

The following resolution was approved by the delegates at a plenary of the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, held in Indianapolis June 30-July 4, 2023.

**Living into God’s Economy: Celebrating the 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan Fund (CB&LF)**

**A Prudential Resolution**

**1 Summary**

2 This Resolution celebrates that since 1853 the United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan  
3 Fund has been helping the church live into God’s Economy. The resolution commends the many  
4 resources and programs of the United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan Fund to  
5 churches, conferences, and religious institutions for the transformation of communities and  
6 congregations toward an abundant life for all.  
7

**8 Biblical, Theological, and Historical Background**

9 Economy comes from the root word *oikos*, or “household,” which in its fullest sense,  
10 encompasses every dimension of family, region, city-state, tribe, land, country, and planet.  
11 Therefore, economy (*oikonomia*) literally translated “household rules” has to do with the order  
12 and function of everything within these particular household settings. It is from the more  
13 universal perspective of *oikonomia* that we consider the idea of *oikonomia tou Theou*, the  
14 “Economy of God.” The “Economy of God” is not a new idea, or a concept that we create or  
15 construct. God’s economy is an emergent reality that God has been calling forth since the  
16 creation event in Genesis and ‘it was good.’ In this current pivotal moment, the future will be  
17 decided by the extent to which each local church chooses to live out God’s Economy, *oikonomia*  
18 *tou Theou*, to transform society and create good.<sup>1</sup>  
19

20 The United Church of Christ Building & Loan Fund is the oldest institution of its kind in the  
21 United States, founded in 1853 to support the mission of new and renewing churches. CB&LF  
22 helps congregations and institutions in the UCC as well as in other denominations plan, raise,  
23 finance, and build transformative projects. For one hundred seventy years, the United Church of  
24 Christ Church Building & Loan Fund’s vision has been to transform communities by helping  
25 churches live into God’s Economy. The mission of United Church of Christ Church Building &  
26 Loan Fund is as relevant as ever.<sup>2</sup>  
27

**28 Text of Resolution**

29  
30 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan Fund (CB&LF), as the first  
31 and one of the nation’s premier faith-focused funds has leveraged its nearly two centuries of  
32 church real estate financing to advance the moral imperatives of the Gospel; and  
33

34 WHEREAS, since CB&LF was founded in 1853, it has provided thousands upon thousands of  
35 congregations and other faith-based organizations with real estate financing, operational  
36 resources and expertise needed to build stable, thriving communities that live the Gospel  
37 mission; and  
38

39 WHEREAS, CB&LF continues to advance God’s Economy through innovative uses of buildings  
40 and space, inventive church operating models, revenue-generating faith enterprises and the use of  
41 impact-driven metrics; and

42  
43 WHEREAS, at the close of 2021, CB&LF had eighty active loans to congregations totaling  
44 \$47,178,505<sup>3</sup>; and

45  
46 WHEREAS, CB&LF builds the capacity of faith leaders and organizations with resources and  
47 training that help promote stabilization, transformation and innovation in churches and  
48 communities; and

49  
50 WHEREAS, CB&LF is raising up and equipping entrepreneurial leadership for missional  
51 community and church connections through the Adese Fellowship program<sup>4</sup>, in partnership with  
52 other ministries of the National Setting of the United Church of Christ; and

53  
54 WHEREAS, CB&LF was foundational in the creation of the UCC Cornerstone Fund, also the  
55 early financial support of Convergence (formerly the Center of Progressive Renewal) and  
56 became a primary investor in Just Like Family Home Care<sup>5</sup>, a home healthcare business  
57 initiative in collaboration with the United Church of Canada; and

58  
59 WHEREAS, CB&LF has advocated for and led the way in investing for impact by becoming in  
60 2013, the first financial ministry in the United Church of Christ to adopt an impact investing  
61 policy<sup>6</sup>, thereby pledging to invest 100% of its endowment for ministry, mission, environmental,  
62 social, or economic justice returns along with financial returns; and

63  
64 WHEREAS, CB&LF since 2014 has on behalf of churches for whom it has consulted on capital  
65 campaigns gifted almost \$200,000 of its fees to ministries and charitable organizations across the  
66 United States including \$77,744 to Our Church’s Wider Mission<sup>7</sup>; and

67  
68 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church  
69 of Christ recognizes with thanksgiving the work and ministry of the United Church of Christ  
70 Church Building & Loan Fund throughout the years and today helping the church live into God’s  
71 economy.

