ¶161F of *The Book of Discipline* as follows:

F) Human Sexuality – We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, ~~heterosexual~~ marriage. We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~ We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015.

TERMINATION DATE: May, 2016

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION Christ Church, Denver