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The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

We, the undersigned people/persons of faith from the United Methodist Church in Virginia, stand together in expressing our opposition to our state’s death penalty.

Those who are sentenced to death are invariably poor and/or mentally ill. They often suffer from violent family backgrounds, sexual abuse, and substance abuse. They are not the “worst of the worst”, but those who are hardest to defend in a court of law due to their personal histories. Additionally, African Americans are disproportionately negatively impacted by the death penalty. Researchers have found that in Virginia, a person is more than three times as likely to be sentenced to death when the victim is white versus when the victim is black. We also believe firmly in the sanctity of life and do not believe that the state should have the power to take away one’s life.

It is time to address this historical sin and end state-ordered execution in Virginia. It is time for the General Assembly to repeal capital punishment once and for all to ensure that no innocent persons are ever put to death for a crime they did not commit.

Sincerely,

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