BOOK OF DOCTRINES & DISCIPLINE

2024 EDITION

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EPISCOPAL GREETING

To the followers of Jesus Christ known as Global Methodists:

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen." (Galatians 1:3-5)

As a people seeking to follow and serve Jesus Christ and offer the Gospel of Jesus to the world around us, we celebrate our common calling. From the beginning of the Methodist movement, a shared covenant offered guidance and strengthened God's work in and through the people called Methodists.

The *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church presents the doctrinal convictions and agreed-upon practices that shape and order our life together. It allows us to join in boldly pursuing our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe.

We affirm that the holy Scriptures contain all that is necessary for salvation and are profitable for the equipping of the body of Christ. Upon that foundational understanding, this book shapes our life as Global Methodists and allows us to live deeply into the value of watching over one another in love. The *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* expresses what is expected of every clergyperson, layperson, and congregation within the Global Methodist Church. It contains our shared convictions for how we effectively and fruitfully witness to the transforming power of God's grace. It affirms our commitment to living out the best of the Methodist Way and partnering with those who call Jesus Lord and affirm the orthodox tenets of the Christian faith.

As episcopal leaders we commit to submitting ourselves to the commitments and practices agreed upon by the General Conference of the Global Methodist Church and found in these pages. We agree to lead others in maintaining the covenant this book requires. We do so not to simply follow rules, but to be the expression of Christ's body we believe we are called to be, so that the world may know the hope and life found in Jesus Christ.

It is our hope that every Global Methodist will find this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* to be a resource for living out our shared life and strengthening our call and common mission. Our prayer is that this covenant we share will allow us to more deeply know and extend God's grace, invite others to a life of transformational Christian discipleship, and boldly be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world as together we contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. (Jude 1.3)

The Assembly of Bishops of the Global Methodist Church

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1784, "the people called Methodists" have been governed by a document outlining the core beliefs and practices of Methodism. True to our "methodical" manner of spelling out how our shared lives of faith might grow and flourish, that document, along with the Bible and the hymnbook, became a staple in the homes of early Methodist believers everywhere, and often it included John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the New Testament. In that sense, the book was intended not simply to guide but to teach all those wishing to follow the Wesleyan Way of salvation and sanctification.

It is in that spirit that, following a transitional version, this first edition of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church is offered, along with the hope that many will find it a useful resource in order to grow in their faith and, indeed, "go on to perfection," as Mr. Wesley taught. That is also the reason why the full name of this historic document—emphasizing both doctrines and discipline—has been restored and the order of its contents rearranged so as to make clear the primacy of doctrine in the life of the faithful. Similarly, our understanding of discipline is related not simply to rules and regulations, but to the notion that a true disciple of Christ is simply a disciplined follower of him. In the words of Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke, the first two bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, our form of discipline has been founded "on the experience of a long series of years, as also on the observations and remarks we have made on ancient and modern churches." "Far from wishing you to be ignorant of any of our doctrines, or any part of our discipline," they continued, "we desire you to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the whole."

As per the Methodist custom, this book is organized by paragraphs (¶) rather than by pages, each of which are numbered consecutively within a chapter or section, but skipping paragraph numbers between parts or chapters to allow for future enactments, following this plan:

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As you utilize this book, we pray that this "labor of love," as Asbury and Coke called it, may be made a blessing to many.

THE 2024 JOURNAL COMMITTEE

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PART ONE – DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS

¶ 101. OUR HERITAGE OF FAITH. 1. Through the unsurpassed grace of God, the Global Methodist Church professes the revelation of God through the call of Abraham and the Hebrew people, culminating in the confession of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, the resurrected Lord of heaven and earth. This confession, expressed by Simon Peter in Matthew 16:16 and Acts 2:36, 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 the women at the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene among them, the first witnesses to the resurrection. It was taught by the apostles and 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 for both faith and practice (the Greek word *kanon* means rule). The church 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, the importance of justification by faith, and the priesthood of all believers. The doctrinal summation that stands behind the Methodist faith is the historic Thirty-Nine *Articles of Religion* of the Church of England which John Wesley reduced to the Twenty-Four Articles for the American church and which was affirmed at the Christmas Conference in 1784.

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

5. Through the labors of many Methodists in the British Isles, especially through the efforts of John and Charles Wesley, an organization and body of literature emerged, giving rise to a distinctly Methodist articulation of the Christian faith and life. To illustrate, Methodism placed particular emphasis on the universal work of grace, justification by faith, the new birth, and the fullness of salvation, otherwise known as entire sanctification or Christian perfection. Methodists created structures and communities alongside the established church to facilitate the mission "to reform the nation, particularly the church, and to 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 led to 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 Thirty-Nine *Articles of Religion*, the Methodist *General Rules*, and a liturgy in the form of a revision of the Prayer Book, and it ordained Methodist clergy. Two other sources of authority were identified: the four volumes of sermons, which given Wesley's own publication of this body of literature at the time, included fifty-three sermons, as well as his *Explanatory Notes Upon 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, and James Varick, helped to establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to address racial discrimination and the injustices of slavery, while preserving doctrine and discipline. In the same century many Methodists participated in the Holiness Movement, an attempt to maintain Wesley's emphasis on holiness of heart and life. When the General Rules were officially adopted in 1789, a new rule was added in the American context that forbid participation in what John Wesley, himself, later referred to as "that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion," namely, the institution of American slavery. However, due to the corrupting influences of American culture at the time, this rule was eventually ignored in those areas in which slavery was declared legal. By the time the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in 1844, American Methodism was already badly divided into pro and anti-slavery factions and a Plan of Separation was therefore adopted. Other tensions at the time included the respective powers of the episcopacy as well as those of the General Conference, due to the holding of slaves by clergy as well as by a prominent bishop. The following year, the Methodist Episcopal Church was rent asunder as delegates from the southern states met in Louisville, Kentucky, to organize the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. These two ecclesiastical bodies went their separate ways until the Uniting Conference of 1939 when they came together once more, along with the Methodist Protestant Church, which had organized earlier in 1830 along congregational lines. The uniting of these three bodies was simply known as The Methodist Church.

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. Consequently, Wesleyan doctrine spread to several countries in the Caribbean, Asia, Oceania, Africa, Latin America, and Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries primarily through the efforts of Methodist missionaries from the British Isles and North America. Powerful spiritual revivals often accompanied this expansion that further reinforced Wesleyan teachings on repentance, salvation by faith, the new birth, and holiness. 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 from 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.

10. In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the United Methodist Church was badly divided. As a consequence, the Global Methodist Church was launched by necessity on May 1, 2022, not only to preserve doctrinal integrity, especially in terms of the authority of Scripture, but also to provide a faithful and lively witness to the apostolic faith. Such a grounding ensured that the four historic marks of the Church, affirmed at the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381 AD, namely, that the church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, would mark the Global Methodist Church in an exemplary way.

¶ 102. THE WESLEYAN WAY OF SALVATION. 1. The Wesleyan tradition celebrates the universal love of God in affirming that Christ died for all people with the result that the gift of salvation is available to all persons through the ministrations of the Holy Spirit. 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 the Apostle 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. God's love toward fallen creation is made manifest in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ; his life, ministry, death, and bodily resurrection. This gift of salvation is available to all humanity by grace through faith. Grace includes the active, empowering presence of God, through the Holy Spirit, enabling believers to trust, love, and serve God. This undeserved gift works to liberate humanity from both the guilt and power of sin, and to 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, instills a basic knowledge of the moral law, gives an initial sense of God, and restores a measure of liberty to receive the further graces of God – all of this issuing in 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." Clearly, repentance is at the heart of what Methodism has always been about: the calling of sinners to forsake their self-referential ways and to embrace the good news of Jesus Christ. Indeed, so important was repentance to John Wesley that he referred to it as one of the three main doctrines of Methodism, along with both faith and holiness. In fact, he even described repentance as "the porch of religion."

5. God's *justifying grace* is received by faith to reconcile us to God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, what God does for us. It is pardon for past sins and ordinarily results in the direct assurance of "God's Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16) as well as the indirect witness of a good conscience in the midst of the fruit of the Spirit.

6. God's *sanctifying grace* begins with God's work of regeneration, sometimes referred to as "being born again," or "initial sanctification." 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 increasingly cleanses the heart in Christlikeness and to put to death the carnal nature in an ever increasing abundance of the fruit of the Spirit. With John Wesley, we believe that a life of holiness and ultimately "entire sanctification" should be the goal of each person's journey with God.

7. Our ultimate hope and promise in Christ is *glorification*, where our souls and bodies will be perfectly restored to live with God eternally through the new creation.

¶ 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 the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3. Lead all those who experience the new birth in Jesus to deepen in the faith and to grow in their relationship with him, receiving the Holy Spirit as evidenced by both spiritual fruit and gifts that are manifested in their lives to the glory of God. 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. NORMATIVE 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 word "normative" refers to the standards by which we judge true and false teaching. Normative teaching is binding and obligatory. It establishes the proper boundaries for preaching and teaching in our denomination.

1. THE APOSTLES' CREED (Second Century A.D.)

The Apostles' Creed is the oldest statement of faith within the Christian Church, stemming from an older Roman Creed that was in use in the second century, with the earliest written form of this creed found in a letter dated about 341 A.D. It has been employed by the church throughout her rich history for doctrinal clarity and for the lively confession of faith in preparation for the sacrament of baptism.

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

2. THE NICENE CREED (A.D. 381)

The Nicene Creed was developed by the first ecumenical council of the Christian Church that met in 325 A.D. in ancient Nicaea, in the present-day nation of Turkey. The creed was later amplified and adopted as a true expression of the Christian faith at a second ecumenical council held in Constantinople in 381 A.D. While the creed expresses the belief of the "catholic" or universal church, Christians in the East and West have long disagreed over the inclusion of one word, filioque, a Latin term meaning "and the Son." The original creed expressed the idea that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, while churches in the Western tradition (including Methodists) came to believe that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Reflecting its worldwide nature, Global Methodists are free to include or leave out the phrase, "and the Son" in the use of the creed both in worship and for instruction in the faith.

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

3. **THE DEFINITION OF CHALCEDON (A.D. 451)**

The Definition of Chalcedon was adopted by the fourth ecumenical council of the church held in 451 A.D. in Asia Minor to counter certain heresies and clarify the dual nature of Christ. Though the Chalcedonian Definition does not enjoy the same broad acceptance as both the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds worldwide, it has been affirmed by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and several Protestant theological traditions.

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 God-bearer.

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. NORMATIVE STANDARDS FOR WESLEYAN WITNESS. 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, normative 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 the Church of England were ratified in their final form in 1571 during the reign of Elizabeth I. They reflect both the concerns of the English Reformation and the comprehensive nature of the established church. As the United States emerged as an independent nation, Wesley revised the *Articles* in 1784 for the Methodist work in America. His twenty-four *Articles* reflect both his theological commitments and his desire for doctrinal clarity, shortening some articles and deleting others if they could be easily misread. The Methodist Episcopal Church added an additional article dealing with the duty of Christians to civil authority. The *Twenty-Five 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 three persons, 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 Saviour 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 worshiped.

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 cleanseth 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.

[The following provision was adopted by the Uniting Conference (1939).

Of the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority

It is the duty of all Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country of which are citizens or subjects or in which they reside, and to use all laudable means to encourage and enjoin obedience to the powers that be.

2. THE *CONFESSION OF FAITH* OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH. The *Confession of Faith* of the Evangelical United Brethren Church traces its roots from the doctrinal developments of the Evangelical Association and the United Brethren in Christ traditions. In 1809, two years after the death of Jacob Albright, the Evangelical Association adopted a German translation of the Methodist Episcopal Church's *Articles of Religion* with the addition of an article on the last judgement from the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* of 1530 and an essay on Christian perfection by George Miller. These were reduced to twenty-one in 1816, omitting polemical articles against Roman Catholics and Anabaptists. These were later condensed to nineteen, the number of articles maintained by the Evangelical Church when it was formed in 1923. In 1815, the first general conference of the United Brethren in Christ adopted a *Confession of Faith* with seven articles. A more comprehensive *Confession of Faith* was composed in 1889, with thirteen articles, including an article on sanctification. In 1946, when the Evangelical United Brethren Church was formed, it retained 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 containing sixteen articles. This was adopted in the 1968 merger with the Methodist Church that resulted in the United Methodist Church. The sixteen articles are as follows:

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. FOUNDATIONAL WESLEYAN STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP. 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," promulgated in 1763, 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:

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

The 1771 edition of Wesley's *Works* included nine additional sermons which helped to clarify the difference between the new birth and entire sanctification (the sermons *On Sin in Believers* and *The Repentance of Believers)* as well as to offer a very helpful summation of John Wesley's practical theology (*The Scripture Way of Salvation)*:

45. The Witness of the Spirit, II
46. On Sin in Believers
47. The Repentance of Believers
48. The Great Assize
49. The Lord Our Righteousness
50. The Scripture Way of Salvation
51. The Good Steward
52. The Reformation of Manners
53. On the Death of George Whitefield

In addition to the forty-four, these nine sermons were known and beloved by American Methodists, since Wesley's four volumes of sermons, published in 1771, contained them all. These same sermons were therefore likely in mind when the Christmas Conference met in 1784 and adopted standards of doctrine for the American church. Later, the 1787-88 edition of Wesley's sermons reverted back to the forty-four, in keeping with the stipulations of the model deed. Nevertheless, the fifty-three sermons continued to be known and widely read due to their publishing history in North America, a history that helped to establish a distinct and revered tradition in terms of actual Methodist practice. Remarkably enough, when the historic Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in 1808, it refused to entertain the question of Francis Ward as to just what sermons constitute "our present and existing standards of doctrine?" At any rate, the additional nine sermons, affirmed by Wesley in 1771, supplemented the original forty-four, providing additional teaching on matters of practical divinity and other topics, leading to greater clarity and, as a consequence, significant illuminating power in the Christian life.

2. **THE *EXPLANATORY NOTES UPON 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 average 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.

"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, reproving, 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 -- THE CONSTITUTION

¶ 201. From its earliest days, the Christian Church has been marked as one, holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic. These four qualities, inseparably joined with one another, bear witness to the origin, nature, and mission of the Church as the Body of Christ called to reflect Christ's Lordship. As those who have experienced the redeeming love of God, the Church exists to reflect God's holy and perfect love to all, to boldly proclaim God's Word, to edify all those who believe, and to work for the redemption of the world. Following in the Methodist tradition of organizing together under a common discipline, the Global Methodist Church has adopted the following Constitution to enable us to "watch over each other in love."

SECTION ONE. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

¶ 202. ***Article I.*** *Name* — The name of the Church shall be the Global Methodist Church. This name may be translated freely into languages other than English as the General Conference may determine.

¶ 203. ***Article II.*** *Doctrinal Foundation* — The Holy Scriptures are understood to be our primary rule for faith and practice and the doctrines of the Church shall be those embraced within the historic creeds of the church, our *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith*, and the core Wesleyan tradition as defined within Part One of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

¶ 204. ***Article III.*** *A Church For All* — All persons are made in God's image and are loved by him. All are thus welcome within our churches to join with others in the worship of God, to participate in its ministries, and upon repentance of their sin, professing faith in Jesus Christ, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and demonstrating a sincere desire for a holy life, to become members in any local church within the connection.

¶ 205. ***Article IV.*** *The Church Universal* — The Global Methodist Church is a part of the Body of Christ and we celebrate wherever God is named as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and Jesus is named as Lord. We affirm the validity and value of each expression of the Trinitarian Christian faith that shares that common understanding, and we commit ourselves to work with others for the day when all may be one in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

SECTION TWO. ORGANIZATION

¶ 206. ***Article V***. *Charge Conferences* – The Charge Conference shall be the connecting link between the local church, the annual conference and the general church.

1. The ministry of the Global Methodist Church happens primarily through the local church, overseen and governed by the charge conference. The purpose of all Global Methodist Church organization is to strengthen and support the work of the local church.

2. The right of a local church to be free from a forced closure or trust clause shall not be abrogated.

¶ 207. ***Article VI.*** *Annual Conferences* — Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability. The annual conference shall

be composed of clergy, both active and retired, as well as an equal number of lay members elected by each charge or by the district or conference. Each charge shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are appointed clergy. In addition to coming together for edification, fellowship, and inspiration, the annual conference shall be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. To create a program of ministry within its area that can fulfill the mission of the church and enhance its witness, including forming such commissions or agencies as may be required, specifying the composition of each body and electing the members thereof.

2. To determine and administer a program for raising and distributing funds necessary to conduct the work and mission of the Church in its region.

3. To establish the number of districts within the annual conference.

4. To elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference as per the number determined by the General Conference. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection and in good standing. Lay delegates shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

5. To vote on all constitutional amendments as approved by the General Conference and distributed to the annual conferences for ratification.

6. To approve the ordination of clergy as recommended by the annual conference board of ministry and approved by the ordained clergy meeting in executive session, and to approve clergy status changes as recommended by the annual conference board of ministry and approved by the executive session of the ordained clergy.

7. To encourage and facilitate the planting of new churches, including the authorization of sponsorship by existing congregations, and to charter new congregations.

8. To establish minimum standards for parsonages and other ministry housing if desired.

9. To approve by simple majority vote, the transfer of a congregation into or out of the annual conference to or from another annual conference.

10. To maintain the records of the annual conference, including the record of closed churches and annual reports from all local churches.

11. To adopt rules for its own governance, provided they do not conflict with the requirements of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline.*

¶ 208. ***Article VII.*** *The General Conference* — As per the Methodist tradition of "conferring together," there shall be a General Conference of the Global Methodist Church that shall initially meet for a convening General Conference, then as a General Conference approximately two years thereafter. Subsequently, the General Conference shall meet once every six years. It shall be composed of no fewer than 200 nor more than 700 delegates, one half of whom shall be clergy and one half of whom shall be laity, elected by the annual conferences on a proportional basis as determined by the General Conference. The General Conference may at its discretion include within its number a limited number of delegates, with or without voice and vote, from other autonomous Methodist bodies. A special session of the General Conference to deal with a particular issue or need may be called by a majority vote of the General Conference or of its episcopal leadership. Such special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference or their lawful successors. Where necessary, the General Conference may meet virtually with the approval of the bishops of the church and the Connectional Council.

The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters that are distinctly connectional, including, but not limited to:

1. To define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of those who serve as deacons, elders, other clergy categories, bishops, and other leaders within the Church.

2. To define and establish the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of church membership.

3. To determine the powers of annual conferences and other connectional associations, allowing where appropriate each such body to adapt structures that may best maximize their mission.

4. To determine the boundaries of the annual conferences.

5. To define and establish a Connectional Council with delegated authority from the General Conference to address all matters entrusted to it between meetings of the General Conference subject to such limitations as the General Conference may from time to time impose and subject to ratification of its actions taken between General Conferences by the General Conference.

6. To establish and give oversight to such general commissions as shall be deemed helpful for strengthening and promoting the mission of the Church through the local church.

7. To provide for the selection, continuance, and discontinuance of members of the episcopacy, ensuring that bishops are accountable to the Church, and to define and establish an Assembly of Bishops.

8. To provide for the oversight and/or governance of institutions related to the Church such as hospitals, schools, or other entities.

9. To determine and administer a program for raising and distributing the funds that are necessary for the work of the Church.

10. To ensure the mission of the Church is kept foremost by all ministries, commissions, clergy, laity, and officers of the Church, affirming that disciples of Jesus are made at the level of the local church, and endeavoring to keep as many resources as possible at the local church level.

11. To approve and revise musical resources and worship rituals of the Church, providing for variations as shall be most helpful to particular contexts worldwide.

12. To provide a judicial system mandating uniform processes and procedures and protecting the rights of all those within the Church.

13. To act upon petitions received dealing with Church organization and polity, and resolutions dealing with non-disciplinary matters. In order to effectively speak on behalf of the whole Church, resolutions shall require the support of three-quarters of the General Conference and shall remain in effect only until the next General Conference convenes.

14. To adopt or revise a statement of Our Social Witness, provided that such adoption or revision shall require a three-quarters vote of those present and voting.

15. To enact other legislation as it determines to be helpful to the mission of the Church.

¶ 209. ***Article VIII.*** *The Episcopacy* — The general superintendency of the Global Methodist Church shall be entrusted to bishops who shall provide spiritual leadership to the Church and exercise temporal authority as adopted by the General Conference. Bishops shall be elected as per the procedures established by the General Conference and shall serve at its pleasure to guard the faith, order, unity, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church.

¶ 210. ***Article IX.*** *The Judiciary* — The General Conference shall create a Connectional Council on Appeals, determining the number, terms, and qualifications of its members, as well as their method of election and the filling of any vacancies. All decisions of the Council shall be final. The Council shall have the following authority and responsibility:

1. To determine the constitutionality, the meaning, application, or effect of any action or decision of the General Conference upon an appeal of one-fifth of the members of that Conference present and voting, or upon a majority of the active episcopal leaders of the church.
2. To determine the constitutionality or the meaning, application, or effect of any action or decision of an annual conference upon an appeal of one-fifth of the members present and voting of that Conference.
3. To review and affirm, modify, or reverse any decision of law made by any bishop.
4. To act upon any petition for appeal seeking a ruling on the constitutionality, meaning, application, or effect of any provision in this *Book of Doctrine and Disciplines* to any action taken by the General Conference, any of its annual conferences, commissions, or bodies created or authorized by the General or annual conferences.
5. To provide for its own methods of organization and procedure.
6. To fulfill such duties and powers in the service of the Church as determined by the General Conference.

