

Crums Church



Bylaws, Governance, and Statement of Faith

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CRUMS CHURCH BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE

1.01—NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as Crums Church (hereinafter “Church”). The Church is incorporated as a nonstock corporation under the laws of the state of Virginia.

1.02—PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a Church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world. Its principal place of business is 2832 Crums Church Road, Berryville, VA, 22611.

ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

2.01—AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the statement of faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all Members, staff, and volunteers. All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or leased by this church, or engaged in by any Member of the Church staff (volunteer or paid), and all decisions of the administration of this Church shall not conflict with the statement of faith. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the statement of faith, the pastor and Church Council (hereinafter “Council”), on behalf of the Church, have the final authority.

2.02—STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in:

1. The inspiration of the Bible, and therefore its authority and infallibility
2. The virgin birth of Christ
3. The substitutionary atonement of Christ
4. The bodily resurrection of Christ
5. The historicity of the biblical miracles.

For a more detailed description of the doctrines and beliefs held by Crums Church, we refer to the Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church, Parts One and Two. See attachment 1.

ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP

3.01—QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Those seeking membership must:

- A. Through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
- B. Attend a pre-membership class led by a member of the pastoral staff or appointee in which they will review the church's statement of faith, bylaws, general practices and policies, and expectations of members. Previous members of Crums UMC are not required to attend a pre-membership class.
- C. Be interviewed by the pastor, pastoral staff and/or Board to ensure they fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the Church and its leaders. Members are expected to support the Church with one's attendance, prayers, financial support, and participation in the life of the Church.
- D. Membership will be granted upon the recommendation of the pastor, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:
 - By baptism at this local church following a profession of faith as a believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
 - By transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice; or
 - By testimony of faith, having been baptized in another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice.

3.02—PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Only Members of at least thirteen (13) years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. Members participating in a meeting with two-way communication via phone or electronic conferencing are entitled to vote. The eligible membership of the Church may only exercise voting privileges in those areas that are defined and limited by these bylaws. Members may not vote to initiate any Church action; rather the vote of a Member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the Church as determined by the pastor and the Council.
- B. This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the senior pastor as the under-shepherd with the Church Council. Determinations of the internal affairs of this Church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the Church's own rules and procedures. The senior pastor and Church Council shall oversee and/or conduct all ministerial and educational aspects of this Church. The Council shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor.
- C. Membership in this Church does not afford the Members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the Church's worship services, the Church property remains private property. The pastor or individual designated by the Board of Directors has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on Church property. If after being

notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on Church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor or person designated by the Board, be treated as a trespasser.

- D. A Member may inspect the prepared annual financial statement of the Church and the minutes of the proceedings of Church and committee meetings, provided he/she shall have made a written request upon the Church stating the precise records requested for review and the reason for the request, and the Church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date. Requests may be denied if such request is deemed to be frivolous by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Board meeting minutes and discipline committee meetings, as well as other information involving privacy interests such as, but not limited to, donor records, lists of names and addresses of Church Members, individual benevolence, individual salaries, health information, background checks, and social security numbers, are exempt from this provision and are not subject to inspection without a court order. Members may not copy or take digital images or records of any ministry record without authorization from the pastor or chairman of the Board. Members agree that information obtained from any inspection of records will be kept in the strictest confidence.

3.03—AUTOMATIC TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. The membership of any individual Member shall automatically terminate without notice if the Member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the Church in the preceding twelve (12) months. This provision may be waived at the discretion of the pastor and the Board upon the showing of good cause.
- B. The membership of any individual shall automatically terminate without notice if the Member adopts opinions—verbally, in print, or in any other manner or medium—that are in direct contravention to the Church’s statement of faith. Since agreement with the Church’s statement of faith is a requirement for membership in this Church, the Member’s non-conforming statements will be treated by the pastor and the Board as the Member’s resignation.
- C. The membership of any individual Member shall automatically terminate without notice if the Member unites in membership with another church.
- D. The membership of an individual Member will automatically terminate upon his or her death.
- E. For any memberships terminated in accordance with the above provisions, with the exception of memberships terminated under (D) above, the Church may send a letter informing the prior Member of the termination, but this is not required.

3.04—TRANSFER OR RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members not under the disciplinary process of Article 3, section 3.05 may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church. A Member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the senior pastor.

3.05—DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER

- A. When a Member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of an individual in the Church, he or she is to go to the offending party and seek to restore their relationship with the offender. Before going, the confronter should first examine him or herself and go with a spirit of humility and the goal of restoration. (Matt. 18: 15-17)
- B. If reconciliation is not reached, a second Member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter ~~in~~ by going again to the offending party. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
- C. If the matter is still unresolved after taking the steps outlined in subsections (A) and (B), the two Members aware of the offense shall, in keeping with Matthew 18, bring the issue before the pastor and the Board, who are representatives of the Church body.
- D. If the pastor and Board agree with the Member that the offending conduct is of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of the Member or the Church body as a whole, they shall attempt to meet with the offending brother or sister. If reconciliation is not reached, the pastor and Board, as representatives of the Church body, shall, upon a majority vote of those present at a meeting of the Board, terminate the offending individual's membership without further notice to him or her. Unless the matter involves an issue of safety or security to the Members of the Church at large, the specifics of the matter shall not be addressed in a public forum or with the general Church membership.
- E. The pastor and Board shall be entitled to the same steps as other Church Members and be subject to the same discipline. If the pastor or a Board Member is the subject of a disciplinary matter, the pastor or Board member shall not be permitted to vote on their own membership termination.
- F. For any memberships terminated in accordance with this provision, the pastor may cause a letter to be written informing the prior Member of the termination, although this is not required.
- G. The procedures provided in this section are based on Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

3.06—AFFILIATED CO-LABORER

Those desiring fellowship, accountability and opportunities for service with this Church on a temporary basis but who maintain membership in a like body of believers outside this locality may be granted affiliated co-laborer status with this Church. The affiliated co-laborer may be eligible to serve in certain capacities determined by the pastor and Board and may attend member fellowship events. This affiliation does not, however, grant membership or the rights of membership to the individual(s) so affiliated. Affiliated co-laborers shall not be entitled to hold any office, vote in, or have any say in any Church matter, and shall not be counted for quorum purposes. A person wishing to become an affiliated co-laborer with this Church must make a request to the pastor or his designee who will determine if affiliated co-laborer status should be granted to the individual. If the pastor or his designee so determines, the person may be granted co-laborer status upon a majority vote of the Board.

