

1 The Business Committee of the Thirty-first General Synod has recommended this
2 proposed resolution be sent to a Committee of the General Synod.

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5 **ON PROPOSING A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR COVENANTAL GIVING AND**
6 **IMPLEMENTING FUNDRAISING BEST PRACTICES**

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8 **A Prudential Resolution**

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10 **Submitted by the United Church Board of Directors**

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13 **SUMMARY**

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15 This resolution speaks to eliminating the *Pattern of Giving* as the standard of covenantal
16 giving and proposes a new approach to generosity in the United Church of Christ
17 consistent with the best practices of a donor-centered approach to philanthropy. It
18 encourages coordinated efforts and collaboration that effectively connect donors with the
19 vital and engaging missions happening in all settings of the church. This resolution
20 creates “a transitional plan for a transitional time,” anticipating and allowing for
21 flexibility of practice across the church as settings and covenants shift in the coming
22 years.

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24 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL RATIONALE**

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26 The church began with generosity: “All who believed were together and had all things in
27 common” (Acts 2:44). Every generation of the church has developed practices to share
28 resources across the width and breadth of the movement, from Paul’s offering for the
29 poor in the Jerusalem community to a modern congregation creating its annual
30 stewardship appeal. Financial giving is part of the covenant we share with one another as
31 a church.

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33 The *Pattern of Giving* is a policy document first enacted by General Synod that delineates
34 and attempts to control how financial resources are gathered and disseminated across the
35 United Church of Christ. The existing philosophy of giving developed in response to a
36 particular historical event, the 1957 merger, creating policies regarding who asks for
37 funding and how money moves from donors to mission priorities. A strictly planned and
38 extensively controlled approach sought to establish trust among the covenant partners,
39 prohibiting direct financial requests of congregations and individuals by agencies and
40 expressions of the church.

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42 The *Pattern of Giving* created the covenantal giving system that has had many names,
43 currently known as Our Church’s Wider Mission. The *Pattern of Giving* adopted in 1968
44 and last revised in 1984 provided a timely solution to the problems of that era but does
45 not adequately serve the needs of the UCC today. As a result, many settings of the church
46 have ceased to adhere to the *Pattern of Giving*, but there has been no formal policy

47 proposed to replace it. Technically, the Church is still bound by this policy that has not
48 been updated in over 30 years.

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50 The United Church of Christ Board, in October 2014, commissioned the Giving Task
51 Force to examine the *Pattern of Giving* and to analyze the church's current giving
52 structures. The Giving Task Force proposed a new framework with specific
53 recommendations that were approved by the Board at its October 2016 meeting.

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55 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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57 Whereas the *Pattern of Giving* no longer serves the needs of the United Church of Christ,
58 makes no provision for use of technologies that are commonly available today, and in
59 some instances prevents the implementation of philanthropic best practices that have
60 developed over the last 30 years,

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62 And whereas a donor-centered approach to fundraising is more in keeping with the best
63 practices of philanthropy today, and the institutionally-centered approach on which our
64 current system relies is a barrier to increasing generosity and to developing new and
65 thriving ministries across the United Church of Christ,

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67 And whereas the shared ministry among all settings of the United Church of Christ is
68 built on covenantal relationships and must provide for and encourage cooperation,
69 collaboration, and flexibility among all covenant partners in the responsible practice of
70 fundraising and philanthropy,

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72 Therefore be it resolved, that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of
73 Christ eliminates the *Pattern of Giving* policy document in favor of best practices that are
74 consistent with norms, expectations, and policies of a donor-centered approach to
75 fundraising and philanthropy.

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77 Be it further resolved that Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
78 encourages all ministry settings of the United Church of Christ to establish coordinated
79 and comprehensive development programs, where congregations and individual donors
80 would be able to donate directly to the mission priorities that are most compelling to
81 them.

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83 Be it further resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
84 directs the national setting to provide resources to coordinate this effort and build
85 capacity for raising funds across the church, in covenant, collaboration, and partnership
86 with Conferences and congregations.

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88 Be it further resolved that Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
89 encourages that Our Church's Wider Mission—Basic Support continue to be directed
90 from congregations to Conferences.

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92 Be it further resolved that Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
93 invites Conferences to commit to an OCWM sharing formula no less than the average
94 rate of giving for the previous three years, on a rolling basis.

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96 Be it further resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
97 invites the Conferences to reevaluate the sharing formula in five years, in conversation
98 with the national setting.

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100 Be it further resolved that Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
101 encourages that the four Special Mission Offerings continue to support the mission of the
102 church, and requests that a cost-benefit analysis be completed for each offering to enable
103 a decision regarding their future implementation.

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105 Be it finally resolved Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests
106 that the national setting conduct a marketing analysis of the names “Our Church’s Wider
107 Mission,” “Our Church’s Wider Mission – Basic Support,” and “Our Church’s Wider
108 Mission – Special Support,” in light of the multiple understanding and various uses of
109 these across the church.

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111 **FUNDING**

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113 The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with
114 the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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116 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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118 The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities
119 within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

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