¶ 211. ***Article X.*** *Right of Appeal* — The General Conference shall establish for the Church a judicial system that shall guarantee to our clergy and to our members a right to trial and appeal.

SECTION THREE. THE RESTRICTIVE RULES AND AMENDMENTS

¶ 212. ***Article XI.*** *The Restrictive Rules* — In continuity with the Wesleyan tradition and historic expressions of Methodism, the following are adopted as restrictive rules, which may be changed only by a three-fourths majority of General Conference delegates present and voting, followed by three-fourths affirmative vote of the aggregate number of delegates of the annual conferences present and voting.

1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our *Articles of Religion*, *Confession of Faith*, Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, *The Standard Sermons* of John Wesley or any other of our doctrinal foundations as established by the Church and embodied within our constitutive standards, or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our existing standards. This restrictive rule shall not apply to the development of a combined *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* as approved by the church. Any successor document to the *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* shall be adopted by a three-fourths vote of the General Conference.
2. The General Conference shall not do away with the privileges of our clergy right to trial by a committee and of an appeal; neither shall it do away with the privileges of our members of right to trial before the church, or by a committee, and an appeal.

¶ 213. ***Article XII.*** *Amendments* — Amendments to the Constitution may originate in the General Conference or an annual conference. Amending the restrictive rule shall require a three-fourths majority of General Conference delegates present and voting (excluding abstentions) followed by three-fourths affirmative vote of the aggregate number of delegates of the annual conferences present and voting (excluding abstentions).

1. Other than to the restrictive rules, amendments to the constitution shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of the General Conference until the close of the 2026 General Conference.

2. After the close of the 2026 General Conference, amendments shall require a two-thirds majority of General Conference delegates present and voting (excluding abstentions) followed by two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of delegates of the annual conferences present and voting (excluding abstentions). Following its ratification, the amendment voted upon shall become effective upon the announcement of its approval. Where appropriate, the General Conference may choose to enact enabling legislation for an amendment that shall be contingent upon the ratification of the amendment by the required vote of the General Conference and the annual conferences.

PART THREE -- SOCIAL WITNESS

¶ 301. 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.

¶ 302. 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 22:22-23, 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 12:1-3, 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).*

PART FOUR -- THE COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Section I. Foundational Principles

¶ 401. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH. The Global Methodist Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to spread scriptural holiness across the globe.

Vision Statement: Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the Global Methodist Church envisions multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the earth who flourish in scriptural holiness as we worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

The church is one, holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic. The mission of the church is an extension of the mission of God. As Christ draws all people to himself, we participate in that work through our evangelism, worship, preaching, teaching, sacramental practice, works of mercy, works of piety, and fellowship. All those of every age and station stand in need of the grace that God has promised to extend to others through his body, the church.

While it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to change the hearts of individuals, ours is the task of sharing the good news of God as we respond to the summons of Christ in Matthew 28: "As you are going, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you," even as Christ has promised to remain with us always, "even to the end of the age." Following the example of early Methodists, we believe God has raised us up in order to "spread scriptural holiness across the land," embodying that "grand depositum" of the faith that John Wesley believed had been entrusted to "the people called Methodists," the continued striving for entire sanctification.

¶ 402. A GLOBAL CHURCH. John Wesley famously declared in his journal on June 11, 1739, "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation." Since that time Methodists have recognized that at the core of our church's mission is ensuring that the Good News of Jesus Christ is shared around the globe. From Britain to the Americas, to the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Methodists who came before us shared Jesus' message of salvation. Today our mission receives this rich inheritance and moves forward boldly into a new chapter. We recognize the world is the parish of the Global Methodist Church. We are active in advancing the cause of Christ on multiple continents, and our faith communities will continue to do so. Ours is a global church that recognizes the gifts and contributions of each part of our communion in Christ, working together as partners in the gospel with equal voice and leadership. Learning from each other and sharing best practices across cultures, we follow the admonition of St. Paul that "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good," that together we are the Body of Christ, sharing in "an equal concern for one another" (1 Corinthians 12). Our vision of a global church is one marked by mutual love, concern, sharing, and accountability.

¶ 403. OUR COVENANT IN CHRIST. We believe that God has called us to live together in a faithful covenant that expresses our commitments both to God and to each other. With John

Wesley, we affirm that the Scriptures know of no such thing as "solitary religion," but that we have been designed to grow in our discipleship in the company of others. As a church, we are committed to a connectional organization that is meant to encourage such sharing and accountability, with the end goal of all being partners in the gospel and in our outreach to the world. This connection is founded in both our common doctrinal understandings, as well as in our core mission of sharing the gospel with the world. Towards that end, we celebrate our unity with one another at the table of the Lord that extends across the globe, crossing all boundaries of language, culture, customs, and social and economic distinctions.

¶ 404. THE MINISTRY OF THE LAITY. God has entrusted his work in this world to the whole people of God. All Christians are called through their baptism to be in ministry to others, both as individuals and as a part of the church, using the gifts and graces with which they have been equipped by the Holy Spirit. Every layperson bears the responsibility for carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), but likewise each have been given the power by God to do so. For like the variety of spiritual gifts described in the Scriptures, the diversity of our outreach efforts knows no limit either when we serve Christ with joy and thanksgiving. With other heirs of the Protestant Reformation, we embrace the notion of "the priesthood of all believers" and we call upon both laity and clergy to work together in a partnership of servanthood. As suggested in Ephesians 4:12-13, Christ has not given to pastors the task of doing the ministry by themselves, but of equipping those in the church for such works of service, so that "the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." We believe that it is only as each individual, whether lay or clergy, bears witness to God's grace that the world may come to know Christ and respond to his invitation to have life in abundance. Each member is therefore expected to be a witness for Christ in the world, a light and leaven in society, and a reconciler in a culture of conflict, identifying with the agony and suffering of the world and radiating and exemplifying the Christ of hope. As the people of God, we must either win the world to Christ or abandon it to those forces that oppose him. Beyond the diverse forms of ministry is this ultimate concern: that all persons will be brought into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and be renewed after the image of their creator (Colossians 3:10). This means that all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free. Toward that end, the full participation of all who believe is vital and cannot be evaded if the gospel is to be heard and received.

¶ 405. TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP. In light of the mission of the Church and our covenant in Christ, the Global Methodist Church engages the commandment to make disciples of Jesus through an intentional process grounded in Scripture and in our Wesleyan heritage. The Global Methodist Church defines a disciple as a person whose life reflects the character of Christ and extends the mission of Christ in holy love of God and neighbor. The disciple's character and practice are informed by the Scriptures, nurtured by the community of faith, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The disciple's mission is to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus through works of teaching, service, multiplication, mercy, and justice making more obedient disciples who will reflect the character and mission of Christ and expanding the boundaries of Christ's Kingdom further out into the world. The goal of transformational discipleship ministry in the Global Methodist Church is to make, develop, and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ through small groups where each person is invited, challenged, supported, and

held accountable in living sanctified lives that reflect the practices, character, and mission of Christ.

¶ 406. CALLED TO INCLUSIVENESS. We recognize that God made all creation and saw that it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and evidence of God's grace to the unity of the Church and to society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons. Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the spiritual life of the Church and its service to the community and the world. Therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or gender (defined throughout this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* by a person's immutable biological traits identified by or before birth). The services of worship of every local church of the Global Methodist Church shall be open to all persons and church activities wherever possible should take place in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Similarly, inclusiveness means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who meet the requirements of our *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in the membership and leadership of the Church at any level and in every place.

¶ 407. LEGAL DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH. Affirming the spiritual dimensions of the ministry of all Christians, it is recognized that this ministry exists in the secular world and that civil authorities may seek legal definition predicated on the nature of the Global Methodist Church in seeking fulfillment of this ministry. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the meaning of "Global Methodist Church," "the general Church," "the entire Church," and "the Church" as used in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* should be consonant with the traditional self-understanding of Methodists as to the meaning of these words. These terms refer to the overall denomination and connectional relation and identity of its many local churches, the various conferences and their respective councils, boards, and agencies, and other Church units, which collectively constitute the religious system known as Global Methodism. Under the procedures set forth in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, the "Global Methodist Church" as a denominational whole is not an entity, nor does it possess legal capacities and attributes. It does not and cannot hold title to property, nor does it have any officer, agent, employee, office, or location. Conferences, councils, boards, agencies, local churches, and other units bearing the name are, for the most part, legal entities capable of suing and being sued and possessed of legal capacities.

Section II. The Church and Pastoral Charge

¶ 408. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH. The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society, providing the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons 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. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the

community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church. Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church. Such a society of believers, being within the denomination and subject to its discipline, is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

¶ 409. DEFINITION OF A PASTORAL CHARGE. 1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches that are organized under and subject to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which a pastor is appointed to serve.

2. A pastoral charge of two or more churches may be designated a circuit or a cooperative parish.

3. When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to do the work of ministry in that charge. The layperson is accountable to the presiding elder or another ordained minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. If the assignment is to continue longer than one year, the layperson will begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry, coming under the care of the conference board of ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.

Section III. Church Membership

¶ 410. ELIGIBILITY. The Global Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and, upon taking the vows of membership, become members in any local church in the connection. In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from assuming the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may assume the appropriate vows on their behalf.

¶ 411. DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP. The membership of a local Global Methodist church shall include all people who have been baptized and all people who have professed their faith.

1. The baptized membership of a local church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism in the local congregation or elsewhere, or whose membership has been transferred to the local church subsequent to baptism in some other congregation.

2. The professing membership of a local Global Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate

services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches and who profess the vows of membership in ¶419.

3. For statistical purposes, church membership is equated to the number of people listed on the roll of professing members.

4. All baptized or professing members of any local Global Methodist congregation are members of the Global Methodist Church and members of the church universal.

¶ 412. THE MEANING OF A SACRAMENT. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The sacraments communicate in physical form the Gospel promise that all who come to Christ in repentance and faith receive new life in him. God gives us the sign as a means whereby we receive this grace and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it. The two sacraments ordained by Christ are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion (also called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist). We receive the sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ enables us to receive the grace of God through the sacraments, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the sacraments to bear fruit in our lives.

¶ 413. SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY. During the English Reformation, the church was defined as the community where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered (Methodist *Articles of Religion* XIII). In keeping with the historic practice of the Christian church, elders are ordained to oversee the sacramental life of the church and thus have full authority and responsibility to preside at celebrations of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Bishops may extend sacramental authority to deacons appointed to the office of pastor in a local church or to another specialized ministry setting for the purpose of celebrating the sacraments. Such sacramental authority for a deacon is limited to the appointed ministry setting and is exercised under the oversight and authority of a presiding elder.

¶ 414. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM. Through Holy Baptism we are united in Christ's death in repentance of our sins; raised to new life in him through the power of the resurrection; incorporated into the Body of Christ; and empowered through the work of the Holy Spirit to go on to perfection. Holy Baptism is God's gracious gift to us, flowing from the once for all work of Christ Jesus, and our pledge to follow as his disciples. The church is commanded to baptize disciples in Christ (Matt. 28:19), and the early church followed this practice (Acts 2:38). Entire households—which presumably would have included infants—were baptized (Acts 10:24, 47-48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16). Including infants in the initiation ritual has a precedent in the covenant membership rite in the Old Testament, in which male infants were circumcised on the eighth day (Gen. 17:9-14). The connection between circumcision and baptism is made explicit in Col. 2:11-12. Methodists historically have practiced infant baptism (*Articles of Religion*, XVII). As the *Confession of Faith* of the Evangelical United Brethren Church states: "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" (Article VI). Parents will decide, in consultation with their pastor, when to baptize their children.

¶ 415. THE MODE AND PRACTICE OF BAPTISM. Holy Baptism may be performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The outward and visible sign of Holy Baptism is water. Candidates are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). The inward and spiritual grace is death to sin and new birth to righteousness by faith through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Holy Baptism is administered among a gathered congregation. Those present vow on behalf of Christ's holy church to receive the baptized into the Church universal, to grow together in grace, and to remember the profession made and benefits received in Holy Baptism. Candidates for Holy Baptism, and those presenting candidates unable to answer for themselves, shall be instructed in the Christian faith and the meaning of Holy Baptism. Holy Baptism, as initiation into Christ's holy church, occurs once in a person's life. Holy Communion serves as the regular and continual affirmation of baptismal vows within the church. Through a service of baptismal remembrance and reaffirmation of baptismal vows people can renew the covenant declared at baptism.

¶ 416. BAPTISMAL VOWS. In faithfulness with early Christian practice as well as the Wesleyan tradition, those wishing to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism within the Global Methodist Church shall first be asked the following questions:

Do you renounce the devil and all his works, and reject the evil powers of this world?
I renounce them.

Do you repent of your sin, turn to Jesus Christ, and confess him as your Lord and Savior?
I do.

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?
I do.

Do you accept the responsibility to resist evil, injustice, and oppression by the grace and power of God?
I do.

Will you obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in them all the days of your life by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit?
I will.

Those who present candidates for Holy Baptism who are unable to answer for themselves will also be asked this question:

Will you nurture these children (persons) in Christ's Holy Church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, profess their faith openly, and lead a Christian life?
I (We) will.

The congregation is then asked to affirm their commitment to support the baptismal candidate in the faith.

Will you who witness these vows encourage [these persons] *in the faith and do all in your power to support* [these persons] *in* [their] *life in Christ?*
We will.

Baptismal candidates (or those presenting candidates unable to answer for themselves) are then asked to confess their faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God the Father?
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?
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.]

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
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.]

¶ 417. THE MEANING OF CONFIRMATION. Through the rite of confirmation, we personally renew the covenant declared at our baptism, witness to God's work in our lives, affirm our commitment to Christ and his holy Church, and receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands enabling our lifelong journey toward holiness. The apostles prayed for and laid hands on those who had been baptized. It is the duty of pastors to prepare confirmands, teaching them the basic tenets of the historic Christian faith, the history and theology of the Wesleyan revival movement, and the practical meaning of church membership in agreement with the *Book of Doctrines & Discipline* and approved catechism.

¶ 418. PROFESSING MEMBERS. Those wishing to become professing members of the Global Methodist Church may present themselves to the pastor of any local congregation and, after any appropriate counsel, be baptized if they have not already done so, and join by professing their faith in Jesus Christ and agreeing to the vows of discipleship. Those wishing to transfer their membership from one congregation of the Global Methodist Church to another may do so by indicating such to the receiving pastor who shall send a request for the transfer to their previous congregation. Persons may also be received by transfer from other denominations in which the Lordship of Christ is affirmed. The pastor in charge has the authority to determine the readiness of any person to assume the vows of membership. A person deferred by the pastor may appeal that decision to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent. In order to fulfill the mandate to "watch over each other in love," professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be encouraged to participate in a class meeting, small group, discipleship or other accountability group on a regular basis, as a key part of the fulfillment of their vows of membership.

¶ 419. VOWS OF MEMBERSHIP. In addition to taking the vows of baptism (¶ 416) those wishing to become professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be asked the following questions before being received into the church:

Do you believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

Do you confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord?

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures?

Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life as a faithful member of Christ's holy church?

Will you be loyal to Christ through the Global Methodist Church and joining with your brothers and sisters around the world do all in your power to fulfill its mission?

Will you be a faithful member of the [Name] Global Methodist Church (or alternatively the [Name], a Global Methodist local church), doing all in your power to strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's representative in this world?

¶ 420. GROWTH IN FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP. Faithful membership in the local church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As members involve themselves in private and public prayer, worship, the sacraments, study, Christian action, systematic giving, and holy discipline, they grow in their appreciation of Christ, understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and an understanding of themselves. Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love, always ready to confront conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

¶ 421. THE MEANING AND MODE OF HOLY COMMUNION. Like baptism, the sacrament of Holy Communion is a sign of God's grace present through the physical elements, offering the Gospel promise that all who come to Christ in repentance and faith receive new life in him. In Holy Communion also known as the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist (from the Greek word for "thanksgiving"), we are invited into fellowship (*koinonia)* with the real, spiritual presence of Christ Jesus in the whole of the sacrament; we participate in the communion of saints with the Church universal; and we are given a foretaste of God's eternal banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb. The sacrament may be offered to all who repent of sin and desire to draw near to God and lead a life of obedience to Christ.

Holy Communion is normally celebrated in the midst of the congregation, physically gathered to remember and respond to God's mighty acts of salvation revealed in Holy Scripture. Local congregations are urged to ensure regular opportunities for the congregation to commune. John Wesley argued that "it is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as he can" (Sermon, "The Duty of Constant Communion"). This is because Christ commands it and we receive great benefits through it; we receive "the food of our souls." God has given us the Lord's Supper, according to Wesley, "that through this means we may be assisted to attain those

blessings which he hath prepared for us; that we may obtain holiness on earth, and everlasting glory in heaven." Thus, believers should partake of Holy Communion as often as they can.

Holy Communion recalls Jesus's actions at the Last Supper: he *took* the bread and cup, *gave* thanks, *broke* the bread, and *gave* it to his disciples. Thus, the Communion liturgy should reflect these actions by including:

• the taking/preparation of the bread and cup;

• a time for repentance and confession of sins, including a pronouncement of pardon for sins;

• thanksgiving for the gifts about to be received;

• the words of institution, which recall Jesus's words at the Last Supper;

• the prayer of invocation, in which the Holy Spirit is invited to make the gifts of bread and wine become for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ;

• the breaking of the bread; and

• the distribution of the elements to all who repent of sin and desire to draw near to God and lead a life of obedience to Christ.

Those who cannot (or choose not to) receive the eucharistic elements for whatever reason are still encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing. The elements of Holy Communion may be taken to those whose condition prevents them from being physically present. We encourage the use of non-alcoholic wine or juice for Holy Communion. Non-alcoholic juice must be offered as an option where wine is used.

Section IV. Care of Members

¶ 422. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY. 1. Each member is called to fulfill their vows of baptism and membership, being faithful by participating in the spiritual formation, worship, stewardship, and service opportunities each church provides. It is the responsibility of each congregation to establish and communicate clear expectations of their members who share in the partnership (*koinonia*) of the gospel (Philippians 1:5), and the responsibility of each member or partner to strive to meet those expectations.

2. The pastor is responsible for ensuring that members are cared for by implementing a discipleship process focused on helping members to "go on to perfection" by loving God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and by loving their neighbor as themselves. Pastors are charged with equipping all the members of a congregation to be in ministry by meeting people at their point of need and offering them Jesus (Ephesians 4:11-13).

3. All members of the church are called into a loving accountability with one another. If a member neglects the membership vows, however, the congregation shall use every means of encouraging that member to return to an active faith and to lovingly restore them to the

fellowship of the church (Matthew 18:15-17). Each local church council shall establish a grace-filled process to restore negligent members to full participation in the life of the church. Negligent members may be placed on an inactive roll by a two-thirds vote of the church council.

4. Members placed on the inactive roll may remain in that status while every attempt is made to return them to active membership. Members on the inactive roll are suspended from serving on church committees or voting on church matters during that time. If an inactive member does not complete the restoration process or show evidence of desiring to return to a more active status, then the charge conference, with the recommendation of the pastor, may remove the member by a two-thirds vote.

5. Upon the approval of the charge conference, congregations may require that individuals' membership be intentionally renewed on a yearly basis. In such churches, congregants who do not choose to renew their commitment may be placed on the inactive roll of the church (¶ 422.3-4), after which the charge conference may, with the recommendation of the pastor, remove their names from the membership roll by a two-thirds vote.

¶ 423. TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS. A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with the Global Methodist Church shall be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by notification of transfer from that person's former church or some certification of Christian baptism, and as a professing member upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith (see ¶¶ 411, 418, 419). In valid Christian baptism, water is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by an authorized person. The pastor will report to the sending church the date of reception of such a member. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, work, and polity of the Church be provided for all such persons. Persons received from churches that do not issue letters of transfer or recommendation shall be listed as "Received from Other Denominations."

¶ 424. **AFFILIATE AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP.** A professing member of the Global Methodist Church, of an affiliated autonomous Methodist or united church, or of a Methodist church that has a concordat agreement with the Global Methodist Church, who resides for an extended period in a city or community at a distance from the member's home church, may on request be enrolled as an ***affiliate member*** of a Global Methodist church located in the vicinity of the person's temporary residence. The home pastor shall be notified of the affiliate membership. Such membership shall entitle the person to the fellowship of that church, to its pastoral care and oversight, and to participation in its activities. Local churches may decide whether affiliate members may serve in local church leadership including the holding of offices. Affiliate members may not serve as a lay member to the annual conference. Affiliate members shall be counted and reported as a professing member of the home church only. A member of another denomination may become an ***associate member*** under the same conditions. This relationship may be terminated at the discretion of the church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held whenever the affiliate or associate member shall move from the vicinity of the church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held.

¶ 425. CONSTITUENCY ROLL. A constituency roll shall be maintained in each congregation, comprising four categories of persons: (1) Unbaptized infants ("Cradle Roll"); (2) Individuals over the age of eighteen who have not indicated a desire to become professing members,

including the spouses and adult children of professing members, but who are those for whom the local church has a pastoral responsibility; (3) Persons who have attended worship more than twice, or participated more than twice in the ministries of the church, during the previous twelve calendar months ("Potential Members"); (4) Persons who, though unlikely to join the church due to distance or other faith commitments, nevertheless come under the pastoral care of the congregation and are recognized as part of its wider community ("Friends of the Church"). The constituency roll shall be reviewed and audited annually.

