

1 TITLE: **Concerns Regarding the “Minnesota Citizen’s Personal Security Act of**  
2 **2003”**

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4 DATE: June 11, 2003,

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6 SUBMITTED AS A TIMELY RESOLUTION to the 2003 Annual Meeting of the  
7 Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ by the Conference Justice  
8 and Witness Committee, Marcia Ferris, chairperson

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10 SUMMARY: This is a resolution calling upon the Minnesota Legislature to reconsider  
11 the “Minnesota Citizen’s Personal Protection Act of 2003” (otherwise known as,  
12 “Conceal and Carry”). This resolution names principles we would urge the  
13 Legislature to consider. This resolution also authorizes the Conference to join the  
14 lawsuit already commenced about this legislation.

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16 WHEREAS: The United Church of Christ as a denomination has declared itself to be a  
17 “Just Peace Church” which includes a commitment to peacemaking and a pursuit of non-  
18 violent approaches to conflict resolution. The presence of firearms in church buildings,  
19 church parking lots, church playgrounds, church-related social service agencies, and  
20 church camps is inconsistent with the Church’s commitment to common security from  
21 violence and undermines the Church’s traditional role as providing a place where all may  
22 be safe from violence;

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24 WHEREAS, all expressions of the Church, as well as other religious communities, have  
25 the right to use their property to communicate religious beliefs and to express their  
26 welcome and hospitality, and all expressions of the Church have the right to welcome  
27 guests as the Church so chooses;

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29 WHEREAS, all expressions of the Church and other religious communities have the right  
30 to adopt policies to protect the safety and well-being of people who use Church property,  
31 including church buildings, church parking lots, church camps, and church social service  
32 agencies. Churches have the right to expect compliance with such policies;

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34 WHEREAS, the penalty for bringing guns onto any property that has banned guns is so  
35 slight that it does not constitute a meaningful incentive for observing bans;

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37 AND WHEREAS, the assertion that a dramatic increase in the number of citizens  
38 carrying concealed guns will result in greater public safety is misleading at best.  
39 Although we recognize competing arguments on this matter, we are concerned that more  
40 guns carried by more people in the course of their daily activities will increase the  
41 possibilities of gun accidents and the use of guns in response to angry confrontations.

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43 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE 2003 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
44 MINNESOTA CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, THAT:

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- 46 1. if timing allows, the Minnesota Conference intends to join the lawsuit already  
47 commenced by the Edina Community Lutheran Church and at least eleven other  
48 congregations challenging provisions of this law;
- 49 2. we encourage the Minnesota Legislature to reconsider the Personal Protection  
50 Act of 2003 as soon as possible, and we urge that the following principles be  
51 reflected in an amended law:
- 52 a. the right of churches and all communities of faith to communicate as  
53 they see fit with those entering church property should be respected and  
54 protected;
- 55 b. the right of churches and all communities of faith to ban guns from  
56 church buildings, church offices, church parking lots, church social  
57 services agencies, church playgrounds, and church camps should be  
58 recognized and supported;
- 59 c. the penalties against those who brings guns onto church property in  
60 violation of clearly stated policies should be substantially increased;
- 61 d. funds should be provided to develop and implement education  
62 curriculum and promotional materials for all ages that teach and encourage  
63 non-violent methods of conflict resolution, anger management, and non-  
64 violent techniques of personal protection. Some—and perhaps all—of the  
65 funds needed for these materials should be generated from license fees on  
66 the sale of guns and ammunition.
- 67 3. we affirm that guns are banned from the offices of the Minnesota Conference  
68 of the United Church of Christ, its Association offices, and the grounds and  
69 building of Pilgrim Point;
- 70 4. we endorse the Annual Student Pledge campaign which encourages students to  
71 sign a pledge that they will not bring guns onto school property, and we  
72 encourage our churches to urge school boards in their communities to observe the  
73 Student Pledge.