

**Resolution of the Tennessee Western Kentucky Conference Supporting Annual Funding of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Black Methodists for Church Renewal (SEJ-BMCR) Youth Harambee**

WHEREAS, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2020/2024) affirms in 649.1 that each annual conference shall establish a conference council on youth ministry or an equivalent structure to provide connectional support, strengthen youth ministries in local churches and districts, and facilitate the active engagement of young people in the life of the church; and

WHEREAS, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), as one of the five officially recognized racial-ethnic caucuses of The United Methodist Church, represents and is dedicated to the interests of more than 2,400 Black United Methodist congregations and approximately 500,000 African American members across the United States;

WHEREAS, the SEJ-BMCR Youth Harambee Conference is an annual program ministry designed to provide youth aged 12-18 with opportunities for spiritual growth, leadership development, and community building through worship, interactive workshops, and fellowship activities;

WHEREAS, Youth Harambee is a transformative experience that empowers young people to embrace their faith, strengthen their leadership skills, and form meaningful connections with their peers across the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church;

WHEREAS, a workshop entitled “Identifying Your Spiritual Gifts” was presented during the 2024 Youth Harambee, allowing both youth and adults to discover these gifts leading towards discerning a call;

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Jurisdiction is the only jurisdiction within The United Methodist Church that continues to sponsor a Youth Harambee, reflecting its commitment to fostering the spiritual and personal growth of Black Methodist youth;

WHEREAS, strengthening Black churches includes investing in Black youth, ensuring that future generations of United Methodists are well-equipped for ministry and leadership within the church and society; while the Episcopal areas and conferences have been restructured, the Jurisdictions themselves have remained the same, and we deeply appreciate the dedication and commitment of our bishops in supporting and strengthening this effort;

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Jurisdiction has consistently supported Youth Harambee, with the 2024 gathering drawing 122 youth and 57 adults;

WHEREAS, studies indicate that Black churches make up a small percentage of total disaffiliations, with only 1.4% of disaffiliating congregations being majority African American, yet the remaining African American churches now represent a much larger percentage of the number of churches within the jurisdiction;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference joins other Annual Conferences within the Southeastern Jurisdiction in supporting this request to the General Council on Finance and Administration to allocate at least \$6,000 annually to support the SEJ-BMCR Youth Harambee Conference;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that these funds be designated exclusively for the SEJ-BMCR Youth Harambee Conference, ensuring continued investment in the spiritual, educational, and leadership development of Methodist youth;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference supports sharing of this resolution with all Annual Conferences within the Southeastern Jurisdiction, urging them to advocate for sustained financial support for SEJ-BMCR Youth Harambee as a vital component of racial healing, ethnic church development, and the strengthening of Black Methodist communities.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mrs. Glenese Scales,  
BMCR Coordinator TWK Conference  
Ms. Pamela Shoffner, Coordinator  
Southeastern Jurisdiction Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc.