

## Resolution for Pilgrimage to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice

WHEREAS our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ made it clear that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34) by extending his ministry to Samaritans and Gentiles (John 12:20-27); he broke social boundaries by meeting with the woman at the well (John 4), by healing a Samaritan (Luke 17:11-19), and scandalized religious and ethnic exclusivists by making a Samaritan the hero of his parable (Luke 10:25-37); AND

WHEREAS Paul declared that there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female, but all are one in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28), AND

WHEREAS that the Social Principles of the *Book of Discipline* state that racism “includes both personal and institutional racism,” that racism “plagues and cripples our growth in Christ,” and that the United Methodist Church asserts “the obligation of society and groups within that society to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic people” (§162.A), AND

WHEREAS John Wesley and the early Methodists were staunch abolitionists who preached the Good News to and with all people, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or nationality, AND

WHEREAS the “Methodist Laymen’s Union,” a version of White Citizen’s Council was founded within the Methodist Church in May 1955; such organizations were responsible for directly and indirectly supporting discrimination, racial terror, violence, and lynchings across the southeast, AND

WHEREAS on April 26, 2018, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery opened to the public in order to educate the world about the history of racial terror lynchings against black people in the United States; the Legacy Museum likewise tells the history of how mass incarceration is simply an extension of slavery and racial violence, AND

WHEREAS white people in Alabama have yet to come to terms with and accept responsibility for their complicity in silencing this history, and where there is no truth-telling there can be no reconciliation, AND

WHEREAS our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ made it clear that truth would set us free, and “everything hidden will be revealed, and everything secret will come out into the open” (Mark 4:22),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the churches of the North Alabama Conference will endeavor to make pilgrimages to the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery as soon as possible; that we will treat such pilgrimages with reverence, curiosity, and contrition; and that, where possible, we will partner with other churches in our communities and across racial lines to make this pilgrimage together so that no one is prevented from making the pilgrimage for financial reasons.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will speak from the pulpit, Sunday school classes, and small groups about what our faith says about personal racism, systemic racism, privilege, and truth and reconciliation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that where possible, since the National Memorial for Peace and Justice has already produced memorials to be placed in each county, our churches will partner with other community organizations, being intentional about listening to local voices and including many voices in the effort, to bring local memorials and historical markers to every county where lynching has occurred. Placing these memorials will require a diverse community-wide effort at education, sensitive truth-telling, and spiritual healing, but we are committed to do so because we serve a God of peace and justice.

**Rationale:** Several congregations have already made pilgrimage to the National Memorial and the Legacy Museum. Participants have described the experience as moving, educational, and life-changing. This is an opportunity for spiritual growth for United Methodists, as well as an opportunity for partnership, community engagement, and truth and reconciliation.

**Congregational Resources:** *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson

The Equal Justice Initiative: <https://eji.org/>

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice: [www.museumandmemorial.eji.org](http://www.museumandmemorial.eji.org)

The Jefferson County Memorial Project (a model for bringing a memorial to your county):  
[www.jeffersoncountymemorial.com](http://www.jeffersoncountymemorial.com)

*Submitted by: David Barnhart, Reggie Holder, James Fields*

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**Committee vote: 7 Yes (Concurrence) 0 No (Non-concurrence)**

**The role of the Committee is not to approve or disapprove the content of a particular petition or resolution but to ensure that they have followed the appropriate process (as outlined in our standing rules) and that they are in agreement with the Book of Discipline, including our Social Principles, and our standing rules.**