ARTICLE 4 CORPORATE OFFICERS (BOARD OF DIRECTORS) AND CHURCH OFFICERS

4.01—DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS (BOARD OF DIRECTORS)

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the Church, the Board of Directors shall consist of:

- President: The Chair of the Church Council,
- Vice President: nominated at large
- Chief Financial Officer: A member who has served, or currently serves as, Chair of the Finance Committee.
- Secretary: The Secretary of the ~~Council~~ Corporation (Registered Agent).
- Member at Large: nominated at large
- Senior Pastor (non-voting member)

If any of these officers prefers not to serve on the board, a person for that position on the board shall be selected by the church council.

4.02—CHURCH OFFICERS

All members of the Church Council (Council) are church officers. Co-chairs of any committee each have their own vote on Council business.

4.03—ELIGIBILITY FOR CHURCH OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- A. The Church shall not install or retain an officer or director who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the statement of faith set forth in **Article 2**.
- B. All Church officers and directors must be approved initially and thereafter annually by majority vote of the Church Council at the annual church business meeting in November to commence or continue in their offices.
- C. Only Church Members are eligible for election or appointment to any Church office or position. Affiliated co-laborers with this Church are not eligible for such election or appointment.

4.04—ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The officers and directors of the Church, other than the pastors, shall be elected by the Church Council at the annual Church business meeting. Every effort shall be made to hold this meeting in November for the subsequent year's officers. Officers and directors of the Church must be elected by a majority of the eligible Council Officers present at the annual Church business meeting. The senior pastor, from time to time as the pastor deems appropriate, may appoint other Church officers, subject to a confirmation vote by a majority of the eligible Church Officers present and voting at the next Church Council meeting. Members may submit nominations for officers and directors to the pastor and the Board of Directors. The pastor and the Board shall then serve as the nominating committee for all general elections of officers.

4.05—TERMS OF SERVICE FOR OFFICERS

- A. The relationship between any pastor and the Church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between a pastor and the Church may be considered at any regular or special Church Council meeting by following the procedures outlined in Article 6, provided notice of the meeting is given from the pulpit to the Church two Sundays prior to the meeting. A majority of the eligible Officers present and voting shall be required to remove the pastor from office. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates the pastor's membership.
- B. Any other Council member may be removed from office at any Council meeting for any reason stated or unstated upon motion by any Board member and an affirmative majority vote of the other Council members at a duly called meeting of the Council. No congregational vote is necessary for Council member removal. This process is intended to protect the personal or private information of any Council member being removed from office.
- C. The term of service for all offices and positions in the Church, except the pastor and other staff members, shall be one year, at the expiration of which the officers may be re-elected or re-appointed.
- D. A vacancy occurring in any office or on the Board of Directors, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular Church Council meeting by a majority vote of the officers present.
- E. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed, unless removed for disciplinary reasons, or they resign.

4.06—CALLING A PASTOR

Upon the resignation, death, or dismissal of the pastor, the Church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the statement of faith and bylaw provisions of the Church and whose life aligns with the qualifications of a pastor. The Church shall abide by the following guidelines for calling a pastor:

- A. The Church Council shall select a search committee to consist of at least five Council members and up to five other Members elected by a majority vote of the Council. The search committee shall consider and interview potential candidates with primary consideration given to their Christian witness and adherence to the Church statement of faith and Church Bylaws.

- B. The interview process for selecting a pastoral candidate shall include, at a minimum, the following: a background check, a credit check, a reference check, reviewing at least two sermons, and the filling out of a detailed application that explains the potential candidate's philosophy of ministry, educational background, ministerial experience and training, as well as their position on issues of doctrinal significance.
- C. Upon a majority vote of the search committee, the search committee will formally announce the candidate to the Church, after which the candidate must preach at least one regularly scheduled set of Sunday Church services and be available for a Church-wide question/answer time prior to being voted upon by the Church Council.
- D. Notice from the search must be given 2 consecutive Sundays prior to a formal candidate's preaching service(s), and 2 consecutive Sundays prior to the Church Council vote.
- E. The candidate must be elected as pastor by a majority vote of Council members. This vote shall be taken by written, secret ballot at a meeting at which the candidate is not present. The search committee will only present for consideration to the membership one candidate at a time, and an up or down vote by the Council must be cast prior to subsequent consideration of other potential candidates.

ARTICLE 5 DUTIES AND POWERS OF CHURCH OFFICERS

5.01—THE PASTOR

- A. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God. The pastor shall administer the ordinances of the Church; act as moderator, or appoint a moderator, at all Church meetings for the transaction of Church matters; supervise the teaching ministries of the Church; and watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of Scripture, the pastor has the final authority.
- B. The pastor and Council, on behalf of the Church, shall establish committees and recommend members for service on the various committees and committee chairs for election at the annual Church business meeting. In the case of a vacancy or newly created committee, positions may be filled at any council meeting. The pastor shall serve as the spiritual leader of the corporation. The pastor shall assist all newly elected officers in the functions and responsibilities of their respective offices. The pastor shall interview all persons seeking to become Members on behalf of the Church and shall perform such other duties as generally appertain to the position of pastor.
- C. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place, and the use of the property belonging to the Church for any other purposes, are under the control of the pastor, who, with the advice and counsel of the Board, shall determine the appropriateness of all property use, as well as persons permitted to use the Church property.

- D. The pastor shall be responsible to fill the pulpit for each regularly scheduled Church service as well as any special services. The pastor (or the President of the Board, in the case of a vacancy in the office of pastor or where the pastor is temporarily unable to perform preaching duties) shall be responsible to invite speakers from within the membership or outside the Church to preach in a manner consistent with the beliefs articulated in the statement of faith.
- E. All celebrations of the Lord's Supper or the Sacrament of Communion are to be presided over by the pastor (or an ordained person in the absence of the pastor). The scheduling of Communion will be decided by the pastor. The elements are to be offered to all people seeking the grace of God, unrestricted by the age, understanding, or membership of any person.
- F. The pastor and the Board shall be responsible for establishing mandatory safety and security procedures for all ministries and programs. There will be a zero-tolerance policy with regard to abuse of minors, and any reasonable suspicions of child abuse allegedly perpetrated by staff, volunteers, Members or non-members. Such reasonable suspicions will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement or child abuse prevention authorities. The pastor shall ensure that annual child abuse prevention training, or review of such, is provided for all staff and volunteers.

