

## **Resolution to Adopt Racial Justice and Equity as a Priority in 2022**

**WHEREAS**, The United Methodist Church recognizes racism as sin and affirms the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons\*; and

**WHEREAS**, since its inception, Austin, Texas has depended on the agriculture of enslaved Black people and bonded servants, and in nearly 200 years of progress Austin has yet to address or fully commit to allowing Black residents equal opportunities to enjoy this advancement; and

**WHEREAS**, the 1928 Austin City Master Plan separated Austinites with race as a sole factor, acting as a legalized form of segregation, created a “Negro District,” and resulted in the intentional and negatively disproportional restriction of resources for the Black community – the residual effects of which are still experienced today; and

**WHEREAS**, intentional segregation followed by city policies enabling gentrification resulted in mass displacement of Black Austinites from their historic communities in Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, Black residents have experienced state-sanctioned racism in the form of Jim Crow laws, racially restrictive covenants, and bank redlining in Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin’s racially biased criminal justice system has resulted in Black Austinites making up 35% of our jail population while comprising only 7% of Austin’s total residents; and

**WHEREAS**, race is the single leading factor in all social determinants that lead to homelessness in Austin, and Black Austinites make up approximately 37% of our population of people experiencing homelessness while comprising less than 10% of Austin's total residents.

**WHEREAS**, a 2017 study, funded by the Urban Institute, ranks Austin in the top quarter of the nation’s economically segregated areas; and

**WHEREAS**, The United Methodist Church has committed to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access\*; and

**WHEREAS**, The United Methodist Church asserts the obligation of society and people within the society to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic persons\*; and

**WHEREAS**, the Rio Texas Conference through the Bishop's Task Force on Race and Culture is currently engaged in addressing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout the Rio Texas Conference; and,

**WHEREAS**, University United Methodist Church of Austin has striven since the Civil Rights Movement of the last century to be an agent of change against racism in our city; and

**WHEREAS**, University United Methodist Church has had an active working group on racial justice since 2017; and members of the WoRJT (Working on Racial Justice Together) Task Force realize racism is both personal and institutional, and that it needs to be addressed through education, examination of church practices, and involvement with community resources in a long-term, ongoing effort;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CHURCH COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF AUSTIN THAT:**

- 1. University United Methodist Church will prioritize churchwide activity, study, and worship in 2022 in striving toward racial justice and equity as a UMC congregation in Austin, Texas.*
- 2. Members of the WoRJT Task Force will plan and lead several churchwide activities, including but not limited to children, youth, and adult educational programming; worship services; special events; and opportunities for advocacy.*

3. *Members of the WoRJT Task Force will engage in outreach and communication with organizations that are led by people of color and which exist to promote their concerns. The subsequent activities will be informed by this collaboration. Through these efforts we will work to identify the principles of racial justice to which we will adhere as a community of faith.*
4. *The year will conclude with a vote by the congregation of University United Methodist Church to adopt the principles that we collectively will have established during the year's activities. Moving forward beyond 2022, the principles will serve as a foundational document that we will return to as a congregation to guide future actions that impact justice and equity.*

\*Taken from The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church

† Source for the citation is the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) website.