



PETITIONS

2024 GENERAL CONFERENCE PETITIONS

2023 Annual Conference

June 2-4, 2023

Grand Traverse Resort

Acme, Michigan



Michigan Conference

The United Methodist Church

CONSIDERATION OF A PETITION TO (POSTPONED 2020) GENERAL CONFERENCE

The next session of the General Conference (technically the postponed 2020 session) is scheduled for April 23 through May 3, 2024. We are anticipating that the Commission on the General Conference soon will announce that additional legislation may be submitted. However as of May 1, 2023, we don't know the specifics regarding additional submissions.

Our Michigan Conference Rules of Order (2023 Rule 6.7.3.2) provide that we may consider "petitions to General or Jurisdictional conferences" ... "except that they shall not be subject to amendment (although they shall be subject to substitution, and substitute motions shall be subject to amendment)."

The General Conference petition below was duly submitted in February 2023 for consideration at the 2023 Michigan Conference session. It will be scheduled for consideration during one of the Plenary sessions.

1 **New Resolution** - Paragraph 165 THE WORLD COMMUNITY – Peacemaking

2 **Submitted by:** Rev. Rich Peacock, Troy First United Methodist Church, 248-321-7480

3

4 Advocate for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

5 “He (the LORD) makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;
6 he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
7 he burns the shields with fire.” (Psalm 46: 9)

8 The prophet Isaiah envisioned what United Methodists seek to practice, “The effect of
9 righteousness will be peace.” (32: 17)

10 Jesus the Christ, whom we praise as the Prince of Peace, commanded his followers to
11 love God, neighbor, and enemy. And the Holy Spirit inspires us to do the things that
12 make for peace.

13 In reference to Jesus’ Beatitude, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called
14 the children of God,” St. Basil the Great wrote, “Nothing is more characteristic of a
15 Christian than peacemaking; for that, the Lord promised the greatest reward.”

16 Therefore, the 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church encourages
17 its members and friends to follow the Psalmist’s injunction, “Seek peace, and pursue it.”
18 (34: 14b)

19 “In particular, we support the abolition of nuclear weapons.” (Resolution 6129.)

20 The Danger of Nuclear Armageddon

21 The reality is that the specter of nuclear war casts a large shadow over humans who
22 universally want a peaceable planet. Nuclear war is an existential threat. The nuclear-
23 armed powers possess around 13,000 nuclear weapons and do not have No First Strike
24 policies.

25 According to the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, the world stands closer to “doomsday”
26 than at any point during even the darkest days of the Cold War. A full-scale nuclear war
27 could spell the end of human civilization as we know it. And the use of even one nuclear
28 weapon would create a humanitarian disaster of unparalleled proportions.

29 People who fire nuclear weapons will slaughter human beings, animals, and plants
30 indiscriminately. They endanger all of God’s creation, which we have no right to ruin.

31 People trust in nuclear deterrence even though nuclear weapons do not guarantee a
32 nation’s security, do not prevent conventional war as illustrated in the war over Ukraine,
33 and do not ensure that any country will win a war. The possession of nuclear weapons
34 creates incentives for countries and terrorists to obtain them and use them.

1 Nations have used nuclear weapons as tools of policy fostering nuclear arms races, the
 2 heightening of tensions among nations, coercion, and intimidation. Moreover, there
 3 have been false alarms about an enemy attack that have nearly led to the launching of
 4 a nuclear response by the United States and Russia.

5 As long as nuclear weapons exist, there is the daily risk that these weapons will be
 6 purposely used by some leaders or terrorists. There is also the real risk that nuclear
 7 weapons will be fired due to human error, computer malfunction, cyber-attack,
 8 miscalculation, misunderstanding, or miscommunication.

9 The manufacturing of nuclear arsenals requires unnecessary taxation and handicaps
 10 the efforts to overcome hunger, disease, poverty, climate crises, racism, and inequality.

11 “Nuclear weapons merit unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation. These are
 12 doomsday arms – genocidal, ecocidal, and suicidal.” (William Sloane Coffin, Jr., January
 13 1, 2006)

14 United Methodists and Nuclear War

15 Our bishops’ historic position remains sound and clear: “We say a clear and
 16 unconditional ‘NO’ to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons. We conclude that
 17 nuclear deterrence is a position that cannot receive the church’s blessing.” (*In Defense*
 18 *of Creation*)

19 Our Social Principles (165. VI. C) asserts: “We advocate...that the production,
 20 possession or use of nuclear weapons be condemned.”

21 “In particular, we support the abolition of nuclear weapons.” (Resolution 6129.)

22 Trends toward Nuclear Disarmament

23 We believe that citizens around the world can organize to prevent nuclear war and to
 24 advocate for nuclear disarmament. We remember that citizens influenced U.S.
 25 presidents to refrain from using nuclear weapons during the Cuban Missile Crisis and
 26 the Vietnam War.

27 Mayors for Peace, founded in 1982 and led by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,
 28 has grown to over 1,800 cities working for a world without nuclear weapons.

29 We are pleased that the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China made a
 30 legally-binding commitment to eliminate their nuclear weapons when they ratified the
 31 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty more than 50 years ago. We urge them to keep their
 32 promise.

33 We are glad that the number of nuclear weapons has decreased from 70,000 to under
 34 13,000. And investors are divesting from nuclear weapons companies as global norms
 35 are shifting.

1 We welcome the 2022 Joint Statement by the leaders of China, France, Russia, Great
2 Britain, Northern Ireland, and the United States that, “a nuclear war cannot be won and
3 must never be fought.”

4 We urge that all nuclear-armed nations end the policy of the first use of nuclear
5 weapons, take nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert, eliminate land based
6 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and commence nuclear disarmament.

7 The United Nations’ Treaty on the Prohibition

8 The United Nations’ Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) makes it
9 illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, stockpile, transfer, or use or
10 threaten to use nuclear weapons. 122 nations voted for the TPNW in 2017. It entered
11 into force on January 22, 2021, 92 nations have signed it, and 68 nations have ratified it
12 as of January 2023.

13 In June, 2022 the TPNW signatories developed the Vienna Action Plan, which describes
14 how countries will implement the treaty.

15 We assert that the TPNW meets the five criteria for nuclear disarmament in Resolution
16 6129: Verification; Irreversibility; Transparency; Universality; Legally binding. The TPNW
17 is a worthy international law for the abolition of nuclear weapons that deserves our
18 support.

19 Therefore, the 2024 General Conference advocates for all nations to ratify and observe
20 the United Nations’ Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

21 We thank thousands of legislators worldwide who have signed the Nobel Peace Prize
22 winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons’ Pledge (pledge.icanw.org)
23 to advocate for the TPNW.

24 Advocacy Actions

25 The 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church encourages:

- 26 1. Lawmakers in every country to sign the Pledge to advocate for the United
27 Nations’ Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at
28 icanw.org/pledge.
- 29
30 2. United Methodists to repeatedly urge their elected representatives to sign the
31 Pledge to advocate for their nation to ratify the TPNW at icanw.org/pledge.
- 32
33 3. United Methodists in every country to regularly advocate for their country to ratify
34 and implement the TPNW.
- 35
36 4. The General Board of Church and Society to provide resources for our bishops,
37 clergy, and laity to advocate for the TPNW.