

RESOLUTIONS

DISCONTINUANCE OF STRONG CITY UMC - Approved

Rev. Claudia Bakely, Flint Hills District superintendent

WHEREAS the Strong City United Methodist Church located in Chase County was founded in 1891 and has had a long and proud history; and

WHEREAS the charge conference of the Strong City United Methodist Church voted on May 11, 2015 to discontinue the church; and

WHEREAS the district superintendent has recommended discontinuance of Strong City United Methodist Church and transfer of membership to Cottonwood Falls United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS the superintendent has recommended that the property of the church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference; and

WHEREAS the property of the parsonage will be sold or transferred to a yet to be determined party upon further church council action, and

WHEREAS the consent to discontinue has been granted by the presiding bishop, a majority of the district superintendents, and the Flint Hills District Board of Church Location and Building and all proper *Disciplinary* requirements have been complied with;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Great Plains Annual Conference that the Strong City United Methodist Church be discontinued effective June 30, 2015 with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service; that the property of the church shall be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference and the property of the parsonage to be dispensed upon further church action; that the membership of the Strong City UMC be determined by each individual member prior to discontinuance, and that any membership not so designated be transferred to the Cottonwood Falls UMC; and that the records and papers of the Strong City UMC be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Great Plains Conference Commissions on Archives and History.

DISCONTINUANCE OF THE LYLE UMC - Approved

Rev. Jim Akins, Hays District superintendent

WHEREAS, the Lyle United Methodist Church, located in Decatur County in the Hays District of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church, was founded in 1877 and has had a faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its mission field; and

WHEREAS, the Hays District Superintendent of the Hays District of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church after prayerful reflection has determined that the missional effectiveness of the United Methodist Church is best served by the closing of the Lyle United Methodist Church, and

WHEREAS, the Hays District Superintendent Jim Akins has recommended that the church be discontinued and the consent of the Hays District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet and Bishop Scott J. Jones presiding Bishop of the Great Plains Area have 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 Lyle United Methodist Church in Decatur County, Kansas is declared discontinued as of June 30, 2015, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service; and
2. That the membership of the Lyle United Methodist Church be determined by each member prior to its discontinuance and any membership not so designated be transferred to the Norcatour United Methodist Church; and
3. That the title to the property and other assets of the Lyle United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church; and
4. That the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to sell, hold, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith; and
5. That the records and papers of the Lyle United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History

DISCONTINUANCE OF THE PRAIRIE CHAPEL UMC - Approved

Rev. Jim Akins, Hays District superintendent

WHEREAS, the Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church, located in Decatur County in the Hays District of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church, was founded in 1904 and has had a faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its mission field; and

WHEREAS, the Hays District superintendent and the Prairie Chapel congregation engaged in prayer, reflection, and discernment about their potential and future as a congregation; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church voted on April 12, 2015 in favor of discontinuation of the church; and

WHEREAS, the Hays District superintendent Jim Akins has recommended that the church be discontinued and the consent of the Hays District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet and Bishop Scott J. Jones presiding Bishop of the Great Plains Area have 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 Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church in Decatur County, Kansas is declared discontinued as of June 30, 2015, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service; and
2. That the membership of the Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church be determined by each member prior to its discontinuance and any membership not so designated be transferred to the Oberlin United Methodist Church; and
3. That the title to the property and other assets of the Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church; and
4. That the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference is hereby authorized and directed to sell, hold, lease, or dispose of such assets upon such terms as they deem adequate and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith; and
5. That the records and papers of the Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History

DISCONTINUANCE OF MT PLEASANT UMC - Approved

Rev. Dennis Livingston, Hutchinson District superintendent

WHEREAS the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church located in Stafford County was founded in 1899 and has had a faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

WHEREAS the Hutchinson District Superintendent, Dennis H. Livingston, and the Mt. Pleasant congregation engaged in prayer, reflection, and discernment about their potential and future as a congregation; and

WHEREAS the charge conference of the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church voted on 22 March 2015 to discontinue the church and celebrated the congregation's history and faithfulness in ministry at a final worship service on 22 March 2015; and

WHEREAS the district superintendent, Dennis H. Livingston, has recommended that the church be discontinued; and

WHEREAS the consent to discontinue has been granted by the presiding bishop, Scott J. Jones, by a majority of the district superintendents, and by the district board of church location and building and all proper Disciplinary requirements have been complied with;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Great Plains Annual Conference:

That the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church be discontinued as of the close of the 2015 Great Plains Annual Conference, with appreciation for its years of faithfulness and service.