5.02—THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- A. The Board of Directors shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the Church, in conducting the church services, and in performing all other work of the Church. The Board shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the Church's various ministries. The Board shall choose a moderator for Church meetings if the pastor is unavailable for a meeting. The Board shall establish a search committee for hiring a new pastor if the office of pastor becomes vacant, or a vacancy is anticipated. The Board may also hire an interim pastor or pulpit supply during the search.
- B. The Board has authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the eligible Members at a duly called business meeting:
 - 1. To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the Church, and to take real and personal property offered by a will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the Church.
 - 2. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the Church; to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and use of the Church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the Church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.
 - 3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the Church corporation.
 - 4. To maintain the duties of loyalty to the Church, confidentiality of Church information, and fiduciary care regarding Church finances to include providing for financial audits, and a spiritual duty to pray for and support the Church with their time, talents, and treasures.
- C. All powers of the Board shall be compatible with the laws of the State of Virginia.

- D. The Board shall, in conjunction with the pastor, conduct an annual ministry liability and safety review of the following policies and/or topics: child protection, including but not limited to worker screening procedures, child abuse reporting procedures, and worker training on child abuse prevention; building safety; security measures; insurance; financial accountability; transportation; sexual harassment; policies listed in IRS Form 990, including a whistleblower policy, a document retention and destruction policy, and a Church financial investment policy (if applicable).
- E. Each board member shall review the Bylaws annually and shall bring suggested changes to a meeting of the Board that has been designated for the purpose of reviewing the Bylaws.

5.03—SECRETARY

The Church secretary, along with any assistant or co-officer or Church clerk, shall:

- A. Certify and keep at the office of the Church the original Bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the Bylaws; minutes of meetings; the membership roll, baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the Church; and shall deliver such documents to his or her successor upon leaving office.
- B. Maintain and file minutes of all Church Council and Board meetings, including the time and place of holding, the notice given, the names of those present unless a Church-wide meeting, and an accurate record of all Church business approved at each meeting. A copy of these minutes shall be kept as a permanent record of the Church and shall be made available at all reasonable times to proper person on terms provided by law and pursuant to these Bylaws.
- C. Sign, certify, or attest to documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
- D. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by the chairman of the Board.
- E. Serve as the secretary of the corporation and be a Member in good standing.

5.04—FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR (CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER)

The Church Finance Committee Chair shall oversee the work of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, oversee the creation and adherence to the annual budget, provide for an independent annual review (audit), and report to the Church Council as needed on all financial matters. All special campaigns and fund-raising events will be coordinated with the Chair and approved by the Church Council. The Finance Committee Chair shall serve as the treasurer of the corporation.

- A. The Financial Secretary shall oversee the counting and recording of all contributions and income.

1. Ensure all monies received as gifts and offerings are counted and recorded by two people who are selected and trained and not related to each other. This shall be done following each Church service or day of services.
 2. Ensure the timely deposit and tracking of all funds.
 3. Maintain a permanent weekly record of individual giving for all donations, offerings, contributions, and gifts, and guard the confidentiality of these records. Issue an official receipt to each contributor at the end of the fiscal year.
- B. The Treasurer shall oversee all expenditures.
1. Keep an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of Church funds.
 2. Make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the Church as requested by the pastor and the Board, and for annual, quarterly or otherwise special or regular business meetings.
 3. Deliver such records to his or her successor upon leaving office.

5.05—DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS

- A. All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual Church business meeting and shall surrender all records in their possession to the Church secretary at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the Church. All records are the property of the Church.
- B. Any officer who neglects his or her duties as outlined in the Bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from office, at the discretion of the pastor, and another may be appointed by the pastor to serve the un-expired term, as described in 4.04.

ARTICLE 6 CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS AND MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

6.01—ANNUAL CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

An annual meeting of the Church Council shall be held ~~at~~ on a date in November of each calendar year. Public notice of the time and place for the annual meeting shall be published for at least two (2) consecutive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. At the annual meeting, the proposed annual budget shall be presented for approval; candidates for Board and Officers shall be presented and elected; reports shall be made, and other such business matters as the Council may deem appropriate shall be conducted.

6.02—QUORUM

One-half (50%) of the Council Members in attendance at the start of a duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If a quorum is not met, then another meeting shall be called, with proper notice given. At the second meeting on the same subject(s), a quorum is satisfied simply by the number of Council Members present at the start of the meeting.

6.03— MODERATOR

- A. The pastor or the pastor’s designee shall serve as moderator of church council meetings. In the temporary absence of the pastor, or if the office of pastor is vacant, the Board President or Vice President shall serve as moderator. In the event of a conflict of interest, the Board may substitute a moderator.
- B. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure with a sense of fairness and common sense, giving all Members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and that decision is final and controlling.
- C. For any meeting under this article, the moderator shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers (or children, if circumstances so warrant) to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any Member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may revoke the disruptive person’s right to remain on the premises and treat the person as a trespasser.
- D. Church Council meetings, including the annual Church business meeting and special meetings, may be held by electronic video means for the transaction of any business normally conducted during in-person Church Council meetings. A quorum shall be 50% of all eligible voting Council Members attending the virtual meeting, and a quorum shall be required to conduct business. Voting shall be conducted by any means deemed acceptable by the Board. Notice of Council meetings and other notice required by these bylaws shall be provided by email, the Church website, social media site, text message, and/or other methods deemed by the Board to be most likely to reach Church Members at least 2 weeks before the meeting. Such notice satisfies “notice from the pulpit” when that method of notice is otherwise required by these Bylaws. Attendance at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
- E. The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

6.04—CHURCH SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

The pastor (or the Board, if the office of pastor is vacant or if the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special Church Council meeting by giving notice from the pulpit to the Church of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or for the discipline or removal of the pastor shall be called in accordance with the provisions of **Article 4**, sections **4.05** and **4.06**.

6.05—VOTING AT CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

Voting at any Church business meeting is limited to eligible Council members in good standing with the Church who are physically present at the meeting. An exception to this in-person vote requirement exists if the Church is meeting electronically as permitted by **Article 6**, sections **6.01** and **6.03D** of these bylaws. Absentee voting is not permitted, and any Member who is undergoing

Church discipline at the time of a vote is not permitted to vote. A majority vote of those attending the meeting, whether in person or electronically, will constitute the requisite number of votes for passage of amendments and motions.

6.06—MOTIONS AT CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

Members who desire that a certain motion be made or subject matter be discussed during an annual, regular, or special business meeting must file a written recommendation with the pastor and Board one week prior to the set meeting. The member will be invited to the meeting to present their point of view. All other motions will be presented by the pastor and/or chairman of the Board (or other moderator if the office of pastor is vacant) unless the pastor and/or the Board has delegated authority to another Member and/or officer to raise certain motions.

