

## **RESOLUTION FOR CLOSURE OF FIFTH AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Pursuant to the recommendation of Rev. Tara Lain, District Superintendent of the Harbor District of the North Carolina Conference, Southeastern Jurisdiction, of the United Methodist Church, Inc. (the "North Carolina Conference"), the following resolution is adopted by Presiding Bishop Connie Shelton, the District Superintendents of the North Carolina Conference, and the Harbor District Board of Church Location and Building to declare that exigent circumstances exist that require immediate closure of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina in accordance with Paragraph 2549.3(b) of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church ("The Book of Discipline"):

### **BE IT RESOLVED:**

WHEREAS, under The Book of Discipline local churches are organized to serve the local community in which the Church is located, and church property is held in trust to ensure that the property is used solely for purposes consonant with the mission of the entire denomination for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world; and

WHEREAS, Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina (the "Church") was organized in 1847 and has served the Wilmington community as part of the United Methodist denomination (and its predecessors, including the Methodist Episcopal Church South) for more than 170 years; and

WHEREAS, the original property for the Church was donated to the Church trustees by Miles Costin in trust pursuant to a deed which provided that the land was donated for the purpose of constructing a place of worship at which the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church South (now the United Methodist Church) would be permitted to preach God's Holy Word "forever hereafter." This property and all other properties owned by the Church are held in trust for the benefit of the United Methodist Church and uses of Church property are subject to The Book of Discipline; and

WHEREAS, though the Church has a rich and robust history of serving its membership and the local community as a thriving United Methodist Church, membership and missional activity of the Church has recently declined and the Church has a current membership of 205 and average weekly attendance of approximately 20 members; and

WHEREAS, contrary to the expressed intention of the donor of the original property for the Church that the property be used "forever after" as a place for preaching God's Word by United Methodist ministers, the congregation has initiated a procedure seeking for the Church to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Conference has a clear, present and pressing need to respond to local needs in the community by providing space for, among other things, basic needs for unsheltered people, a gathering space for senior adults and persons with disabilities, space for providing shelter and other assistance following major storms, and a welcoming space for worship and study for one or more new United Methodist faith communities; and

WHEREAS, the current membership of the Church has declined opportunities to collaborate with and participate in important ministries and needs of the North Carolina Conference and the local community; and

WHEREAS, the location of the Church property is well-suited towards meeting these missional needs of the North Carolina Conference;

NOW THEREFORE, the undersigned Bishop Connie Shelton, the District Superintendents of the North Carolina Conference, and members of the Harbor District Board of Church Location and Building hereby declare that exigent circumstances exist that require immediate protection of the property of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina for the benefit of the United Methodist denomination. Accordingly, Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church is hereby CLOSED in accordance with Paragraph 2549.3 (b) of The Book of Discipline because the Church no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized and incorporated. Title to all the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the Church shall immediately vest in The Board of Trustees of the North Carolina Conference, Southeastern Jurisdiction, of the United Methodist Church, Inc. (the "North Carolina Conference Board of Trustees"). The North Carolina Conference Board of Trustees is hereby authorized to use or dispose of all properties of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church under such terms and conditions as such the North Carolina Conference Board of Trustees may deem meet and proper.

Effective this 24th day of March, 2023:

Bishop Connie Shelton  
Doris B. Blackman  
Chris L. Pondy  
Michael D. Tramm  
Dana M. White  
Kenneth J. Jackson  
Jana C. Lavin  
Jamael Ruiz Mellan  
Jon E. Strout

Nelvia Block  
Rebecca N. Blackman  
Michael D. Tramm  
Brian D. Dittman  
Evan D. Dittman  
Dan W. Hansen  
Michael D. Tramm  
Quentin W. Weaver