That the membership of the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church be determined by each member prior to discontinuance; and any memberships not so designated be transferred to Great Bend First United Methodist Church.

2015 JOURNAL**Resolutions**

That property and assets not subject to the reversion clause in the deed be donated to other United Methodist congregations or agencies, sold with the proceeds to be used for the benefit of other United Methodist Ministries, or transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference; 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 it deems appropriate and to incur any reasonable expenses in connection therewith.

That the records and papers of the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

DISCONTINUANCE OF TYRO UMC - Approved

Rev. Kibum Kim, Parsons District superintendent

WHEREAS the Tyro United Methodist Church, Tyro, KS, located in Montgomery County, has had a long and faithful history of service to Jesus Christ, having been established in 1907 as the Tyro Methodist Episcopal church by settlers in the area, and

WHEREAS the Church Conference of the Tyro United Methodist Church voted on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 to discontinue the church effective June 7, 2015, and

WHEREAS the last worship service will be held on Sunday, June 7, 2015 at 11:30am, and

WHEREAS the district superintendent has recommended discontinuance of Tyro United Methodist Church and transfer of its membership to other United Methodist Churches as requested, and

WHEREAS the consent to discontinue has been granted by Bishop Scott Jones, the Great Plains Conference district superintendents, and the Parsons District Board of Church Location and Building, and all proper Disciplinary requirements have been followed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Annual Conference concur with the decision of the Tyro United Methodist Church.

DISCONTINUANCE OF THE CLYDE UMC - Approved

Rev. Delores J. Williamston, Salina District superintendent

WHEREAS, the Clyde United Methodist Church, Clyde, Kansas, located in Cloud County is in the Salina District of the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church; formally established at Moses Heller's log cabin home with the Rev. R.P. West presiding in November of 1866 and has had a long faithful history of serving Jesus Christ and its community; and

WHEREAS, the Salina District superintendent and the Clyde congregation engaged in prayer, reflection and discernment about their potential and future as a congregation; and

WHEREAS, the Charge Conference of the Clyde United Methodist Church voted on Jan. 25, 2015 in favor of discontinuation of the church; and

WHEREAS, the Salina District Superintendent Rev. Delores J. Williamston has recommended that the church be discontinued and the consent of the Salina District Board of Church Location, the Cabinet and Bishop Scott J. Jones presiding Bishop of the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church have 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 Clyde United Methodist Church in Cloud County, Kansas whose final worship service was Easter Sunday April 5, 2015 is declared discontinued as of June 30, 2015, with appreciation of its years of faithfulness and service.
2. That the membership of Clyde United Methodist Church be determined by each member prior to discontinuance and any memberships not so designated be transferred to the Concordia First United Methodist Church in Concordia, Kansas; and
3. That the title to the property and other assets of Clyde United Methodist Church be transferred to the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church; and

Resolutions

4. 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.
5. That the records and papers of the Clyde United Methodist Church be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission on Archives and History.

DISCONTINUANCE OF WICHITA CHRIST COMMUNITY UMC - Approved

Rev. Rick Just, Wichita East District superintendent

WHEREAS the Christ Community United Methodist Church located at 2130 S. Webb in Wichita has had a history of ministering in the name of Jesus Christ in southeast Wichita for over two decades, and

WHEREAS the Christ Community United Methodist Church has had great experiences of the presence and power of Christ during its time of ministry, and

WHEREAS in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit and after much prayerful thought, the Church Conference of the Christ Community United Methodist Church voted on May 17, 2015, to discontinue the church effective June 1, 2015 and restart as a new United Methodist Church on June 1, 2015 under a new name, the New Beginnings United Methodist Church, and

WHEREAS the district superintendent has recommended discontinuance of the Christ Community United Methodist Church and for its membership to be held by the Annual Conference or other United Methodist Churches as requested, and

WHEREAS the consent to discontinue has been granted by Bishop Scott Jones, the Great Plains Conference District Superintendents, and the Wichita East District Board of Church location and Building, and all proper Disciplinary requirements have been followed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Annual Conference concur with the decision of the Christ Community United Methodist Church conference to discontinue.

