1 REGARDING THE TAR CREEK SUPERFUND SITE 2 (Resolution of Witness) 3 4 RESOLUTION 5 6 **WHEREAS**, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed the 40 plus square mile Tar 7 Creek Superfund Site (Site) on the National Priority List more than 21 years ago, ranking first 8 and worst in the nation; and 9 10 WHEREAS, during this time the U.S. Federal authorities have spent at least \$100 million in the 11 area trying to clean up damage from lead and zinc mining activities of the past 70 years; and 12 13 WHEREAS, homes and communities within the Site are located above abandoned mine shafts 14 and are in immanent danger of 250-300 ft. "cave ins" at any time; and 15 16 WHEREAS, contamination from the Tar Creek mining operations extends into those areas of 17 the states of Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma adjacent to the Site; and 18 19 WHEREAS, contamination has been found to exist in areas of the United States where mining 20 wastes have been shipped from the Site for use as fill material in construction of foundation 21 footings for buildings, parks, school playgrounds, highways, parking lots and various other 22 construction uses; and 23 24 WHEREAS, a major portion of the land that is owned by the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma is 25 within the Superfund site; and 26 27 WHEREAS, the property values of real estate of residents who live inside the designated 28 superfund site have been greatly diminished; and 29 30 WHEREAS, the damage to the health of the estimated 19,000 persons living in and adjacent to 31 the Site, especially the small children who have dangerously high levels of lead in their blood, 32 continues while the efforts of various Federal and State agencies to solve the problem prove to be 33 unsuccessful. 34 35 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 36 37 Cherokees where stream and sediment contamination impact the aquatic life, plants and game in 38 the area. These impacts damage resources utilized by the Eastern Shawnee, Seneca-Cayuga, 39 Peoria, Wyandotte and Ottawa Tribes as well as low income subsistence users. 40 41 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Twenty-sixth General Synod of the United Church 42 of Christ: 43 44 Petitions the appropriate officers and offices of local, state, federal and Native American tribal 45 governments to move forward immediately to establish and implement a plan to solve this 46 problem which affects persons living in and adjacent to the Site; and 48

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Sends this resolution, duly signed by the President of the United Church of Christ to the

- 49 President of the United States of America, the United States Senators and the members of the
- 50 United States House of Representatives from the states of Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, the
- 51 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 collaboration 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.