

**RECOMMENDED ACTION;** the United Church of Christ Board of Directors proposes the following Memorandum of Understanding to the Boy Scouts of America.

**BACKGROUND;** see UCCB-14-03-ExComm-04a.

**Memorandum of Understanding  
Boy Scouts of America  
And  
United Church of Christ**

- 1 Whereas, The United Church of Christ (UCC) and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) have  
2 worked together to provide leadership and character development programs to serve the  
3 needs of boys, young adults, and their families through the member congregations of the  
4 United Church of Christ, chartering more than one thousand units, over more than one  
5 hundred years; and
- 6 Whereas, The Declaration of Religious Principle of the Boy Scouts of America has stated since  
7 1911: “The Boy Scouts of America, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the  
8 training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious  
9 training. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is  
10 connected shall give definite attention to religious life”; and
- 11 Whereas, the twelfth point of the Scout Law teaches, “A Scout is reverent. . . . He respects the  
12 beliefs of others,” and
- 13 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America is a non-sectarian organization that welcomes people of all  
14 faiths, and that prescribes no specific moral code but rather leaves to parents and faith-based  
15 organizations the responsibility to teach morality to youth; and
- 16 Whereas, the mission of the United Church of Christ is grounded in scripture, joins faith and  
17 action, and serves God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world; and
- 18 Whereas, the United Church of Christ’s core values are to participate in and give witness to the  
19 continuing testament of the still-speaking God, extend extravagant welcome to all, without  
20 discrimination, no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, and to change lives  
21 through the power of God’s love and by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and
- 22 Whereas, many members of the United Church of Christ live their faith with actions for justice  
23 and peace, bringing positive change to their communities, their country, and the world, and  
24 have demonstrated the UCC’s values of welcome and inclusion by ordaining ministers  
25 without discrimination since 1972; by the General Synod’s adoption of the “Open and  
26 Affirming” resolution (1985) which encourages its member congregations to be designated  
27 “Open and Affirming” through a study process and by adopting non-discrimination policies  
28 for all aspects of their ministries and use of church facilities; and by the UCC’s motto, “that  
29 they may all be one” (John 17:21); and

30 Whereas, it is the mission and vision of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to  
31 make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the  
32 Scout Oath and Scout Law, and to prepare every eligible youth in America to become a  
33 responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law;  
34 and

35 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America provides family-centered programs related to leadership  
36 and character development for youth where the programs are delivered through and  
37 according to the values, aims, and objectives of chartered organizations; and

38 Whereas, membership criteria for adults in Boy Scouts of America units appropriately includes  
39 certain background information reviews to protect the health and safety of the youth and  
40 adult members of the units; and

41 Whereas, Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or  
42 heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting; and

43 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual  
44 orientation; and

45 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that chartered organizations be responsible for the  
46 selection of adult leaders according to the chartered organizations' values, policies, and  
47 guidelines, and the Boy Scouts of America's standards, with at least one adult leader for a  
48 unit being a member of the chartered organization for such unit; and

49 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that each chartered organization subscribe to a  
50 policy of nondiscrimination as specified in the Unit Renewal Application Instructions; and

51 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that each chartered organization "Conduct the  
52 Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the Boy  
53 Scouts of America;" and

54 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America agrees "to respect the aims and objectives of the [chartered]  
55 organization" in the Annual Charter Agreement; and

56 Whereas, the aims and objectives of the United Church of Christ include providing a safe and  
57 welcoming environment to all persons without discrimination, including families with youth,  
58 to develop their relationship with God; to learn the teachings of Scripture; and especially for  
59 youth, to develop physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, and spiritually; and

60 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America's own panel of experts in the fields of psychiatry, criminal  
61 justice, education, and child abuse prevention in a recent report concluded that sexual  
62 orientation of youth and adults has no effect on the mental, emotional, sexual orientation, and  
63 physical well-being of youth under their care; and

64 Whereas, several local councils of the Boy Scouts of America have adopted non-discrimination  
65 policies, including non-discrimination with respect to sexual orientation, of its members,  
66 leaders, and employees; and

67 Whereas, Boy Scouts of America policies prohibit any parent of any registered youth from being  
68 excluded from unit, district, council, or national activities; and

69 Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America encourages all parents to register as adult volunteers and  
70 leaders in their child's unit;

71 Therefore, Be It

72 Resolved, That the United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America will work  
73 cooperatively to establish and nurture scouting units according to the values, aims, and  
74 objectives of the United Church of Christ, including welcoming and affirming the value of all  
75 boys, young adults, and adults, without discrimination, as an outreach of the ministry of the  
76 United Church of Christ and its member congregations so that boys, young adults, and adults,  
77 without discrimination, may grow in their relationships with God, develop into responsible  
78 citizens, serve the needs of others, and develop personally; and be it further

79 Resolved, That the United Church of Christ and the Boy Scouts of America will work  
80 cooperatively to establish and nurture safe environments for all boys, young adults, and  
81 adults, without discrimination, in units chartered by congregations of the United Church of  
82 Christ, by fully implementing the Youth Protection standards, the Guide to Safe Scouting,  
83 and other methods prescribed by Boy Scouts of America and by the United Church of Christ  
84 to protect the health and safety of the members of the units; and be it further

85 Resolved, That the Boy Scouts of America will respect the spiritual and moral responsibility of  
86 the United Church of Christ's chartering congregations with the understanding that there is  
87 no Boy Scout authority which supersedes the authority of the local pastor and the  
88 congregation in any phase of the program affecting the spiritual welfare of those who  
89 participate; and be it further

90 Resolved, That because sexual orientation is a matter that the various faiths and denominations  
91 address in different manners, the Boy Scouts of America shall respect the various views of  
92 the various churches of the United Church of Christ, and shall not promote one set of views  
93 over another; and be it further

94 Resolved, That Boy Scouts of America shall never employ discrimination of any form, including  
95 sexual orientation, when determining eligibility for new, continued, or renewed membership  
96 of youth, young adults, or adults in any unit chartered by a congregation of the United  
97 Church of Christ, but the congregation shall have the discretion to choose adult leaders  
98 according to the values of the congregation; and be it further

99 Resolved, That the United Church of Christ will convene, support and promote a committee  
100 ("Working Group") according to terms of reference set forth by the United Church of Christ  
101 and comprised of ministers and members of United Church of Christ congregations who also  
102 maintain membership in the Boy Scouts of America, and who will promote the Boy Scouts of  
103 America programs within the congregations of the United Church of Christ; and be it further

104 Resolved, That the Working Group will appoint up to three voting members to the Boy Scouts of  
105 America Religious Relationships Team; and be it finally

106 Resolved, That it is agreed all member congregations of the United Church of Christ may rely on  
107 the stipulations in this Memorandum of Understanding in operating under any charter they  
108 sign with the Boy Scouts of America.