

1 **1Petition to the 2008 Western Jurisdiction**

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3 **TITLE: Marriage Equality and Pastoral Support**

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5 **Submitted by:** Karen Oliveto, California-Nevada; Frank Wulf, California-Pacific

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7 **FINANCIAL IMPACT:** None

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9 **BACKGROUND**

10 On May 15, 2008, The California Supreme Court issued its decision holding that marriage is a
11 basic civil right of personal autonomy and liberty to which all person are entitled without regard
12 to their sexual orientation. Gay and lesbian couples from United Methodist churches throughout
13 the western jurisdiction will be married in the weeks and months to come.

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15 WHEREAS, the marriage equality movement began 60 years ago, striking down laws
16 prohibiting marriage between interracial couples (Perez v. Sharp, 1948);

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18 WHEREAS, on May 15, 2008, The California Supreme Court issued its decision holding that
19 marriage is a basic civil right of personal autonomy and liberty to which all persons are entitled
20 without regard to their sexual orientation; and

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22 WHEREAS, as a result of the Supreme Court’s decision, the State of California began to license
23 and recognize same-gender marriages on June 16, 2008;

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25 WHEREAS, the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church states that “certain basic
26 human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights
27 and liberties for homosexual persons.” (§162.H)

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29 WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church understands family “to be the basic human
30 community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility,
31 respect, and fidelity.” (§161.A)

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33 WHEREAS, the Western Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church has had a long history of
34 ministry with, by and for lesbians and gay men through which the Holy Spirit has taught us the
35 sacred worth of all persons and our ministries have been shaped accordingly;

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37 WHEREAS as of June 16, 2008, gay and lesbian couples from throughout the Western
38 Jurisdiction have gone or will go to California to be legally married and will return to their
39 communities and local churches

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41 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Western Jurisdiction of the United Methodist
42 Church acknowledges and celebrates the Supreme Court decision regarding marriage equality.

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44 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Western Jurisdiction Conference of the United
45 Methodist Church support same-gender couples who enter into the marriage covenant and
46 encourage both congregations and pastors to welcome, embrace and provide spiritual nurture and
47 pastoral care for these families.