¶ 426. NON-LOCAL CHURCH SETTINGS. Duly appointed clergy of the Global Methodist Church, while serving as a chaplain of any organization, institution, or military unit, as an extension minister, or as a campus minister, or while otherwise present where a local church is not available, may receive a person into the membership of the Global Methodist Church under the conditions of ¶ 422. Where possible, before the sacrament of baptism or vows of profession of faith are administered, such appointed minister shall consult with the pastor of the local church (should one be nearby) on the choice of the person concerned. Upon agreement by the pastor, a statement verifying that such sacrament was administered or that such vows were made shall be issued. The baptized or professing member may use the statement to join a local church.

¶ 427. OUTSIDE OF CONGREGATIONAL SETTINGS. Any candidate for church membership who for good reason is unable to appear before the congregation may, at the discretion of the pastor, be received elsewhere in accordance with the rituals of our church. In any such case lay members should be present to represent the congregation. Names of such persons shall be placed on the church roll, and announcement of their reception shall be made to the congregation.

¶ 428. TRANSFER FROM DISCONTINUED LOCAL CHURCHES. If a local church is discontinued, the presiding elder shall transfer its members to another Global Methodist Church or to such other churches as the members may select.

Section V. Membership Records and Reports

¶ 429. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS. 1. *Active Membership Roll*. Each local church shall accurately maintain a permanent membership record for each baptized or professing member including: a) the person's name, date of birth, address, place of birth, date of baptism, officiating pastor, and sponsors; b) date of confirmation or profession of faith, officiating pastor, and sponsors; c) if transferred from another church, date of reception, sending church, and receiving pastor; d) if transferred to another church, date of transfer, receiving church, and address of receiving church; e) date of removal or withdrawal and reason; f) date of restoration of professing membership and officiating pastor; g) date of death, date and place of funeral/memorial, place of burial, and officiating pastor.

2. *Inactive Membership Roll* (¶ 422.3-4).

3. *Constituency Roll* (¶ 425).

4. *Affiliate Membership Roll* (¶ 424).

5. *Associate Membership Roll* (¶ 424).

6. In the case of a union or federated church with another denomination, the governing body of such a church may report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory, and

such membership shall be published in the minutes of each church, with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union or federated church, and with an indication of the total actual membership.

7. All baptism, membership, marriage, and funeral records are the property of the local church and cannot be sold. If the church is discontinued, these records are placed in the care of the annual conference.

¶ 430. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT AND AUDIT. The pastor shall report to the charge conference annually the names of persons received into the membership of the church or churches of the pastoral charge and the names of persons removed since the last charge conference, indicating how each was received or removed. The church shall be encouraged to audit the membership records annually.

¶ 431. ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBERS ATTENDING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. The pastor is encouraged to report annually the names and contact information for professing and baptized members attending colleges and universities to the chaplain or campus minister of such institutions where the church's ministries exist.

Section VI. Changes in Local Church Membership

¶ 432. MEMBERS WHO MOVE. If a member of a local church moves to another community so far removed from the home church that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, this member shall be encouraged to transfer membership to a Global Methodist church in the community of the newly established residence. As soon as the pastor is reliably informed of this change of residence, actual or contemplated, it shall be the pastor's duty and obligation to assist the member to become established in the fellowship of a church in the community of the future home and to send to a Global Methodist pastor in such community, or to the presiding elder, a letter of notification, giving the latest known address of the person or persons concerned and requesting local pastoral oversight. When a pastor discovers a member of the denomination residing in the community whose membership is in a church so far removed from the place of residence that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, it shall be the duty and obligation of the pastor to give pastoral oversight to such person, adding the name to the constituency roll (¶ 425) and to encourage transfer of membership to a Global Methodist church in the community where the member resides.

¶ 433. TRANSFER TO OTHER GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCHES. When a pastor receives a request for transfer of membership to another Global Methodist congregation that pastor shall send the proper notification directly to the pastor of the congregation to which the member is transferring, or if there is no pastor, to the presiding elder. On receipt of such notification, the pastor or presiding elder shall enroll the name of the person so transferring after public reception in a regular service of worship, or if circumstances demand, public announcement in such a service. The pastor of the sending church shall then be notified to remove the member from its roll.

¶ 434. TRANSFER TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS. A pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a church of another denomination, or upon receiving such request

from a pastor or duly authorized official of another denomination, shall (with the approval of the member) issue notification of transfer and, upon receiving confirmation of the member's reception into another congregation, shall properly record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the local church. If a pastor is informed that a member has without notice united with a church of another denomination, the pastor shall make diligent inquiry and, if the report is confirmed, shall enter "Transferred to a Church of Another Denomination" after the person's name on the membership roll and shall report the same to the next charge conference.

¶ 435. RESTORATION OF PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP. 1. A person whose name has been removed from professing membership by withdrawal, or action by charge conference, or trial court may ask to be restored to membership in the local church.

2. A person whose membership was recorded as having been withdrawn after becoming a member of another denomination may, when that denomination will not transfer membership, be restored to professing membership by reaffirmation of the membership vows.

3. A person who has withdrawn at his or her own written request may return to the church and, upon reaffirmation of the membership vows, become a professing member.

4. A person whose name was removed by charge conference action may return to the church and, at his or her request, be restored to professing membership in the local church through reaffirmation of the membership vows.

5. A person who withdrew under charges or was removed by trial court may ask to return to the church. Upon evidence of a renewed life, approval of the charge conference, and reaffirmation of the membership vows, the person may be restored to professing membership.

Section VII. Organization and Administration

¶ 436. PRIMARY TASKS. Each local church shall be organized so that it can pursue its primary task and mission in the context of its own community—reaching out and receiving with joy all who will respond to the invitation to follow Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives, encouraging people in developing their relationship with God, providing opportunities for them to strengthen and grow that relationship in spiritual formation, and supporting them to live lovingly and justly in the power of the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples. In carrying out its mission, adequate provision should be made to evangelize and spread scriptural holiness by: (1) planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, and witness for persons and families within and without the congregation; (2) providing for effective pastoral and lay leadership; (3) providing for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of the church; (4) utilizing the appropriate relationships and resources of the district and annual conference; (5) providing for the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of documentary record material of the local church; and (6) seeking inclusiveness in all aspects of its life.

¶ 437. ORGANIZATION. 1. The basic organizational plan for the local church may be designed by each congregation in such a manner that it provides for a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach, and witness to all. In addition to a charge conference, a congregation must have a church council or similar governing board. The charge conference shall determine how to allocate the other responsibilities outlined in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline.*

2. Members of the church's governing board or council shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate

of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of the Global Methodist Church and are competent to administer its affairs. It should include confirmed youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote must be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in relationship to the local church where they would be serving. The pastor shall be the administrative officer of the church and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

3. *Open Meetings*. All meetings of official administrative bodies of the local church shall be open to all professing church members. The only exception to this rule is if the committee is dealing with personnel, legal, or contractual issues and a majority of the body votes to close the meeting only for the portion of time that deals with those specific issues. All meetings of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent shall be closed unless the committee invites another person or persons to meet with it to address a particular issue.

¶ 438. THE CHARGE CONFERENCE. 1. Within the pastoral charge the basic unit in the connectional system in the Global Methodist Church is the charge conference. The charge conference shall therefore be organized from the church or churches in every pastoral charge and shall meet at least annually.

2. The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other equivalent body of the local church who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church, together with retired ordained ministers and retired diaconal ministers who elect to hold their membership in that charge conference and any others as may be designated in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. If more than one church is on the pastoral charge, all members of each church council shall be members of the charge conference.

3. The presiding elder shall fix the time and place of the meetings of the charge conference and shall preside at the meetings of the charge conference or may designate an elder to preside.

4. The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

5. Special sessions may be called by the presiding elder after consultation with the pastor of the charge, or by the pastor with the written consent of the presiding elder. The purpose of such a special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purposes stated in the call. Any such special session may be convened as a church conference.

6. Notice of time and place of a regular or special session of the charge conference shall be given at least ten days in advance by three or more of the following (except as local laws may otherwise provide): from the pulpit of the church, in its weekly bulletin, in a local church publication, by email, or by mail.

7. A charge conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority, with adequate provision being made for translation.

8. A joint charge conference for two or more pastoral charges may be held at the same time and place, as the presiding elder may determine.

9. *The Church Conference*. To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings. It shall be called at the discretion of the presiding elder or following a written request to the presiding elder by one of

the following: the pastor, the church council, or 10 percent of the professing members of the local church. In any case a copy of the request shall be given to the pastor. Additional regulations governing the call and conduct of the charge conference shall apply also to the church conference. A joint church conference for two or more churches may be held at the same time and place as the presiding elder may determine. A church conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority with adequate provision being made for translation.

¶ 439. POWERS AND DUTIES. 1. The charge conference shall be the connecting link between the local church, the annual conference, and the general church and shall have general oversight of the church council(s) and the overall ministry of the local church.

2. The charge conference, the presiding elder, and the pastor shall organize and administer the pastoral charge and churches according to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. When the membership size, program scope, mission resources, or other circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the presiding elder, modify the organizational plans, provided that the provisions of ¶¶ 436-437 are observed.

3. The primary responsibilities of the charge conference in the annual meeting shall be to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church, receive reports, elect leaders, and adopt objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of the Global Methodist Church.

4. The charge conference recording secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and shall be the custodian of all records and reports and, with the presiding officer, shall sign the minutes. A copy of the minutes shall be provided for the presiding elder, and a permanent copy shall be retained for church files. When there is only one local church in a charge, the secretary of the church council shall be the secretary of the charge conference. When there is more than one church in a charge, one of the secretaries of the church councils shall be elected by the charge conference to serve as its secretary.

5. Each charge is encouraged to be inclusive in the make-up of the council so that all segments of the congregation are represented.

6. The charge conference may establish a limit to the consecutive terms of office for any or all of the elected or appointed officers of the local church, unless the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* sets a specific limit. It is recommended that no officer serve more than three consecutive years in the same office.

7. The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the board of ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, candidates for ordained ministry who have been professing members in good standing of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least one year; whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and call to the ministry clearly establish them as candidates; and who have met the educational requirements. It is out of the faith and witness of the congregation that men and women respond to God's call to ordained ministry. Every local church should intentionally nurture candidates for ordained ministry, providing for spiritual and financial support, and for their education and formation as servant leaders for the ministry of the whole people of God.

8. The charge conference shall examine and recommend, faithfully adhering to the provisions of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, renewal of candidacy of candidates for the ordained ministry.

9. The charge conference shall inquire annually into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of the certified lay ministers related to the charge and recommend to the conference board of ministry those persons who have met the standards for a certified lay minister.

10. The charge conference shall receive reports annually on all local church organized mission teams and shall forward the combined report through the regular annual local church statistical report.

11. The charge conference shall, in consultation with the presiding elder, set the compensation of the appointed clergy.

12. In preparation for and at the charge conference, it shall be the responsibility of the presiding elder, the pastor, and the lay member(s) of the annual conference and/or the church lay leader(s) to interpret to each charge conference the importance of connectional funding, explaining the causes supported and their place in the total program of the Church. Payment in full of connectional funding (⁋ 449) by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church.

13. The charge conference shall receive and act on the annual report from the pastor concerning the church's membership.

14. In those instances where there are two or more churches on a pastoral charge, the charge conference may provide for a charge-wide or parish council, a charge-wide or parish treasurer, and such other officers, commissions, committees, and task groups as necessary to carry on the work of the charge. All churches of the charge shall be represented on such charge-wide or parish committees or boards. Charge-wide or parish organization shall be consistent with disciplinary provisions for the local church.

15. In instances of multiple church charges, the charge conference shall provide for an equitable distribution of parsonage maintenance and upkeep expense or adequate housing allowance among the several churches.

16. The charge conference shall promote awareness of and concurrence with the Doctrinal Standards and General Rules of the Global Methodist Church (¶¶ 101- 108), and with policies relative to the Social Witness of the church (¶¶ 301-302).

17. The charge conference may provide for the sponsoring of and the planting of new faith communities.

18. The charge conference shall have such other duties and responsibilities as the General or annual conference may commit to it.

¶ 440. ELECTION OF LEADERS. The charge or church conference shall elect by simple majority vote leaders who shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in the local church where they would be serving as needed to fulfill the mission of the church. In filling the offices of the church, special attention should be given to the inclusion of women, men, youth, young adults, persons over sixty-five years of age, persons with disabilities, and persons of various racial, ethnic, or tribal identities. Local church offices may be shared between two persons.

¶ 441. REMOVAL OF OFFICERS AND FILLING OF VACANCIES. If a leader or officer who has been elected by the charge conference is unable or unwilling to perform the duties reasonably expected of such a leader or officer, the presiding elder may call a special session of the charge conference. The purpose of such special session shall be stated as "Consideration for the removal of person(s) from office and the election of person(s) to fill vacancy(ies)." The

Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or another group charged with that responsibility shall meet as soon as possible after the special session of the charge conference has been announced and shall propose person(s) who may be elected if vacancy(ies) occur at the charge conference. If the charge conference votes to remove a person or persons from office, the vacancy(ies) shall be filled in the manner prescribed for elections. When a local church trustee is under consideration for removal and the pastoral charge consists of two or more churches, a church local conference shall be called instead of a charge conference.

¶ 442. DUTIES OF LEADERS 1. Out of the professing membership of each local church, there shall be elected by the charge conference a **lay leader** who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:

a) fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;

b) meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;

c) serving as a member of the charge conference and the church council, the Finance Committee, the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, where, along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church (to be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that the lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference);

d) continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the church's reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the church's mission;

e) assisting in advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community;

f) informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay minister. In instances where more than one church is in a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church, sharing the responsibilities.

g) The lay leader, at each local church's discretion, may also serve as the chairperson of the church council or other governing body.

2. The **lay member(s) of the annual conference** and alternates may be elected annually or to coincide with the conferences of the general church. If the charge's lay member of the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve, an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in their place. Both the lay members and the alternates shall have been professing members in good standing of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessor for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election, except in a newly organized church. Churches that become part of an ecumenical shared ministry shall not be deprived of their right of representation by a lay member in the annual conference. The lay member(s) of the annual conference, along with the pastor, shall serve as an interpreter of the actions of the annual

conference session. These persons shall report to the church council on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible.

3. The **church council or governing board chairperson** shall be elected by the charge conference annually. The chairperson shall be a professing member of the Global Methodist Church in the local church where he or she would be serving, and shall have the following responsibilities:

a) leading the council in fulfilling its responsibilities;

b) preparing and communicating the agenda of the council meetings in consultation with the pastor(s), lay leader, and other appropriate persons;

c) reviewing and assigning responsibility for the implementation of actions taken by the council;

d) communicating with members of the council and others as appropriate to permit informed action at council meetings;

e) coordinating the various activities of the council;

f) providing initiative and leadership for the council as it engages in planning, establishing of objectives and goals, and evaluating ministry;

g) participating in leadership training programs as offered by the annual conference and/or district.

h) The church council chairperson shall be entitled to attend meetings of all boards and committees of the church unless specifically limited by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. The chairperson is encouraged to attend annual conference.

4. In congregations with an alternate system of governance, individuals shall be named to represent the functions fulfilled by a Pastor-Parish Relations and Finance Committee and a Board of Trustees.

¶ 443. THE CHURCH COUNCIL. 1. The church council, or its equivalent governing body, shall provide for planning and implementing a ministry of evangelizing and spreading scriptural holiness through nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference.

2. Mission and Ministry—Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

a) The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages.

b) The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy.

c) The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; certified lay ministers; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ.

d) The leadership development and resourcing ministries shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church.

3. Meetings

a) The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings.

b) It is recommended that the council make decisions by trying to achieve a consensus driven by the Holy Spirit. If, in the opinion of the chair, a consensus cannot be achieved, then the Council may make a decision by voting with a simple majority as the standard.

4. Other Responsibilities—It will also be the responsibility of the church council to:

a) Review the membership of the local church;

b) Fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference;

c) Establish the budget on recommendation of the Finance Committee or its equivalent body and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church;

d) Recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the Pastor-Parish (or Staff-Parish) Relations Committee or its equivalent body;

e) Review the recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s) and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.

5. Membership—The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eight persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The membership shall include but not be limited to the chairs of the committees responsible for pastor-parish relations, the finances of the church, the management of the church's properties and assets, the lay leader, the lay member(s) of the annual conference, and all appointed clergy.

6. Quorum—The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section VIII. Local Church Administrative Committees

¶ 444. NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE. As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or its equivalent that is composed of professing members of the local church or the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. The responsibility of this committee is to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian spiritual leadership for the local congregation. Members of the committee shall engage in and be attentive to developing and enhancing their own Christian spiritual life in light of the mission of the Church. In conducting its work, the committee shall engage in biblical and theological reflection on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church. It shall provide a means of identifying the spiritual gifts and abilities of the church's members. The committee shall work with the church council or equivalent body, to determine the diverse ministry tasks of the congregation and the skills needed for leadership.

a) The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee shall serve throughout the year to guide the church council on matters regarding the leadership (other than employed staff) of the congregation, so as to focus on mission and ministry as the context for service; guide the

development and training of spiritual leaders; recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders; and assist the church council in assessing changing leadership needs.

b) The committee shall recommend to the charge conference, at its annual session, the names of people to serve as officers and leaders of designated ministries of the church council required for the work of the church and as the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the church requires or as the charge conference deems necessary to its work.

c) The pastor shall be the chairperson. A layperson elected by the committee shall serve as the vice chairperson of the committee.

d) To secure experience and stability, the membership may be divided into three classes, one of which would be elected each year for a three-year term. Retiring members of the committee shall not succeed themselves. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. When vacancies occur during the year, successors shall be elected by the church council.

e) In the identification and selection process, care shall be given that the leadership of ministries reflects inclusivity and diversity.

¶ 445. PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE. 1. As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent composed of professing members of the local church or charge, or the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. Where the church employs additional program staff beyond the pastor in charge, the committee may be structured as the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, with the same responsibilities. People serving on this committee must be engaged in and attentive to their Christian spiritual development to give proper leadership in the committee's responsibilities. In conducting its work, the committee shall identify and clarify its values for ministry. It shall engage in biblical and theological reflection on the mission of the church, the primary task and ministries of the local church, and on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities.

2. No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. The lay leader is automatically a member of the committee.

3. To secure experience and stability, the membership may be divided into three classes, one of which shall be elected each year for a three-year term. The lay leader is exempt from the three-year term on this committee. Members of the committee may succeed themselves for a second three-year term. When vacancies occur during the year, the church council shall elect successors.

4. In those charges where there is more than one church, the committee shall include at least one representative and the lay leader from each local church.

5. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committees of charges that are in cooperative parish ministries shall meet together to consider the professional leadership needs of the cooperative parish ministry as a whole, or one parish-wide Pastor-Parish Relations Committee may be formed.

6. The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the presiding elder, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor. The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee, except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. The committee may meet with the presiding elder without the

appointed clergy under consideration being present. However, the appointed clergy under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the presiding elder and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. The committee shall meet in closed session and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

7. In the event that only one congregation on a charge containing more than one church has concerns it wishes to share, its member(s) in the committee may meet separately with the pastor or any other person accountable to the committee or the presiding elder, but only with the knowledge of the pastor.

8. The duties of the committee shall include the following:

a. To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor(s) and staff and their family(ies).

b. To promote unity in the church(es).

c. To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to their effectiveness in ministry; assessing their unique gifts and abilities; priorities in the use of gifts, skills, and time; relationships with the congregation; the person's health and self-care, including conditions that may impede their effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry to the congregation, while interpreting the congregation's needs, values, and traditions to the pastor(s) and staff.

d. To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff to enhance their effective ministry and to identify continuing educational needs and plans.

e. To communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in the Global Methodist Church regarding open itinerancy and the preparation for ordained ministry.

f. To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the senior pastor. The term associate pastor is used as a general term to indicate any pastoral appointment in a local church other than the pastor in charge. Committees are encouraged to develop specific titles for associate pastors that reflect the job descriptions and expectations.

g. To arrange with the church council for the necessary time and financial assistance for the attendance of the pastor and/or staff at such continuing education, self-care, and spiritual renewal events as may serve their professional and spiritual growth, and to encourage staff members to seek professional certification in their fields of specialization.

h. To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference lay ministers and persons for candidacy for ordained ministry and to enlist and refer to the appropriate board or commissions persons for candidacy for missionary service, recognizing that the Global Methodist Church affirms the biblical and theological support of persons regardless of gender, race, ethnic or tribal origin, or disabilities for these ministries. Neither the pastor nor any member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee shall be present during the consideration of a candidacy application or renewal for a member of their immediate family. The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of persons from the charge who are preparing for ordained ministry, lay ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact with these persons, supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each person.

i. To confer with the pastor and/or other appointed members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and/or pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastor(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the presiding elder, and the bishop in

securing clergy leadership. Its relationship to the presiding elder and the bishop shall be advisory only. The committee shall not recommend to the presiding elder or bishop a change of pastor(s) without first discussing its concerns with the pastor(s) involved.

j. After consultation with the pastor, to communicate with the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee when there is a need for other leaders, and/or the church council when there is a need for employed staff, to work in areas where utilization of the gifts of the pastor(s) or staff proves an inappropriate stewardship of time (cf. Acts 6:2).

k. The committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policies and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not ordained clergy subject to episcopal appointment. Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss non-appointed personnel. The committee shall further recommend to the church council a provision for adequate health and life insurance and severance pay for all lay employees. In addition, the committee shall recommend that the church council provide an equitable pension with local church contribution for lay employees serving at least half-time. The church council shall have authority to provide such pension benefits through a denominational pension program.

l. Members of the Pastor-Parish (or Staff-Parish) Relations Committee shall keep themselves informed of personnel matters related to the denomination's policies, professional standards, liability issues, and civil law. They are responsible for communicating and interpreting such matters to staff. Committee members should make themselves available for educational and training opportunities that will enable them to be effective in their work.

m. To consult on matters pertaining to pulpit supply, proposals for compensation, travel expense, vacation, health and life insurance, pension, housing (which may be a church-owned parsonage or housing allowance in lieu of parsonage if in compliance with the policy of the annual conference), continuing education, and other practical matters affecting the work and families of the pastor and staff, and to make annual recommendations regarding such matters to the church council, reporting budget items to the Finance Committee. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family. The committee will follow up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health of the pastor or pastor's family. The chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family's health and well-being.

