**Resolution #5**

**Subject:** **Suicides in Teen Girls Hit 40-Year High**

**RESOLVED**, that The Episcopal Diocese of Michigan urges members of the diocese and its congregations and other interested persons to:

1. Learn and educate others about the increased rate of suicide among young people.
2. Become familiar with the many factors that can lead to suicide.
3. Look for and encourage parents, family members, friends, teachers and clergy to look for the warning signs that young people are at risk. Warning signs include:
* Talking about wanting to die
* Talking about feeling trapped
* Talking about feeling unbearable pain, or feeling like a burden to others
* Behaving recklessly
* Becoming socially isolated

This list is necessarily brief and not all-inclusive. Some people manifest very different warning signs; some show none. For more comprehensive information, please see the American Federation for Suicide Prevention’s website at https://afsp.org/about-suicide/risk-factors-and-warning-signs/

1. Take action: Responses need to be tailored to the situation and the person in crisis. Some actions that may help include contacting physicians, hospitals, mental health professionals and telephone hotline services such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. You can also take action when the person is not in crisis, to help them and to educate yourself and to become a better advocate. The AFSP website has a section devoted to ways to take action: https://afsp.org/take-action
2. Create an open environment where young people are encouraged to discuss their concerns about themselves and others with their parents, teachers and clergy, knowing that they can reach out for help and that someone will be there to help.
3. Teach Coping and Problem-Solving Skills. Focus on developing and strengthening communication and problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, help-seeking and coping skills.

**EXPLANATION/RATIONALE**:

In the fifth Baptismal Covenant in the Book of Common Prayer, we proclaim that we will “strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being”. Respecting the dignity of every human being includes recognizing threats to that dignity and to human life.

Covenant 5 is active in the effort to abolish bullying. Cyberbullying and other forms of bullying may cause or contribute to death by suicide.

The suicide rate among teenage girls continues to rise, reaching a 40-year high in 2015, according to a new analysis released Thursday, August 10, 2017.

Suicide rates doubled among girls and rose by more than 30 percent among teen boys and young men between 2007 and 2015, the [updated breakdown](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6630a6.htm) from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) finds. [See Suicide Rates for Teens Aged 15-19 Years, by Sex -- United States, 1975-2015. CDC] Also, according to the CDC, in 2007, 4,320 children and young adults aged up to 24 died by suicide, making suicide among the top four causes of death for people 10 and up. In 2015, 5,900 kids and adults aged 10 to 24 died by suicide, separate CDC data shows.

Social media can help or hurt, as do economic factors. Governments can make sure people have somewhere to live and economic support, the CDC advises. “Exposure to violence (e.g., child abuse and neglect, bullying, peer violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and intimate partner violence) is associated with increased risk of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, suicide, and suicide attempts.”

Information for this rationale came from a report by Maggie Fox, NBC News and was submitted by Donald Thompson of Covenant 5.

Suggestions for ways to learn more about these issues and actions that should be taken include adult education forums, book study, and community workshops and other learning opportunities.