“And be it further resolved that all the church property, upon closing, be handled in accordance with The Book of Discipline, upon recommendatin of the congregation and with approval of the Wichita East District Superintendent and Wichita East District board of church location and building and in consultation with the Board of Trustees of the Great Plains Annual Conference.

DISCONTINUANCE OF WICHITA GRACE UMC - Approved

Rev. Linda Louderback, Wichita West District superintendent

WHEREAS the Grace United Methodist Church, Wichita, Kansas, located in Sedgwick County, has had a long and faithful history of service to Jesus Christ, having been established on Jan. 6, 1886 as the Emporia Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, and

WHEREAS the Church Conference of the Grace United Methodist Church voted on, Nov. 9, 2014, to discontinue the church effective April 5, 2015, and

WHEREAS the last worship service was held on Sunday, April 5, at 10:45 a.m., and

WHEREAS the district superintendent has recommended discontinuance of the Grace United Methodist Church and transfer of its membership to other United Methodist Churches as requested, and

WHEREAS the consent to discontinue has been granted by Bishop Scott Jones, the Great Plains Conference district superintendents, and the Wichita West District Board of Church location and Building, and all proper Disciplinary requirements have been followed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Annual Conference concurs with the decision of the Grace United Methodist Church conference to discontinue.

“And be it further resolved that all the church property, upon closing, be handled in accordance with The Book of Discipline, upon recommendation of the congregation and with approval of the Wichita West District Superintendent and Wichita West District board of church location and building and in consultation with the Board of Trustees of the Great Plains Annual Conference.”

**2015 JOURNAL
Resolutions**

DISCONTINUANCE OF WICHITA MOUNT OLIVET UMC - Approved

Rev. Linda Louderback, Wichita West District superintendent

WHEREAS the Mount Olivet United Methodist Church, Wichita, Kansas, located in Sedgwick County, has had a long and faithful history of service to Jesus Christ, having been established on April 8, 1953 as the Mount Olivet Methodist Church, and

WHEREAS the Church Conference of the Mount Olivet United Methodist Church voted on Feb. 22, 2015, to **discontinue the church effective June 30, 2015, and**

WHEREAS the last worship service will be held on Sunday, June 28, at 10:30 a.m., and

WHEREAS the district superintendent has recommended discontinuance of the Mount Olivet United Methodist Church and transfer of its membership to other United Methodist Churches as requested, and

WHEREAS the consent to discontinue has been granted by Bishop Scott Jones, the Great Plains Conference district superintendents, and the Wichita West District Board of Church location and Building, and all proper Disciplinary requirements have been followed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Annual Conference concur with the decision of the Mount Olivet United Methodist Church conference to discontinue.

“And be it further resolved that all the church property, upon closing, be handled in accordance with The Book of Discipline, upon recommendation of the congregation and with approval of the Wichita West District Superintendent and Wichita West District board of church location and building and in consultation with the Board of Trustees of the Great Plains Annual Conference.”

EMBERHOPE AND TFI FAMILY SERVICES MERGER DISCUSSIONS - Approved

Financial Implications: None

Rationale: This resolution would authorize EmberHope (Youthville) to enter into discussions with TFI Family Services aimed at merging the two organizations in order to better serve the children of Nebraska and Kansas. It would further authorize the Connecting Council to take final action on the proposed merger if discussions are successful.

