WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, endeavors in both word and deed to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God”; and

WHEREAS, it is with profound sadness and righteous indignation that we mourn the lives of nine victims of gun violence fueled by racism, hate, and ignorance at Mother Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC, last month on Wednesday, June 17, 2015; and

WHEREAS, we affirm our common call to love amidst challenges, even during tough times as these, ever mindful that if any part of the Christian body is hurting, we’re all hurting (1 Corinthians 12:26); and

WHEREAS, Ephesians 4:4-6 reminds us all that there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all; and

WHEREAS, following this act of domestic terrorism, the ripple effects of hate-filled and racially motivated attacks on Black congregations throughout the United States have caused intimidation, fear and panic among members through the burning of church buildings, threatening letters, and phone calls, and reopened old wounds associated with America’s deep seated and hateful acts of racism; and

WHEREAS, several members of our congregations have become fearful and suspicious of visitors on Sunday mornings and other weeknights, especially our children who wonder aloud, “What are we going to do if someone comes in our church and tries to do that?” and

WHEREAS, we recognize, as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his Letter from Birmingham Jail, that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” and “we truly are “tied together in a single garment of destiny;” and

WHEREAS, our assembly is itself a manifestation of the Body of Christ in the world, remembering of one another at the Table and bearing witness to a divine love that transcends and must triumph over terror enacted upon that sacred Body and individual members of it, thus standing with our fellow Christians and declaring that we are truly the keepers of our “brothers and sisters;” and

WHEREAS, General Assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since the 1969 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Seattle, WA, have adopted resolutions and reports affirming the responsibility of the followers of Christ to pro-reconciliation/anti-racism, especially having approved the Pro-reconciliation/ Anti-racism Initiative as a mission priority of the 20/20 Vision during the 2001 General Assembly;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, will seek justice for those
harmed, comfort those who mourn, and journey with those who fight for justice and equality, until “justice rolls down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream (KJV);” and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly affirms our General Minister and President’s continuing public condemnation of the massacre of the Charleston Nine and the burning the African American Churches; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly calls upon the College of Regional Ministers to be especially attentive to the ongoing pastoral care needs of ethnic minority congregations within their region, endeavoring to provide pertinent training and support for pastors and leaders who are trying to help their congregations cope with any acts of racial violence such as the recent tragedies and more; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly calls on the General Minister and President’s Pastoral Table to work with Reconciliation and the Council on Christian Unity to establish an appropriate means such as an annual “Peace and Racial Harmony Week” to commemorate those who tragically lost their lives in Mother Emmanuel AME Church and to encourage Disciples congregations in the United States and Canada to have joint worship with other ethnically diverse Disciples congregations to demonstrate our desire for unity and our understanding and willingness to be the **“laos”** or whole people of God.

Submitted by:

Rev. Jesse Jackson Jr., pastor of East Sixth Street CC, OKC, OK

Rev. Derrick Perkins, pastor of Centennial CC, St. Louis, MO

Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, pastor of East Second St. CC Lexington, KY

Rev. Dr. Judy Cummings, pastor New Covenant CC, Nashville, TN

Dr. William Crowder, pastor Park Manor CC, Chicago, IL

Rev. Kevin McNeil, pastor Mt. Zion CC, Floyd, VA

Rev. Geoffrey Brewster, Phillips Theological Seminary, Tulsa, OK

Rev. Rob Crawford, Bartlesville, OK

Rev. Michael Riggs, pastor First CC, Tulsa, OK

Rev. Joseph Garkovich, pastor, First CC, Canon City, CO

Rev. Dr. Eric Brown, pastor, Woodland CC, Columbus, OH

Rev. Kelli Driscoll, pastor, Bethany CC, Tulsa, OK

On behalf of the General Board, the Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends the General Assembly **ADOPT GA-1539.**

(Discussion time: 12 minutes)