

## **Resolution in Support of Eliminating Flavored Tobacco Products**

Whereas the health and well-being of our members and individuals within the communities we serve is of utmost importance;

Whereas public health is best improved through informed policy decisions;

Whereas, flavored tobacco products appeal to and are a major cause of youth and young adult tobacco use. Eight out of ten youth who have ever used a tobacco product initiated with a flavored product;

Whereas for several decades, menthol cigarettes have been scientifically proven to pose significant health risks, particularly by making smoking initiation easier, increasing addiction potential, and making cessation more difficult particularly within the African American community;

Whereas, half of youth who have ever tried smoking started with menthol cigarettes;

Whereas the use of menthol cigarettes disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including youth, African Americans, and other minority groups, contributing to over 47,000 deaths in the African American Community per year, along with other health disparities and higher rates of tobacco-related diseases;

Whereas the availability of menthol cigarettes undermines efforts to reduce smoking rates and contradicts public health initiatives aimed at curbing tobacco use and its associated health consequences;

Whereas several countries and jurisdictions have already implemented successful bans on menthol cigarettes, demonstrating the effectiveness of such measures in increasing smoking cessation;

Whereas, youth e-cigarette use is a public health crisis. In 2023, over 2 million youth were current e-cigarette users;

Whereas, nearly 90% of youth e-cigarette users use flavored products and illegal, unauthorized e-cigarettes remain for sale in a wide variety of kid-friendly flavors like cotton candy, gummy bear, mint, menthol and pink lemonade;

Whereas, cigars come in hundreds of kid-friendly flavors, like Banana Smash, Chocolate Brownie and Cherry Dynamite. More than 800 kids under age 18 try cigar smoking for the first time every day and research shows that flavored cigars are driving much of this usage.

Whereas prohibiting flavored tobacco products is supported by a broad range of public health organizations, civil rights groups, and faith/ecumenical bodies;

Therefore, be it resolved that the African Methodist Episcopal Church supports eliminating flavored tobacco products including menthol cigarettes and the development of culturally appropriate cessation services as a critical step in protecting public health, reducing smoking rates, and addressing health disparities within our community;

Be it finally resolved that the African Methodist Episcopal Church urges all relevant authorities to prioritize the health and well-being of our community by supporting the elimination of all flavored tobacco products including menthol cigarettes.

Adopted this 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2024.