Whereas EmberHope, a ministry affiliated with the Great Plains Conference and formerly with both Kansas West and Kansas East conferences, has a heritage of serving Kansas children and families in a manner suited to the needs of the culture;

Whereas, the financial challenges facing child welfare agencies, in Kansas and nationwide, have increased dramatically even though the need for services continues to grow;

Whereas, the EmberHope Board of Directors, having reviewed multiple options for the future of the organization, believes a partnership with TFI Family Services, INC. to be the best path forward for both organizations.

Whereas, the board believes the needs of children and their families will be better served through such a partnership; and

Whereas, the assets of the United Methodist Youthville Foundation will remain separate from any new organization,

Therefore be it resolved that the Great Plains Annual Conference allow EmberHope to enter substantive discussion regarding the proposed partnership with TFI Family Services.

Be it further resolved that the Connecting Council be authorized to grant final approval of all necessary steps to accomplish a merger if the substantive discussions are successful and both boards of directors approve.

Resolutions

LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY AND CASUALTY INSURANCE - Approved

Financial Implications: YES

Rationale: Local churches must consider property and casualty insurance coverage in light of the variety of commercial cost options currently available to them. Conference staffs assist local churches to define risks and control costs, helping them to obtain the levels of insurance they need to continue providing their respective ministries.

Whereas Section 3 of the Great Plains Plan of Organization adopted in 2014 expects “churches of the former Nebraska and Kansas West conferences will continue to be responsible to purchase property, liability, and all other coverage necessary to protect each church and its assets”; and

Whereas churches of the former Kansas East Conference continue to be covered by their current group policy; and

Whereas the current “opt out” provision continues to be available for churches under 50 members; and

Whereas the Great Plains Plan of Organization stipulates that this group policy will continue unless or until a petition is sent to and approved by clergy and lay members of the Great Plains United Methodist Church Conference within the bounds of the former Kansas East Conference.

Therefore, be it resolved that Annual Conference immediately form a committee to determine the financial impacts of allowing any church to opt out of the group policy covering the churches of the former Kansas East Conference.

Be it further resolved that said committee will prepare appropriate alternatives and recommendations that they will place before a quorum of the clergy and lay members of the former Kansas East Conference at the 2016 Annual Conference session for consideration and incorporation into Section 3 *Local Church Insurance Policies*, of the Great Plains United Methodist Conference Plan of Organization; and

Be it further resolved that the actions described herein fulfill the requirement of a “petition sent to and approved by” members of the former East Kansas Conference, as stipulated in the current Great Plains United Methodist Conference Plan of Organization.

HEALTH & WELLNESS LIAISON - Approved

Financial Implications: None

Rationale: The purpose of this Resolution is to engage United Methodist Churches throughout the Great Plains Conference in an existing program designed to increase access to health and wellness-focused resources and to expand and connect the network of individuals committed to providing opportunities to improve the health of their congregations.

Whereas physical health is a long-recognized critical component of holistic health and its neglect has the potential to be a negative influence on spiritual and mental health of individuals and the ministry of the Church; and

Whereas data indicates that, on a population basis, the physical health of residents within the geographic area of the Great Plains Conference, as generally within the entire United States, is in a challenged status; and

Whereas the Health & Wellness Committee was formed within the Kansas East and Kansas West Conferences in 2008 as a mechanism to provide local churches access to resources designed to help improve the health of their congregations; and

Whereas designating a person as Health & Wellness Liaison within local churches expedites access to resources and, subsequently, engagement in programs facilitated by the Health & Wellness Committee and provides a mechanism to connect like-focused peers throughout the Great Plains Conference,

Therefore, be it resolved that the position of Health & Wellness Liaison be included as a standard entry on the Nomination Roster annually supplied by local churches to the Conference office and local congregations be encouraged to select a person for this office.

Be it further resolved that the conference office will make a roster of Health & Wellness Liaisons, including contact information, available on an annually updated basis to the Health & Wellness Committee, beginning with the next cycle of local church nominations in 2015.

Be it further resolved that the Health & Wellness Committee will use this data to provide resources to and connect Health & Wellness Liaisons for the purpose of facilitating improved health within the congregations of the Great Plains Conference.

