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EASTER 1964

A Christian's desire to participate in public worship--- especially on Easter --- should neither occasion surprise nor require explanation. This would appear to be an undeniable right both from the standpoint of our national heritage and common Methodist practice.

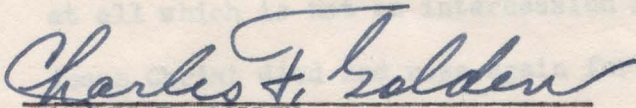
At a deeper level, the very nature and meaning of the Christian faith supports this desire and right. Indeed, we are assured that our God and Father seeks men to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. Moreover, the New Testament faith assures us that this God-given privilege is open to all people, without regard to their race or color.

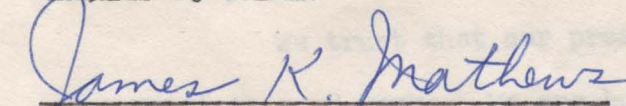
It is because we are prompted by such encouragement of faith that we have come to worship at Galloway Memorial Methodist Church today. We are aware, of course, that some members of this congregation, though surely not all of the members, do not desire to have other than white people attend services of worship here. We are aware too that some Negroes and others have been turned away. We stand united with such ones and regard that in some sense we represent them. This is true partly because we are Methodist bishops, responsible to the whole church for the whole church. But in a larger sense there cannot, in fact, be any true Christian worship at all which is not an intercession in behalf of all mankind, for Jesus Christ died and rose again for all.

We trust that our presence will not provoke you to wrath but to good works. We are hopeful that we shall be admitted for worship, despite contrary attitudes which may have been expressed

here in times past. The meaning of those acts may now be altered--- from the Christian perspective. For this is Easter Sunday, which offers not only victory over death, but infinite possibility for renewal of individuals and of churches and of society. Easter is an occasion for entirely new attitudes and fresh beginnings. We believe that the Feast of the Resurrection affirms life for all men. All Christians together believe that Jesus, the Christ, is the Living Lord of all. Furthermore, for Christians every Sunday is a commemoration of Easter and its meaning.

If we are not admitted, we shall harbor no ill-will toward those who may feel compelled to turn us away. We shall naturally be disappointed. We shall be deeply concerned for the witness of the whole church before the world. We shall also wonder at those who presume to speak and act for God in turning worshippers away from His House. We shall remain unshaken in the conviction that we share with hosts of Christians everywhere that God has chosen to work in our day to bring into operation that reconciliation of all men of which the Cross-Resurrection is both the symbol and the reality. And we shall pray for the forgiveness of us all and hope that we might all come fully to know Christ and "the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering."


CHARLES F. GOLDEN


JAMES K. MATHEWS

Bishops of The Methodist Church.