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**Recommendation for Discontinuation of Oak Park United Methodist Church**

*Submitted By: The Rev. Schuyler Rhodes, Superintendent, Los Rios District*  
*Fiscal Impact: There is no projected fiscal impact to the Annual Conference.*

Background:

The Oak Park United Methodist Church in Sacramento was founded in 1895 in what was then an unincorporated area of Sacramento, CA. The Church’s first building was located at 34<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Groundbreaking at the current site at 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway began on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1926. On June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1927 the first worship service was held in the gymnasium because the sanctuary was still unfinished. Church membership peaked at 572 during 1949-1950.

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1983 Oak Park UMC member Jo Streeter wrote, “Now in this church’s eighty-eighth year we face great decisions. Our membership is at an all-time, low less than 100 including those physically unable to participate. Many are inactive.”

Today the membership of Oak Park is 29. The pastor reports an average attendance of 12 people per week in worship.

Despite significant efforts on the part of both the clergy and lay people remaining, the church has continued its decline and not been successful in engaging the Oak Park community in the making of Disciples for the transformation of the world.

In January of 1993, then District Superintendent Ron Swisher arranged for the Tongan Fellowship to come there as a Mission Congregation to worship in the Oak Park UMC facility. In 2015, under the guidance of District Superintendent Schuyler Rhodes, the Tongan Fellowship was chartered under the name of First Taulanga U Tongan United Methodist Church. Their current membership is 257 with an average worship attendance of 120.

Pastor Kataii Tapa currently serves as Pastor of both 1<sup>st</sup> Taulanga U Tongan UMC and Oak Park UMC. The Oak Park UMC contributes less than ¼ time compensation toward their pastoral leader.

The following steps were taken in the discernment and approval process:

- 1. March of 2017: DS Schuyler Rhodes convened an assessment of the Church based on Paragraph 213 of the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline. This committee was chaired by Kenneth Iritani.

The purpose of this Committee was to explore the ministry potential of the congregation and make recommendations.

1        2. May, 2017: The Paragraph 213 Committee presented their recommendations to the Oak  
2        Congregation. Their recommendation, given due and full consideration was for  
3        discontinuance. The Committee noted that while there are several people who care  
4        deeply about the community of Oak Park, the Church is not sustainable.

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6        3. May 2017: The Cabinet chose to continue to discern the work of the assessment team.

7        Therefore be it resolved as follows that:

- 8        1. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2549.2 of the 2016 United Methodist Book  
9        of Discipline that the Oak Park United Methodist Church be discontinued effective June  
10       30<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
- 11       2. After a final worship service to be arranged with the remnant congregation, the pastor and  
12       the District Superintendent, the remaining Oak Park United Methodist Church  
13       membership shall be transferred to Hope United Methodist Church in South Sacramento,  
14       CA.
- 15       3. Title, possession of all real and personal property, assets and liabilities of the Oak Pak  
16       United Methodist Church shall be transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> Taulanga U Tongan United Methodist  
17       Church so that this Church may continue the work and mission of the United Methodist  
18       Church in the Oak Park community.
- 19       4. All relevant, current and historic records of the congregation shall be deposited with 1<sup>st</sup>  
20       Taulanga U Tongan United Methodist Church in consultation with the Conference  
21       Commission on Archives and History.

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23       Approved unanimously by the Bishop and the Cabinet on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2018.

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