



## **United Methodist Women Condemn Hate and Violence in Charlottesville August 13, 2017**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

United Methodist Women condemns the racism, anti-Semitism and bigotry that bred the violence and loss of life connected to a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, today. We also lament the blindness of too many to the historical reality that the United States has from its very beginning been a multiracial country, built by a diverse population, not a “white nation” in need of being “taken back.” We decry the dog whistles of hate embedded in too much of today’s public discourse, which embolden and nod to the sort of hate and violence that was openly on display in Charlottesville. Even now we are encouraged by the many people of faith who joined with an interfaith group and others of good will to counter the hate that came to Charlottesville.

We are encouraged by the many political leaders from all parties who named and spoke out against the viewpoints and the actions of the racist hate groups that organized the rally. We urge United Methodist Women and the entire church to speak out and resist fear, hate and scapegoating. This is our Christian witness. The Hebrew prophets declared God is “appalled” at silence in the face of injustice (Isaiah 59:14-16). Speaking up, participating in responses with others, standing without fear, living out our faith as we insist on racial justice is an essential component of our identity as United Methodist Women and as United Methodist Christians. As stated in the resolution, “Speaking Out for Compassion and Against Hate”:

At a time of rising vitriol, racism, hate, and violence in the world born of deep economic crisis and global shifts, it is time for the church to speak out. If we do not, God will be appalled. We feel compelled to raise a prophetic voice challenging the climate of distrust, distortion of truth and fear, shifting the conversation to our common future. In many places, the level of anger has crossed a line in terms of civility. Whatever the disagreement about policy or program, this behavior is unacceptable. It represents a spiritual crisis that calls for us to respond by deepening our understanding of God’s call and filling our own deep yearnings for spiritual wholeness, that can empower us to love and compassion without giving up our responsibility to speak out for justice.

We Urge United Methodist Women members to speak up for compassion and against hate and to organize against bigotry in their communities.

Harriett Olson  
General Secretary/CEO  
United Methodist Women