

1 **Memorial on Support for the First Amendment Right to Boycott**

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3 WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its policy document “Boycott Policies and Procedures” defined
4 boycott as “A collective effort to abstain from the purchase or use of products or services
5 provided by a targeted firm, government or other agency,”¹ and

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7 WHEREAS, the ELCA, in “Boycott Policies and Procedures” further affirms that the “purpose
8 of a boycott is to persuade the targeted entity to cease certain practices judged to be unjust and/or
9 to perform certain practices deemed to be just”², and

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11 WHEREAS, boycotts, as a nonviolent political action to oppose injustice have an honorable
12 history from Americans’ pre-Revolutionary boycott of tea to the boycott of South Africa during
13 apartheid, and

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15 WHEREAS, historically, Lutherans have been involved in social movements that used boycotts
16 as a means of witness and reform in a wide range of areas, including the consumption of liquor
17 and tobacco, business establishments open on Sunday, objectionable entertainment, goods
18 produced with child or slave labor, gambling, and racial discrimination³, and

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20 WHEREAS, Martin Luther himself called for a boycott of the Fuggers, a merchant banking
21 company,⁴ and

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23 WHEREAS, Boycott, Divest, Sanctions [BDS] does not call for the end of Israel but rather seeks
24 for Israel to comply with international law and respect human rights, and

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26 WHEREAS, over 100 measures have been introduced in state and local legislatures and in the
27 U.S. Congress to punish BDS supporters, including those who merely refuse to pledge never to
28 boycott Israel.⁵ and

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30 WHEREAS, whatever one’s stance on specific boycotts, in view of the ongoing assault on the
31 right to boycott, this resolution is rooted in defense of the First Amendment right to speak and to
32 act nonviolently for the sake of the common good in accordance with one’s convictions

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34 THEREFORE, be it

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36 RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the ELCA
37 Churchwide Assembly to oppose legislation penalizing or criminalizing support for nonviolent
38 boycotts, divestment and/or sanctions on behalf of Palestinian human rights by requesting the
39 Presiding Bishop to call on the President of the United States and U.S. Congress to oppose the
40 same and to call upon synods, congregations, and members to oppose or overturn legislation
41 penalizing or criminalizing support for nonviolent boycotts, divestment and/or sanctions at their
42 state and local jurisdictional levels.

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44 Submitted by:

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46 The Working Group on the Middle East of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod
47 The Rev. Joanne Fitzgerald, Convener United, Oak Park

48 The Rev. Jeff Nichols Grace, La Grange
49 Mr. Don Schuemann New Hope, Aurora
50 Ms. Laurie Schuemann New Hope, Aurora
51 Mr. Dieter Schulte Luther Memorial, Chicago
52 The Rev. Leslie Weber St. Mark, Mt. Prospect
53 The Rev. Carole Willer Grace, La Grange

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56 1. Adopted by Church Council, November 1989 (CC89.11.183)

57 2. Ibid.

58 3. See, e.g., Klein, Christa R., with Christian D. von Dehsen, *Politics and Policy: The Genesis and*
59 *Theology of Social Statements in the Lutheran Church in America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press,
60 1989) for discussion of Lutheran involvement in the temperance movement of the 19th and 20th
61 centuries. (See the Preface and Chapter 1.)

62 4. Martin Luther, "Trade and Usury," Luther's Works, Vol. 45: Christian in Society II (Minneapolis:
63 Fortress Press, 1962).

5. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "State Anti-BDS Legislation," 1998,
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/> (Accessed March 7, 2022). To date, more than 30 states
have enacted anti-BDS measures, including governors' executive orders.

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66 Signature: _____
67 Pr. Leslie F. Weber, Jr.

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