6.07—MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. **Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at such time and place as the Board determines.
- B. **Special Meetings.** The pastor or any two Board of Director members may call a special meeting of the Council at any time, and nothing contained in this article shall be construed as limiting, fixing, or affecting the time or date when a meeting called by action of the Board may be held.
- C. **Notice of Meetings**
 - 1. **Requirement of Notice:** Notice shall not be required for regularly scheduled meetings of the Council unless there has been a change to the time, date, or location of such regularly scheduled meetings, in which case notice shall be given in accordance with this section of the Bylaws. Notice shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section for all special meetings of the Council.
 - 2. **Method of Notice:** Notice shall be sent to each Council member for special meetings by means of the Secretary's chosen method of communication, whether by postal mail, phone, or email at each Council member's address or phone number as it appears in the records of the church or as supplied by the Council member to the Secretary for the purpose of notice. Notice shall be given by or at the direction of the chairman or the pastor. In the event the pastor or chairman refuses to give notice, any Board member may give notice of any meeting. The Secretary is responsible for verifying that notice is duly provided.
 - 3. **Content of Notice:** Notice of any special meeting shall state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
 - 4. **Time of Notice:** Notice of any special meeting shall be delivered by the person charged with giving notice, not less than two days before the date of the meeting.
 - 5. **Waiver of Notice:** A Council member may waive notice of a meeting of the Council by written statement, and attendance by the Council member at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
- D. **Quorum.** A quorum for meetings shall be 50% of the Council membership. If a quorum is not attained, then those present shall adjourn the meeting to a new date certain duly noticed to all

Council members for not more than ten days thereafter, at the noticed meeting a quorum shall consist of those Council members then present.

- E. **Roles.** At every meeting of the Council, the chairman, or if absent, the officer chosen by a majority of the Council members present, shall act as chair and/or moderator, and shall conduct the meeting in an orderly manner as determined by the chair. The secretary of the Board shall act as secretary of all meetings and shall take accurate minutes of Council meetings and promptly deliver such minutes to the Council. In the absence of the Board secretary, the chair may appoint another person to act as Board secretary of the meeting.
- F. **Participation in Meetings.** Any one or more Council members may participate in a meeting of the Council by means of a conference telephone, web-based conference, or similar communications equipment or device, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participating by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting for purposes of determining if a quorum is present.

ARTICLE 7 EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

7.01—PURPOSE

The Church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Great Commission, this church shall establish and maintain an educational program (either a Sunday School and/or a weekday educational program) for the purposes of winning souls to Christ and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living. To this end, the church shall engage in educational ministries.

7.02—CHURCH PARTICIPATION

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the Church shall be primarily for the benefit of the Members of the church; however, the pastor and Board, on behalf of the church, may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interests of the Church.

7.03—AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT OF FAITH

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the Church and shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the statement of faith of the Church and the inerrant Word of God. The Church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the statement of the faith, whether in or out of the classroom. Or who actively disagrees with or openly violates the beliefs and practices of the statement of faith, whether in or out of the classroom.

ARTICLE 8 COMMITTEES

8.01—COMMITTEES

The pastor and Council, on behalf of the Church, may designate or form any committees and may appoint Members and/or chairpersons of said committees as considered by the pastor and Board to be in the best interests of the Church. These committees may be standing or temporary (special) committees.

8.02—ACTIONS OF COMMITTEES

The primary function of committees is to research and recommend. Committees have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. Committees shall make available upon request all records and materials to the pastor and Board, who shall have the right to overrule any plans or decisions made by the committee. If deemed appropriate by the pastor and Board, a committee will submit an annual report to the Church of the decisions and plans of the committee.

8.03—STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees shall be: Outreach, Personnel, Finance, Trustees, Education, Missions, Communications, Education, Youth Ministry, Worship, Member Care, Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry, Hospitality, and Small Groups.

ARTICLE 9 DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time the Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. If the Church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the Church will attempt to honor the designation; however, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the Board. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in **Article 1**, section **1.02**.

ARTICLE 10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

10.01—PURPOSE

The purpose of this conflict-of-interest policy is to protect the Church’s interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

10.02—DEFINITIONS

- A. Interested Person: Any director, officer, or member of a committee with governing Board-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest.
- B. Financial interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
 - 1. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Church has a transaction or arrangement.
 - 2. A compensation arrangement with the Church or with any individual or entity with which the Church has a transaction or arrangement; or
 - 3. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
 - 4. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Board of directors decides that a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Compensation: Direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
- D. Board: The Board of Directors of the Church. The pastor and Board will determine procedures for determining a possible conflict of interest.

10.03—PROCEDURES

- A. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Board and, if applicable, members of committees with governing Board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- B. Determining whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he or she shall leave the Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members (as applicable) shall decide, by a majority vote, if a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
 - 1. The chair of the Board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - 2. After exercising due diligence, the Board or committee shall determine whether the Church can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - 3. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the Church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In

conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

D. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy

1. If the Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a Member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the Member of the basis for such belief and afford the Member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
2. If, after hearing the Member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board determines the Member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

10.04—RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS

- A. The minutes of the Council meetings shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- B. The minutes of the Council meetings also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

10.05—COMPENSATION

- A. A voting member of the Council or any committee who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that Member's compensation.
- B. A voting member of the Council or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Church, either individually or collectively, are not prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

10.06—ANNUAL STATEMENTS

Each director, officer, and member of a committee with governing Board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy; has read and understands the policy; has agreed to comply with the policy; and understands the organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

10.07—PERIODIC REVIEWS

To ensure the organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- A. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
- B. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or an excess benefit transaction.

10.08—USE OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in **Article 10**, section **10.07** above, the organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

ARTICLE 11 BINDING CHRISTIAN ARBITRATION

11.01—SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

Members of the Church must agree to submit to binding Christian arbitration any legal matters within the Church that cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

11.02—ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the Board. If the Board has not adopted procedures, the Church will use arbitration procedures provided by the National Center for Life and Liberty. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local Church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

ARTICLE 12 TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS

12.01—PRIVATE INUREMENT

No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its Members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in **Article 1** section **1.02** hereof.

12.02—POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

No substantial part of the activities of the Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. To the extent prohibited by law, the Church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

12.03—DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the Church, the Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all assets of the Church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the Board shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the Church's statement of faith.

12.04—NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Church shall not discriminate against Members, applicants for membership, students, or others on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the Church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of the Church. This policy statement is not intended to waive the ministerial exception or any other exception or exemption to federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws or regulations.

12.05—LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, the Church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article 1, section 1.02.

ARTICLE 13 AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the Council Members present and voting at any regular Church Council meeting, provided that said revision or amendment is announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays, and at least seven days before the vote is taken. Proposed amendments or changes must be made available to Council Members for review at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote to amend the Bylaws will be taken. Amendments become effective immediately upon a majority vote approving same.

