

WHEREAS the members of the Susquehanna United Methodist Conference are guided by the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church and

WHEREAS ¶162x of the Social Principles states that those with mental illness and their families “have a right to be treated with respect” and “have a right and responsibility to obtain care appropriate to their condition, and

WHEREAS like physical health, mental health is important at every stage of one’s life, including childhood, as it determines how we cope with stress, relate to others, make choices and is an integral and essential component of all persons; and

WHEREAS mental health issues in childhood affect development, may interfere with the child’s ability to participate in school and other activities, and may create stress in the family; and

WHEREAS there is evidence of increased risk-taking behavior in children and youth with mental illness -- 50% of youth who drop out of school have mental illness and 70% of youth in juvenile justice systems have a mental illness¹,

WHEREAS suicide is the third leading cause of death for ages 10 – 24¹;

WHEREAS obtaining appropriate mental health treatment for children can be difficult; and

WHEREAS the churches of our Conference can serve as a resource to anyone with a mental health problem and their families; and

WHEREAS education and training for clergy and the members of our congregations on how to recognize and provide support for those who are showing signs of mental distress is important; and

WHEREAS the Nation recognizes the month of May as Mental Health Awareness month, the month of September as Suicide Prevention Month, and the first full week of October as Mental Illness Awareness week;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Susquehanna United Methodist Conference celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month on the third Sunday in May by Special Offering Sunday #4050 to benefit the ongoing efforts of educating members and the public, helping someone in need, and encouraging the resources necessary for early detection and appropriate treatment of a mental health problem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that September be recognized as Suicide Prevention Month by encouraging members to become involved in community and/or local and state activities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the first week of October be celebrated as Mental Illness Awareness Week by holding a day of prayer on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, for prevention and early intervention, for those who suffer from mental problems, their families, and those professionals who care for them and for a cure for all mental illnesses. ¹Statistics provided by the National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov

Mission and Outreach Team, Susquehanna Conference Mental Health Task Force, Rev. Evelyn Madison,
Chair

Susquehanna Conference Commission on Child Advocacy, Rev. Dr. Ed Zeiders, Chairperson.