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TO: Voting Members of SCNC-UCC Annual Gathering
RE: Proposed Amendment to Conference Bylaws Article IX Paragraph 27

As delegates consider the proposed bylaw amendment, it may help to know that if passed, this amendment does not require, recommend, or even imply any action be taken at the Local Church setting with respect to existing reversionary clauses. The proposed amendment is solely to bring our Conference bylaws into alignment with our UCC polity and governance documents, which our SCNC-UCC Board of Directors Chair, Rev. Sarah Averette-Phillips described in Paragraph 2 of the Background Information she provided.

Why then, if this is a piece of business solely between our Conference and the National Setting, are the delegates of Annual Gathering being asked to vote on it?

The discrepancy arises in our Conference bylaws. Procedurally, our Conference bylaws may only be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present and voting at an Annual Meeting or Special Meeting of the Conference (SCNC-UCC Bylaws, Article XIV, Paragraph 39), consistent with UCC polity and governance practices. Therefore, only our annual meeting delegates can resolve the existing contradiction even though once passed no action need be taken by any of the voting members or by any of our Local Churches.

Chair Sarah also wisely suggests that there are many reasons why reversionary clauses to the Conference are good practice, including helping to protect a church from steeplejacking. In addition, there are a few very narrow circumstances under which a reversionary clause may be required, primarily where the Conference acts as co-signer for a Local Church to facilitate a loan secured by real estate owned by the Local Church. These occasions are infrequent, and when they arise, are accompanied by a process of discernment and covenant between the congregation and the Conference, with clear understandings of the risks, benefits, and responsibilities of all. Thus, passage of this proposed bylaw amendment would not affect the wisdom or propriety of existing or future voluntary reversionary clauses.

Accordingly, an affirmative vote by 2/3 of the members present and voting at the SCNC-UCC Annual Meeting will rectify the existing inconsistency between the Conference and the National Setting and bring us back into mutual alignment.



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