These Bylaws were adopted by a majority vote of the Church Council present and voting at the duly called meeting in which a quorum was present, December 13, 2022.

These bylaws supersede any other Bylaws of Crums Church.

Date

Church Secretary

Corporate Seal
Crums Church, Inc.

ATTACHMENT 1:

PART ONE DOCTRINE

¶ 101. OUR HERITAGE OF FAITH.

1. As a Wesleyan expression of Christianity, Crums Church professes the Christian faith, established on the confession of Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God, and resurrected Lord of heaven and earth. This confession, expressed by Simon Peter in Matthew 16:16-19 and Acts 2:32, is foundational. It declares Jesus is the unique incarnate Word of God, and He lives today, calling all to receive Him as savior, and as the one to whom all authority has been given.

2. This faith has been tested and proved since its proclamation by Mary Magdalene, the first witness to the resurrection. It was defended by the women and men of the early church, many of whom gave their lives as testimony. Their labor, enabled and inspired by the Holy Spirit, resulted in the canon of scripture as the sufficient rule both for faith and practice (the Greek word *kanon* means rule). It formulated creeds such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian definition as accurate expressions of this faith.

3. In the sixteenth century, the Protestant reformers preserved this testimony, asserting the primacy of Scripture, the necessity of grace and faith, and the priesthood of all believers. Their doctrinal summations, the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Schleitheim Confession*, the *Anglican Articles of Religion*, and the *Heidelberg Catechism*, bore witness to this faith.

4. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Pietists in all traditions sought to emphasize the experiential nature of this faith, as direct encounter with the risen Lord. They worked to develop the fruit of this faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in individual and communal life. These pietistic movements influenced many in the reformation traditions, including two Anglican brothers, John and Charles Wesley.

5. Through the organization and published works by these brothers, a distinctly Methodist articulation of Christian faith and life, of "practical divinity," emerged. Methodism placed particular emphasis on the universal work of grace, the new birth, and the fullness of salvation, entire sanctification or perfection. Methodists created structures and communities alongside the established church to facilitate the mission "to reform the nation, especially the church, and spread scriptural holiness over the land."

6. As Methodists moved to America, they brought this expression of faith with them. Although Methodism in England remained loyal to the established church until after John Wesley's death, the American revolution dictated the formation of a new church, independent of the Church of England. Accordingly, in 1784, while gathered in Baltimore for the "Christmas Conference," the Methodist Episcopal Church was formally constituted.

7. This new church adopted John Wesley's revision of the Anglican Articles of Religion, the Methodist General Rules, a liturgy, and ordained the first Methodist clergy. Two other sources of authority were identified: the four volumes that included fifty-three of Wesley's sermons and his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*. When a constitution was adopted in 1808, the Restrictive Rules protected the Articles and General Rules from revocation or change.

8. Other Methodist expressions of "primitive Christianity" and "the scripture way of salvation" emerged. German-speaking Americans from pietistic Reformed, Anabaptist, and Lutheran traditions, created organizations with doctrine and discipline nearly identical to the

English-speaking Methodist Episcopal Church. The work of Phillip William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, and Jacob Albright established the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. A number of African American Methodists, including Richard Allen, Jarena Lee, and James Varick, helped establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Zion to address racial discrimination and the injustices of slavery, while preserving doctrine and discipline.

9. Through separations and mergers, Methodist Christians have preserved testimony to the risen and reigning Christ by holding themselves accountable to standards of doctrine and discipline. Beginning with early Methodist work in the Caribbean, this Wesleyan understanding of doctrine has now spread across the globe, flourishing with the unique contributions of many cultures. When The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968, with the merger of The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren, both the Methodist *Articles of Religion* and the Evangelical United Brethren *Confession of Faith* were accepted as doctrinal standards and deemed “congruent” articulations of this faith. For fifty years, the growing voices of Methodists in Africa, the Philippines, and Europe have joined in the engagement to maintain our doctrinal heritage, promoting fidelity to the doctrinal principles that launched our movement. Crums Church, along with many other Methodist churches, seeks to preserve this heritage.

¶ **102. THE WESLEYAN WAY OF SALVATION.** 1. The gift of grace is available to all persons. Our Father in Heaven is not willing that any should be lost (Matthew 18:14), but that all may come to “the knowledge of truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). With St. Paul, we affirm the proclamation found in Romans 10:9, “That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

2. Grace is the manifestation of God’s love toward fallen creation, to be freely received and freely given. This undeserved gift works to liberate humanity from both the guilt and power of sin, and live as children of God, freed for joyful obedience. In the classic Wesleyan expression, grace works in numerous ways throughout our lives, beginning with the general providence of God toward all.

3. God’s *prevenient or preventing grace* refers to “the first dawning of grace in the soul,” mitigating the effects of original sin, even before we are aware of our need for God. It prevents the full consequences of humanity’s alienation from God and awakens conscience, giving an initial sense of God and the first inclinations toward life. Received prior to our ability to respond, preventing grace enables genuine response to the continuing work of God’s grace.

4. God’s *convincing grace* leads us to what the Bible terms “repentance,” awakening in us a desire to “flee the wrath to come” and enabling us to begin to “fear God and work righteousness.”

5. God’s *justifying grace* works by faith to bring reconciliation to God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, what God does for us. It is pardon for sin and ordinarily results in assurance, “God’s Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God.”

6. God’s *sanctifying grace* begins with God’s work of regeneration, sometimes referred to as “being born again.” It is God’s work in us as we continually turn to Him and seek to be perfected in His love. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit works to replace sin with the fruit of the Spirit. With John Wesley, we believe that a life of holiness or “entire sanctification” should be the goal of each individual’s journey with God.

7. Our ultimate hope and promise in Christ is glorification, where our souls and bodies are perfectly restored through this grace.

¶ **103. PRINCIPLES OF OUR LIFE TOGETHER.** Wesley said, “there is no holiness but social.” By referring to “social holiness,” Wesley meant that the road to holiness was one that we could not travel by ourselves, but rather involved the community of faith at every step along the way.

Our longing and hope are that our church may:

1. Remain rooted and grounded in the scriptures and in the historic teachings of the Christian church as defined in our Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith, and understood through the Wesleyan lens of faith.

2. Aspire to introduce all people, without exception, to Jesus Christ, recognizing that the mission in which we are engaged has eternal consequences. We are committed to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 to go into all the world to make disciples of Christ, teaching and baptizing in His name.

