

1 **Resolution Concerning Guns at Annual Conference**

2 **Whereas** in the Book of Isaiah, the Prophet writes “He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate
3 for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-
4 hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah
5 2:4);

6 **Whereas** in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is quoted, saying “Put your sword back into its place; for all
7 who take the sword will perish by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52);

8 **Whereas** John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, opposed the use of weapons in a way that could result
9 in the loss of life. He wrote, “No man, therefore, can give the power of the sword, any such power
10 as gives the right to take away life: whatever it is, it must descend from God alone, the sole
11 disposer of life and death.” (John Wesley, *Observations on Liberty*, 1776);

12 **Whereas** General Conference Resolution No. 3428, “Our Call to End Gun Violence,” adopted in 2016,
13 states “...United Methodist congregations (are asked) to display signs that prohibit carrying guns
14 onto church property.” (*The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church 2016*, p. 395);

15 **Whereas** firearms are a significant contributor to injury and death in the United States. According to the
16 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 36,000 individuals are fatally
17 wounded with a firearm every year, and an additional 100,000 individuals are injured. (Centers
18 for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System
19 (WISQARS), “Fatal Injury Reports” <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars>). Statistical data has
20 shown a strong correlation between the number of firearms present in a given setting, and the
21 likelihood that violence and homicide will occur (Hepburn, L, Hemenway, D. Firearm availability
22 and homicide: A review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior: A Review Journal*.
23 2004; 9:417-40; and Miller M, Azrael D, Hemenway D. Firearms and violence death in the
24 United States. In: Webster DW, Vernick JS, eds. *Reducing Gun Violence in America*. Baltimore
25 MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). Firearm carrying in and of itself also increases the
26 likelihood of a firearm-related violent crime occurring, even on occasions where an individual did
27 not plan to use the weapon. Further, where a firearm is present, conflicts are more likely to turn
28 violent, even when the intention of violence is lacking (Pelletier, Karissa R. and Jesenia M.
29 Pizarro. Homicides and weapons: Examining the covariates of weapon choice. *Homicide*
30 *studies* 23, no. 1 (2019): 41-63);

31 **Whereas** since the last session of Annual Conference, it was discovered that a Conference Delegate had
32 carried a firearm at a past Conference, and it was possible that other Conference participants has
33 also done so; and

34 **Whereas** our Desert Southwest Conference, through the work of the Gun Violence Awareness Task
35 Force of Justice and Outreach Ministries, has long advocated for actions, practices, and policies
36 that will reduce the incidence of gun violence; now, therefore, be it

37 **Resolved**, that the Desert Southwest Conference of The United Methodist Church:

38 1. Require that the meeting areas of Annual Conferences, including the main hall used for
39 Conference Sessions, and any other areas, including meeting rooms, and dining and display
40 areas, be gun-free zones; and

41 2. Remind all churches in our Conference that the resolution “Prohibiting Guns on Church
42 Property,” passed at the 2018 Annual Conference Session, states “...churches in the Desert

43 Southwest Conference are gun free campuses. They may also choose to post signs prohibiting
44 the carrying of guns either openly or concealed onto church property.”

45 **Submitted By Gun Violence Awareness Task Force**