

Resolution #

RESOLUTION TO FULL SESSION OF 2005 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Resolution Relating to Small Membership Churches

Presented by the Conference Work Team on Christ Servant Ministries

WHEREAS, small membership churches played a significant role in the growth and development of Methodism in America; and

WHEREAS, small membership churches continue to have a vital role in the ever changing landscape of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, particularly for the rural as well as suburban areas of our Conference; and

WHEREAS, large churches make headlines, we recognize that 71 percent of U.S. congregations have fewer than 100 regularly participating adult members, and small membership churches may be defined as having a membership of less than two-hundred which represents 40 to 50% of the total churches of this Conference; and

WHEREAS, small membership churches demonstrate vitality even though their membership may never grow much larger, and some may never be able to support a full-time pastor, but each small church can make an impact on their communities through strong, effective ministries; and

WHEREAS, pastors serving these congregations may be limited to part-time local pastor, certified lay ministers, lay supply or retired pastors serving in part-time status; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that small churches are quite different from larger churches and require different strategies in religious education, missional involvement, and opportunities for spiritual growth

WE THEREFORE, urge the Annual Conference to consider the uniqueness of the small membership church and sponsor training events at every level that would nurture their uniqueness and support their effectiveness:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church commend small membership congregations that demonstrate vitality in ministry and strength of commitment to service in their unique situations, and further encourage all small membership churches to take advantage of training events and other opportunities to enhance their gifts of ministry where they are planted.

Persons responsible for presenting this resolution: George J. Hollich, Jr. and Rev. Dr. Alfred Maloney