Resolution 2022- 7 Building Fellowship In the Face of Division

**RESOLUTION to the 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION**

**Relating to Working Through Our Different Viewpoints on Human Sexuality**

**Presented by Rev. Timothy Carl Anderman**

**WHEREAS,** the heritage and purpose of The United Methodist Church has been to

honor, live, and grow in God’s Covenant of grace and love for us, and our covenants together; and to see our lives and faith from God’s perspective while we give care for souls; and to grow as we mature in our love by God’s grace in sanctification, seeking to live lives in pursuit of holiness, as we create trust in building relationships in fellowship in Christ,

**WHEREAS,** We seek toprovide good pastoral care to each other, through deep listening and seeking to understand one another, by assertively choosing and creating a fruitful setting, as we seek to share our understanding in both the challenges and the ways God has blessed us,

**WHEREAS,** Jesus taught through the use of parable and story, which continued the practice through the centuries in the Jewish traditions in the Old Testament of sharing our experiences in stories of our journeying in faith and receiving and living in God’s Covenant, and which continued and continues in our Christian traditions of sharing our witness, and we are people of the Quadrilateral, valuing the Bible, human experience, tradition, and rational thinking,

**WHEREAS,** Human sexuality is one of the most complex and personal dynamics we experience as human beings, and we face a great challenge to speak of the origins of our view points and we have a variety of reasons and experiences for our views and positions, and the Annual Conference setting does not provide the ideal or complete venue for such deep discussions as is required for such a complex, personal dynamic of our lives,

**WHEREAS,** when conflicts in human relationships occur, the issue and dynamic showing often has underlying, unnamed and hidden dynamics that are often ignored or avoided, thereby undermining relationships and reconciliation with one another and with one’s own covenant with Christ wherein we are claimed by grace,

**WHEREAS,**whether our denomination stays together, or divides in some way, in faithfulness we still need to actively seek understanding and wholeness in our relationships, even while dismantling or keeping the current institutional structure, remembering our purpose as United Methodist has always been to learn, grow, and mature in our love in Christ together as we learn from one another in the process of sanctification as envisioned in I John 3:2-3, 14, 18-20, 23-24, 4:1, which includes following the command from Jesus to love even our enemies, which leads us to seek to understand the hearts and souls those who have different points of view, not just their stated position.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Eastern PA Conference as a Conference, and in our local churches, will commit to creating specific places and times to meet in Christian fellowship throughout the next two years at various levels of groups in fellowship in our local churches, and as a Conference Community one or two times in the next year at our church camps, Innabah, Pocono Plateau, and Gretna Glen, or other settings. Our purpose is to build trust and understanding by listening and hearing one another one on one, in small group setting, and when possible, larger group settings, specifically examining for greater insight, by responding to and sharing the question, “What one or two personal stories would you tell and share that would help someone understand your position on the issue of homosexuality in our churches and denomination?” The purpose to be helping others understand our experiences in how events and people in our lives have influenced, shaped, or clarified our faith and viewpoint.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** Individual churches are encouraged to work towards creating specific times, and places in their fellowship for sharing our faith journey through answering the question above, telling and sharing our stories which provide greater opportunity to learn from one another’s perspective.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we are building upon our history and tradition of our Church of sharing faith and fellowship in Christ in small groups to envision our faith journey forward, by taking care not to ignore, and instead more intently listen to one another; we seek to understand with renewed respect our conflict’s root causes and dynamics, and how God wants us to faithfully move forward, building community in Christ’s love.

**Person responsible for presenting this resolution:**Rev. Timothy Carl Anderman