

## A Resolution Calling for Death Penalty Reform in Alabama

*“Whoever is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone.”*(John 8:7)

WHEREAS, Jesus made it clear with this statement that no one has the moral authority to condemn a fellow human to death, and

WHEREAS, Alabama has executed 56 people since 1983 and currently holds 185 people who have been condemned to death, and

WHEREAS, nearly 40 of these individuals were sentenced by a judge who imposed the death penalty despite a jury’s recommendation for life without parole, a practice currently being applied only in Alabama courts, and

WHEREAS, in the United States in 2015 five Death Row inmates were exonerated, one of whom spent 30 years on Alabama’s Death Row before being freed after prosecutors were persuaded to retest evidence, and

WHEREAS, the manner in which the death penalty is determined has recently been the subject of a U.S. Supreme Court opinion, and may necessitate change

WHEREAS, the manner in which the death penalty is carried out has been a continuing issue regarding availability of the chemical means, and the argument that it causes pain and suffering when administered; and

WHEREAS, a cost-effectiveness analysis shows that it is far less costly to sentence a capital defendant to life in prison without parole rather than to the death penalty; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Himself was the victim of an unjust trial and was unjustly executed as a result, giving rise to the possibility that other condemned individuals may be unfairly convicted, and

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states in Social Principle 164G that “we believe in the resurrection of Christ and that the possibility of reconciliation with Christ comes though repentance,” and that, “this gift of reconciliation is offered to all individuals without exception and gives all life new dignity and sacredness,” and “for this reason, we oppose the death penalty and urge its elimination from all criminal codes,”

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, in the love of Christ, who preached nonviolence in all human interaction, calls for a moratorium on all state executions, 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 and urge this and other reforms to Alabama’s death penalty laws, 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 Conference Board of Church and Society.