



Northern Illinois Conference

OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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As you may know, the Boy Scouts of America recently settled a lawsuit related to accusations of sexual abuse of children. Many churches, including United Methodists, have chartered BSA troops or packs over the years. As part of the settlement, the United Methodist Church has agreed to raise and give \$30 million over a three-year period to a fund to compensate survivors. The church also agreed to work for the healing of survivors and recommit to work toward ending sexual abuse of young people.

We have heard the cries and painful stories of those abused while in the Boy Scout program, some in troops chartered at local NIC churches. Our Christian faith calls us to have an obligation to children – past, present, and future – to do no harm to them and to repair the breach when harm is done.

The Repair the Harm to Children campaign was created to address the needs of the survivors in three ways: listening and providing healing to the survivors, contributing our fair share to the survivor fund established by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, and working to create safeguards against harm in the future. It was formed by the Conference Committee on Finance and Administration and the Conference Board of Trustees in collaboration with Bishop Schwerin and the conference staff. We seek pledges from churches and individuals to fund restorative healing for the survivors.

We care for the survivors financially by contributing our fair share to the survivor fund established by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Of the \$30 million committed by the United Methodist Church, the amount allocated to Northern Illinois is \$754,348. The amount is payable over the next three years, but no reparations will be paid to survivors until all United Methodist annual conferences have paid their fair share.

We intend that every church will contribute and repair the past harm as quickly as possible. We recommend that the church administrative councils discuss their pledge decision with input from the finance committee and/or the church's Scouting liaisons. All pledges are welcome and meaningful to the healing of victims of sexual abuse. We are grateful for what you are able to do to meet this financial challenge.

We ask you to consider your commitment during April and May prayerfully. Our first goal is to receive initial pledges by the start Annual Conference this June. A church or an individual can make a pledge at UMCNIC.org/RepairtheHarm. You may complete your pledge over three years. As you consider your ability and duty, we have provided resources on the same website.

We are asking for payments towards pledges to start in the fall of 2023. Payments can be made online at UMCNIC.org/RepairtheHarm or via check.

All children in the care of United Methodist churches should be safe from any kind of harm. Unless repairs are made to children who have been hurt, we are not being honest with the children God brings us now and in the future. We are speaking to every United Methodist in the NIC when we ask for your participation in repairing the damage done to the children of formerly chartered BSA troops and creating safe spaces for the future.

To safeguard against any future harm, all churches in the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church (NIC) have committed to having Safe Sanctuary policies administered by their church leaders and appointed clergy. Safe Sanctuaries is an overt expression in making congregations safe places for all within the community of faith. More information can be found at UMCNIC.org/SafeSanctuaries.

If you would like more information, review the attached FAQ page or visit UMCNIC.org/RepairtheHarm.

Thank you for taking the time to prayerfully respond with a Christian heart to the harm that has been done.

Rev. Tammy Scott , CCFA President