

1 **PUTTING OUR MONEY WHERE OUR VALUES ARE:**
2 **EVALUTATING CHURCH FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

3
4 **Submitted by the Central Atlantic Conference**

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6 **SUMMARY** This resolution asks all settings of the United Church of Christ (local
7 congregations, Associations, Conferences, the national setting,, etc.)—to use our money
8 to provoke change in discerned unethical practices of financial institutions, or move our
9 money to financial institutions that represent our faith values.

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11 **BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

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13 Usury is the practice of overcharging borrowers. It has been prohibited by religious,
14 legal, moral, and social codes since the beginning of recorded human history—in Exodus
15 22:25, Leviticus 25:36-37, Deuteronomy 23:19-20, and Ezekiel 18:19-23.

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17 Usury was illegal in the United States until 1978. But it is now rampant in credit card and
18 mortgage lending, payday lending, auto loans, rapid tax refund operations, and even in
19 public bond deals. The end of usury laws in America launched an era of deregulation that
20 allowed financial markets to run wild, helping to produce the present economic crisis.

21 God calls us to seek justice, care for he poor and love our neighbor: Proverbs 31:8,9;
22 Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:6, 7:12, 25;14-30, 40; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 10:30-37;

23 **RESOLUTION**

24 Whereas God calls us to seek justice, care for he poor and love our neighbor, and

25 Whereas the business practices of some financial institutions have contributed to the deep
26 economic damage done to our families and communities, and

27 Whereas usury is against our tradition and the traditions of other faiths, and Whereas our
28 congregations and other church bodies invest in these financial institutions and can
29 thereby exert pressure relative to banking practices by way of collective action, and

30 Whereas there are alternatives that may be more accountable to small and medium
31 investors and more deeply invested in the communities where they do business,

32 Therefore, be it resolved by the Twenty-eighth General Synod that all settings of the
33 United Church of Christ (local congregations, Associations, Conferences, the national
34 setting , etc.) are requested to faithfully examine their relationships with financial
35 institutions, and, where practical and prudent, deliberately move toward relating to
36 financial institutions that have records of fair lending, business and investing practices as
37 each body discerns for its setting.

38 **FUNDING**

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40 Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the
41 overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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43 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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45 Justice and Witness Ministries are requested to implement this resolution.