

## **Resolution Supporting Youth Involved in Youth Led Movements**

**Whereas** the Bible gives us many stories of youth who led by example, including, but not limited to, David (who fought Goliath as a youth), Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (who refused to abandon their faith as youth), the child maidservant of Naaman's wife (who shared her faith that God could use Elisha to heal Naaman's leprosy), Jeremiah (who responded to God's call to be a prophet during his youth), and the unnamed boy (who shared his loaves of bread and fish so Jesus could feed the multitude); and

**Whereas** our country has witnessed great social change through youth who led by example, including, but not limited to, the adoption of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States standardizing the voting age to 18 (in large part due to student protests), and the beginning of the desegregation of many of Birmingham's public facilities in May of 1963 (in large part due to the "Children's Crusade" when more than 900 school children were arrested and put in Birmingham's jails for peaceably protesting segregation); and

**Whereas** our country is currently witnessing a resurgence of youth led movements in response to gun violence and other social concerns; and

**Whereas** we are also witnessing responses by some adults (on all sides) that impugn the dignity and sacred worth of youth leaders (on all sides) through personal attacks because they don't share the same ideology; and

**Whereas** the United Methodist Church has affirmed in its Social Principles that "young people [...] frequently find participation in society difficult" and that we should "urge development of policies that encourage inclusion of young people in decision-making processes and that eliminate discrimination and exploitation (§ 162 D); now therefore, be it

**Resolved**, that the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference:

1. condemns all ad hominem attacks, especially ones directed toward youth or children;
2. proclaims the sacred worth of all youth in youth led movements, whether or not we agree with their ideology;
3. affirms youth leaders, and potential youth leaders, in our local congregations and in our Annual Conference;
4. encourages intergenerational dialogue, worship, mission, fellowship, and evangelism in local churches; and
5. expresses appreciation and encouragement to the Youth Delegates, youth pages, and all other youth present at Annual Conference.