72  
73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of  
74 Christ encourages all settings of the UCC to view the Award Winning CB&LF documentary  
75 film, “It Takes a Village”<sup>8</sup> that tells the story of how CB&LF worked with St. Peter’s UCC and  
76 its affiliate MOLO Village Community Development Corporation<sup>9</sup> to build the Village @ West  
77 Jefferson, the first new building project in this Louisville community in decades, creating 100  
78 local jobs and bringing the first restaurant, credit union, coffee shop, health care institute, and  
79 day care facility, community around St. Peter’s UCC in Louisville KY.

80  
81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod commends CB&LF and  
82 its financial, educational, and capacity building programs to churches, conferences, and religious  
83 institutions for the transformation of communities and congregations toward a just world for all.

84

85 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of  
86 Christ lauds CB&LF’s goal to raise \$100 Million from investors, financial institutions,  
87 philanthropic organizations and others for church real estate development, flexible financing for  
88 church operational capacity, seed funding for transformative ministry initiatives and financing  
89 for creative spiritual ventures, to help churches and Christian organizations to Plan, Raise,  
90 Finance and Build God’s economy<sup>10</sup>.

91

92 Funding: The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with  
93 the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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

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<sup>1</sup> As articulated by Rev. Dr. Patrick Garnet Duggan, Executive Director, CB&LF in **Ground Zero in the Economy of God**, 2013

<sup>222</sup> See mission, history, and program of the Church Building & Loan Fund at [CBLFund.org](https://CBLFund.org) including the video ‘An Introduction to the United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan Fund’ at [CBLFund.org/about](https://CBLFund.org/about)

<sup>3</sup> Data comes from CB&LF “2021 Impact Metrics Report”

<sup>4</sup> The Adese (from the Amharic language meaning to renew, pronounced ah-deh-say) Fellowship is a year-long, ecumenical program that engages participants in self-discovery, theological reflection, and business development as they create enterprises that help their communities follow the way of Jesus and live into God's economy. This groundbreaking fellowship maximizes the business acumen and entrepreneurial capacity of participants to launch scalable and sustainable ventures that counter systemic poverty. [CBLFund.org/build](https://CBLFund.org/build)

<sup>5</sup> The Just Like Family Home Care mission is to provide creative, loving, and innovative solutions to private duty home care for our elderly and in-need. The [Just Like Family Home Care Franchise](https://www.justlikefamilyhomecare.com) has nearly 30 locations across Canada with plans for franchise development in the United States.

<sup>6</sup> “In recognition that 100% Mission-Focused may lead the Fund to choose from a range of investments, the Fund seeks to invest through advisors, intermediaries and/or investment vehicles that will carry out the Fund’s investment goals and objectives in accordance with this definition of impact investments: investments which have a stated ministry, mission and/or social justice (which includes social justice and/or economic justice) and/or environmental return objective in conjunction with a financial return objective.” Church Building & Loan Fund Investment Policy Statement, October 30, 2013

<sup>7</sup> Data comes from CB&LF “2021 Impact Metrics Report”

<sup>8</sup> The CB&LF’s documentary film, "It Takes A Village" won the special Hero Award at the [Better Cities Film Festival](https://www.bettercitiesfilmfestival.com) at the UN-HABITAT's World Urban Forum 11 - cities of the future gathering in Katowice, Poland.

<sup>9</sup> “MOLO” means “welcome” in Xhosa (a South African dialect); at MOLO Village, where everyone is welcome to add their own contributions since “it takes a village.” [MOLO](https://www.molovillage.com)’s vision is to support the growth of healthy, engaged, and productive residents prepared to take their families and their neighborhood on a path to prosperity.

<sup>10</sup> CB&LF Mission Implementation Strategy Plan 2022 – 2024; Strategic Priority 3: Capital Raise & Financing Capacity; Goal 1: Raise up to \$100M for real estate lending, non-real estate financing and operational capacity building to plan, raise, finance and build God’s Economy.