**2015 JOURNAL
Resolutions**

REINSTATING GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE - Referred to Board of Pension and Health Benefits Team

Financial Implications: Yes

Rationale: Since the Great Plains Annual Conference has experienced the full reality of obtaining individual health insurance through one enrollment period and five months of premiums and benefits, it makes sense to re-evaluate the decision that made the Conference leave group health insurance for individual health insurance.

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States could hand down an adverse ruling on the Affordable Care Act (King vs. Burwell ruling set for late June 2015) that could affect the ability of Great Plains Annual Conference clergy members to obtain individual health insurance; and

Whereas, in the October 6, 2014, healthcare update E-mail, Annual Conference delegates were informed that if the choice was made to stay with CIGNA group health insurance, the rates would increase from \$14,232 per year to \$17,232 per year in 2015. It was proposed that better options might be found through individual plans in the Affordable Care Act. For Kansas better rates were easier to find. For Nebraska better rates were harder to find.

Example: subsidized/ unsubsidized premium rates for silver plans for a 57 year old with a spouse age 55 and one child age 22 in Buffalo County, Nebraska:

Assurant-	\$8,424/year subsidized, \$21,648 unsubsidized
Coventry Healthcare-	\$5,712/year subsidized, \$18,936 unsubsidized
Blue Cross/Blue Shield-	\$9,540 /year subsidized, \$22,764 unsubsidized

Example: subsidized/ unsubsidized premium rates for gold/platinum plans for a 57 year old with a spouse age 55 and one child age 22 in Saline County, Kansas:

Assurant-	Not offered in Kansas
Coventry Healthcare-	\$7,368/year subsidized, \$16,020 unsubsidized gold
Blue Cross/Blue Shield-	\$9,768/year subsidized, \$18,420 unsubsidized platinum

Whereas, again, when it came to deductibles, one state had better options than the other. For Kansas better deductibles were easier to find. For Nebraska better deductibles were harder to find. Example: silver plans for a 57 year old with a spouse age 55 and one child age 22 in Buffalo County, Nebraska:

Assurant-	\$2,000 individual in network, \$6,350 family in network \$6,000 individual out of network, \$19,050 family out of network
Coventry Healthcare-	\$2,750 individual in network, \$5,500 family in network \$7,500 individual out of network, \$15,000 family out of network
Blue Cross/Blue Shield-	\$2,500 individual in network, \$5,000 family in network \$5,000 individual out of network, \$10,000 family out of network

Example: gold/platinum plans for a 57 year old with a spouse age 55 and one child age 22 in Saline County, Kansas:

Assurant-	Not offered in Kansas
Coventry Healthcare-	\$600 individual in network, \$1,200 family in network gold \$2,500 individual out of network, \$5,000 family out of network
Blue Cross/Blue Shield-	\$0.00 individual in network, \$0.0 family in network platinum \$1,500 individual out of network, \$3,000 family out of network

Whereas the above comparisons show a basic inequity between the costs of health insurance from state to state and county to county, it brings up the question of fairness, and at least one side effect of leading clergy to be reluctant to move to certain insurance demographics, whereby the principle of equity of benefits between appointments is affected; and

Whereas the move to individual health insurance has cost the clergy a \$14,232 health benefits tax exemption and taken away the \$2,500 flexible spending account tax shelter. (These changes forecast tax increases of \$3,000 to \$4,000 for clergy in 2015.) Because of the \$14,232 increase in salary, a family's eligibility for college need-based financial aid is greatly reduced; and

Whereas the change to buying individual health insurance with the same \$14,232 offers younger clergy lower premiums and older clergy higher premiums, the Great Plains Annual Conference is faced with the issue of age discrimination. This risks inconsistency with our Social Principles on the Rights of the Aging ¶ 162.E The Book of Discipline 2012. The disparities of individual versus group health insurance are very basic:

Younger clergy receive a higher salary due to lower health premiums.

Older clergy receive a lower salary due to higher health premiums.

Resolutions

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the Great Plains Annual Conference hear the will of this body and take the necessary steps to return the Annual Conference to group health insurance beginning January 1, 2016.

