

REC 26-19 | DISCONTINUANCE: LA TRINIDAD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SUBJECT: La Trinidad UMC, Los Angeles, CA

SUBMITTED BY: Appointive Cabinet and the Conference Board of Trustees

WHEREAS the La Trinidad United Methodist Church (LTUMC) is the successor congregation to the Iglesia Metodista Unida of Latin American Mission founded in 1936, and

WHEREAS, La Trinidad UMC has been an historic religious presence in the Hispanic community of East Los Angeles, rooted in a long tradition of ministry among Mexican American communities. Established as part of Methodist outreach to Spanish-speaking populations, the church served for generations as both a place of worship and a cultural anchor in East L.A., a community shaped by migration, labor, and civil rights struggles, and

WHEREAS, Over the last 10 years, the West District Union, Hispanic Ministry Team and Conference staff have worked with the pastors and remnant congregation to assess and revitalize ministry potential, the church nonetheless experienced a precipitous decline in congregational membership and the state of its buildings, and

WHEREAS the church, District, and Conference pursued transformation of the property and ministry by securing an affordable housing project with a worship space for a ground lease payment of \$3.3 million; and

WHEREAS this payment intended for future Latine/Hispanic ministry in East Los Angeles was improperly redirected by some church members, placing those funds at risk, and

WHEREAS ¶2549.4b of the *2020/2024 Book of Discipline* provides that “At any time between sessions of annual conference, if the presiding bishop, the majority of the district superintendents, and the appropriate district board of church location and building all consent, they may, in their sole discretion, declare that exigent circumstances exist that require immediate protection of the local church’s property, for the benefit of the denomination. In such case, title to all the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church shall immediately vest in the annual conference board of trustees who may hold or dispose of such property in its sole discretion, subject to any standing rule of the annual conference,” and

WHEREAS the presiding bishop, the majority of the district superintendents, and the appropriate district board of church location and building agreed that exigent circumstances required immediate protection of the property of La Trinidad United Methodist Church, and

WHEREAS effective on January 13, 2026, an *ad interim* exigent-circumstance declaration was issued for La Trinidad UMC as a local church, and all real and personal property became vested in the Conference Board of Trustees as per ¶2549.4(b) and ¶2501, and

WHEREAS recorded title remains in the name of the church corporation pending conveyance or other action directed by the Trustees, and

1 **WHEREAS** \$2.8 million of the ground lease funds have been reclaimed through legal remedies, and
2 the Conference continues to pursue reclamation of an additional \$300,000 through legal remedies,
3 and also locate missing bank records detailing the disposition of initial deposits totalling \$180,000,
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5 **WHEREAS** the reclaimed funds have been invested in the California-Pacific United Methodist
6 Foundation for Hispanic ministry in East LA, net of arrears payments to the Conference and West
7 District and current operating funds for Nueva Esperanza, and
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9 **WHEREAS** in the course of creating the affordable housing LLC with Domus Development, the
10 District Superintendent obtained the opinion of legal counsel as to the existence of any
11 reversion, possibilities of reverter, right of reacquisition or similar restrictions pursuant to 2020/2024
12 Book of Discipline ¶2549.1;
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14 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the California-Pacific Annual Conference, pursuant to
15 *The Book of Discipline* ¶ 2549, hereby confirms the January 13, 2026 *ad interim* declaration of
16 exigent circumstances and the vesting of all real and personal, tangible and intangible property of La
17 Trinidad United Methodist Church in the California-Pacific Conference Board of Trustees, and
18 hereby formally declares La Trinidad United Methodist Church, Los Angeles, California,
19 closed/discontinued as a local church; and
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21 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Conference Board of Trustees is authorized and directed
22 to take all actions necessary under church law and civil law to hold, protect, recover, administer,
23 convey, lease, sell, or otherwise dispose of the property and related funds, subject
24 to *Discipline* ¶¶ 2501, 2506, 2508, 2512, and 2549, any applicable standing rules of the Annual
25 Conference, and any restrictions required by law; and
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27 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the District Superintendent shall ensure that the members of
28 La Trinidad United Methodist Church are transferred in accordance with *Discipline* ¶ 229 to Nueva
29 Esperanza United Methodist Mission, or otherwise to another United Methodist local church
30 selected by the District Superintendent or by the members; and
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32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Conference Board of Trustees shall administer any
33 recovered funds and net property proceeds for new and/or existing ministries within urban
34 transitional communities, including Latine/Hispanic ministry in East Los Angeles, consistent with
35 *Discipline* ¶¶ 212 and 2549.8.