3. Lead all those who experience new birth in Jesus to deepen and grow in their relationship with Him, inviting the Holy Spirit to produce spiritual fruit within their lives as they similarly manifest the gifts of that Spirit. We encourage all to participate in discipleship and accountability groups, such as Wesleyan class and band meetings, and to utilize all the other means of grace to achieve this end.

4. Model the love of God in order to respond to the summons to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. To this end we are committed to fulfill the commandment in John 21 of lovingly feeding and tending to the flock of God and others, worshiping God in spirit, and in truth and watching over one another in love. This the church does until, perfected in love, it experiences the fullness of God's restored Kingdom with Christ.

5. Recognize the laity as the people of God and a royal priesthood, chosen and empowered for the work of God in this world in full partnership with our clergy. We affirm the participation and leadership of those of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, sexes, and ages in the Body of Christ.

6. Encourage and affirm the call of God in the lives of clergy who are grounded in the authoritative witness of the Scriptures, set apart by the church, and recognized to possess the necessary gifts and graces for ministry in alignment and accountability with our settled doctrines and discipline.

7. Display a "catholic spirit" to the church universal, cherishing our place within the greater Body of Christ through mutual respect, cooperative relationships, and shared mission with others wherever possible. We envision a global church in which all work together, resourcing and learning from one another, to fulfill the tasks of the church given to it by God.

8. Provide an organization and structure that is able to accomplish its primary functions of support, with a connectional polity that can empower and multiply the gifts of all for the sake of Christ's work in the world.

¶ **104. HOLY SCRIPTURE.** The canonical books of the Old and New Testaments (as specified in the Articles of Religion) are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service, against which all other authorities must be measured.

¶ **105. FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS FOR OUR DOCTRINAL STANDARDS.** The following summaries of the apostolic witness disclosed in Scripture have been affirmed by many Christian communities, and express orthodox Christian teaching.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to the dead.
On the third day He rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
Is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

** universal*

THE NICENE CREED (A.D. 381)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

** universal*

THE DEFINITION OF CHALCEDON (A.D. 451)

Following the holy fathers, we teach with one voice that the Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same Person, That He is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body consisting of one substance with the Father as regards His Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards His manhood, like us in all respects, apart from sin. Begotten of His Father before the ages as regards His Godhead, But in these last days born for us and for our salvation of the Virgin Mary, the Godbearer. This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, must be confessed to be in two natures, without confusion, without changes, without division, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. Even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of Him, And our Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us, And the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

¶ **106. CONSTITUTIVE STANDARDS.** As is the case in many Christian communities, we recognize additional statements of faith that are consistent with the creedal tradition of the church universal, but which also express our church's particular emphases and concerns, as well as our theological heritage of faith. These constitutive standards embody the "faith once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3) and serve as a bulwark against false teaching, providing the framework for the praise of God in our teaching (orthodoxy), the development of our collective theology, and the launching point for our living and service (orthopraxis). Recognizing the complementary streams of the Methodist and the Evangelical United Brethren faith communities, both the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith define the doctrinal boundaries of our church, until such time as a combined Articles of Faith may be approved by the church.

1. THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH. Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were finalized in 1571 to define the doctrine of the Church of England. When Methodism emerged as a church, independent of the Church of England two centuries later, John Wesley abbreviated the formulation to 24 Articles. An additional article dealing with the duty of Christians to civil authority was added by the Methodist Episcopal Church when it was formed in 1784. The Articles were officially adopted by the General Conference of 1808, when the first Restrictive Rule was also implemented, and revised by the Uniting Conference of 1939 when three Methodist communions within America became one. The Twenty-Five Articles are as follows:

Article I - Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and good; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Article II - Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile us to His Father, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

Article III - Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

Article IV - Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

Article V - Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments of whose authority was never any doubt in the church. The names of the canonical books are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve Prophets the Less. All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

Article VI - Of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

Article VII - Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Article VIII - Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do

good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

Article IX - Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

Article X - Of Good Works

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

Article XI - Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary works—besides, over and above God's commandments—which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly: When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

Article XII - Of Sin After Justification

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Article XIII - Of the Church

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

Article XIV - Of Purgatory

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

Article XV - Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

Article XVI - Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

Article XVII - Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The Baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

Article XVIII - Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

Article XIX - Of Both Kinds

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

Article XX - Of the One Oblation of Christ, Finished upon the Cross

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

Article XXI - Of the Marriage of Ministers

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

Article XXII - Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

Article XXIII - Of the Rulers of the United States of America

The President, the Congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Article XXIV - Of Christian Men's Goods

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

Article XXV - Of a Christian Man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

The following Article from the *Methodist Protestant Discipline* was placed here by the Uniting Conference (1939). [It was not one of the Articles of Religion voted upon by the three churches.]

Of Sanctification (from the Methodist Protestant Discipline)

Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement cleans ~~eth~~ all from sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but are washed from its pollution, saved from its power, and enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in His holy commandments blameless.

2. THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH.

In 1809, the Evangelical Association adopted a German translation of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Articles of Religion, adding an article on the last judgement from the Augsburg Confession. These were reduced to twenty-one in 1816, omitting polemical articles against Roman Catholics and Anabaptists, and later condensed to nineteen. In 1815, the United Brethren in Christ adopted a

Confession of Faith based on an 1814 Confession and 1789 *Lehre* by Philip William Otterbein. A more comprehensive Confession was composed in 1889, including an article on sanctification reflecting the influence of the Heidelberg Catechism. The 1946 conference that formed the Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted both the Confession of Faith of the United Brethren in Christ and the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Church. In 1962 a new Confession of Faith was completed, including articles on "Sanctification and Christian Perfection" (Article XI) and "The Judgement and Future State" (Article XII). This was adopted in the 1968 merger with the Methodist Church that produced the United Methodist Church.

Article I - God

We believe in the one true, holy and living God, Eternal Spirit, who is Creator, Sovereign and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. He is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness and love, and rules with gracious regard for the well-being and salvation of men, to the glory of his name. We believe the one God reveals himself as the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable, eternally one in essence and power.

Article II - Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, in whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united. He is the eternal Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father, born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. As ministering Servant he lived, suffered and died on the cross. He was buried, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to be with the Father, from whence he shall return. He is eternal Savior and Mediator, who intercedes for us, and by him all men will be judged.

Article III - The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from and is one in being with the Father and the Son. He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He leads men through faithful response to the gospel into the fellowship of the Church. He comforts, sustains and empowers the faithful and guides them into all truth.

Article IV - The Holy Bible

We believe the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, reveals the Word of God so far as it is necessary for our salvation. It is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be made an article of faith nor is it to be taught as essential to salvation.

Article V - The Church

We believe the Christian Church is the community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. We believe it is one, holy, apostolic and catholic. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by men divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers and the redemption of the world.

