

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

2
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
6

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
10

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
14

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
19

20 WHEREAS, Martin Luther himself called for a boycott of the Fuggers, a merchant banking
21 company,⁴ and
22

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
25

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
29

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
33

34 THEREFORE, be it
35

36 RESOLVED, that the Chicago Metropolitan Synod Assembly calls on Bishop Curry to urge our
37 Illinois Governor and state legislature to oppose and overturn legislation penalizing or criminalizing
38 support for nonviolent boycotts, divestment and/or sanctions on behalf of Palestinian human rights,
39 therefore be it further
40

41 RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide
42 Assembly to oppose legislation penalizing or criminalizing support for nonviolent boycotts, divestment
43 and/or sanctions on behalf of Palestinian human rights by requesting the Presiding Bishop to call on the
44 President of the United States and U.S. Congress to oppose the same and to call upon synods,
45 congregations, and members to oppose or overturn legislation penalizing or criminalizing support for
46 nonviolent boycotts, divestment and/or sanctions at their state and local jurisdictional levels.
47

48 Submitted by:
49

50 The Working Group on the Middle East of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod

51 The Rev. Joanne Fitzgerald, Convener United, Oak Park

52 The Rev. Jeff Nichols Grace, La Grange

53 Mr. Don Schuemann New Hope, Aurora

54 Ms. Laurie Schuemann New Hope, Aurora

55 Mr. Dieter Schulte Luther Memorial, Chicago

56 The Rev. Leslie Weber St. Mark, Mt. Prospect

57 The Rev. Carole Willer Grace, La Grange

58

59

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

61 2. Ibid.

62 3. See, e.g., Klein, Christa R., with Christian D. von Dehsen, *Politics and Policy: The Genesis and*
63 *Theology of Social Statements in the Lutheran Church in America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press,
64 1989) for discussion of Lutheran involvement in the temperance movement of the 19th and 20th
65 centuries. (See the Preface and Chapter 1.)

66 4. Martin Luther, "Trade and Usury," Luther's Works, Vol. 45: Christian in Society II
67 (Minneapolis: 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.

68

69

70 Signature: _____

71 Pr. Leslie F. Weber, Jr.