

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE
PETITION TO THE 2006 ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE**

TITLE: CLERGY AFFIRMATION OF PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

- 1 The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference invites its pastors to affirm publicly that they
- 2 voluntarily relinquish the authority granted them by the Judicial Council decision 1032 and that
- 3 they agree to receive any person into professing membership who – after a reasonable period of
- 4 instruction and training – affirms vows of membership.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2006

TERMINATION DATE: June 30, 2007

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION

Church and Society Network: Advocating for Peace with Justice Committee

PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION TO CONFERENCE:

Name: Marti Zimmerman (and additional clergy)

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FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

RATIONALE: Not debatable

5 **Whereas** ¶ 4 of the Constitution of the United Methodist Church states: “The United Methodist
6 Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race,
7 color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship
8 services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as
9 baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing
10 members in any church in the connection,” and

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12 **Whereas** it is theologically inconsistent to deny professing membership to anyone who has
13 already been admitted into baptized membership in the Church, and

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15 **Whereas** the Methodist movement has always professed the belief that God’s grace is available
16 to all, and

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18 **Whereas** the United Methodist Church publicly affirms that its local congregations have open
19 hearts, open minds, and open doors, and

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21 **Whereas** the *Book of Discipline 2004*, ¶ 120 states: “The mission of the Church is to make
22 disciples of Jesus Christ,” and

23
24 **Whereas** the *Book of Discipline 2004*, ¶ 202 states: “ The function of the local church under the
25 guidance of the Holy Spirit is to help people accept and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and
26 Savior, and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God,” and

27
28 **Whereas** the *Book of Discipline 2004* ¶ 138 affirms “In the United Methodist Church
29 inclusiveness means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who meet the
30 requirements of the United Methodist *Book of Discipline* in membership and leadership of the
31 Church in any level and in every place,” and

32
33 **Whereas** the Judicial Council decision 1032 has held that pastors may exercise absolute and sole
34 discretion in deciding who may or may not be received into professing membership in the local
35 congregations of the United Methodist Church to which they have been appointed as pastors,