



### Resolution Supporting Harm Reduction for LGBTQ Teens

WHEREAS, according to the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, “We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons,” (§161 F); and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church has affirmed its commitment to be in ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, and points out that “an individual confronting his or her own minority sexual orientation and/or that of a close family member, friend, or associate often experiences isolation, confusion, and fear when he or she needs information, guidance, and support, and we recognize that teens dealing with questions about sexual orientation are at a greater risk for suicide” (#2041, 2012 Book of Resolutions); and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church has also affirmed its opposition to homophobia and heterosexism, and its opposition to “all forms of violence or discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual practice, or sexual orientation” (#2042, 2012 Book of Resolutions); and

“WHEREAS, even though our church has diverse opinions on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, **our challenge is to figure out how to share the Good News and be in ministry together in spite of our differences. We are committed to abide by the Discipline and teach on all of our Social Principles.** We share a commitment to do no harm, to do good by strengthening families, and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the United Methodist churches of the North Alabama Conference will educate families about how to respond with love to their youth who share that their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression may not conform to their family’s expectations; this response includes affirming the value and sacred worth of their youth, maintaining safe spaces and not severing ties with their youth, and demonstrating respect for their youth. It is not necessary for parents to agree with their children in order to demonstrate love. **Whether a family responds with joy or anxiety to their youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity, both parents and youth need a church’s sacred space in which to prayerfully seek growth, adjustment, transformation, along with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that where possible, United Methodist churches of the North Alabama Conference will work with local schools to encourage best practices for creating safe spaces, reducing bullying, and **showing gracious love to youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, or who question their sexual orientation or gender identity.**

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