Article VI - The Sacraments

We believe the Sacraments, ordained by Christ, are symbols and pledges of the Christian's profession and of God's love toward us. They are means of grace by which God works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening and confirming our faith in him. Two Sacraments are ordained by Christ our Lord, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith, and is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin, a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus and a mark of Christian discipleship.

We believe children are under the atonement of Christ and as heirs of the Kingdom of God are acceptable subjects for Christian Baptism. Children of believing parents through Baptism become the special responsibility of the Church. They should be nurtured and led to personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their Baptism.

We believe the Lord's Supper is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another. Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until he comes.

Article VII - Sin and Free Will

We believe man is fallen from righteousness and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is destitute of holiness and inclined to evil. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. In his own strength, without divine grace, man cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God. We believe, however, man influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit is responsible in freedom to exercise his will for good.

Article VIII - Reconciliation Through Christ

We believe God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The offering Christ freely made on the cross is the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, redeeming man from all sin, so that no other satisfaction is required.

Article IX - Justification and Regeneration

We believe we are never accounted righteous before God through our works or merit, but that penitent sinners are justified or accounted righteous before God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe regeneration is the renewal of man in righteousness through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life. By this new birth the believer becomes reconciled to God and is enabled to serve him with the will and the affections. We believe, although we have experienced regeneration, it is possible to depart from grace and fall into sin; and we may even then, by the grace of God, be renewed in righteousness.

Article X - Good Works

We believe good works are the necessary fruits of faith and follow regeneration but they do not have the virtue to remove our sins or to avert divine judgment. We believe good works, pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, spring from a true and living faith, for through and by them faith is made evident.

Article XI - Sanctification and Christian Perfection

We believe sanctification is the work of God's grace through the Word and the Spirit, by which those who have been born again are cleansed from sin in their thoughts, words and acts, and are enabled to live in accordance with God's will, and to strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as one's self. Through faith in Jesus Christ this gracious gift may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God.

We believe this experience does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes common to man, nor from the possibilities of further sin. The Christian must continue on guard against spiritual pride and seek to gain victory over every temptation to sin. He must respond wholly to the will of God so that sin will lose its power over him; and the world, the flesh, and the devil are put under his feet. Thus he rules over these enemies with watchfulness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Article XII - The Judgment and the Future State

We believe all men stand under the righteous judgment of Jesus Christ, both now and in the last day. We believe in the resurrection of the dead; the righteous to life eternal and the wicked to endless condemnation.

Article XIII - Public Worship

We believe divine worship is the duty and privilege of man who, in the presence of God, bows in adoration, humility and dedication. We believe divine worship is essential to the life of the Church, and that the assembling of the people of God for such worship is necessary to Christian fellowship and spiritual growth.

We believe the order of public worship need not be the same in all places but may be modified by the church according to circumstances and the needs of men. It should be in a language and form understood by the people, consistent with the Holy Scriptures to the edification of all, and in accordance with the order and *Discipline* of the Church.

Article XIV - The Lord's Day

We believe the Lord's Day is divinely ordained for private and public worship, for rest from unnecessary work, and should be devoted to spiritual improvement, Christian fellowship and service. It is commemorative of our Lord's resurrection and is an emblem of our eternal rest. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian Church, and important to the welfare of the civil community.

Article XV - The Christian and Property

We believe God is the owner of all things and that the individual holding of property is lawful and is a sacred trust under God. Private property is to be used for the manifestation of Christian love and liberality, and to support the Church's mission in the world. All forms of property, whether private, corporate or public, are to be held in solemn trust and used responsibly for human good under the sovereignty of God.

Article XVI - Civil Government

We believe civil government derives its just powers from the sovereign God. As Christians we recognize the governments under whose protection we reside and believe such governments should be based on, and be responsible for, the recognition of human rights under God. We believe war and bloodshed are contrary to the gospel and spirit of Christ. We believe it is the duty of Christian

citizens to give moral strength and purpose to their respective governments through sober, righteous and godly living.

¶ 107. NORMATIVE WESLEYAN STANDARDS

Representing the normative contributions and emphases of Methodism’s articulation of the Christian faith, the Wesleyan Standards have, to one degree or another, been broadly shared between the spiritual descendants of the eighteenth-century evangelical renewal led by John and Charles Wesley. These standards teach us what it means to be Methodist and the teachings of our communities should be consistent with them. These include the following:

1. THE STANDARD SERMONS OF JOHN WESLEY

Intended to provide patterns of preaching and teaching for the people called Methodists, John Wesley published several editions of his sermons, beginning in 1746, to set down what he found as “the way to heaven, with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men.” The compilation of forty-four of those sermons were intended to provide a “model deed” for what was preached from a Methodist pulpit in the ongoing life of the church. These particular sermons were regarded by Wesley as being of distinct value, and intended to serve as “standards” for teaching Christian doctrine in the church:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>1. Salvation by Faith</i> | <i>2. The Almost Christian</i> |
| <i>3. Awake, Thou That sleepest</i> | <i>4. Scriptural Christianity</i> |
| <i>5. Justification By Faith</i> | <i>6. The Righteousness of Faith</i> |
| <i>7. The Way to the Kingdom</i> | <i>8. The First-Fruits of the Spirit</i> |
| <i>9. The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption</i> | <i>10. The Witness of the Spirit - Discourse I</i> |
| <i>11. The Witness of our own Spirit</i> | <i>12. The Means of Grace</i> |
| <i>13. The Circumcision of the Heart</i> | <i>14. The Marks of the New Birth</i> |
| <i>15. The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God</i> | |
| <i>16-28. Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (13 Discourses)</i> | |
| <i>29. The Original, Nature, Property and Use of the Law</i> | |
| <i>30-31. The Law Established through Faith Discourse (2 Discourses)</i> | |
| <i>32. The Nature of Enthusiasm</i> | <i>33. A Caution against Bigotry</i> |
| <i>34. Catholic Spirit</i> | <i>35. Christian Perfection</i> |
| <i>36. Wondering Thoughts</i> | <i>37. Satan's Devices</i> |
| <i>38. Original Sin</i> | <i>39. The New Birth</i> |
| <i>40. The Wilderness State</i> | <i>41. Heaviness through Manifold Temptations</i> |
| <i>42. Self-Denial</i> | <i>43. The Cure of Evil Speaking</i> |
| <i>44. The Use of Money</i> | |

The 1771 edition of Wesley’s *Works* included nine additional sermons:

- The Witness of the Spirit, II*
- On Sin in Believers*
- The Repentance of Believers*

The Great Assize
The Lord Our Righteousness
The Scripture Way of Salvation
The Good Steward
The Reformation of Manners
On the Death of George Whitefield

In addition to the forty-four, these nine sermons were adopted as standards of doctrine for the American church in 1784. The 1787-88 edition of Wesley's sermons included only the forty-four, in keeping with the stipulations of the model deed.