¶ 446. BOARD OF TRUSTEES. Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of a local church, within each congregation of the Global Methodist Church there shall be a Board of Trustees, consisting of at least five professing members of the church representing the gender, race, and age of the congregation, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law. The pastor of the congregation(s) shall be a member with voice but without vote of the Board of Trustees and may not be counted for the purpose of achieving a quorum or calculating a majority.

1. *Election of Trustees*. Members of the Board of Trustees of each local congregation may be elected by the charge or church conference to a three-year term, equally divided into three classes, with one-third elected each year. A member of the Board of Trustees may be re-

elected for no more than one additional term, and no member may serve longer than six consecutive years.

2. *Vacancies and Removal of Trustees*. Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the local church or be excluded therefrom, trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion. Should a trustee of a local church or a director of an incorporated local church be unable to carry out their responsibilities, or when he or she refuses to execute properly a legal instrument relating to any property of the church when directed to do so by the charge conference, and when all legal requirements have been satisfied in reference to such execution, the charge conference may by majority vote declare the trustee's or director's membership on the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors vacated. Vacancies occurring in the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the unexpired term. Such election shall be held in the same manner as for Trustees (¶ 446.1). A vacancy other than the preceding that occurs ad interim may be filled until the next charge conference by the church council.

3. *Organization.* The Board of Trustees may organize as follows:

a. Within thirty days after the beginning of the calendar or conference year (whichever applies to the term of office), the Board of Trustees shall convene at a time and place designated by the chairperson or the vice chairperson for the purpose of electing officers of the board for the ensuing year and transacting any other business properly brought before it.

b. The board shall elect from its members, to hold office for a term of one year or until their successors shall be elected, a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and, if need requires, a treasurer; provided, however, that the chairperson and vice chairperson shall not be members of the same class; and provided further, that the offices of secretary and treasurer may be held by the same person. The charge conference may, if it is necessary to conform to the local laws, substitute the designations *president* and *vice president* in place of *chairperson* and *vice chairperson*.

c. Where necessary as a result of the incorporation of a local church, the corporation directors, in addition to electing officers as provided above, shall ratify and confirm by appropriate action and, if required by law, elect as officers of the corporation the treasurer(s) elected by the charge conference in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. If more than one account is maintained in the name of the corporation in any financial institution(s), each such account and the treasurer thereof shall be appropriately designated.

4. *Meetings.* The board shall meet at the call of the pastor or of its chairperson at least three times per year at such times and places as designated in the meeting notice at least one week prior to the appointed time of the meeting. Waiver of notice may be used as a means to validate meetings legally where the usual notice is impracticable. A majority of the members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

5. *Powers and Limitations*. The board shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

a. Oversight, and care of all real property owned by the local church and of all property and equipment acquired directly by the local church or by any group, board, class, commission, or similar organization connected with it. The Board shall not, however, violate the rights of any local church organization elsewhere granted in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline,* nor prevent or interfere with the pastor in the use of any of the said property for religious services or other proper meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of the church.

Reflecting the historic understanding of Methodism, pews in the Global Methodist Church shall always be free.

b. The use of a local congregation's facilities or properties by an outside organization may be granted by the Board of Trustees after consideration of whether the purposes and programs of that organization are consistent with the values of the congregation and the Global Methodist Church.

c. Should the congregation possess a parsonage offered to the pastor for housing, the chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson or designee of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family's health and well-being. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family (¶ 445.8m). The Board of Trustees are responsible to ensure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health and well-being of the pastor or pastor's family and shall provide that the parsonage be maintained in good condition.

d. Subject to the direction of the charge conference, the Board of Trustees shall receive and administer all bequests made to the local church, shall receive and administer all trusts, and shall invest all trust funds of the local church in conformity with laws of the country, state, or political unit in which the local church is located. Nevertheless, upon notice to the Board of Trustees, the charge conference may delegate the power, duty, and authority to receive, administer, and invest bequests, trusts, and trust funds to a permanent endowment committee or to a local church foundation.

e. The board shall conduct an annual accessibility audit of their buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any existing physical, architectural, or communication barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers.

6. *Annual Report*. The board shall annually make a written report to the charge conference, in which shall be included the following:

a. The legal description and the reasonable valuation of each parcel of real estate owned by the church;

b. The specific name of the grantor in each deed of conveyance of real estate to the local church;

c. An inventory and the reasonable valuation of all personal property owned by the local church;

d. The amount of income received from any income-producing property and a detailed list of expenditures in connection therewith;

e. The amount received during the year for building, rebuilding, remodeling, and improving real estate, and an itemized statement of expenditures;

f. Outstanding capital debts, payoff date, and how contracted;

g. A detailed statement of the insurance carried on each parcel of real estate, indicating whether restricted by co-insurance or other limiting conditions and whether adequate insurance is carried;

h. The name of the custodian of all legal papers of the local church, and where they are kept;

i. A detailed list of all trusts in which the local church is the beneficiary, specifying where and how the funds are invested;

j. An evaluation of all church properties, including the chancel areas, to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities, and when applicable, a plan and timeline for resolving barriers to accessibility (¶ 446.5e).

¶ 447. FINANCE COMMITTEE. 1. As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Finance Committee or its equivalent composed of the committee chairperson, the pastor(s), a lay member of the annual conference, the chairperson of the church council, the chairperson or designee of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, a representative of the Board of Trustees to be selected by that board, the chairperson of the ministry group on stewardship (if any), the lay leader, the financial secretary, the treasurer, the church business administrator (if any), and other members to be added as the charge conference may determine. Alternatively, the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. The chairperson of the Finance Committee shall be a member of the church council. The financial secretary, treasurer, and church business administrator, if paid employees, shall be members without vote. The positions of treasurer and financial secretary may not be combined and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions should not be immediate family members. No immediate family members of any appointed clergy may serve as treasurer, Finance Committee chair, financial secretary, counter, or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the Finance Committee. These restrictions would apply only to the church or charge where the clergy serves.

2. The Finance Committee shall oversee the stewardship of financial resources as their priority throughout the year, seeking as part of the ministry of discipleship to move members toward tithing and beyond, with an attitude of generosity.

3. All financial requests to be included in the annual budget of the local church shall be submitted to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall compile annually a complete budget for the local church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. The Finance Committee shall be charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the church council. It shall administer the funds received according to instructions from the church council. The committee shall carry out the church council's directions in guiding the treasurer(s) and financial secretary.

4. The committee shall designate at least two persons not of one immediate family residing in the same household to count the offering. They shall work under the supervision of the financial secretary. A record of all funds received shall be given to the financial secretary and treasurer. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in accordance with the procedures established by the Finance Committee. The financial secretary shall keep records of the contributions and payments.

5. The church treasurer(s) shall disburse all money contributed to causes represented in the local church budget, and such other funds and contributions as the church council may determine. The treasurer(s) shall remit each month to the conference treasurer all denominational and conference benevolence funds then on hand. The church treasurer shall make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to the Finance Committee and the church council. The treasurer(s) shall be adequately bonded.

6. The Finance Committee shall establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the local church. The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the Finance Committee and submitted as a report to the charge conference annually.

7. The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the local church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee shall make a full and complete report to the annual charge conference. A local church audit is defined as an independent evaluation of the financial reports and records and the internal controls of the local church by a qualified person or persons. The audit shall be conducted to reasonably verify the accuracy and reliability of financial reporting, determine whether assets are being safeguarded, and determine compliance with local law, local church policies and procedures, and the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. The audit may include: 1) a review of the cash and investment reconciliations; 2) interviews with the treasurer, financial secretary, pastor(s), Finance Committee chair, business manager, those who count offerings, church secretary, etc., with inquiries regarding compliance with existing written financial policies and procedures; 3) a review of journal entries and authorized check signers for each checking and investment account; and 4) other procedures requested by the Finance Committee. The audit shall be performed by an audit committee composed of persons unrelated to the persons listed in 2 above or by an independent certified public accountant (CPA), accounting firm, or equivalent.

8. The committee shall recommend to the church council proper depositories for the church's funds. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in the name of the local church.

9. Contributions designated for specific causes and objects shall be promptly forwarded according to the intent of the donor and shall not be retained or used for any other purpose.

10. After the budget of the local church has been approved, additional appropriations or changes in the budget must be approved by the church council.

11. The committee shall prepare at least annually a report to the church council of all designated funds that are separate from the current expense budget.

¶ 448. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM COMMITTEES. The church council may recommend such other committees it deems advisable, whose members are to be elected by the charge conference, including but not limited to: communications committee, discipleship committee, records and history committee, missions committee, memorial gifts committee, and ministries that address the unique needs and interests of both women and men.

Section IX. Connectional Funding

¶ 449. LOCAL CHURCH CONNECTIONAL FUNDING. 1. *Wesleyan Value of Connectional Funding* - The Global Methodist Church, while grace-filled, recognizes that there is a season of accountability throughout our personal and public lives. John Wesley's societal structure of using mutual accountability groups indicates the responsibilities placed upon each of us in how we perceive and manage the assets with which God has entrusted us. From its earliest days, the Methodist movement has been one of mutual support within a connectional system. A connectional system allows churches to work together to make larger kingdom impacts, ensure proper accountability and credentialing, and maintain theological integrity. In short, we are better together. The Global Methodist Church values its connectional system and wishes to see it thrive in its support and oversight role for local churches.

2. Each local church of the Global Methodist Church contributes financially to the ministry of the Church beyond the local church through connectional funding. The local church treasurer or designee shall calculate the amount to be remitted in accordance with ¶¶ 449.4 and .5 by January 30 of each calendar year based on the prior year's local church operating income.

3. Connectional funding shall not include amounts due from the local church for insurance benefits and pension contributions for its pastor(s) and any additional staff who are part of such plans of the Global Methodist Church. Such payments for insurance benefits and pension contributions for plan participants are due in addition to connectional funding remittances by the local church.

4. In calculating the amount of connectional funding to be remitted,

a. the following items are to be included in local church operating income: giving from identified and not identified donors, investment income utilized for operations, building use fees and rental income, and other unrestricted operating income.

b. the following items are to be excluded from local church operating income: benevolences (outside ministries supported by the local church), capital campaign receipts, borrowed funds, fundraisers for non-operating expenses, receipts for reduction of indebtedness, memorials, endowments, and bequests whether restricted or non-restricted, receipts for Global Methodist Church special mission programs, grants and support from other organizations, sales of land, buildings or other church assets, and other non-operating income received.

5. The amount remitted by the local church for connectional funding shall be calculated as follows:

a. For general church connectional funding, not more than 1.5% of local church operating income (see ¶ 449.4) as set by the General Conference;

b. For annual conference connectional funding, not more than 5% of local church operating income (see ¶ 449.4) as set by the respective annual conference.

6. The percentage in ¶ 449.5a shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the General Conference. The percentage in ¶ 449.5b shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the relevant annual conference.

7. Each month the local church shall remit one-twelfth of the annual sum of general church connectional funding to the Treasurer of the Global Methodist Church and one-twelfth of the annual conference connectional funding to the respective annual conference.

8. The annual conference connectional council or its equivalent may designate a local church as a missional church and exempt such a church from paying general church or annual conference connectional funding for up to five years from the date of designation. Missional churches shall be church plants, church restarts, or churches located in or serving economically disadvantaged communities.

9. The pastor(s) and leadership of the local church shall interpret connectional funding to the members of the local church so that connectional funding is embraced by such membership and regularly share information with the members of the local church to educate and interpret such connectional funding.

Section X. The Method of Organizing a New Church

¶ 450. **ORGANIZATION OF A NEW CHURCH.** 1. With the sponsorship of a Global Methodist local church or group of churches, a new local church may be planted by any lay person or clergyperson of the Global Methodist Church. A sponsoring local church, or group of local churches or group of churches shall provide accountability for the project. In the absence of a sponsoring church or group of churches, an annual conference, through its designated leadership, may authorize the planting of a new local church and provide accountability.

2. Each annual conference shall determine the criteria required for the chartering of a new local church. The conference superintendent shall designate the district to which the new church shall belong.

3. Upon the request of the organizing pastor, the presiding elder shall call the interested people to meet at an appointed time for the purpose of organizing them into a chartered local church or may by written authorization designate an elder in the district to call such a meeting. Following a time of worship, an opportunity shall be given to those in attendance to present themselves for membership, whether by transfer or profession of faith. Upon organization, the new local church shall function under the provisions of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline.*

Section XI. Transfer of a Local Church

¶ 451. TRANSFER OF A LOCAL CHURCH. A local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another by a two-thirds vote of the professing members who are present and voting in the church council and the church conference, and a simple majority vote by each of the two annual conferences involved. Upon announcement of the required majorities by the bishop or bishops involved, the transfer shall immediately be effective. The votes required may originate in the local church or either of the annual conferences involved and shall be effective regardless of the order in which taken. In each case an action shall remain effective unless and until rescinded prior to the completion of the transfer by a majority vote of those present and voting.

Section XII. Shared Ministry

¶ 452. **COOPERATIVE PARISH.** 1. A cooperative parish is a designated geographical area containing two or more local churches that have agreed to work together under unified parish leadership. The pastor and any other appointed clergy or employed staff work as a unified ministry team. Each local church has its own church council, but there is also a parish council consisting of representatives from each local church council that governs the coordinated efforts of the cooperative parish. There will also be a parish-wide Pastor-Parish or Staff-Parish Relations Committee. There may also be other parish-wide committees where financial support, property, or program ministry are shared parish-wide. The presiding elder, with the approval of the bishop, may form a cooperative parish in any suitable ministry setting with the consent of the local churches concerned.

2. The cabinet may organize cooperative parishes and may create appropriate policies and procedures as fits their ministry context.

3. A cooperative parish or yoked parish may be formed with local churches of other denominations, provided that the doctrine and mission of the other denomination does not conflict with those of the Global Methodist Church. Such an ecumenical cooperative parish requires the approval of the appropriate judicatory body within which each local church is a member.

¶ 453. ECUMENICAL CONGREGATIONS. 1. *Definition.* Ecumenical congregations may be formed by a local Global Methodist church and one or more local congregations of other Christian traditions, provided that the doctrine and mission of the other denomination does not conflict with those of the Global Methodist Church. Such congregations are formed to enhance

ministry, make wise stewardship of limited resources, and live out the ecumenical spirit in creative ways responsive to the needs of God's people, as well as to opportunities for expanded mission and ministry. Forms of ecumenical shared ministries include: (a) a federated church, in which one congregation is related to two or more denominations, with persons choosing to hold membership in one or the other of the denominations; (b) a union church, in which a congregation with one unified membership roll is related to two or more denominations; (c) a merged church, in which two or more congregations of different denominations form one congregation that relates to only one of the constituent denominations; (d) a yoked parish, in which congregations of different denominations share a pastor (see ¶ 453.3).

2. *Covenanting.* Congregations forming an ecumenical congregation shall develop a clear covenant of mission, set of bylaws, or articles of agreement that address financial and property matters, church membership, denominational support and funding, committee structure and election procedures, terms and provisions of the pastorate, reporting procedures, relationship with the parent denominations, and matters related to amending or dissolving the agreement. Congregations shall notify the presiding elder of any amending of the covenant agreement and shall consult with the presiding elder prior to dissolving the covenant agreement.

3. *Connectional Responsibilities.* Cabinets, conference staff, and other leaders shall work with ecumenical congregations at their inception and to maintain ongoing avenues of vital relationship and connection to the denominational church, while recognizing that such avenues must also be maintained with the other denominational partners in that congregation.

¶ 454. AFFILIATE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

1. Churches in a special annual conference may request, in writing, affiliate church membership in the annual conference where they are geographically located.

2. After the approval of the cabinet and the session of the annual conference, the church shall report their affiliate status to its special annual conference for its approval.

3. The clergy and lay representatives of the affiliate member churches may participate in their affiliated annual conference with voice only.

4. Affiliated member churches are not obligated to give their connectional funding to their affiliated annual conferences.

5. Other churches in geographically bound annual conferences may become affiliated church members of a special conference under the same conditions.

Section XIII – Congregational Fidelity

¶ 455. CONGREGATIONAL FIDELITY. Central to the integrity of both local congregations and the Global Methodist Church as a whole, the doctrines and discipline of the denomination as outlined in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall be voluntarily and joyfully embraced and practiced by all. Additionally, local congregations covenant to provide connectional funding as set forth in ¶ 449. Congregations that for reason of conscience find themselves unable to do so are accordingly encouraged to affiliate with another Christian denomination more in keeping with their beliefs or practices or disaffiliate from the Global Methodist Church under the provisions of ¶ 1003. Should a congregation consistently advance doctrines or engage in practices not in conformity with this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or fail to remit in full the connectional funding set forth in ¶ 449, the annual conference connectional council or its

equivalent shall have the authority to effectuate such a change independently, provided that the following provisions are met:

1. If the current pastor of the congregation is promoting doctrines or practices contrary to those of the Global Methodist Church, the bishop shall remove the pastor and appoint a pastor who will promote and defend the doctrines and practices of the Global Methodist Church. The bishop shall then allow time for the new pastor to bring the congregation into conformity.

2. If step one proves unfruitful or the pastor is not contributing to the problem, the bishop and presiding elder shall meet with the church council (or its equivalent) or a larger group of the congregation to identify areas of disagreement over Global Methodist Church doctrines or practices, seeking a resolution of such disagreements and restoration of conformity by the local church. The bishop shall winsomely defend and teach the doctrines and practices of the Global Methodist Church in such engagements.

3. If the local congregation fails to remit its connectional funding in full as calculated annually, the presiding elder shall meet with the church council (or its equivalent) to encourage remittance.

4. If a resolution of the disagreement proves unattainable or the local church does not remit its connectional funding in full following the meeting with the presiding elder, the local church may be involuntarily disaffiliated from the Global Methodist Church by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent, by agreement of the bishop, and by an affirmative vote of the presiding elders of the conference in which the local church is located.

5. The congregation shall receive timely written notice of the involuntary disaffiliation and may appeal the decision to the Connectional Council on Appeals within sixty days, providing whatever explanations or other details to support their case. During the pendency of any appeal, the involuntary disaffiliation shall be stayed. The determination of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall be final. If no appeal occurs or if the involuntary disaffiliation is affirmed on appeal, the disaffiliation shall take effect immediately.

Section XIV. Transitional Provisions

¶ 456. LOCAL CONGREGATIONS ALIGNING WITH THE GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH. 1. Local congregations formerly aligned with The United Methodist Church may align with the Global Methodist Church through an affirmative vote by the professing members of the congregation present and voting at a duly authorized church conference. The church council shall notify the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent of their decision. The affirmative vote must be to endorse the doctrinal standards and Social Witness (¶¶ 101-108 and 301-302) in this *Book of Doctrines and Disciplines* and express a desire to be connected and accountable to this church.

2. Other Christian congregations who desire to be connected and accountable to the Global Methodist Church may request to align upon an affirmative majority vote of a congregational meeting to endorse the doctrinal standards and Social Witness (¶¶ 101-108 and 301-302) in this *Book of Doctrines and Disciplines*. It is the responsibility of the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent to verify the legality of the process used by the local congregation and the congregation's viability prior to their request being approved.

3. Congregations shall function in their annual conferences and districts under this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Beginning on the effective date of affiliation, local churches shall forward connectional funding to the Global Methodist Church as provided in ¶ 449.

4. Where both a local church and its pastor affiliate with the Global Methodist Church and both desire to continue the pastoral appointment or lay assignment, the bishop providing episcopal oversight for the annual conference to which the church relates will seek to maintain the current clergy appointment for the sake of stability and continuity in this time of transition.

5. The effective date of local churches under ¶ 456.1-3 shall be the date established by the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent of the annual conference to which the local church relates.