Be it further resolved that this motion also enables the Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the Great Plains Annual Conference to obtain group health insurance sooner than January 1, 2016 should there be an adverse political or judicial event that threatens to take away affordable, individual health insurance for the Annual Conference's clergy and employees before the end of 2015.

LOCAL CHURCH HEALTHCARE ALLOWANCE - Approved

Financial Implications: YES

Rationale: Local churches continually review their financial health and viability, considering pastor and staff compensation in light of total giving and their congregational mission and/or objectives. Conference staffs help local churches develop financial predictability by identifying healthcare costs and options, which assist them in controlling costs and resourcing their various ministries.

Whereas the Great Plains Conference voted electronically in Oct. 2014 to approve the Connecting Council's recommendation to end our conference health plan for local church clergy and enrolled lay staff; and

Whereas this vote also set the insurance allowance for these individuals at \$14,232 annually, paid by the local church, while discontinuing deductions for health insurance from clergy or lay staff salaries; and

Whereas Conference now requires full-time or three-quarter time Clergy to individually obtain adequate health insurance, defined as coverage no less comprehensive than that provided by the Silver Plan level under the Affordable Care Act of 2010.

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2015 Great Plains Annual Conference immediately form a committee to determine the discriminating factors and resulting algorithm/formula for how Healthcare Allowance caps will be calculated and subsequently modified for fiscal years 2017 and beyond.

Be it further resolved that said committee will consider all available state and federal healthcare programs in preparing an appropriate set of healthcare options and recommendations that they will place before the 2016 Great Plains Annual Conference for consideration and incorporation into Section 5 of the Great Plains United Methodist Conference Plan of Organization.

LAY EQUALIZATION PLAN REFINEMENTS - GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL DELEGATES -Approved

Financial implications: none

Rationale: As required by the Book of Discipline, the Great Plains Plan of Organization included a Lay Equalization Plan to ensure that the number of laity equals or exceeds the number of clergy at Annual Conference. This resolution involves a technical refinement to that Plan.

Whereas the current Lay Equalization Plan includes "All delegates and reserve delegates elected to the General and Jurisdictional conferences." Section 4(f); and

Whereas occasionally delegates and reserve delegates elected to the General and Jurisdictional conferences do not remain lay members in the Annual Conference (i.e. they become clergy or move out of the conference or leave the United Methodist Church). As written, the Lay Equalization Plan would still include those persons in the Lay Equalization Plan.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Lay Equalization Plan be amended as follows:

Add the following to the end of section 4(f): "provided they remain laypersons in good standing in a church or campus ministry in the Great Plains Annual Conference."

Resolutions

LAY EQUALIZATION PLAN REFINEMENTS -CAMPUS MINISTRIES - Approved

Financial implications: none

Rationale: As required by the Book of Discipline, the Great Plains Plan of Organization included a Lay Equalization Plan (to ensure that the number of laity equals or exceeds the number of clergy at Annual Conference). This resolution involves a technical refinement to that Plan.

Whereas the current Lay Equalization Plan provides that "For each clergy campus minister, chaplain and Wesley Foundation director, there shall be a lay board member or student elected from the ministry." Section 1(o); and

Whereas the current Lay Equalization Plan does not provide for a lay board member or student elected from the ministry when the ministry is led by a layperson (as was the case at the Washburn Campus Ministry in the recent past); and

Whereas every campus ministry should be represented at Annual Conference session to the greatest extent possible.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Lay Equalization Plan be amended as follows:

Add the following to the end of section 3: "For each lay campus minister, chaplain, and Wesley Foundation director, there shall be a lay board member or student elected from the ministry."

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY LAITY IN LAY EQUALIZATION PLAN - Approved

Financial implications: none

Rationale: The Uniting Conference included Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) laity in the Lay Equalization Plan. This resolution seeks two corrections: (1) to acknowledge that not all of BOOM laity need to be included in the plan and (2) to move BOOM laity up in priority on the list.