The additional nine sermons supplement the original forty-four, providing additional teaching on matters of practical divinity and other topics.

2. THE EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

First published in 1755, John Wesley's New Testament text is based upon the King James Version and Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. The notes were aimed at the "unlearned reader" and provide historical context for and Wesleyan theological interpretation of the Scriptures, drawing upon work of four earlier commentaries.

¶ 108. THE GENERAL RULES OF THE UNITED SOCIETIES

In order to make explicit the expectations upon those who are members of the Methodist societies, John Wesley first devised a set of rules in 1738, publishing it five years later. The General Rules were subsequently adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785, one year after its formation. The General Rules provide a helpful summation of the kind of intentional discipleship which marked early Methodism, summed up in three simple rubrics: do no harm, do good to all, and stay connected to the sacramental and devotional life of the church. The Rules thus remain a part of the Constitution and are protected by the Restrictive Rules.

The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies

"In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

This was the rise of the United Society, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society is no other than 'a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.'

That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called **classes**, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class, one of whom is styled the leader. It is his duty:

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order: (1) to inquire how their souls prosper; (2) to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require; (3) to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.
2. To meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week, in order: (1) to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly and will not be reproved; (2) to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding. There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.' But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as: The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

Slaveholding: buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.

The giving or taking things on usury—i.e., unlawful interest.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:

The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.

Softness and needless self-indulgence.

Laying up treasure upon earth.

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

It is expected of all who continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly: By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men: To their

bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that 'we are not to do good unless *our hearts be free to it.*'

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them *falsely*, for the Lord's sake.

It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are:

The public worship of God.

The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.

The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures.

Fasting or abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our societies; all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls."

PART TWO

SOCIAL WITNESS

201. OUR SOCIAL HERITAGE

1. Following both the example and teachings of Jesus, we believe that God calls us to love and serve others around the world in His name. Since God first stirred the hearts of John and Charles Wesley to feed the hungry, visit those in prison, oppose slavery, and care for those less fortunate, Methodists have believed in meeting people at their point of need and offering them Jesus. We are convinced that faith if it is not accompanied by action is dead (James 2:17) and that, as Jesus reminded us, when we do not do what is needed to care for the least of our sisters and brothers, we likewise have not done so for Christ either (Matthew 25:45).

2. It was in that spirit that the Methodist Episcopal Church became the first denomination in the world to adopt a formal Social Creed in 1908, spurred by the Social Gospel in response to the deplorable working conditions of millions. Though reflective of its own time, the statement is still

remarkably relevant even today, calling for, among other things, “equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life, principles of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions, abolition of child labor, the suppression of the ‘sweating system,’ a reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practical point, a release from employment one day in seven, and for a living wage in every industry.” In turn, that prophetic witness was subsequently embraced by each of the other branches of Methodism and the Evangelical United Brethren Church and continues this day within the Global Methodist Church. As a global church, our Social Witness represents a consensus vision transcending cultures of what it means to be faithful disciples in a world that remains in rebellion against its Creator, wracked by violence and unfettered greed. It is a summons to prayerfully consider how to “do good” and “do no harm” to all as we put our faith into practice.

202. OUR WITNESS TO THE WORLD

1. We believe that all persons irrespective of their station or circumstances in life have been made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect. We denounce as sin racism, sexism, and other expressions that unjustly discriminate against any person (Genesis 1-2, Deuteronomy 16:19-20, Luke 11:42, 19:9, Colossians 3:11).
2. We believe that life is a holy gift of God whose beginnings and endings are set by God, and that it is the particular duty of believers to protect those who may be powerless to protect themselves, including the unborn, those with disabilities or serious illness, and the aged (Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 19:32, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41-44).
3. The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the wellbeing of the mother and the child are at stake. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (Exodus 22:23-23, Psalm 139:13-16, James 1:27).
4. We believe that all should have the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation and free of grinding toil or exploitation by others. We respect the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining to protect their welfare. We pray that all should be allowed to freely follow their vocations, especially those who work on the frontiers of truth and knowledge and those who may enrich the lives of others with beauty and joy. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God’s creative power (Deuteronomy 5:12-14, Luke 10:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 5:18).
5. We believe that God has called us to share His concern for the poor and to alleviate the conditions and policies which have produced vast disparities in wealth and resources, both among individuals and nations, giving rise to poverty. We are called to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all God’s people as we share the good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed (Leviticus 19:9-10, Matthew 25:37-40, Luke 6:20-25, James 2:1-5).
6. We believe that all have been summoned to care for the earth as our common home, stewarding its resources, sharing in its bounty, and exercising responsible and sustainable consumption so that there is enough for all (Genesis 2:15, Leviticus 26:34-35, Psalm 24:1).

7. We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 19:3-9, Ephesians 5:22-33).

8. We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for His children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20).

9. We believe that children, whether through birth or adoption, are a sacred gift to us from God, and we accept our responsibility to both protect and nurture the youngest among us, particularly against such abuses as enforced child labor, involuntary conscription, human trafficking, and other such practices in the world (Deuteronomy 4:9-10, Psalm 127:3-5, 1 Timothy 5:4,8,16).

10. We believe that followers of God have been called to exercise self-control and holiness in their personal lives, generosity and kindness in their relations with others, and grace in all matters of life (Romans 12:9-21, Galatians 5:22-23).

11. We believe in the rule of justice and law in society, in the right of individuals to follow God's call and to lawfully immigrate to new places, and in the pursuit of peace both between nations and individuals. We offer ourselves to work in order to reduce the bitterness that has overflowed in God's world (Genesis 12:1, Isaiah 11:1-9, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 2:19-10).

12. We believe the practice of the Golden Rule, treating others as we would wish to be treated, can effectively guide our social and business relationships. We seek to cultivate the mind of Christ and a heart for others (Matthew 7:12, Romans 12:1-2).

13. We believe that each person should have the right to exercise their religious beliefs without fear of persecution and that governments should respect freedom of religion and the important role of faith communities within the greater society. We further denounce discrimination or persecution which may target any because of their gender, economic status, ethnic or tribal identity, age, or political views (Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:35).

14. We believe in the final triumph of righteousness when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ, and we accept our calling to work towards that end as Christ's light and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16, Revelation 11:15-17, Revelation 21-22).