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Suggested Title: Charter for Compassion

Resolution #: New Resolution

General Church Budget Implications: None

Global Implications: None

Add a new Resolution to Book of Resolutions:

WHEREAS, the Scriptures teach “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt 22:37-39, NRSV)

WHEREAS, Jesus prayed for unity, “...so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and I have loved them even as you have loved me” and for God’s love to be lived by the community of faith “...so that the love with which you loved me may be in them...” (John 17:22-23,26, NRSV)

WHEREAS, Paul taught believers to live lives of compassion, “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience... And above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” (Col 3:12-14, NRSV)

WHEREAS, all of these teachings compel believers to love others, to respect them, and to act with compassion

WHEREAS, there is a clear recognition that in the Church and in the world around it, there are multitudes of failures to live consistently with the these teachings

WHEREAS, The Charter of Compassion was crafted by thousands of people from around the globe as a call “to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion” and “to make compassion a clear, luminous, and dynamic force in our polarized world.”

WHEREAS, over 130 partner organizations including the Presbyterian Church USA have endorsed the Charter of Compassion

WHEREAS, the content of the Charter For Compassion and background information regarding it are included on the website [charterforcompassion.org](http://charterforcompassion.org)

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church:

1 – Endorses the Charter of Compassion and will ensure that this endorsement is communicated across the denomination

2 – Commits The United Methodist Church, to joining with other partners in working to fulfill the provisions of the Charter of Compassion both within the worldwide United Methodist Church, in ecumenical / interreligious contexts, and in the world in which we live

3 – Encourages Annual Conferences and United Methodist churches across the connection to study the Charter For Compassion and to participate in its calls to action

## Charter for Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to

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work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

**It is also necessary** in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

**We therefore call upon all men and women** ~ to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

**We urgently need** to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

Rationale:

The Charter of Compassion was crafted by thousands of people from around the globe as a call “to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion” and “to make compassion a clear, luminous, and dynamic force in our polarized world.” Many of our ecumenical partners, including the Presbyterian Church USA, have endorsed the Charter.

Date: September 1, 2011

Signature of Petitioner

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen J. Sidorak, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen J. Sidorak, Jr., General Secretary  
General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns  
Phone 212-749-3553

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