

1 TITLE OF RESOLUTION: Shared Financial Support of Grace Community UCC, St.
2 Paul, by Churches and Individuals of the Minnesota Conference
3 DATE SUBMITTED: March 15, 2000
4 SUBMITTED BY: Grace United of Christ Task Force
5 ENDORSED BY: Minnesota Conference Prophetic Ministries Committee
6 Eastern Association Council; Eastern Association Annual Meeting
7 SUMMARY OF INTENT: To provide for shared financial support for the ministries of
8 Grace Community UCC, St. Paul, whose ministry is largely focused among low-income
9 persons and at-risk youth.
10 BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT
11 *WHEREAS* the United Church of Christ has declared itself to be a multicultural,
12 multiracial church, and the Minnesota Conference of the UCC has declared that a long
13 range goal of the Conference is to become a multicultural, multiracial, antiracist
14 Conference as a way to embody our belief that God cares about all persons equally, and
15 *WHEREAS* Grace Community UCC, St. Paul, is the only congregation in the Minnesota
16 Conference that is predominantly African-American or that has a significant percentage
17 of membership who are African-American; and
18 *WHEREAS* the United Church of Christ has a commitment to urban ministry and to
19 ministering among the poorest and most at-risk people within the human family, and
20 *WHEREAS* Grace Community UCC, St. Paul, is able to meet needs and do ministry in
21 ways that other churches in the Conference cannot do because of the community in which
22 Grace Church is located and the uniqueness of the programs it offers, and
23 *WHEREAS* Grace Community UCC, St. Paul, has a variety of outreach ministries in its
24 neighborhood with homeless people and at-risk youth, and
25 *WHEREAS* Grace Community UCC, St. Paul, is not likely to become self-supporting in
26 the near future because its membership is small and many members are of limited
27 financial resources, and
28 *WHEREAS* more than a third of the financial support of Grace Community UCC has
29 come from a single benefactor, and it is not healthy for this ministry to continue to be so
30 largely dependent upon the financial support of a single benefactor, and this financial
31 support will not continue indefinitely;
32 TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION:
33 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT
34 * the churches and individuals of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of
35 Christ be encouraged to share in the financial support of Grace Community UCC, and
36 thereby further extend their ministries into the urban area and specifically to those who
37 are both African-American and poor in St. Paul; and that
38 * the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ include Grace Community
39 UCC as a budget line-item through the Prophetic Ministries budget (as "designated
40 local outreach ministries") and also as one recipient of the new Conference-wide Peace
41 and Justice special offering; and that
42 * for the next five years, at least \$50,000 annually (approximately the amount given by
43 the current single donor annually) of the budget of Grace Community UCC (total
44 proposed budget for 2000 is approximately \$150,000) be made up from the following
45 sources following consultation between Grace United Church of Christ leadership, the
46 Grace Church Task Force, and the Conference Prophetic Ministries Committee:
47 --a portion of the Conference-wide Justice and Witness special offering
48 --a line-item in the Conference Annual budget under the Prophetic Ministries
49 Committee
50 --a "Sisters and Brothers" program of individuals and congregations who will be
51 invited to offer financial support; and that
52 * the Conference Council oversee and evaluate this shared support with reports made to
53 each Annual Conference meeting and recommendations to be presented to the 2004

54 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference with regarding further support; and that
55 * the Grace Church Task Force and Grace Church leadership coordinate and consult in
56 the implementation of the Sisters and Brothers program.
57 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: postage and stationary for mailings in the Sisters and
58 Brothers program.

Additional background materials for resolution on shared financial support for Grace Community Church

1. The Grace Church Task Force was created in 1997 at the request of the Conference Council to provide communication, coordination, encouragement, and contact between leadership of Grace Community UCC and the wider UCC community. The Task Force includes two members on behalf of the Eastern Association Church and Ministry Committee (Kathy and David Plumb), two person on behalf of the Eastern Association Council (currently Peg Pfab and Jeff Hagaman...also Eric Nelson has served and Steve Thom is newly appointed), and David McMahill, Minister for the Eastern Association. The Task Force meets as needed, sometimes monthly, sometimes every other month, with the pastor and lay leaders of Grace Church.
2. The new Conference-wide Peace and Justice special offering will begin in 2001. This takes the place of the national Just Peace Special Appeal, which ends in 2000. The Conference Prophetic Ministries Committee has used the Conference's share of the Just Peace offering for a wide variety of peace and justice grants around the state of Minnesota, including grants to the Gaylord Alliance for Friendship program, the Minnesota Council of Churches Joint Religious Coalition, the Grand Marais Just Peace Event, and the like. The Conference portion of the Just Peace offering has ranged from \$2000 to \$8000 annually over the years, with a similar amount going on to the national church. We do not have a clear track record yet on what a well-promoted, well-targeted Conference-wide Peace and Justice offering might do, but the vision ranges much higher than what the Just Peace appeal had done.
3. The Conference Prophetic Ministries Committee has not in recent years had a line item in the Conference budget for "Designated local outreach ministries" but has now requested such an addition beginning with the 2001 budget, and has requested \$10,000 for this item as a way of reflecting a commitment to the long range goal of living out the meaning of being a multicultural, multiracial, antiracist Conference.