

Recommendation #5 (Note: amendment marked in Red type)

Resolution to Stop Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse

1 Recognizing that all persons are created in the image of God, are worthy of God's grace, and are welcome into
2 relationship with Christ Jesus;

3 WHEREAS, the 2008 *General Conference of The United Methodist Church* addressed violence against women and
4 children in *Resolution #3423* and pledged to work for the eradication of domestic violence and sexual abuse;

5 The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church affirm the family as "*the basic human community through*
6 *which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity.*" Clearly violence and abuse
7 *cannot be tolerated within such an understanding. The Social Principles are explicit: "We recognize that family violence and*
8 *abuse in all its forms—verbal, psychological, physical, sexual—is detrimental to the covenant of the human community. We*
9 *encourage the Church to provide a safe environment, counsel and support for the victim. While we deplore the actions of*
10 *the abuser, we affirm that person to be in need of God's redeeming love."* (adapted from Resolution #3423)

11 WHEREAS, national statistics report:

- 12 ● One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime;
- 13 ● One in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape;
- 14 ● An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year;
- 15 ● The majority (73%) of family violence victims are female. Females were 84% of spousal abuse
16 victims and 86% of abuse victims at the hands of a boyfriend;
- 17 ● The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$5.8 billion each year, \$4.1 billion of which is for
18 direct medical and mental health services;
- 19 ● Boys who witness domestic violence are *twice as likely* to abuse their own partners and children
20 when they become adults.

21 WHEREAS, as recently as 2006, statistics in Ohio report:

- 22 ● 20,608 domestic violence cases were filed in Ohio;
- 23 ● 135,645 people received domestic violence services;
- 24 ● 10,484 domestic violence victims received shelter;
- 25 ● 34,027 arrests were made under Ohio's domestic violence statute and 4,485
26 domestic violence arrests were made under other sections;
- 27 ● 345 deaths occurred as a result of domestic violence;
- 28 ● 4,548 forcible rapes were reported in Ohio;
- 29 ● 25,928 domestic violence victims were wives or live-in partners of their offenders;

1 Whereas, the Scriptures remind us of the value of all persons and the need to rise above violence:

2 *"Parents, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* Ephesians 6:4

3 *"But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive language from your mouth."*

4 Colossians 3:8

5 *"Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil
6 for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might
7 inherit a blessing."* 1 Peter 3: 8-9

8 *"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."*

9 John 13:34

10 WHEREAS, domestic violence is abhorrent to all Christians;

11 We resolve to:

- 12 ● Raise awareness through West Ohio Conference resources around the issues of domestic violence
- 13 ● Ask that all United Methodist congregations in West Ohio seek to:
 - 14 ○ Create a church climate of openness, acceptance, and safety that encourages victims to speak
15 of their pain and seek relief and healing.
 - 16 ○ Encourage all clergy and lay leaders to work collaboratively with community agencies on
17 prevention strategies and to provide for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of victims,
18 offenders, and other family members.
 - 19 ○ Adopt policy and procedures for keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse in
20 church facilities and programs.
 - 21 ○ Assess currently available prevention and response resources in the community and, where
22 indicated as appropriate, initiate new programs and services. Wherever possible, undertake
23 new programs ecumenically or as part of a community coalition.
 - 24 ○ Set up and/or work with peer support groups for battered spouses, for adults who were
25 sexually abused as children, and for rape victims. A trained resource person or professional
26 counselor should be consulted for assistance in setting up peer support groups.
 - 27 ○ Encourage church members to volunteer their services to existing shelters, crisis centers, and
28 other community services. Insist upon training for volunteers.
 - 29 ○ Re-examine, scriptural **interpretation** and theological messages, cultures, and traditions,
30 **and change if necessary**, that validate violence or abuse or support a view of women as
31 subordinate to men or children as property of adults. Pay particular attention to church
32 teachings on repentance and forgiveness.
 - 33 ○ Participate in Domestic Violence Awareness Month each October and Child Abuse Prevention
34 Month each April.

- 1 o Urge clergy to preach on domestic violence and sexual abuse topics; urge congregants to host
2 or cooperate in community education events and to highlight opportunities for involvement
3 in prevention and service activities.
4 (adapted from Resolution 3423)

5 Resources for education and action:

- 6 ● Ohio Domestic Violence Network: www.ncadv.org/files/Ohio.pdf
7 ● National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
8 ● National Domestic Violence Hotline
9 ● National Sexual Assault Hotline
10 ● General Board of Church and Society
11 ● Women's Division

Signed:

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