PART FIVE -- THE MINISTRY OF THE CALLED

¶ 501. MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH. 1. The church's ministry is derived from the ministry of Christ, who bids all people to receive salvation and follow him as disciples in the way of love. This summons to ministry is to the whole people of God, or laity (*laos*) who are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession," charged to "declare the praises of him who has called us out of darkness and into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9) Baptism initiates this call to ministry, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

2. With the exception of the offices of bishop and presiding elder, which are reserved for elders, all laity and clergy may serve in various offices. Offices of ministry refer to what followers of Christ do for the general building up of the body of Christ. Offices include, but are not limited to, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, administrators, miracle workers, healers, and helpers (Eph. 4:11-13, and 1 Cor. 12:28). The Holy Spirit works in and through a call to ministry and the subsequent discernment and affirmation of that call by the church.

¶ 502. CERTIFIED LAY MINISTERS. 1. A certified lay minister is a professing member of a local congregation who has received special training in Wesleyan doctrine and our denominational polity, and endorsement by the church in order to serve the church as laity. This category encompasses all those who were previously named certified lay servants, certified lay speakers, certified lay ministers, deaconesses, home missioners, and lay missioners. Certified lay ministers may work in any area of the church's ministry, including leading, teaching, proclaiming/preaching, evangelizing, worship, and caring ministry. As laity, a certified lay minister is not subject to the approval or appointment of the bishop or presiding elder, although they may request the lay minister to serve in a ministry capacity outside his or her own local church.

2. Qualifications. Persons desiring to be certified lay ministers must fulfill the following qualifications:

a. Professing member of a local Global Methodist congregation (or its predecessor) for at least two years.

b. Satisfactory completion of a course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, covering the church's doctrine, history, polity, and basic Bible knowledge.

c. Satisfactory completion of at least one advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, on an area of ministry (e.g., preaching, worship leading, caring ministry, etc.). Coursework or training in other settings may be counted to meet this requirement at the discretion of the annual conference board of ministry.

d. National background check.

e. Written recommendation by the pastor and endorsement by majority vote of the pastor-parish relations committee and the charge conference.

f. Interview and approval by the annual conference board of ministry. A public service of commitment recognizing the certification is recommended.

3. Renewal of Certification. Certification for lay ministry may be renewed every three years by the annual conference board of ministry based on the following:

a. An annual report to the charge conference and annual conference board of ministry outlining what ministry was done during the year and giving evidence of satisfactory performance.

b. Endorsement by majority vote of the charge conference annually.

c. Written recommendation for renewal by the pastor.

d. Completion of an additional national background check every three years

e. Satisfactory completion of at least one additional advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Commission on Ministry, in the last three years.

4. Conditions of service.

a. A certified lay minister serves as a volunteer, but an honorarium and expenses for pulpit supply or other specialized ministries outside one's own local church are appropriate. A certified lay minister serving as a lay staff member of a church or other ministry should be equitably compensated for their work.

b. Certification as a lay minister may be transferred to another annual conference if the person relocates. Subsequent renewal in that new annual conference is in accordance with ¶ 502.3.

c. Persons who held active certification in a predecessor denomination shall automatically be received as certified lay ministers in the Global Methodist Church, provided that they have met the requirements of ¶ 502.2b-c through coursework in the predecessor denomination, subscribe to the doctrinal standards and Social Witness of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline,* and agree to abide by its discipline. Subsequent renewal is in accordance with ¶ 502.3. Those not meeting the requirements of ¶ 502.2b-c are not certified but may work toward certification and are not required to repeat coursework they have already completed.

¶ 503. ORDERS OF MINISTRY. Clergy are those who have been called out from among God's people for particular service to his church. A calling from God may take many expressions and come at any age in the life of an individual. Scripture bears witness to both the young (1 Samuel 3) and those who are older (Genesis 12 and Exodus 3) being summoned by God into his work, as well as men and women, and those whose encounters with God were sudden and dramatic and those whose call may have been more gradual, naturally unfolding over a period of many years. In addition to those specifically charged with preaching and teaching (I Peter 5:1-4), the early church also set apart seven disciples who were "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" to distribute food to the widows among them (Acts 6:1-6). Individuals such as Stephen, Phoebe, and Timothy, served in various ways to benefit the people of God. Whether a deacon or elder, all clergy are required to live lives of integrity and self-control as they hold fast to the mystery of faith (1 Tim. 3:1-13).

Following the historic practice of Methodism, those who serve as clergy within the Global Methodist Church shall be both elected by their peers and ordained by the bishop on behalf of the whole church. Election is the action by which the clergy of an annual conference, after carefully examining the qualifications, abilities, and readiness of a candidate for ministry, incorporate individuals into the membership of the covenant fellowship of those called to serve the church. Election carries with it the right to vote and participate in the business of an annual conference provided the person is under appointment or senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 520. Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be clergy under this paragraph and have the right to vote and participate in the business of an annual conference. Those persons licensed as transitional local pastors under ¶ 521.2b shall also be clergy under this paragraph and have the right to vote and participate in the business of an annual conference, except as limited by that paragraph.

Ordination is the action by which the church sets apart those who have been elected to a particular order of ministry for the good of the whole church. Ordination is conferred by the laying on of hands by a bishop and others among the people of God in conference. There are two orders of clergy:

1. *Order of Deacons.* Within the people of God, some persons are called to the ministry of deacon, which is a ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. The words deacon, deaconess, and diaconate all spring from a common Greek root—*diakonos*, or "servant," and *diakonia*, or "service." This ministry exemplifies and leads the Church in the servanthood every Christian is called to live both in the church and in the world. Deacons are to witness to the Word in their words and actions, and to embody and lead the community's service in the world for the sake of enacting God's compassion and justice. Within and beyond a local church, deacons may, among other ministries, lead in worship, preach and teach, conduct marriages, bury the dead, care for the sick and needy, and interpret the needs of the world to the church. Deacons may also consecrate or assist with the sacraments in accordance with ¶ 413. Deacons may serve in a variety of offices within and beyond a local church, including, but not limited to, serving as pastor of a local church. Deacons retain their responsibility to witness and service in the world. Ordination as a deacon is for life, whether a person is subsequently ordained an elder or not; persons may remain as deacons should they desire to do so.

2. *Order of Elders.* From among those ordained as deacons, some are called to carry on the historic work of the *presbyteros* or elder in the life of the Church to the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order. (Those who were not ordained deacon prior to ordination as elder will be granted deacon's orders upon beginning their service in the Global Methodist Church. It is recommended that annual conferences recognize this grant through a special service.) Those called to the ministry of elder bear authority and responsibility to proclaim God's Word fearlessly, to teach God's people faithfully, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church so that it may be both faithful and fruitful. Elders retain their calling as Laity to witness and service in the world, as well as their call as deacons to word, service, compassion, and justice among the people of God.

¶ 504. TYPES OF ORDAINED MINISTRY. From its earliest days, Methodism was unique in its adoption of an itinerant ministry involving "circuit-riding preachers" who carried the Gospel and Wesleyan witness across numerous frontiers around the world. While the nature of itinerancy has changed over the decades according to the needs and circumstances of church and culture, it continues to be reflected in the appointment system of clergy who are willing and ready to serve wherever most needed. Within the Global Methodist Church, there are two types of ordered ministry: located ministry and the ministry of oversight (or apostolic ministry)

1. *Located Ministry*. Clergy appointed to serve in a particular place, such as the pastor of a local church or director of a social service agency, are part of the located ministry of the Global Methodist Church. They shall have that call affirmed and be appointed by the bishop over the annual conference wherein they serve, who shall also oversee their work. Clergy in located ministry may serve in a full-time, part-time, or bi-vocational capacity, or as a volunteer.

2. *The Ministry of Oversight (Apostolic Ministry)*. Elders who are called and appointed to oversee the work of others are a part of the ministry of oversight or the apostolic ministry of the Global Methodist Church. Upon their election to the office, elders may serve as a bishop of the church to defend the faith and to provide oversight and discipline to the churches and clergy that compose the annual conference. In turn, bishops may call and appoint other elders as presiding

elders to give guidance and direction to those serving as clergy within their district, organize new churches, and assist, discipline, and provide sacramental support to laity, deacons, and elders in located ministry.

¶ 505. BASIC QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORDAINED. Those to be ordained must meet the following qualifications:

1. Have a personal faith in Jesus Christ and be committed to Christ as Savior and Lord.

2. Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness consistent with the *General Rules*, including responsible self-control by exhibiting personal habits that are conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all relationships, fidelity in a Christian marriage between one man and one woman, chastity in singleness, social responsibility, and the knowledge and love of God.

3. Have a call by God and the people of God to devote themselves to the work of ministry.

4. Be able to effectively communicate the Christian faith.

5. Give evidence of God's gifts for ordained ministry and promise of future usefulness in the mission of the church.

6. Accept the authority of Scripture; be competent in the disciplines of Scripture, theology, church history and polity; possess the skills essential for the practice of ministry, and lead in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

7. Be accountable to the church, accept its doctrinal standards, discipline, and authority, accept the supervision of those appointed to the ministry of oversight, and live in covenant with its ordained ministers.

¶ 506. ENTRANCE INTO ORDAINED MINISTRY. 1. Persons who hear a call to ordained ministry should meet with their local pastor or presiding elder to inquire about candidacy. They must have held membership in a local Global Methodist church (or its predecessor) for at least one year and have a secondary school diploma or equivalent. Upon recommendation by two-thirds secret ballot of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or equivalent, the person is presented to the charge conference for a vote by simple majority on whether to approve them for candidacy.

2. *Candidacy Discernment*. After local church approval, the candidate shall spend a minimum of six months under the supervision of the annual conference board of ministry in discernment, which must include a supervised internship or employment in a ministry setting. During this time, the candidate shall:

a. Engage in discernment, including but not limited to, completion of a guidebook, mentoring, and participation in a small group with other candidates;

b. Undergo a psychological evaluation, and background and credit check; and

c. Upon completion of the minimum of six months of discernment, the candidate shall write a formal statement detailing his or her call to ordained ministry and submit it to the annual conference board of ministry.

3. The annual conference board of ministry, or subgroup thereof, shall interview the candidate and the annual conference board of ministry shall then vote on whether to certify the candidate by majority vote.

4. A certified candidate must undergo a period of spiritual formation under the supervision of the annual conference board of ministry until such time as the person is ordained a deacon.

¶ 507. ***Educational Requirements for Ordination.*** *1. Educational Objectives.* Following the admonition of John Wesley to unite both knowledge and vital piety, candidates for ordination as a deacon or elder within the Global Methodist Church must fulfill basic educational requirements as a part of their preparation process. As a global church, the specific requirements may vary in different regions of the world (¶ 507.2), but all shall be aimed at ensuring that our clergy everywhere have studied to "present themselves to God as one approved, as workers who do not need to be ashamed and who correctly handle the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

2. *Pathways to Ordination.* While educational programs and opportunities may be different based upon geography and life circumstances, those wishing to serve God's people through ordination within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible. The historic degree in North American settings, designed to prepare an elder for a lifetime of ministry, is generally the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), though an equivalent education is possible through such degrees as a Master of Arts (M.A.) in biblical studies, a Master's in Ministry (M.Min.), a Master's in Theology (M.Th.), or, for persons residing other than in the United States and Europe, a Bachelor's degree (B.A.) in the practice of ministry including biblical studies. In addition, individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, complete a non-degree certificate of pastoral studies from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.

A list of approved schools or programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. Beginning January 1, 2026, candidates for ordination are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination. Students who have completed their studies or enrolled prior to January 1, 2026, are not required to complete their studies at an approved school.

The Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any of the above listed degree or certificate programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued.

3. Deacons' Educational Requirements. A total of ten courses (approximately 30 credit hours) are required for those ordained as deacons. These ten courses are:

- Introduction to Old Testament
- Introduction to New Testament
- Systematic Theology
- Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine
- Methodist History and Polity of the Global Methodist Church
- Basics of Preaching
- Pastoral Care
- Evangelism and Mission
- Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship
- Inductive Bible Study or Hermeneutics

4. Elders' Educational Requirements. Individuals who have been previously ordained as a deacon in the GMC may be eligible to be ordained as an elder in the GMC following the completion of at least ten additional courses, including eight required courses as follows:

- History of Christianity through the Reformation
- History of Christianity, Reformation to the present
- Apologetics
- Wesleyan Discipleship and Spiritual Formation
- Christian Leadership and Conflict Resolution
- An additional Old Testament Class
- An additional New Testament Class
- Ministry of The Holy Spirit

Elective Courses may be chosen from among the following areas:

- Mission of the Church and Church Renewal
- Cross Cultural Ministry and Evangelism
- Advanced Preaching
- Hebrew or Greek language studies
- Pastoral Counseling
- Church Finance and Administration
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in a hospital or similar setting
- Philosophy of Religion
- Field Study in Israel
- Theology Electives
- Theology of Worship
- Children or Youth Ministry
- Gospel Vision for Justice
- Mission and Church Renewal
- Media and Modern Applications
- Directed Internship or independent study

5. Global Education Committee. A Global Education Committee shall be formed as part of the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education that shall serve to encourage and connect Wesleyan theological education in the varying regions around the world, ensuring consistent standards for training clergy that align with the missional and theological aims of the Global Methodist Church.

6. Continuing Education for Clergy. Following ordination as a deacon or elder, clergy are expected to continue learning throughout their lifetimes by means of classes, retreats, seminars, and study leaves on at least an annual basis wherever possible. Time in continuing education shall not be counted as vacation or personal time.

7. Certification of Classes and Non-Degree Certificate of Pastoral Studies Programs. The Commission on Ministry and Higher Education will determine whether courses at a given institution meet the requirements listed in this paragraph. Each annual conference board of ministry shall certify that the courses taken by a person correspond sufficiently to these areas. The Commission on Ministry and Higher Education will recommend competencies and courses

for ministerial training, as well as establish standards for and supervise approved non-degree certificate of pastoral studies programs in conjunction with the annual conference boards of ministry.

8. Changes in Requirements. In the event of a change in educational requirements within the Global Methodist Church, candidates in process shall be allowed to complete their educational program as per the requirements specified in the *Book of Doctrine and Disciplines (*including the *Transitional Book of Doctrine and Discipline)* in effect at the time they began their studies, provided that the candidate demonstrates adequate progress toward the completion of their education.

9. Review of Courses. The Commission on Ministry and Higher Education shall complete a review of the courses required for ordination in consultation with the Advisory Committee to the Committee on Approval and representatives from the Boards of Ministry and bring recommendations to the 2026 General Conference.

¶ 508. HISTORIC QUESTIONS. In addition to whatever other questions may be asked, persons seeking ordination as deacon shall be evaluated during their interview by the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent based upon their answers related to the following historic questions first asked about those desiring to be "traveling preachers:"

"(1) Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?

(2) Have they gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

(3) Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?

As long as these marks occur in them, we believe that they are called of God to serve. These we receive as sufficient proof that they are moved by the Holy Spirit."

Prior to ordination as elder, candidates shall provide the board of ministry with written answers to the following questions historically asked by bishops since the time of John Wesley:

(1) Have you faith in Christ?

(2) Are you going on to perfection?

(3) Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?

(4) Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love?

(5) Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to God's work?

(6) Do you know the General Rules of our Church?

(7) Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?

(8) Have you studied the doctrines of the Global Methodist Church?

(9) After full examination do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?

(10) Will you preach and maintain them?

(11) Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity?

(12) Do you approve our church government and polity?

(13) Will you support and maintain them?

(14) Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?

(15) Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
(16) Will you visit from house to house?
(17) Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?
(18) Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?
(19) Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
(20) Will you observe the following directions?

(a) Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.

(b) Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time.

(c) And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

¶ 509. ORDINATION AS DEACON. Within the Global Methodist Church, certified candidates must first be ordained as deacons and, after ordination as deacons, may be ordained as elders.

1. *Ordination Questions*. Upon completion of the educational requirements of ¶507.3 , a candidate for ordination as deacon shall be interviewed by the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. Prior to the interview, the candidates shall be asked to respond in writing to the following questions:

(*a) What is your personal experience of God?*
(b) What is your understanding of evil?
(c) What is your understanding of grace?
(d) How do you understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and in the Church?
(e) What is your understanding of the Kingdom of God?
(f) What significance do you believe that the resurrection holds?
(g) What is your understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture?
(h) What is your understanding of the nature and mission of the Church?
(i) What gifts and graces do you bring to the work of ministry?
(j) What is the meaning of ordination?
(k) What is the role and significance of the sacraments?
(l) Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity and will you support and maintain it?
(m) For the sake of the church's witness, are you willing to dedicate yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, exercising self-control in your personal habits, integrity in all of your relationships and if married, fidelity in your covenant with your spouse, or if single, chastity in your personal conduct?

The annual conference board of ministry shall evaluate whether the candidate evidences a sufficient foundation in and commitment to the doctrine, ethical principles, and discipline of the Global Methodist Church.

2. The annual conference board of ministry or equivalent will interview the candidate for ordination as a deacon. After being interviewed and individually recommended by the annual conference board of ministry by a two-thirds vote and approved by a two-thirds vote of the clergy of the annual conference in clergy session and by the bishop, a certified candidate for ordination shall become a full member of the annual conference and be ordained as deacon by

the bishop through the laying on of hands. The clergy session may determine by majority vote to act on candidates individually or as part of a group.

3. Deacons are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters except the ordination and conference relation of elders. Deacons not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall have no voting rights in the annual conference, except as provided for in ¶ 520.

4. Deacons may be appointed to serve as part of a ministry team in a local church (including as a pastor) or another ministry setting by the bishop, or they may secure their own position with the approval and appointment of the bishop.

5. Deacons considering a call to ordination as an elder, or in whom the gifts and graces for the ministry of elder are recognized by a bishop or presiding elder, may be appointed to the office of pastor in a local church. If such an appointment is more than temporary, a deacon who accepts such an appointment must declare candidacy for ordination as an elder and begin the process toward such ordination following the completion of all educational requirements as a deacon.

6. Where applicable by national or local laws, inactive deacons serving in a ministry setting outside the connectional structure of the Global Methodist Church shall insure themselves with a package of insurance coverage (including limits) determined by their conference board of ministry and cabinet. Such insurance shall include, but not be limited to professional liability and misconduct. Each inactive deacon shall annually submit to the cabinet and board of ministry a certificate of insurance showing their annual conference listed as an additional insured.

¶ 510. ORDINATION AS ELDER. 1. Deacons who desire to be ordained as an elder shall declare their candidacy for such ordination to the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. They shall be eligible for ordination as elder once they:

a. Prove themselves faithful, mature, and effective over a period of a minimum of two years' service as a deacon;

b. Complete the educational requirements for ordination as an elder specified in ¶ 507.4.

c. Be interviewed and recommended individually by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent for ordination as an elder. In evaluating candidates who attend an educational institution not on the Global Methodist Church's recommended list, the annual conference board of ministry will evaluate whether the candidate's courses and preparation meets the standards of the Global Methodist Church. The annual conference board of ministry shall evaluate whether the candidate evidences a sufficient foundation in and commitment to the doctrine, ethical principles, and discipline of the Global Methodist Church; and

d. Be approved by two-thirds vote by the elders of the annual conference in clergy session and be approved by the bishop. The clergy session may determine by majority vote to act on candidates individually or as a group.

2. Elders are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters. An elder not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall not have voting rights in the annual conference, except as provided for in ¶ 520. Elders may be appointed by the bishop as a presiding elder, to local ministry as pastor in charge, to the staff of a local church, as a chaplain, as an evangelist, or to other ministry settings. Elders are eligible to be elected to the office of bishop.

3. Where applicable by national or local laws, inactive elders serving in a ministry setting outside the connectional structure of the Global Methodist Church shall insure themselves with a package of insurance coverage (including limits) determined by their conference board of ministry and cabinet. Such insurance shall include, but not be limited to professional liability and misconduct. Each inactive elder shall annually submit to the cabinet and board of ministry a certificate of insurance showing their annual conference listed as an additional insured.

¶ 511. MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND. A fund shall be maintained for ministerial education by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church. Once certified, a candidate may request a loan to assist with educational requirements. A service commitment of five years duration after ordination is required of any clergy who receives such assistance, with twenty percent of the loan amount forgiven for each year of ministry within the Global Methodist Church.

¶ 512. SUPPLY PASTOR. 1. Upon approval of a conference board of ministry, a bishop may appoint individuals who are candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a supply pastor within the Global Methodist Church. It shall be the responsibility of the conference board of ministry to assign an elder to provide mentoring to that person.

2. In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers," and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor completes a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church, he or she may preside over the sacraments of baptism and holy communion under the direction of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder. The presiding elder may assign the supply pastor's candidacy mentor to this role where appropriate. The board of ministry may consider any courses taken in the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training.

3. A supply pastor must be ordained as a deacon within five total years of their appointed service in that role. Candidates for ordination who fail to meet the educational requirements as defined in ⁋ 507.3 will be discontinued as supply pastors.

4. Supply pastors are clergy members of the annual conference with full voice, but not vote, on all matters.

¶ 513. CHAPLAINCY AND OTHER ENDORSEMENTS. 1. The Ministry and Higher Education Commission shall appoint an Ecclesiastical Endorsing Board, based on nominations from the Director of Endorsing Ministries and the Ecclesiastical Endorsing Board. The Board shall report to the Commission to fulfill the following ministry objectives and requirements:

(1) evaluate applications and recommend persons to specialized ministries that require a denominational endorsement,

(2) provide professional and pastoral support and accountability by those appointed to serve in chaplaincy/institutional ministry settings,

(3) interpret and advocate for those serving such appointments to bishops, annual conferences and local congregations,

(4) work to identify quality continuing education opportunities for those appointed to endorsed ministries, and

(5) liaison with other faith groups, chaplaincy organizations, colleges, theological seminaries and conferences to share the vision and opportunities for boundary ministries in institutional and secular settings.