Whereas the Uniting Conference recognized that the lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry play a unique role in the life of the Annual Conference and included all 11 BOOM laity in the Lay Equalization Plan at section 4(j), which is at the end of the priority list.

Whereas several lay members of BOOM are already members of the Annual Conference by virtue of other positions (district lay leader or lay member from a local church) and several members cannot afford the additional time off from work to commit to attending Annual Conference (BOOM responsibilities already require a substantial commitment).

Whereas the number of General Conference/Jurisdictional Conference delegates and reserved delegates included in the Lay Equalization Plan will be reduced this next year (from 20-21 to 15) (and likely further in the future).

Whereas the number of lay members under the Lay Equalization Plan was smaller this year, resulting in the exclusion of BOOM laity (and additional youth and young adult representatives).

Therefore, be it resolved that the Lay Equalization Plan be amended as follows:

Remove old section 4(j).

New section 4(g): Five lay members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (to be selected by the lay members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry).

Renumber remaining subsections of section 4.

ADMINISTRATION OF AREA SEMINARY SCHOLARSHIP AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FUNDS - Approved

Financial Implications: No

Rationale: The Nebraska, Kansas East and Kansas West conferences (and their predecessor conferences) received funds designated to be used to provide seminary and continuing education scholarships to United Methodists of their annual conference. This resolution assigns administration of these funds to the Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry.

Whereas, the contributions made to these funds were made with the intent to provide seminary and continuing education scholarships to United Methodists,

Whereas, the geographic area of our annual conference has been adopted and was implemented as of Jan. 1 2014, and

Whereas, funds should be administered in a way that makes them available for use for United Methodists from across the Great Plains conference,

Therefore be it resolved that the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, legal successor to the Kansas West Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Kansas East Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Nebraska Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, now assigns administration of all seminary scholarship and continuing education funds from the previous conferences to the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Great Plains Annual Conference, subject to the provisions of the original gift and agreement.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT REPRESENTATION ON THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF TRUSTEES - Approved

Whereas the conference Board of Trustees is granted authority “with respect to the properties of the annual conference” as outlined in the Book of Discipline paragraph 2512.3, and

Whereas “the cabinet is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of a conference, to be executed in regularized consultation and cooperation with other councils and service agencies of the conference.” (Book of Disciplines paragraph 424.4) and

Whereas a significant portion of the responsibility of district superintendents for the temporal affairs of the conference, such as church closings and care for conference property within their district, is associated with the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, and

Be It Resolved That the Conference Plan of Organization for the Great Plains Annual Conference be amended to include a district superintendent on the conference Board of Trustees as a liaison, non-voting ex-officio member and that this district superintendent be chosen by the cabinet and bishop.

Submitted as a recommendation from the Extended Cabinet of the Great Plains Annual Conference.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT REPRESENTATION ON THE CONFERENCE NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - Approved

Whereas the New Church Development Committee of the Great Plains Annual Conference is charged with researching, planning and supporting new church starts in the annual conference, and

Whereas “the Church expects, as part of the superintendent ministry, that the superintendent will be the chief missional strategist of the district...” (Book of Disciplines paragraph 419.1) which includes developing new church starts, and

Whereas communication between the New Church Development Committee, the district superintendents, and the conference New Church Development coordinator is critical, and

Be It Resolved That the Conference Plan of Organization for the Great Plains Annual Conference be amended to include a district superintendent on the conference New Church Development Committee as a liaison, non-voting ex-officio member, and that this district superintendent be chosen by the cabinet and bishop.

Submitted as a recommendation from the Extended Cabinet of the Great Plains Annual Conference

CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LAND - Approved

Financial Implications: None

Rationale: United Methodists in our conference are deeply concerned about the ongoing violence and injustices in Palestine/Israel. Jesus calls us to care for our neighbors near and far, to speak out and stand up for justice.

