

RESOLUTION FOR TOBACCO-FREE PLACES OF WORSHIP

Whereas the *2012 Surgeons General Report* and the *2009 SC Youth Tobacco Survey* reveal tobacco use is the single leading preventable cause of death, annually killing more people than alcohol, car accidents, AIDS, murder, suicide, and illegal drugs combined; and no amount of secondhand smoke is safe;

Whereas each year in South Carolina an estimated 6,100 adults die from their own smoking, and about 790 adults, children and infants die from others' smoking (secondhand smoke and pregnancy smoking);

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 80% of tobacco users initiate use before they are 18; and in South Carolina, more than 6,300 youth under age 18 become new daily smokers each year;

Whereas if current smoking patterns are not reduced, an estimated 103,000 S.C. children who are living today will die prematurely as adults from a smoking-related illness;

Whereas secondhand smoke contains poisons and causes heart disease, lung cancer, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), low birth weight and lung problems in infants and children, and may cause disease in other parts of your body;

Whereas tobacco and/or secondhand smoke disables and kills, the United Methodist Churches (UMC) sees the responsibility for protecting all congregational members and community residents in their charge from dangerous products;

Whereas the official position of the United Methodist Church on the use and misuse of Alcohol and Tobacco, as well as other drugs, can be found in the Social Principles of the UMC, which state:

"The use of tobacco is another form of drug abuse, even though it is legal. Overwhelming evidence links cigarette smoking with lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis. In addition, cigarette smoking can negatively affect a developing fetus, and secondary smoke is a known carcinogen. The United Methodist Church discourages all persons, particularly children, youths and young adults, from using any form of tobacco." (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Drug and Alcohol Concerns: Tobacco," ¶83 II) Scriptural Reference: 1 Corinthians 6:13-20

Whereas, the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church acknowledges that tobacco is a sacred plant among Native Americans and used in some sacred ceremonies. We acknowledge Native Americans believe that if a sacred plant is abused, we risk spiritual disconnection and thus Native Americans support that any use of tobacco that occurs outside of sacred ceremony is an affront to the Creator;

Whereas the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church believes that tobacco misuse use and exposure to secondhand smoke (environmental tobacco smoke) are hazardous to the health of human beings, especially children, it affirms that one of the best places of worship is one that is provided within a 100% tobacco product-free environment;

Be it resolved the Advocacy Team of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church will work with Mothers Eliminating Secondhand Smoke (M.E.S.S.) a collaborative effort of Hold Out the Lifeline: A Mission to Families, DHEC and the South Carolina Tobacco Collaborative which promotes the adoption and enforcement of 100% tobacco- and smoke-free policies in homes, vehicles, schools, recreational facilities and faith-based organizations;

Be it also resolved that the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church encourage congregations to adopt a Model Tobacco Use Policy for Faith Based Organizations that address preventing tobacco use other than during sacred ceremonies within faith-based settings which encompasses prohibiting tobacco misuse in the entire facility, all vehicles, parking lots, and at any of its sponsored events and functions on or off its property, by all people (pastors, employees, members, visitors, contractors, delivery drivers, etc.);

Be it further resolved that the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church encourage its leadership to develop policies supporting stricter regulation of tobacco, an increase in tobacco prevention programs, a ban on all fruit or candy-flavored tobacco products and work to stop tobacco advertising, especially that which targets young people and minorities.

Sponsored by Conference Connectional Ministries Advocacy Area
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