2. In its discretion, the Connectional Council may select a Director of Endorsing Ministries to oversee ongoing completion of the objectives listed above. The Director shall work with the Ministry and Higher Education Commission to establish necessary funding, implement policies, and obtain logistical support. The Director shall be ultimately accountable to the Connectional Council and shall work in close collaboration with the Ecclesiastical Endorsing Board on all matters relevant to the effective discharge of responsibilities.

¶ 514. THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELISTS. Evangelism is the persuasive communication of the good news of Jesus Christ and his present and coming Kingdom in word, deed and sign as an invitation to repent and believe in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus, the one true and living God. Effective evangelism leads people to call on Jesus as Savior and Lord and experience the new birth (Mark 1:15, Luke 24:19-32, Acts 2:22-47, Romans 10:9, John 3:3- 8). While every follower of Jesus is commanded to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ, God also calls and gives to the Church some who are specifically anointed and gifted as evangelists (Ephesians 4:11-13). These lay and clergy persons are effective at leading people to saving faith and equipping others in the body of Christ to evangelize and accelerate the spread of the Gospel. All believers need to be connected to a local church; to be sanctified and formed into disciples who can make disciples. (Matthew 4:19, Ephesians 4:11-13, Acts 8:4-40, Acts 21:8, Matthew 16:13-19, Matthew 28:18-20)

1. Certification of Lay and Clergy Evangelists. Certification as an evangelist in the Global Methodist Church is approved and monitored at the local church level with additional accountability and monitoring for clergy evangelists by the annual conference board of ministry. The standards for certification include the following:

a. Anyone who desires to serve as an evangelist must effectively communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God, their conversion to Christ, as well as God's call to this ministry. The Global Methodist Church recognizes and celebrates both lay and clergy evangelists.

b. Each candidate must bear fruit, showing that God has empowered them with gifts to lead others to saving faith in Christ and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

c. Each candidate must embrace and affirm the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church and have been a member of a Global Methodist Church for one year before seeking the official role of evangelist or the equivalent.

d. Each candidate must receive the endorsement of his or her local church by a vote of the church council, and also the endorsement of the annual conference evangelism committee or the equivalent. Clergy evangelists must additionally receive the endorsement of their annual conference board of ministry.

e. Evangelists must work closely with local churches in a team approach to evangelistic ministry so that new Christians are formed as mature disciples of Jesus Christ who also make disciples.

f. Lay and clergy evangelists must submit an annual ministry report, including any continuing education to their charge conference, and to the annual conference evangelism committee or the equivalent. In addition, clergy evangelists must also report annually to the annual conference board of ministry.

2. *Appointment of Deacons and Elders as Evangelists.* Evangelists who meet the criteria as a deacon or elder may be appointed as an evangelist according to the requirements of ¶ 610.10. Individuals appointed as evangelists to positions outside and beyond the ministry of the local church shall be confirmed annually by the clergy session of the annual conference.

¶ 515. THE MINISTRY OF MISSIONARIES. Throughout the history of the church there have been individuals called by God and sent by the Church to share the good news of Jesus across cultures; to make disciples in distant places and among less evangelized peoples; and to equip emerging Christian communities for growth, faith-sharing, and good works acts of mercy in Jesus' name (Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 15:20, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:13-15, Ephesians 4:11-14, Ephesians 2:8-10). Ambassadors of Christ, these are vocational missionaries, called to bring the message of peace and reconciliation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:11-15).

1. Qualifications and the Commissioning of Lay and Clergy Missionaries. Commissioning to the office of missionary in the Global Methodist Church is approved and monitored by the annual conference board of ministry.

a. Anyone who desires to serve as a GM Church missionary must communicate God's call on their lives to cross- cultural vocational ministry. The Global Methodist Church recognizes and celebrates both lay and clergy missionaries.

b. Each candidate must be able to testify to the Good News of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God as well as his or her conversion to Christ.

c. Each candidate must bear fruit, showing that God has empowered them with gifts to lead others to saving faith in Christ, to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and a commitment to making disciples who make disciples.

d. Each candidate must embrace and affirm the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church, with a commitment to the practices of spiritual disciplines, and patterns of holiness consistent with the *General Rules.*

e. Each candidate must be a member in good standing of a Global Methodist Church for at least one year prior to seeking the official role of a GM Church missionary.

f. Each candidate must have received training for (1) cross-cultural missions (such as *Perspectives*, or comparable training as approved by the annual conference board of ministry); (2) Old and New Testament; (3) evangelism, and (4) equipping for disciple-making (such as *Discover Bible Study* methodology and an introduction to Disciple Making Movements).

g. Each candidate must receive the endorsement of his or her local church by a vote of the church council, and also the endorsement of the annual conference missions committee or the equivalent. Clergy missionaries must additionally receive the endorsement of their annual conference board of ministry.

h. Each candidate shall provide evidence as to how he or she will receive ongoing pastoral / member care and support, to ensure personal and family well-being while in their field of service.

i. Missionaries must serve with (and under the oversight of) an approved GM Church ministry or an approved GM Church missional partner as determined by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church or its designee.

2. *Appointment of Deacons and Elders as Missionaries.* Missionaries who meet the criteria as a deacon or elder may be appointed as a missionary according to the requirements of ¶

610.10. Individuals appointed as missionaries to positions outside and beyond the ministry of the local church shall be confirmed annually by the clergy session of the annual conference.

¶ 516. TRANSFER OF CLERGY CREDENTIALS. 1. Clergy applying to transfer to the Global Methodist Church from another Christian denomination (except for those specified in ¶ 521) must provide the following:

(1) A formal resume with references;

(2) Proof of ordination from a denomination with a formalized vetting process. Ordinations by local congregations, networks, or associations do not meet this requirement;

(3) Official transcripts of all post high school education; and

(4) Where available, a copy of all personnel files maintained by his or her former denomination to be sent to the board of ministry at the written request of the clergy person.

2. The applicant must also:

(1) Submit to a background and credit check, and psychological examination,

(2) Interview with a presiding elder,

(3) Interview with the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. In evaluating candidates who attend an educational institution not on the Global Methodist Church's recommended list, the annual conference board of ministry will evaluate whether the candidate's courses and preparation meets the standards of the Global Methodist Church. The annual conference board of ministry shall evaluate whether the candidate evidences a sufficient foundation in and commitment to the doctrine, ethical principles, and discipline of the Global Methodist Church

3. Upon the completion of these requirements, transfers must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry, a two-thirds vote of the clergy session of the annual conference to which the applicant is seeking admittance, and by the receiving bishop.

¶ 517. APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS. 1. Upon recommendation of the board of ministry and affirmation by the clergy session of the annual conference, a bishop may appoint clergy in good standing in other Christian denominations to serve appointments or ecumenical ministries while retaining their denominational affiliation. Their appointment shall be as a **Valid Deacon** or **Valid Elder.** Clergypersons retaining their affiliation with other denominations while receiving appointment in the Global Methodist Church shall meet the following criteria:

a. Complete an application prepared by the board of ministry, including the following:

i) Testimony to their Christian faith and call to ministry.

ii) Permission and release of any required psychological tests, a criminal background and credit check, reports of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

iii) Either a notarized statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse, OR a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

b. A statement agreeing to teach, support and maintain Global Methodist Church doctrine.

c. Give evidence through an interview with the board of ministry that they have read the *Book of Doctrine and Discipline* and will support and maintain Global Methodist Church discipline and polity.

d. Present suitable credentials as an ordained clergyperson from another Christian denomination,

e. Present evidence of completion of education equivalent to that required for deacons in the Global Methodist Church. Clergypersons holding ordination from another denomination or congregation, but not meeting the required educational standards of the Global Methodist Church may be appointed provisionally, with full educational requirements for deacon to be completed within three years of the start of the appointment. Progress toward completion of educational requirements shall be shown annually.

2. Clergy affirmed as Valid Deacons or Valid Elders may be accorded the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:

a) constitutional amendments;

b) election of delegates to General or annual conferences; and

c) all matters of ordination character, and conference relations of ministers.

Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may serve on any board, commission or committee of the annual conference, except the board of ministry and the board of trustees. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may not be elected as delegates to General or annual conferences.

3. Between conference sessions, the board of ministry may approve such persons for appointment pending their approval at the next regular clergy session of the annual conference. The bishop may make *ad interim* appointments of such persons once approved by the board of ministry. In every case, prior examination and on-going review shall be made of such person's understanding, acceptance, and willingness to support and maintain the doctrine, discipline, and polity of the Global Methodist Church.

¶ 518. LEAVES OF ABSENCE. A change in conference status may be affected by the following:

1. *Voluntary Leave Process.* Clergy may request in writing a voluntary temporary leave of absence of up to one year from their ministerial duties due to medical needs, family circumstances, or other personal issues. Transitional leaves may similarly be granted for clergy in good standing who are temporarily between appointments. Such a change in conference status may be granted or terminated by majority vote of the clergy members of the annual conference upon recommendation by two-thirds of the annual conference board of ministry. Between sessions of annual conference, a voluntary leave of absence may be granted or terminated by a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry, with the recommendation of the bishop and a two-thirds majority of the presiding elders. Renewal of voluntary leave may be made annually by the majority vote of the clergy session, for a period of up to five years. After that time, the clergy person must choose either honorable location status (¶ 518.7) or senior status (¶ 520), with the approval of a majority of the clergy session. Either status discontinues the person's eligibility for appointment and does not require annual renewal of status.

2. *Voluntary Leave Conditions.* Clergypersons on voluntary leave shall have no claim on conference funds but may be eligible to continue in conference health programs through their own contributions. They may serve on annual conference commissions, committees, or boards, as well as vote for clergy delegates to General Conferences. Persons on voluntary leave of six months or longer are considered inactive and, except for election of clergy delegates, do not have vote at the annual conference. However, they do remain members of the annual conference with voice. They may continue to engage in part-time, unpaid ministry as a volunteer. Those on voluntary leave shall continue to be amenable to the annual conference for their conduct and the performance of ministry.

3. *Sabbatical Leave*. Clergy who have been serving in a full-time appointment for six consecutive years may be granted sabbatical leave for a program of study, travel, or renewal. Sabbatical leaves of three months or less may be granted by the pastor-parish relations committee, with the approval of the presiding elder. A longer sabbatical leave of up to one year must be approved by the conference board of ministry. Compensation for the clergy during a sabbatical of three months or less shall be continued by the local church. Longer sabbaticals shall be the responsibility of the individuals involved, though the support of congregations and others is encouraged.

4. *Involuntary Leave Process.* Involuntary leaves may be requested by the bishop, two-thirds of the presiding elders, and a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry., The board shall also determine what if any disciplinary action or other conditions are required (e.g., therapy, remedial education, etc.). Placing a person on involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session. The fair process for administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary leave procedure (¶ 905-906). When an end to the involuntary leave of absence is initiated by the bishop and a two-thirds majority of the presiding elders, the annual conference board of ministry shall review the circumstances surrounding the granting of the status to determine if the conditions of the leave have been met. If the board determines that such is not the case, it may continue involuntary leave of absence. Involuntary leave may continue for up to five years from when it was first granted, at which time the board must pursue administrative location (¶ 518.7). Termination of involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry and a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session.

5. *Involuntary Leave Conditions.* Clergypersons on involuntary leave shall have no claim on annual conference funds and the conference shall assume no responsibility for salary, pension, or other benefits during the leave of absence, but the clergyperson may be eligible to continue in conference health programs through their own contributions. Clergy on involuntary leave shall not participate in the commissions, committees, or boards of the district or annual conference. They shall be in the inactive status, with no voice or vote at annual conference, may not be delegates to General Conference, and may not vote for clergy delegates. Those on involuntary leave shall continue to be amenable to the annual conference for their conduct and shall not participate in any official acts of ministry during the leave.

6. *Maternity and Paternity Leave.* Any clergy member (including both spouses in a clergy couple) may request maternity or paternity leave for up to three months or for such time as mandated by the law of the jurisdiction where the church is located, whichever is greater, at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption or fostering. Such leave shall be granted by the pastor-parish relations committee in consultation with the presiding elder. During the leave, the clergyperson's annual conference status will remain unchanged, and the health and benefit plans will remain in force. Compensation, which may include sick leave, vacation, or other time off, shall be provided by the salary-paying unit for an amount of time determined by the church or in accordance with the law of the jurisdiction where the church served is located, whichever is greater.

7. *Honorable or Administrative Location.* Persons who have been placed on honorable location (with consent) or administrative location (without consent, JPP 2.2c and 3) are no longer members of the annual conference. They shall not have voice or vote at the annual conference unless specifically granted voice by the annual conference. Their membership shall be held in a local church of their choice, with the written consent of the pastor in charge and, in the case of administrative location, the pastor-parish relations committee. Any ministerial service is limited to the church/charge where they hold membership and must be only with the written consent of the pastor in charge.

¶ 519. AFFILIATE CLERGY MEMBERSHIP. 1. Clergy persons from other denominations who are serving at an ecumenical congregation that has a covenanting relationship with the Global Methodist Church as prescribed in ⁋ 453 may be granted affiliate membership in the annual conference that the covenanting congregation belongs to.

2. Clergy persons who are serving in an annual conference that is different from their own annual conference may be granted affiliate clergy membership in the conference where they are appointed to serve, while maintaining full membership in their original annual conference.

3. Clergy members who belong to a special annual conference may be granted affiliate membership in a local annual conference where their appointments are located.

4. Clergy members, especially those in cross-racial or cross-cultural appointments, may be granted affiliate clergy membership in a special annual conference.

5. Affiliate clergy members may not participate in the clergy session of the annual conference to which they are affiliate members but may participate in other meetings with voice only.

¶ 520. SENIOR STATUS. Following the scriptural pattern, there is no retirement for clergy or laity from the work of God's Kingdom. However, clergy persons serving in appointments may choose senior status within the annual conference, with the approval of a majority of the board of

ministry and a majority of the clergy session. There is no mandatory age for such status. Senior status releases clergy members from any obligation to accept an appointment to ministry from the bishop, though clergy in senior status may voluntarily accept an appointment from the bishop to any ministry setting for which they qualify. Senior clergy, including bishop emeriti, retain their active status and right to both voice and vote at annual conference if they fulfill either of the following conditions:

a) they are within seven years of the effective date of their aligning with the Global Methodist Church or the end of their last appointment, whichever is later, provided that they notify the conference secretary at least ninety days prior to the annual conference session of their intention to participate as a voting member, or

b) they are under appointment by the bishop for at least one-quarter time (no notification necessary).

Senior clergy not qualifying under the preceding sentence retain voice, but not vote, at annual conference. Those in senior status, whether active or inactive, may be elected as a delegate to General Conference and serve on district or annual conference commissions, committees, or boards.

¶ 521. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS. The opportunity to apply to the Global Methodist Church under the provisions of this paragraph will expire on December 31, 2026.

1. *Clergy who are current or former ordained members of The United Methodist Church* may apply to an annual conference board of ministry to be received as clergy members of the Global Methodist Church and to have their ordained status recognized. The application shall be accompanied by a copy of the applicant's ordination certificate(s) and shall include a written affirmation of the doctrines and Social Witness set forth in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church and an agreement to abide by its discipline. The applicant shall consent to a background check. The annual conference board of ministry shall review the application and vote on each application received. An affirmative vote on each application shall result in the applicant being recommended to the annual conference clergy session for a vote. If the clergy session votes in the affirmative, the applicant is admitted to clergy membership and granted ordained status within the Global Methodist Church. The board of ministry may approve clergy between sessions of the annual conference.

2. *Current or Former Associate Members and Licensed Local Pastors in The United Methodist Church*.

a. Persons who are current or former associate members or licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church may apply for clergy membership in the Global Methodist Church and to be ordained as a deacon or elder. Each application shall be evaluated by the annual conference board of ministry or a subgroup thereof. The application must include a copy of the certificate or license from the person's service in The United Methodist Church, a transcript of courses completed to meet the requirements of ¶ 507, and a written affirmation of the doctrines and Social Witness set forth in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist church and agreement to abide by its discipline. Those meeting the qualifications for ordination as deacons or elders set forth in this chapter shall, with the recommendation of the annual conference board of ministry and subsequent approval by the annual conference, be ordained at a designated service of the annual conference. If an associate member or a licensed local pastor meets the educational requirements to be ordained as an elder and has served in The United Methodist Church for at least two years, the two-year period of minimum service as a deacon in

¶ 510.1a shall not be applicable and the person may be ordained as a deacon and as an elder following approval by its clergy session. If approved by the Board of ministry and the clergy session of the annual conference, an individual may be ordained deacon and elder at the same annual conference session.

b. Those current or former licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church not meeting the qualifications for ordination as a deacon or elder in the Global Methodist Church may be granted a license as a transitional local pastor for a one-year term. The status of a transitional local pastor begins from the date of their approval at the annual conference session and must be approved annually by the annual conference board of ministry, with extensions for up to three additional years. A pastor operating under a license granted under this provision shall be a clergy member of the Global Methodist Church while licensed, shall have sacramental authority in their appointment, and shall have full voice and vote on all matters except the ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders. Such a person shall be under the supervision of the board of ministry of the annual conference in which they are appointed, and a supervising elder appointed by a conference superintendent or a bishop. The board of ministry may approve persons for transitional local pastor status between annual conference sessions.

3. Clergy will be placed in the annual conference in which their appointment is located or may transfer to a different annual conference in the connection. The clergy person will be subject to the bishop of that annual conference for appointment.

4. Persons in the candidacy process in The United Methodist Church or other Wesleyan traditions who desire to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church may be received into an annual conference after recommendation by the board of ministry to the annual conference clergy session, or by the board of ministry between annual conference sessions. The candidate shall comply with the provisions of ¶ 506 and their membership in a congregation of The United Methodist Church or another Wesleyan tradition for at least one year shall satisfy the membership requirement of ¶ 506. The candidate shall request that a copy of all candidacy files held by their former district or annual conference be forwarded to the body credentialing candidates. Where such documentation is not released by another denomination, the annual conference board of ministry or subgroup thereof shall verify the status of the candidate with whatever documentation is available. Candidates shall continue at the point in the process where they are in The United Methodist Church or other Wesleyan tradition and will not need to repeat steps or requirements they have already completed. Candidates will continue in their candidacy process according to the requirements listed in this chapter, provided that candidates may choose to be governed by the processes outlined in the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect at the time their candidacy began.

5. Clergy who have been recognized and ordained in churches following an episcopal (bishop's) or presbyterian (elders) system of governance may be received into the Global Methodist Church by recognition of their ordination. Clergy coming from congregational systems in which their ordination was performed by a local church or congregation will apply for ordination within the Global Methodist Church as a part of their transfer (⁋ 516).

6. The annual conference board of ministry may, in its discretion, grant exceptions to the requirements in this paragraph upon petition of a person seeking certification as a candidate for conference membership and ordination.

PART SIX THE SUPERINTENDENCY

¶ 601. THE NATURE OF SUPERINTENDENCY. From apostolic times, certain persons have been set apart and entrusted with the task of defending the Apostolic faith and leading the church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. While shared by the whole people of God, this apostolic task is most clearly expressed in the historic office of the *episkopos* (meaning overseer) or bishop. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, the first Methodist bishops, exemplified an evangelistic and missionary spirit that will be shared by every bishop in the Global Methodist Church. The Global Methodist Church is led, equipped, and supervised by an episcopacy modeled after that of the early centuries of Christianity and stemming from the historic line of Methodist bishops. We share John Wesley's conviction that bishops and elders are expressions of the same New Testament order. Therefore, bishops in the Global Methodist Church represent a specialized ministry rather than a separate order and are consecrated rather than ordained to their office. The role of bishop is a sacred trust held for a time as the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of our church allows. It is not a lifelong office. The episcopal office is to keep the church focused outward toward our mission field. Our bishops must not lean on the trappings of ecclesial office but lead us from an authentic, humble, and evangelistic love for God and neighbor. When convened together, the bishops of the Global Methodist Church constitute a general superintendency that leads our church in spiritual and temporal matters. The call to order the church extends beyond the episcopacy to conference superintendents, presiding elders, and elders who each possess distinct and collegial responsibilities.

Section I. The Office of Bishop

¶ 602. **ROLE AND QUALIFICATIONS.** Bishops are elected from among those within the order of elders and set apart for a ministry of visionary servant leadership, general oversight, and supervision in support of the Church in its mission. As followers of Jesus Christ, bishops are charged with guarding the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church. The basis of such discipleship of leadership lies in a life characterized by personal integrity, rigorous discipleship, and the anointing and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Bishops shall be persons of genuine faith, and upstanding moral character. They should possess the gift of encouragement, a vital and renewing spirit, and possess a commitment to the vision of the Church adopted by the General Conference. Candidates for the episcopacy should also have a strong record of effectiveness in leading the church in evangelism, discipleship, and mission, and bishops shall be unwaveringly committed to uphold the doctrines and polity of our church, and able to communicate the historic Christian faith from a Wesleyan perspective. (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7)

¶ 603. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES. As general superintendents of the Church, bishops are entrusted with the following responsibilities:

1. Lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Global Methodist Church which confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and particularly to lead the Church in its mission of witness and service in the world.

2. Guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition and understood from a Wesleyan perspective.

3. Reclaim and exercise the historic teaching office of the episcopacy by grounding the church in the faith "once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3) and train lay and clergy leaders to apply our theology to the challenges and opportunities of the present age.

4. Defend, communicate, uphold, and enforce the order, doctrines, and discipline of the church as provided for in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

5. Preside over the General and annual conferences as assigned. The bishop may delegate presiding over annual conference to a conference superintendent or bishop emeritus.

6. Appoint conference superintendents to the annual conferences after consultation with the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent, the annual conference superintendency committee or its equivalent, and the cabinet, and with the consent of the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent in accordance with ¶ 607.

7. Delegate responsibility for appointment making and supervision to Conference Superintendents and cabinets.

8. Fix the clergy appointments in each conference in consultation with the conference superintendents and conference cabinet.

9. Consecrate bishops; ordain elders and deacons; and commission missionaries; entering the names of those individuals into the appropriate records and furnishing proper credentials to each. As these services are acts of the whole Church, text and rubrics shall be used in the form approved by the General Conference.

10. Promote, support, and model generous Christian giving, with special attention to teaching the biblical principles of giving.

11. Provide leadership in the quest for Christian unity in ministry and mission and in the search for strengthened relationships with other Christian communities.

12. Promote and support the evangelistic witness of the whole Church.

13. Travel through the connection at large to implement the missional strategy of the Global Methodist Church and to foster relationships areas among various parts of the connection.

¶ 604. ELECTION OF BISHOPS. The following provisions guide the election of bishops in the Global Methodist Church:

1. In the twelve months prior to a regularly scheduled General Conference, duly elected annual conference delegations shall:

a. Nominate up to one clergy from their conference to the episcopacy and nominate up to one clergy from outside their conference to the episcopacy. These endorsements shall not include actively serving bishops. Each nomination will ideally be accompanied by appropriate evaluative and background information prescribed by the Global Episcopacy Committee. Nominations and supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Global Episcopacy Committee.

b. Elect one lay and one clergy member to an area episcopacy committee. Members so elected shall not be eligible for election as bishops.

2. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall compile and publish a list of all nominees to the episcopacy no later than 90 days prior to the opening session of a regularly scheduled General Conference. A listing of bishops eligible and willing to stand for re-election shall also be published.

3. Within 90 days of the opening session of General Conference, a plenary body composed of all those selected to serve on area committees on episcopacy shall convene to define episcopal areas based on the number of bishops recommended by the Global Episcopacy Committee, with the guideline being areas composed of six to eight annual conferences each.

The chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall serve as chair. Episcopal areas need not be geographically contiguous and may be international in composition. Active bishops and members of the Global Episcopacy Committee may participate with voice but not vote. The plan for episcopal areas shall be approved by simple majority of the plenary gathering of area committees on episcopacy. The plan for episcopal area alignment shall be revisited at each gathering of the plenary prior to General Conference.

4. Individual area episcopacy committees shall convene, elect their own leadership, and conduct interviews with episcopal candidates as desired. Each area episcopacy committee shall produce a ranked list of up to five candidates that best match the leadership needs of the episcopal area and the Global Methodist Church. These ranked lists may include actively serving bishops and shall be shared with the delegates to the General Conference by the Global Episcopacy Committee at least 30 days prior to the General Conference. To assist in this process, area committees on episcopacy shall have access to relevant confidential documentation released to them by the Global Episcopacy Committee. If the same candidate is the top choice of more than one area episcopacy committee, the Global Episcopacy Committee may issue a statement offering guidance to General Conference delegates prior to the balloting process.

5. Bishops shall be elected to each defined episcopal area by the full body of the General Conference. Delegates may not vote for the same candidate for more than one episcopal area on the same ballot. At least sixty percent support shall be required to elect a bishop to an episcopal area. If a single candidate is the top choice for more than one episcopal area on the same ballot, the Global Episcopacy Committee may issue guidance to delegates prior to the next ballot.

6. Those elected to the office of bishop shall be consecrated at General Conference according to the historic manner. (See *O For a Heart to Praise My God,* 2024, Seedbed Publishing. Pages 256-261.)

7. The actual term of service for bishops begins sixty days following the close of the General Conference at which bishops are consecrated, unless determined otherwise by the General Conference.

8. A bishop may serve a maximum of two six-year terms, except that Bishops Scott J. Jones and Mark J. Webb shall be permitted to stand for election at the 2026 General Conference. No person elected as bishop at the convening General Conference, with the exception of Bishops Jones and Webb, shall be permitted to stand for election to the episcopacy at the 2026 General Conference unless such person receives a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the delegates present and casting ballots at the 2026 General Conference. No more than one-half (1/2) of the newly elected bishops may be re-elected to one six-year term. Bishops Webb and Jones will not be included in the new half (1/2) number. In a circumstance where more than half of the bishops elected in 2024, excluding Bishops Webb and Jones, reach the 3/4 threshold necessary for inclusion on the ballot, the nominees eligible to stand for election shall be determined by the highest number of votes received until the 1/2 threshold is reached.

Section II. The Global Episcopacy Committee

¶ 605. THE GLOBAL EPISCOPACY COMMITTEE. There shall be a Global Episcopacy Committee consisting of twelve members elected by the General Conference.

1. The Connectional Council shall receive nominations of persons to serve on the Global Episcopacy Committee and produce a slate of six lay and six clergy nominees diverse with respect to geography, ethnicity, and gender which shall be released publicly thirty days before

the General Conference. Delegates to the General Conference may nominate additional persons from the floor. All nominees, with their consent, shall be included in a balloting process to elect six lay and six clergy members. All delegates shall be empowered to vote for both lay and clergy nominees. A minimum of sixty percent support plus one vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots shall be required for election. No one may serve more than two consecutive six-year terms. Following the conclusion of the election, the Connectional Council may add two additional clergy members and two additional lay members to the Global Episcopacy Committee to ensure diversity.

2. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall determine and elect its own officers. The connectional operating officer shall chair the meeting at which such officers are elected.

3. If a member of the Global Episcopacy Committee is nominated to serve as a bishop of the Church, that member's service on the Global Episcopacy Committee shall terminate upon nomination to the episcopacy. The remaining members of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall elect a clergy person to serve the remainder of that person's term.

4. While those elected shall begin their term sixty days following the close of the General Conference session at which they are elected, those selected may participate with voice (not vote) in any sessions of the Global Episcopacy Committee held between their selection and the beginning of their term of service. Those elected in 2024 begin service upon election.

5. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall meet at least semiannually to fulfill the following responsibilities:

a. To foster a healthy and effective episcopacy in the Global Methodist Church.

b. To communicate the work, needs, expectations, and challenges of the episcopacy to the church.

c. To evaluate each active bishop annually using a process that includes input from the area superintendency committee.

d. To guide the nomination process for new bishops as described in ¶ 604.

e. To approve sabbaticals, resignations, and other leaves of duty for bishops.

f. To receive and investigate complaints against bishops. The committee shall be empowered to suspend a bishop, arrange for responses aimed at resolution and, as necessary, provide for a trial for a bishop in keeping with the *Judicial Practices and Procedures* of the Global Methodist Church.

g. To establish compensation amounts, adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living, the average salary of pastors in the episcopal area, and the currency exchange rate. The responsibility for providing appropriate compensation, health insurance, pension contributions, and travel and office expenses for bishops shall be borne by the general church. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall adhere to the limits of the general budget.

h. To develop a proposal for the shared expense for bishops to be brought to each General Conference in collaboration with the connectional operations officer.

Section III. The Assembly of Bishops

¶ 606. THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS. By virtue of their election and consecration, bishops, including interim bishops, are members of the Assembly of Bishops and are bound together in special covenant. As the collegial expression of episcopal leadership, the Assembly of Bishops speaks pastorally to the church and from the church to the world. The Assembly of Bishops is composed of all active bishops and shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Provide a faith community of mutual trust, concern, and accountability which results in the sanctification and well-being of its members.

2. Watch over one another in love, in cooperation and consultation with the Global Episcopacy Committee.

3. Plan for the growth, vitality, and extension of the church.

4. Organize the assembly as deemed most helpful to the mission of the church.

5. Issue teaching documents as may correct errors, provide theological and moral guidance, and deepen faith.

6. Exercise temporal leadership as defined by *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

7. Ensure effective consultation in the appointment process.

8. Designate trained and qualified persons to preside over church trials as described in *The Judicial Practices and Procedures* of the Global Methodist Church.

9. Nominate the connectional operations officer to be elected by the Connectional Council.

10. Lead the ecumenical work of the Global Methodist Church and shepherd the Church toward greater unity.

Section IV. Conference Superintendents

¶ 607. CONFERENCE SUPERINTENDENTS. Conference superintendents are elders who are appointed by the bishop, after consultation with the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent, the annual conference superintendency committee or its equivalent, and the cabinet with the consent of the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent to provide spiritual and temporal leadership to each annual conference. By vote of the annual conferences involved, two or more conferences may agree to be led by a single conference superintendent. Conference superintendents serve an initial term of six years and may be extended annually for up to twelve total years of service.

1. A conference superintendent shall have the following responsibilities:

a. Collaborate with annual conference leaders to set vision and build a clear and articulated missional strategy for the conference in keeping with the vision and mission of the Global Methodist Church.

b. Encourage, inspire, and motivate the clergy, laity, and churches of the annual conference to embrace and implement the vision and missional strategy of the annual conference.

c. Strengthen and multiply local churches, providing spiritual leadership to both laity and clergy.

d. Provide general oversight of the fiscal and program operations of the annual conference(s).

e. Ensure fair process for clergy and laity in administrative and judicial proceedings.

f. Form the districts (or equivalent) after consultation with the presiding elders and bishop.

g. Recommend the presiding elders for appointment by the bishop.

h. Convene together and supervise the cabinet of the annual conference.

i. In consultation with the presiding elders, present appointments in the annual conference(s) to be fixed and approved by the bishop as *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* directs (¶ 610).

j. Divide or unite circuits, charges, stations, or missions as judged necessary and to recommend appropriate appointments.

k. Transfer, upon the request of the receiving conference superintendent, clergy member(s) of one annual conference to another, provided said member(s) agrees to said transfer; and to send to the secretaries of both conferences involved and to the conference boards of ministry timely written notices of the transfer of members.

l. Ensure that an appropriate personnel and supervisory record is kept and maintained on each clergy member as required. There shall be only one file maintained for each member, containing both personnel and supervisory information. Clergy shall have access to the entirety of their file and shall have the right to add a response to any information contained therein.

m. Chair the conference leadership team (or equivalent) as provided in the established rules of the conference.

n. After consultation with the board of ministry chair and the presiding elders, the conference superintendent shall nominate clergy and laity to serve on the board of ministry.

o. Nominate the committee on investigation (⁋ 710.6) and administrative review committee (⁋ 710.7) per the *Judicial Practices and Procedures* of the Global Methodist Church.

p. Represent the bishop in his/her absence as assigned.

q. Discharge such other duties as *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* may direct.

2. There shall be an annual conference superintendency committee or its equivalent elected to foster a healthy relationship between the conference and conference superintendent. Each conference superintendent shall be evaluated annually in a process approved by the bishop.

Section V. The Office of Presiding Elder

¶ 608. SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT. An elder in full connection may be appointed to lead a district (or its equivalent) by the bishop as a presiding elder upon recommendation by the conference superintendent. A presiding elder is appointed annually after evaluation for effectiveness. A presiding elder may not serve more than twelve years in the aggregate, unless extended annually by the annual conference connectional council (or equivalent) and approved by the conference superintendent. In the selection of presiding elders, bishops and conference superintendents shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of the Global Methodist Church (¶ 306).

¶ 609. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDING ELDERS**. As an extension of the office of bishop and conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall oversee the ministry of the clergy and churches in the communities of the district to which they are appointed. The presiding elder is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop, or where no pastor is appointed. The presiding elder has the following specific responsibilities:

1. Offer support, care, and counsel to churches and clergy concerning matters affecting their ministry.

2. Together with the bishop and conference superintendent, guard, transmit, and proclaim the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and Tradition from a Wesleyan perspective, communicating and defending the doctrines and discipline of the church as provided for in *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline.*

3. Be the district's chief missional resource providing missional accountability, collaborating with congregations and communities within the district to assess and understand their context and develop their leadership needs to support the ministry of the local church.

4. Collaborate with the bishop, conference superintendent, and cabinet in the process of appointing clergy and assigning qualified and trained lay ministers, as defined by the conference board of ministry.

5. Develop an effective system for recruitment of candidates for ministry.

6. Establish working relationships with lay leadership, to develop faithful and effective systems of ministry within the district.

7. Encourage covenant groups, class meetings, and band meetings among both the clergy and the laity of the district.

8. Maintain regular contact with the clergy for counsel and supervision, and receive written or electronic evaluations that include each appointed clergy or assigned layperson's continuing education, spiritual practices, current ministry work, and goals for future ministry.

9. As directed by the conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall facilitate the proper maintenance of the appropriate records of all persons appointed to the charges, including clergy in extension ministry.

10. As directed by the conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall facilitate the proper maintenance of the appropriate records dealing with property, endowments, and other tangible assets of the district.

11. In consultation with the bishop, conference superintendent, and cabinet, work to develop the best strategic deployment of clergy possible in the district, including realignment of pastoral charges, larger parishes, cooperative parishes, multiple staff configurations, new church starts, and ecumenical shared ministries.

12. Assume other leadership responsibilities as determined by the conference superintendent and/or bishop supporting the health and effectiveness of the local churches in the district or annual conference.

Section VI. Appointment-Making

¶ 610. CONSIDERATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENTS. 1. To strengthen and empower the local church to effectively carry out its mission for Christ in the world, clergy shall be appointed by the bishop and these appointments reported annually to the conference.

2. Appointments are to be made with consideration to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, and in faithfulness to our commitment to an open itinerancy. Open itinerancy means appointments are made without regard to race, tribal or ethnic origin, gender, disability, marital status, or age.

3. Appointment-making across conference lines shall be encouraged to resource churches and enable open itinerancy. Clergy in good standing are free to seek an appointment in any annual conference. Bishops, conference superintendents, and cabinets should share information on supply and demand across the church.

4. Appointment-making will reflect the unique needs of a charge, the community context, and the gifts of a particular pastor. Criteria will be developed in each instance and then shared with pastors and congregations. These criteria may include profiles of the congregation, pastor, and missional setting.

5. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are vital for the growth of our global church. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations of which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. Where these appointments are made, the annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments through adequate training and support.

a. Each annual conference superintendency committee shall be responsible for working with the bishop, the conference superintendent, and the presiding elders to ensure compliance with the commitment to open itineracy and the equitable and fair consideration of diverse pastors during the appointment process.

b. Annually, the bishop and/or the conference superintendent of each annual conference shall deliver a report to the annual conference superintendency committee addressing the specific steps taken to ensure diverse persons were considered for appointments. Such a report shall enumerate the cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments that were made and the extent to which cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments were considered.

c. The annual conference superintendency committee shall annually report to the Global Episcopacy Committee the progress of the annual conference in fulfilling the commitment to open itineracy, and the Global Episcopacy Committee shall annually provide direction to the annual conference committees on superintendency to enhance fulfillment of open itineracy in each annual conference.

6. Clergy shall not have a guaranteed right to an appointment. Effort will be made to deploy all effective clergy. Deacons and elders who are not under appointment shall be considered inactive (¶¶ 509.3, 510.2).

7. The process of appointment making is to be thoroughly consultative. Consultation is the process by which the conference superintendent and/or the presiding elder confers with the pastor and the pastor-parish relations committee to understand (a) the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for the mission of the congregation, (b) the gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and expectations of the pastor and any spouse and family, and (c) the missional setting. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of a change in appointment. Whenever possible, churches may be given 2-3 pastoral candidates to choose from for potential pastoral interviews. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice—understanding there are factors like available personnel and available appointments that may extend the time when churches are served by pulpit supply. While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, and final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the board of ministry, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent. The presiding elder or their cabinet designee must be present for final interviews with the local church to give support and guidance in the appointment process. The Assembly of Bishops shall hold its members accountable for the implementation of the consultative process in their respective areas.

8. The bishop, conference superintendent, and cabinet should work toward multi-year (rather than annual) local church appointments to facilitate a more effective ministry.

9. *Interim Ministers.* To be faithful to the Great Commission and the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8) and to enable a church to move through a period of transition of pastoral appointment, there may be times that an interim minister is necessary.

Churches may experience times of discontinuity. In these situations, a trained lay or clergy interim minister can foster healing and provide pastoral leadership. Bishops, conference superintendents, and cabinets may want to provide Holy Spirit-led lay or clergy interim minsters to such congregations.

10. *Extension Ministry Appointments*. Upon the recommendation of the conference superintendent and cabinet, bishops may appoint deacons and elders to extension ministries outside the local church upon approval of the setting by the board of ministry. The appointment should reflect the nature of ordained ministry meeting needs in the world in keeping with the mission of the church (¶ 401). A process of consultation shall be available to persons in appointments beyond the local church, as needed and appropriate. Such persons remain active clergy.

11. *Appointments to School*. Upon the recommendation of the conference superintendent and cabinet, bishops may appoint deacons and elders to attend any recognized school, college, or theological seminary, or to participate in an accredited program of clinical pastoral education. Such appointments are a separate category from appointments to extension ministries outside the local church. Such persons remain active clergy.

Section VII. Additional Provisions

¶ 611. TRANSFERRING BISHOPS. 1. A bishop of an autonomous Methodist church may join the Global Methodist Church by clergy transfer. Application for transfer shall include an explicit written affirmation of the doctrines, Social Witness, and church government set forth in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Transferring bishops shall also agree to uphold *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Such a transfer is subject to the approval of the Global Episcopacy Committee and the Assembly of Bishops. When a bishop is received between sessions of General Conference the Assembly of Bishops and Global Episcopacy Committee shall inform the church of their episcopal assignment. All transferred bishops must stand for election at the next General Conference and shall be eligible to serve one six-year term provided that they are elected at the next General Conference following their reception as a bishop by transfer.

2. A retired bishop joining the Global Methodist Church shall become a senior elder and may bear the title of bishop emeritus, if granted by the Global Episcopacy Committee and Connectional Council. A bishop emeritus shall be a clergy member of the annual conference of their choice and may serve in any capacity allowed for senior clergy (¶ 520).

¶ 612. VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF BISHOP. A vacancy in the office of bishop may occur due to death, transition to senior status, resignation, suspension, leave of absence, or medical leave. When the service of a bishop is interrupted by any of the above causes, the Global Episcopacy Committee shall approve an updated plan of coverage for the affected episcopal area(s) in consultation with the Assembly of Bishops. With their consent, bishops *emeriti* may be temporarily enlisted into active service by the Global Episcopacy Committee.

¶ 613. STATUS OF BISHOPS EMERITI. 1. Bishops may choose senior status (¶ 520) upon approval of a majority of the Global Episcopacy Committee. Elders who formerly served as bishops but are not actively serving as bishops may use the title of "bishop emeritus," but they will not retain their episcopal responsibilities or membership in the Assembly of Bishops unless

they have been assigned by the Global Episcopacy Committee to serve in an interim capacity due to a need.

2. Bishops *emeriti* may assist active bishops at their request but shall not be remunerated for their work except for expenses.

3. A bishop emeritus shall be a clergy member of the annual conference of their choice and may serve in any capacity allowed for senior clergy (¶ 520).

¶ 614. LEAVES. 1. *Leave of Absence.* A bishop may be granted a leave of absence for a justifiable reason for not more than six months by the Global Episcopacy Committee. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and an interim plan of episcopal coverage shall be approved and published by the Global Episcopacy Committee in consultation with the Assembly of Bishops.

2. *Medical Leave.* Bishops who by reason of impaired health are temporarily unable to perform full work may be granted a leave of absence for not more than six months by the Global Episcopacy Committee. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and an interim plan of episcopal coverage shall be approved and published by the Global Episcopacy Committee in consultation with the Assembly of Bishops. If, after the six-month period, the bishop is still unable to perform full work due to impaired health, the leave may be extended by the committee in one month increments for an additional six months, or the bishop may apply for disability.

¶ 615. COMPLAINTS AGAINST BISHOPS. 1. Episcopal leaders in the Global Methodist Church share with all other ordained persons in the sacred trust of their ordination. Whenever a bishop violates this trust or is unable to fulfill appropriate responsibilities, continuation in the episcopal office shall be subject to review. This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of sacred trust, in hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized.

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more offenses listed in *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall be submitted to the chair of the **Global Episcopacy Committee**. A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the listed offenses.

3. The complaint shall be administered according to the provisions of Part Nine: Judicial Administration. Any involuntary status change of a bishop must be recommended by a three-fourths vote of the investigative committee and approved by the Global Episcopacy Committee by a two-thirds vote (*Judicial Practices and Procedures* of the Global Methodist Church, 3), with the exception that a penalty following trial shall not require such a recommendation and approval and shall be implemented immediately, subject to any appeal.