Whereas we affirm Israel’s right to permanent, recognized and secure borders, and Palestinians’ rights to self-determination and formation of a viable state; and,

2015 JOURNAL Resolutions

Whereas “The United Methodist Church opposes continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlement, and any vision of a ‘Greater Israel’ that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings (Resolution 6111: “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land.” 2012 Book of Resolutions); and

Whereas we are called to support members of Christ’s church around the world, including Palestinian Christians who are being forced to leave the Holy Land due to Israel’s confiscation of their property and the severe hardships of living under occupation; and

Whereas the Palestinian Christian community, through the Kairos Palestine document, has requested the support of the wider Church; (Kairos Palestine. “A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering” https://www.kairosresponse.org/Kairos_Palestine_Document.html. Web. March 2015); and

Whereas Palestinian Christian leaders have specifically requested the support of the United Methodist Church; (Letter to the United Methodist Church from Rifat Odeh Kassis, General Coordinator, Kairos Palestine, November 28, 2014 http://www.kairosresponse.org/Rifat_Kassis.html. Web January 2015); and

Whereas the 2012 General Conference reiterated the call to end the occupation, through boycotts of goods produced in the occupied territories (Resolution 6111: “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land.” 2012 Book of Resolutions); and,

Whereas all UMC missionaries serving in the Holy Land over the last 25 years support concrete actions by our denomination to show our support of Palestinian rights. (United Methodist Missionaries Support Divestment from the Israeli Occupation, https://www.kairosresponse.org/UMC_Missionaries_Divestment.html. Web. January 2015),

Therefore, be it resolved that the Great Plains Annual Conference shall create a diverse and representative task force to review and research actions that can be taken to respond to these requests by our UMC missionaries and our Palestinian sisters and brothers in Christ, to formulate recommendations for our Great Plains Conference delegates to General Conference 2016 as well as for the 2016 annual conference.

Be it further resolved that the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church calls on the U.S. government, the government of Israel, and the elected Palestinian leadership to reject all acts of aggression and violence, to respect the equality and dignity of all the region’s people, and to forge solutions based on the principles of international laws and human rights.

GREAT PLAINS ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXPLORING A CHANGE IN JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES - Approved

Financial Implications None

Rationale: There is great disparity in the membership and power of the five US Jurisdictions. Redrawing boundaries could help balance this.

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Great Plains Annual Conference newly elected General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates explore the redrawing of jurisdictional boundaries which would include the Great Plains Conference.

Be It Further Resolved, that the Great Plains Conference’s newly elected General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates shall begin conversations with the Western and North Central Jurisdictional delegates about a possible change in jurisdictional boundaries.

Be It Further Resolved, the Great Plains General and Jurisdictional delegation shall bring to the 2016 Great Plains Annual Conference (1) a report on these conversations and (2) a proposed process and time line to continue the conversation.

Resolutions

MODERN DAY SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING - Approved

Financial Implications: None

Rationale: Each child of God has sacred worth. Christ came into the world so that we might know and have abundant life. Modern day slavery and human trafficking deny sacred worth, and are counter intuitive to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Whereas, the states of Kansas and Nebraska, which comprise the Great Plains Annual Conference, played a historic role in calling for the abolition of slavery in the United States of America; and

Whereas, the globalization of communication, currency exchange, migration and trading, has made human trafficking the predominate means by which people are enslaved; and

Whereas, several major highways that pass through the Great Plains Annual Conference are prime corridors for human trafficking; and

Whereas, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center states that “Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery that occurs in every state, including Kansas and Nebraska”; and

Whereas, Wichita Kansas, where the Great Plains Annual Conference is meeting for 2015, has been identified as a “significant hub in the practice of human trafficking” due to its central location and proximity to highways (“Wichita group hopes to educate community about human trafficking” Wichita Eagle, January 11, 2015).

Therefore be it resolved, the Great Plains Annual Conference Mercy and Justice Team study the matter of human trafficking and modern day slavery, utilizing resources from the General Board of Church and Society and the 2012 United Methodist Book of Resolutions (#6021 and #6023), and focus specifically on trafficking within Kansas and Nebraska.

Be it further resolved, that the Mercy and Justice team issue a report no later than the 2016 Great Plains Annual Conference with resources, recommendations, and actions that can be taken by the local church to combat the injustice of modern day slavery and human trafficking.