RES 20-04 | RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO THE MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD AND OTHERS

SUBJECT: A 2021 General Conference that Is Safe for Persons of All Races and Cultures

SUBMITTED BY: Frank Wulf, Stuart Ahn, Darin Arnston, Richard Bentley, Cedrick Bridgeforth, Tom Choi, Judy Chung, Patricia Farris, Joann Yoon Fukumoto, Rachel Gipson, Tonya Harris, Katharine Henry, Mele Maka, Allison Mark, Mandy McDow, Sandra Olewine, Liz Roark, Erich Schmitt, Mark Stephenson, Jason Takagi, Dione Taylor, Monalisa Tu’itahi, Phillip Valdes, Molly Vetter, Claire Williams

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT: None

SOURCE OF STAFF TIME: Not Applicable

WHEREAS we are baptized to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves; and

WHEREAS the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church in its pastoral letter of June 8, 2020 states: “We ask every United Methodist to name the egregious sin of racism and white supremacy and join together to take a stand against the oppression and injustice that is killing persons of color.”

WHEREAS the Minneapolis Police Department has a shameful history of racist violence against black and brown people; and

WHEREAS the murder of George Floyd by an officer from the Minneapolis Police Department has sparked renewed protests across the U.S. and around the world for an end to the ongoing epidemic of police violence against black and brown people; and

WHEREAS the murder of George Floyd is neither the first nor the last act of violence to be committed by police and vigilantes in the United States – we must also remember Philando Castile, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Rayshard Brooks, and far too many others; and

WHEREAS Black Lives Matters is calling for ongoing resistance in opposition to police violence and brutality against black and brown people in the Twin Cities and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS the Minneapolis City Council is seriously exploring the possibility of defunding the police and finding alternative means for providing security for the city’s residents; and

WHEREAS black and brown delegates to the United Methodist General Conference scheduled for August 29-September 7 in Minneapolis have legitimate and compelling reasons to be fearful for their safety in that city or in any other city in the United States;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the California-Pacific Annual Conference urges the Commission on the General Conference and the Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Commission on Religion and Race, and the General Board of Church and Society to work closely with Black Lives Matter Minneapolis, the leadership of the City of Minneapolis, and the leadership of the State of Minnesota to ensure that all delegates to the 2021 General Conference will both be and feel safe participating irrespective of race, culture, nationality, or language; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the California-Pacific Annual Conference strongly urges the Commission on the General Conference and the Council of Bishops to make a public announcement about the specific measures that are being taken to secure the physical, emotional and spiritual safety and
well-being of black and brown participants to the General Conference well in advance of the participants’ arrival in Minneapolis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the California-Pacific Annual Conference calls for significant time to be set aside during the first week of the 2021 General Conference for dialogue with Black Lives Matter and other established anti-racist organizations to address the Church’s complicity in racism and white privilege and to explore how the Church itself must change to become authentically anti-racist and take its proper place in the creation of a world that is truly just for all; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the California-Pacific Annual Conference calls upon the 2021 General Conference to create and financially support Shalom Partnerships between the church at all levels of its existence and established grassroots organizations across the United States and around the world that are led by under-represented persons in order to: 1) ameliorate the damage already caused by colonialism, systemic racism and white privilege, 2) participate in trainings and spiritual formation networks that nurture anti-racist personhood, and 3) build communities of authentic relationships through which the work of true equality and justice are realized.