REGARDING THE TAR CREEK SUPERFUND SITE

(Resolution of Witness)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed the 40 plus square mile Tar Creek Superfund Site (Site) on the National Priority List more than 21 years ago, ranking first and worst in the nation; and

WHEREAS, during this time the U.S. Federal authorities have spent at least $100 million in the area trying to clean up damage from lead and zinc mining activities of the past 70 years; and

WHEREAS, homes and communities within the Site are located above abandoned mine shafts and are in imminent danger of 250-300 ft. “cave ins” at any time; and

WHEREAS, contamination from the Tar Creek mining operations extends into those areas of the states of Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma adjacent to the Site; and

WHEREAS, contamination has been found to exist in areas of the United States where mining wastes have been shipped from the Site for use as fill material in construction of foundation footings for buildings, parks, school playgrounds, highways, parking lots and various other construction uses; and

WHEREAS, a major portion of the land that is owned by the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma is within the Superfund site; and

WHEREAS, the property values of real estate of residents who live inside the designated superfund site have been greatly diminished; and

WHEREAS, the damage to the health of the estimated 19,000 persons living in and adjacent to the Site, especially the small children who have dangerously high levels of lead in their blood, continues while the efforts of various Federal and State agencies to solve the problem prove to be unsuccessful.

WHEREAS, the Site is not limited to the 40 square mile epicenter on the Quapaw Reserve, but extends downstream to the Neosho and Spring Rivers to the middle of the Grand Lake o’ the Cherokees where stream and sediment contamination impact the aquatic life, plants and game in the area. These impacts damage resources utilized by the Eastern Shawnee, Seneca-Cayuga, Peoria, Wyandotte and Ottawa Tribes as well as low income subsistence users.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-sixth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Petitions the appropriate officers and offices of local, state, federal and Native American tribal governments to move forward immediately to establish and implement a plan to solve this problem which affects persons living in and adjacent to the Site; and

Sends this resolution, duly signed by the President of the United Church of Christ to the President of the United States of America, the United States Senators and the members of the United States House of Representatives from the states of Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, the Majority and Minority leaders of the United States Senate; the Speaker of the United States
House of Representatives, the Governors and other appropriate officers of these states and the
Chair of the Business Committee of the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma.

Commends the ongoing efforts of Local Environmental Action Demanded Agency, Inc. of
Vinita, OK (L.E.A.D.) to document and remedy the hazardous situation in the Site; and

Recommends immediate broad based ecumenical and community efforts to facilitate
opportunities for those residents of the hazardous Tar Creek Superfund Site to voluntarily
relocate, on a temporary or permanent basis, to less toxic areas until such time as the Site has
been restored to a habitable condition; and

Recommends that the agencies involved determine the extent of the area where contaminates
have come to reside and provide a remedial plan that addresses the contaminant impacts from the
Tri-State Mining District to the Spring and Neosho Rivers and the Grand Lake o’ the Cherokees.
Supports the efforts of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches initiate remedial action in
 colaboration with local churches and community groups at the Site; and

FUNDING

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Justice and Witness Ministries is requested work with the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference as the
primary implementers of this resolution, acting in partnership with Local Church Ministries,
Wider Church Ministries, CAIM and the General Minister and President of the United Church of
Christ, ecumenical partners, community groups and activists.