A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF OUTDOOR MINISTRIES OF THE UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Approved As Submitted

A Prudential Resolution

TEXT OF THE MOTION

Whereas, we affirm the crucial support in the past from our national UCC and from many
Conferences in both proclaiming and celebrating the vital and visible outdoor ministry to our
youth, our churches and the wider church, and

Whereas, we recognize the power of Outdoor Ministry sites in promoting wider
church/conference financial appeals, including capital campaigns and Our Church’s Wider
Mission; and further we affirm the crucial support in the past from the national UCC setting and
from many conferences, and

Whereas, we honor the foresight of founding mothers and fathers of the faith to purchase,
develop and invest in Outdoor Ministry camp and retreat sites for the UCC’s faith journeys and
to grow and raise up leadership in every generation, and

Whereas, we celebrate further investments in the infrastructure and improvements to our
Outdoor Ministry sites, and

Whereas, the UCC, in recognition of the significant number of ordained ministers who claim
their Outdoor Ministry experience as foundational to their hearing and heeding of the Call (for
example, over 200 clergy credit their experience at Silver Lake Conference Center with hearing
the Call), and

Whereas for over 50 years, our outdoor ministries have been developing leaders who live their
faith in every walk of life and consider their experiences there as major touchstones in their lives
as they make ethical and professional decisions, and

Whereas, we further name and recognize the correlation between the alarming closing of
Outdoor Ministry sites (from over 65 in 1995 to 35 current member sites) and the lost
opportunity for raising up young seminarians, and faith leaders of the Church and Conferences,
and for future generations of youth to experience this unique ministry of Jesus, and

Whereas since OMA’s inception, we’ve lost Blakes Grove (IA), Atkinson Center, VT; Deer Hill
Conference Center NY; Camp laurent, NY; Camp Fernbrook PA; Pilgrim Haven, MI; Pleasant
Valley Outdoor Center IL; Lake, Camp Western Hills MO; Dillon, RMC; Pilgrim Park, ND;
Deering Conference Center NH (BHM); Pilgrim Haven, MI; Warner Farm, MA; Ingraham
House, CT; Rockcraft Lodge, ME; Dillon Hi Country, Rocky Mountain Central Conference and
Pilgrim’s Playground, AZ; and more recently, Lake Byrd, Florida; Camp Fernbrook PA SE, Lani
Kamaha’o, Oahu Association, HI; Bows Lake Camp and Conference Center, MI Conference,
and many others,
In recognition that Camps have closed and been sold by our UCC Conferences and Associations across the country; and in recognition of current sites in distress even now, (Mensch Mill Conference and Retreat Center, PSE) and in light of the disturbing trend of closings of faith-based camps across the country,

And whereas, it would not be inappropriate to describe the state of Outdoor Ministry in the UCC as the ‘Canary in the Coalmine’ for our denominational lifecycle,

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Twenty-Ninth General Synod of the UCC gathered in Long Beach, CA declares its advocacy and support of the Outdoor Ministries Association (OMA), and

Be it further resolved that the Twenty-Ninth General Synod requests that the conferences, associations and other settings of the wider church, prayerfully discerning the long term consequences to the youth and future leaders of the church when considering the ramifications of closing a camp or center, seek the counsel of the OMA, and

Be it finally resolved that the Twenty-Ninth General Synod, requests that the conferences, associations and other settings of the wider church provide timely notification to OMA in the event of impending Outdoor Ministry site or program closing so OMA may have the opportunity to provide resources, support and consultation to the distressed body and to programs at risk.

**FUNDING**

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

**IMPLEMENTATION**

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