

1 TITLE OF RESOLUTION: In Opposition to Reinstatement
2 of the Death Penalty in Minnesota
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4 DATE SUBMITTED: February 24, 2004
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6 SUBMITTED BY: First Congregational Church of Minnesota,
7 United Church of Christ
8

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21 SUMMARY OF INTENT:

22 To give voice to faithful opposition to reinstatement of the death penalty in Minnesota by
23 publicly deploring the capital punishment as a tool of justice and by urging the church's members to
24 work against its reinstatement.
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26 BACKGROUND & SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

27 Jackie Ruzas, an inmate serving a life-sentence, wrote in his poem "Easy to Kill" the
28 following stanza, "Play my life back on this death cell wall, I wish to see my first wrong step. To
29 those who want to take my life, show me where I first started to lose it." Ruzas' words point to
30 some of the tragic consequences of the death penalty: When we sanction the taking of human life,
31 we preclude possibilities of repentance and reconciliation. Vengeance rather than compassion
32 becomes the ethos of society. Medicine is co-opted into the machinery of killing. Such death-
33 dealing systems are anathema to the saving ways of the executed and resurrected Christ, the One
34 whom we as Christians are called to follow.
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36 Jesus' witness to love and his walking into the heart of Rome's campaign of terror and
37 subjecting himself to it. His death became an act of radical, revolutionary proportion in the
38 formation of resurrection community. The Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection are timeless
39 witnesses that no ruling government can claim ultimate power over life and death.
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41 As a Christian community, it is our calling to proclaim the sovereignty of the "Lamb
42 standing as if slain" (Rev. 5:6) and take an uncompromising stand against reinstatement of the death
43 penalty in our state.