

A Resolution Calling for Prison Reform in Alabama

Remember those who are in prison, as though you were there with them. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. Hebrews 13:3

WHEREAS, *nowhere* in scripture do we find a divine endorsement of prisons, but rather we see repeatedly that prisons in the Bible are usually part of a larger apparatus of injustice and oppression, and an extension of the spirit of death, and

WHEREAS, upon visiting Draper Correctional Facility in Elmore County, members of the Alabama-West Florida Conference Board of Church & Society found inhumane conditions — specifically, extreme overcrowding (nearly 200% capacity), no air conditioning, inadequate bathroom facilities, limited educational and rehabilitative opportunities, and lack of supervision creating conditions that are dangerous to inmates, employees, and all who enter the facility, and

WHEREAS, the recent Department of Justice report on conditions at Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women and other sources indicate that inhumane and dangerous conditions are pervasive throughout the 29 state facilities run by the Alabama Department of Corrections,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, in the love of Christ, who came to save those who are lost and vulnerable, urges the creation of a genuinely new system for the care and restoration of victims, offenders, criminal justice officials, and the community as a whole, and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church calls upon the Alabama Legislature and Governor, to change mandatory sentencing laws that continually expand prison populations at greater expense than alternatives that have better outcomes for prisoners, victims and citizens, and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that United Methodists in the Alabama-West Florida Conference who are residents of Alabama be encouraged to contact their state legislators to demand that immediate steps be taken to significantly improve the conditions of Alabama state prisons and to reduce the prison population, and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of Alabama and every member of the Alabama State Legislature.

Submitted by the Board of Church and Society of the Alabama-West Florida Conference