

A Resolution Calling for the Renaming of the Third Monday in January by the State of Alabama

WHEREAS “The United Methodist Church recognizes the prophetic witness of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his message of justice and peace embodies the spirit of the Social Creed, the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church and the inclusiveness of our denomination. His words continue to inspire and guide our commitment to the whole Gospel and the observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day enriches and strengthens our social witness today” (*The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church - 2008, Resolution #61, 2004 Book of Resolutions*); and

WHEREAS, the State of Alabama is one of only two states that continue to recognize the third Monday in January as Robert E. Lee/Martin Luther King Birthday, and the recognition of General Robert E. Lee on the same holiday as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. represents an era of slavery and oppression in contrast to Dr. King’s message of justice and peace; and

WHEREAS, it is a transgression against our biblical understanding of human equality in the image of God to continually subject nearly one-third of the State of Alabama’s population to a perceived celebration of their own dehumanization; and

WHEREAS, our nation’s pledge of allegiance is not to the Confederacy that General Lee represents, but to the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, most public school systems utilize the same holiday calendar as the State of Alabama so the schoolchildren of Alabama are led to think that General Lee’s influence on our nation is just as important as Dr. King’s; and

WHEREAS, the culture expressed in the recognition of General Lee’s birthday as a State of Alabama holiday on the same day as the federal recognition of Dr. King’s birthday is a point of hindrance in the recruitment of clergy from outside of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, thereby limiting the quality of leadership for the good of our local churches; and

WHEREAS, the recognition of General Lee as a State of Alabama holiday on the same day as Dr. King's federally recognized holiday has proven to be a divisive issue among Alabamians, erecting unnecessary barriers of understanding and unity among our citizens,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, in the love of Christ, who came to bring justice and peace, beseech our Legislature without further delay to change the State of Alabama holiday on the third Monday of January to only recognize Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, thus recognizing only Dr. King's prophetic witness of justice and peace on the federally recognized holiday,

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

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