**Closing the Digital Divide: Calling on the United Church of Christ
to Seek Digital Justice and Inclusion**

**A Resolution of Witness**

1  **TEXT OF THE MOTION**
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3  **WHEREAS** few areas of life are not impacted by digital access and use and there is a growing
4  correlation between quality digital access and use and increased economic, educational,[1] health,[2]
5  labor,[3] and social opportunities and mobility;[4] and
6
7  **WHEREAS** thirty percent of school-age children in the United States[5] (two-thirds of those
8  whose family income is below the federal poverty level[6]) and two-thirds of students globally[7] do
9  not have adequate, reliable internet access at home; and
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11  **WHEREAS** the COVID pandemic laid bare the injustice of the digital divide, further widening
12  educational,[8] economic,[9] and opportunities[10] gaps[11] between those who have high quality digital
13  access and those who do not; and
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15  **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has long recognized the unique power of media to give
16  meaningful voice to diverse peoples, cultures, and ideas and in so doing to shape society; and,
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18  **WHEREAS** the ability to use new and evolving technologies is essential for strengthening
19  relationships and building peaceful communities, and especially for the hearing, centering, and
20  amplifying of voices of those on the margins;[12] and
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22  **WHEREAS** disparities in digital access reflect gender,[13] race,[14] geographic,[15] ability,[16] and
23  economic[17] privilege, systemically entrenching existing[18] inequalities[19] in the United States; and,
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25  **WHEREAS** this divide is similarly[20] experienced[21] globally,[22] further exacerbating[23]
26  inequalities[24] especially for previously colonized nations while also impeding[25] progress toward
27  global commitments to the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals; and,
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29  **WHEREAS** the work of justice and ministry in the church is critically tied to sustainable
30  development,[26] intersecting with the broad work of the global Sustainable Development Goals[27]
31  and with specific actions including eliminating poverty, embracing sustainability, and
32  empowering others for progress; and,
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34  **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has consistently and repeatedly taken a stand for justice
35  for all God's children including for racial, social, disability, economic, and digital justice;
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37  **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United
38  Church of Christ identifies the globally widening digital divide and lack of digital inclusion as a
39  justice issue, and invites all settings of the United Church of Christ to do likewise while working

40  with, among other organizations, United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry, raising
41  awareness among constituents, and joining faith-based and other coalitions pressing for digital
42  justice including through increased affordability, accessibility, training, and support; and
43
44  **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
45  Christ encourages the National Setting, Conferences, and Associations to develop digital-
46  inclusion activities and policies with attention to advocacy, access to internet-enabled devices,
47  skills training, digital programming support, and online content designed to enable and promote
48  self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration; and
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50  **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
51  Christ encourages the National Setting, Conferences, and Associations to support rural
52  congregations, and other congregations challenged by the current lack of digital infrastructure, in
53  assessing local internet availability and affordability, networking them for collaborative action;
54  and,
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56  **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
57  Christ urges all settings of the United Church of Christ to advocate for digital justice and
58  affordable, quality digital access for all, especially those who are left out or held back by
59  systemic inequalities within the United States and around the world.
60
61  **FUNDING**
62  The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the
63  overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.
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65  **IMPLEMENTATION**
66  The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within
67  the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.
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