PART SEVEN -- CONFERENCES

¶ 701. THE CONFERENCE SYSTEM. Beginning in 1744 when John Wesley first met with his brother Charles and a few other clergymen to consider "how we should proceed to save our own souls and those that heard us," the principal expression of connectionalism within Methodism has historically been within its conference system. The agenda for the first conference was a simple one: "1. What to teach, 2. How to teach, and 3. What to do, that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice," and the agenda for that and subsequent meetings was generally expressed in a question-and-answer format. Organized at multiple levels -- charge conferences, district conferences, annual conferences, and a general conference -- the conference system is at the spiritual center of Methodism and refers not simply to a meeting and the decisions that may be made in such a setting, but both to the act of gathering together in holy conferencing and to the persons themselves who do so. The conference system provides for collective discernment and collective decision-making as the governing principle of our church polity (Proverbs 15:22, Acts 15:1-35).

Section 1. The General Conference

¶ 702. BOOK OF DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE. 1. *Translation.* All actions of the General Conference, including this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, shall be translated at general church expense into the official languages of any part of the Global Methodist Church. This material shall also be available in digital form.

2. *Adaptability.* All provisions of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall be generally applicable to all geographic, national, and cultural parts of the church. The adaptability of any provisions shall be written into the provisions themselves in order to be recognized as valid.

¶ 703. POWERS. The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters that are distinctly connectional, including, but not limited to:

1. Adopt a constitution for the Global Methodist Church and amendments to such constitution.

2. Ensure the mission of the church is kept foremost by all of the ministries, agencies, clergy, laity, and officers of the Global Methodist Church. In doing so, the General Conference shall remember that disciples of Jesus are made at the level of the local church. The General Conference shall endeavor to keep as many resources at the local church level as possible, so that the mission of the Global Methodist Church can be achieved.

3. Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of those who serve as deacons, elders, supply pastors, and other leaders within the Global Methodist Church.

4. Establish the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of church membership, which shall be open to all who believe, irrespective of race, color, ethnic or tribal identity, gender, or disability.

5. Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of the episcopacy and provide for their selection, continuance, and discontinuance. All bishops shall be accountable to the general church through the provisions of Part Nine (Judicial Administration) of this *Book of Doctrines and Disciplines.*

6. Determine the powers of all levels of conferences and other connectional associations within the Global Methodist Church, providing as appropriate for each such body to adapt structures that may best maximize their mission.

7. Determine the boundaries of annual conferences.

8. Establish and give oversight to such general boards, program agencies, or commissions and to form ministry partnerships as shall be deemed necessary for strengthening and promoting the mission of the Global Methodist Church through the local church.

9. Define and establish a Connectional Council with delegated authority from the General Conference to address all matters entrusted to it between meetings of the General Conference, subject to such limitations as the General Conference may from time to time impose and subject to ratification of its actions taken between General Conferences by the General Conference.

10. Determine a program for raising and distributing the funds that are necessary for the work of the Church, including, but not limited to, delegating to the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church the establishment of the general church budget annually in accordance with any priorities and directions established by the General Conference.

11. Fix the ratio of representation to the General Conference, based upon the number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments an annual conference or other divisions of the church not part of an annual conference has, as compared to the total number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments of the Global Methodist Church, as of the deadline set by the Connectional Council, and other factors determined by the General Conference.

12. Approve and revise music resources and worship rituals of the Global Methodist Church, providing for variations as shall be most helpful to particular contexts worldwide, including making such resources available digitally.

13. Provide a judicial system mandating uniform processes and procedures and protecting the rights of all those within the Global Methodist Church.

14. Act upon petitions received dealing with church organization and polity, and resolutions dealing with non-disciplinary matters.

15. Adopt or revise a statement of "Our Social Witness" (Part Three), provided that such adoption or revision shall require a three-fourths vote of the General Conference.

16. To effectively speak on behalf of the whole church, resolutions dealing with social concerns shall similarly require the support of three-fourths of the General Conference. All resolutions not part of "Our Social Witness" or church law shall remain in effect only until the next General Conference convenes, when they may or may not be revised or reapproved.

17. Provide for the oversight and/or governance of institutions related to the church such as hospitals, schools, or other such entities.

18. Enact other legislation it determines would be helpful to the mission of the Global Methodist Church.

¶ 704. OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE. 1. The bishops shall be the presiding officers at the General Conference.

2. Each General Conference shall elect a secretary upon nomination by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church to serve until the adjournment of the next General Conference. The secretary shall oversee the publication and translation of proposals made to the General Conference and the actions taken by it, including publishing a transcript of the daily

proceedings. The secretary shall be responsible for the corrected copy of the permanent record of the General Conference.

¶ 705. ORGANIZATION. 1. *Rules.* The General Conference shall operate under *Robert's Rules of Order* and such supplemental rules as are adopted by the convening General Conference.

2. *Quorum*. When the General Conference is in session, it shall require the presence of a majority of the whole number of delegates to the General Conference to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business; but a smaller number may take a recess or adjourn from day to day in order to secure a quorum, and at the final session may approve the journal, order the record of the roll call, and adjourn *sine die*.

3. *Virtual Sessions*. Where necessary due to international or local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of delegates, with the approval of the Assembly of Bishops, the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church may, with a two-thirds vote, authorize the conducting of the conference via electronic or other digital means (⁋ 208).

¶ 706. PETITIONS TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE. Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of the Global Methodist Church may petition the General Conference in the following manner:

1. The petition must be sent to the General Conference Secretary or a designated petitions secretary. It shall be in typed or printed or electronic form, or other means approved by the General Conference Secretary, and shall follow a format determined by them.

2. Each petition must address only one issue if the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* is not affected; if the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, except that, if two or more paragraphs are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another. Petitions dealing with more than one paragraph in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* that do not meet these criteria are invalid. Petitions that meet these criteria (composite petitions) shall not be separated into pieces.

3. Each petition must be signed by the person submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification, such as address, local church, organization, or annual conference. Any petition submitted by an individual must also be signed by at least ten other professing or clergy members. Each petition submitted digitally must identify the individual submitting it, accompanied by identification as above, and must contain a valid electronic mail return address or return fax number by which the submitter can be reached. Electronic signatures will be accepted in accordance with common business practice.

4. Petitions must be received by the General Conference Secretary or their designee no later than 120 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.

5. Petitions properly submitted shall be distributed in advance of the General Conference in all the principal languages of the church and made available to delegates at least 60 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference. Where the content of petitions is essentially the same, the petition will be published once, with the first author named and the number of additional copies received noted. Upon publication, all translations of the advance publication shall be made available as a downloadable file, free of charge, on the denominational website. Petitions and/or resolutions received after the deadline may be printed and/or distributed to all the delegates upon the approval of each for distribution by the General Conference.

6. The secretary of the General Conference shall arrange for electronic access to all petitions, including General Conference actions and the resulting impact on the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, throughout the General Conference session. This access shall be available until the publication of the new edition of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Implementation shall be according to guidelines established by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church.

¶ 707. LEGISLATION EFFECTIVE DATE. All legislation of the General Conference shall become effective January 1 following the session of the General Conference at which it is enacted, unless otherwise specified.

Section II. The Annual Conference

¶ 708. ORGANIZATION. 1. *Composition.* Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability across a geographical region. A special annual conference or district that is not geographically bound and overlaps the boundaries of other annual conferences or districts can be formed by the decision of General Conference at the request of a group of churches. The voting membership of an annual conference shall be composed of those elders, deacons, and transitional local pastors under appointment (except as limited elsewhere in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*) and senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 520, as well as at least an equal number of lay members elected by each charge or by the district or annual conference. Each charge shall be entitled to as many lay members as it has appointed clergy. The annual conference may add lay members of the annual conference who are serving in conference leadership positions. The annual conference shall determine the method of electing additional lay members to equalize the number of clergy members. Only laity shall vote in the election of equaling laity. Such members may be elected by a charge conference, district conference, or the annual conference, but they must be elected and not appointed.

2. When at any time a lay member is unable to attend the session, the alternate lay member, if present, shall be seated. The lay member or the alternate, whichever is seated, has the responsibility of the lay member to report to the local church on actions of the annual conference.

3. If not otherwise a voting member of the annual conference, the conference chancellor shall be seated in the annual conference and shall be given the privilege of the floor without vote.

4. An annual conference may incorporate under the laws of the countries, states, and other political entities within whose bounds they are located.

5. The bishop shall appoint the time and place for holding the annual conference, in coordination with whatever committee or group is tasked with planning and organizing the conference.

6. Where necessary due to local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of delegates, the bishop may, with a two-thirds vote of the cabinet, authorize the conducting of the conference via electronic or other digital means.

7. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the presiding elders. A special session of the

annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call, unless the annual conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

8. The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or, in case of inability, shall arrange for another bishop to preside. In the absence of a bishop, the bishop may delegate presiding to the conference superintendent or a bishop emeritus (⁋ 603.5). Such delegation does not empower the conference superintendent to ordain clergy.

9. The annual conference shall elect a secretary and such other officers as it may determine.

¶ 709. **POWERS AND DUTIES**. Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability across a geographical region. In addition to coming together for edification, fellowship, and inspiration, the annual conference is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Create a program of ministry within its area that can fulfill the mission of the church and enhance its witness.

2. Determine a program for raising and distributing funds necessary to conduct the work and mission of the church in its region.

3. Encourage and facilitate the planting of new churches, including the authorization of sponsorship by existing congregations, and to charter such new congregations (¶¶ 439.17, 450).

4. Establish the number of districts, upon recommendation from the bishop, cabinet, and conference leadership.

5. Form such boards, commissions, and agencies as may be required to further its mission, specifying the composition of each body and electing the members thereof.

6. Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula determined by the General Conference. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be members in full connection and may be clergy delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least two years. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

7. Upon the adoption of a constitution for the Global Methodist Church, vote on all constitutional amendments as approved by the General Conference and distributed to the annual conferences for ratification.

8. The ordained clergy meeting in executive session are to approve the ordination of clergy as recommended by the annual conference board of ministry (¶¶ 509.2-3, 510.1), and to approve clergy status changes as recommended by the board of ministry (¶¶ 516-520).

9. Establish minimum standards for parsonages and other ministry housing, if desired (¶¶ 207.8, 443.4e, 445.8m).

10. Approve by simple majority vote the transfer of a congregation into or out of the annual conference to or from another annual conference (¶ 451).

11. Maintain the records of the annual conference, including the records of closed churches (¶ 429.7) and annual statistical reports from all local churches (¶¶ 430, 439.10).

12. Adopt rules for its own governance, provided they do not conflict with the requirements of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline.*

¶ 710. ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES. Annual conferences shall create the following boards and committees:

1. *Connectional Council or Equivalent Body* — The Connectional Council shall meet at least one time per year face-to-face (absent exigent circumstances that would require electronic or other forms of meeting) for the purpose of communication and coordination of ministry among the boards and committees of the annual conference.

a. Membership of the Connectional Council shall consist of the following:

1) An equal number of clergy and lay members as elected by the annual conference in a manner consistent with the standing rules of the annual conference;

2) The bishop or conference superintendent;

3) One presiding elder as a representative of the cabinet;

4) The annual conference secretary;

5) The annual conference lay leader, if any;

6) Any other conference officers elected by the annual conference;

7) Any members at large elected by the annual conference to promote diversity or to obtain specific gifts, skills, or expertise, if any, upon nomination by the Nominations and Leadership Committee;

8) Appropriate conference staff persons as the conference superintendent determines may serve as members of the council with voice but without vote.

b. The Council shall have the following specific authority and responsibilities:

1) To engage in proactive strategizing, including a strategic plan, for growth in discipleship and mission, and to implement the priorities established by annual conference, making recommendations to the boards and committees for implementation.

2) To adjust the annual conference budget between sessions with published rationale, as long as it does not exceed the total amount of the budget.

3) To hire, with the consultation of the conference superintendent, the conference operating officer or similar role and evaluate his/her work annually.

4) To approve the staffing levels for all boards and committees, consistent with budget limitations.

5) To adopt policies and procedures, subject to annual conference approval, applicable to the annual conference, its boards and committees, and its other entities in alignment with the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the priorities set by annual conference.

6) To coordinate proposals coming from the boards and committees to the annual conference, including the proposed budget, to assure congruence with the church's mission and strategy, as well as congruence with each other.

7) To initiate, staff, and set parameters for task forces dealing with issues beyond the scope of an individual board or committee.

8) Any other responsibilities or authorities assigned by the annual conference not in conflict with the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

2. *The Board of Ministry*. The board of ministry shall be responsible for overseeing the recruiting and credentialing of clergy for the furtherance of the mission of the Global Methodist Church. (¶¶ 506-510, 514-517, 519, 521) The Board shall also be responsible for overseeing all clergy changes in conference relations. (¶¶ 518, 520)

a. Members shall be nominated by the conference superintendent and elected by the annual conference. The board shall include elders, deacons, and laity. No more than one-third of the board may be laity. Annual conferences shall set the number of members of the board. Members shall serve for six years and may succeed themselves once. Notwithstanding other provisions of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, deacons and laity on the board of ministry may vote on the ordination and conference relations of all clergy candidates.

b. If a member of the board of ministry cannot serve for any reason, the conference superintendent, in consultation with the cabinet, shall appoint an interim member to serve the remainder of the unused term. The annual conference shall confirm the interim appointment at its next meeting.

c. The board of ministry shall elect from its members a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary. Election shall be by simple majority and shall be for a term of years to be determined by the annual conference.

d. The board of ministry may establish subcommittees and teams to assist it in its work.

3. *Superintendency Committee*. The superintendency committee shall be responsible to support the conference superintendent in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Global Methodist Church, with special reference to the area where the conference superintendent has residential responsibility.

a. Members shall be nominated by the annual conference nominations and leadership committee and elected by the annual conference. The committee shall include equal numbers of clergy and laity. The annual conference shall set the number of members of the committee, with a maximum of 12 persons serving at any one time and no less than six. Members shall serve six years and may not succeed themselves. No member of the conference staff or member of the conference superintendent's family shall serve on the committee. The conference superintendent shall serve on the committee with voice but not vote.

b. If a member of the committee cannot serve for any reason, the nominations and leadership committee, in consultation with the cabinet, shall appoint an interim member to serve the remainder of the unused term. The annual conference shall confirm the interim appointment at its next meeting.

c. The superintendency committee shall elect from its members a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary. Election shall be by simple majority and shall be for a term of years to be determined by the annual conference.

d. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the conference superintendent. The conference superintendent shall be present at each meeting of the committee, except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself.

e. The committee shall be available to advise the conference superintendent concerning conditions within the annual conference as they affect relationships between the conference superintendent and the people of the annual conference.

f. Keeping in mind the roles, responsibilities, and duties laid in ¶ 607, the committee shall engage in an annual evaluation of the conference superintendent.

4. *Finance and Administration Committee*. The finance and administration committee shall be responsible to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, budgets, procedures, and management services for the annual conference.

a. Members shall be nominated by the annual conference nominations and leadership committee and elected by the annual conference. The committee shall include equal numbers of

clergy and laity. The annual conference shall set the number of members of the committee. Members shall serve six years and may succeed themselves once. The conference superintendent, one presiding elder chosen by the conference superintendent, and the conference treasurer shall serve on the committee with voice but not vote.

b. If a member of the committee cannot serve for any reason, the nominations and leadership committee shall appoint an interim member to serve the remainder of the unused term. The annual conference shall confirm the interim appointment at its next meeting.

c. The committee shall elect from its members a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary. Election shall be by simple majority and shall be for a term of years to be determined by the annual conference.

5. *Nominations and Leadership Committee.* The nominations and leadership committee shall be responsible for nominating clergy and laity to serve on annual conference committees and boards.

a. Members shall be nominated by the conference superintendent and elected by the annual conference. The committee shall include equal numbers of clergy and laity. The annual conference shall set the number of members of the committee. Members shall serve six years and may not succeed themselves. The conference superintendent and one presiding elder shall also serve on the committee with voice and vote in addition to the clergy and laity elected by the annual conference.

b. If a member of the committee cannot serve for any reason, the conference superintendent shall appoint an interim member to serve the remainder of the unused term. The annual conference shall confirm the interim appointment at its next meeting.

c. The conference superintendent shall serve as the chair of the committee. The committee shall elect from its members a vice-chair, secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary. Election shall be by simple majority and shall be for a term of years to be determined by the annual conference.

6. *Committee on Investigation*. The committee on investigation shall be responsible for considering judicial complaints against clergy as set out in Part Nine: Judicial Administration of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and specifically ¶910.2.

a. There shall be seven members, four ordained clergy and three laity, and seven alternate members, four ordained clergy and three laity. None of the members or alternates shall be members of the board of ministry or the cabinet or their immediate family members. Members shall serve three years and may succeed themselves once.

b. The conference superintendent shall nominate persons for the committee, in consultation with the board of ministry (for the clergy members). Nominations shall reflect the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the conference. The annual conference shall elect the committee, with the power to elect additional members or alternates during the term of office as needed. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character.

c. The committee on investigation shall elect a chair and secretary and organize itself at the annual conference following its election.

d. Should a member of the committee on investigation have been a party to any of the proceedings in the case that comes before the committee, he or she shall be disqualified from sitting on the committee during its consideration of that case, and an alternate member shall take his or her place.

e. Four clergy and three laity (or their alternates) seated as members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

f. If an annual conference has not yet elected a committee on investigation, the conference superintendent or president *pro tempore* shall appoint the members of the committee in consultation with the cabinet.

7. *Administrative Review Committee*. The administrative review committee (¶ 906.2) shall be responsible for ensuring that the disciplinary procedures for resolving a substantiated administrative complaint are properly followed as required by *Judicial Practices and Procedures* 5.2 and fair process (¶905).

a. There shall be an administrative review committee in every annual conference composed of three ordained clergy and two alternates who are not members of the cabinet or the board of ministry or their immediate family members. Members shall serve three years and may succeed themselves once.

b. The conference superintendent shall nominate the members of the committee, and the clergy session of the annual conference shall elect them. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character.

c. The administrative review committee shall elect a chair and secretary and organize itself at the annual conference following its election.

d. Should a member of the administrative review committee have been a party to any of the proceedings in the matter that comes before the committee, he or she shall be disqualified from sitting on the committee during its consideration of that case, and an alternate member shall take his or her place.

e. Three clergy (or their alternates) seated as members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

f. If an annual conference has not yet elected an administrative review committee, the conference superintendent shall appoint the members of the committee in consultation with the cabinet.

8. The annual conference may create additional boards and committees to accomplish its work, as it deems appropriate.

¶ 711. ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONNECTIONAL FUNDING AND REPORTING OF INFORMATION FOR ALLOCATION OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL CONFERENCE. 1. The annual conference should establish a funding percentage for its local churches to support the work of the conference. Efforts should be made to minimize conference funding in order to allow maximum resources to remain in local churches. Support for ministries within and beyond the annual conference should not be included in such funding percentage but be raised as mission giving from individuals and local churches. The conference should take into consideration any guidelines offered by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church on the setting of the funding percentage. The general church funding percentage shall be set by the General Conference without adjustment by the annual conference.

2. In order to allocate delegates to the General Conference, the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church shall establish a deadline by which time the annual conference must submit a list of those churches in the annual conference and the number of full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments in the annual conference. Delegates for the General Conference shall be allocated based on the number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments an annual conference has as compared to the total number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments of the Global Methodist Church as of the deadline.

PART EIGHT -- CONNECTIONAL ORGANIZATION

¶ 801. CONNECTIONAL LIFE. Reflecting the shared mission of each of our congregations, connectional entities may be formed at the general and annual conference levels to effectively support the task of making disciples and spreading scriptural holiness. These organizations shall prioritize resourcing the work of local churches, functioning where possible in and through partnerships with existing ministries, congregations, annual conferences, and other bodies, rather than creating new structures. They may set standards and share best practices in adapting to fit the context and changing circumstances across the church and globe. While providing secure and reliable funding channels where appropriate, connectional entities shall nonetheless be frugal, with minimal structures and staff, so as not to burden local congregations with extra financial demands, embodying the call of Jesus not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20.28).

Section I. Connectional Commissions

¶ 802. CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS. Working on behalf of local congregations and conferences, the connectional commissions of the Church provide for essential functions in an efficient, fiscally responsible, and cooperative manner, conducive to the needs of our collective ministry. To this end, they exist to serve the Church, whether embodied in resourcing its members, clergy, local churches, missions, or conferences; or embodied in the exercising of authority on behalf of the Church and its constituent bodies. At all times the connectional commissions exist to serve and facilitate the mission and ministry of the Church, which in turn exists to serve the Lord.

1. All connectional commissions of the Church are amenable to the Connectional Council and ultimately the General Conference, except as herein otherwise provided, or as governed by appropriate civil law.

2. The General Conference shall have authority to create, regulate, reconfigure, or abolish connectional commissions, except as limited herein or as governed by appropriate civil law. All connectional commissions shall be evaluated by the Connectional Council prior to every regular session of the General Conference. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, effectiveness in resourcing the local church and financial implications. This evaluation shall be shared with the General Conference prior to the called session. The continuation of these commissions shall be voted upon at every General Conference session.

3. The following connectional commissions are established within the Global Methodist Church: Evangelism, Church Multiplication, Missional Mobilization, and Disaster Response Commission; Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry Commission; Ministry and Higher Education Commission; Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission; General Conference Commission, Ecumenical Relationships Commission; and the Conferences Commission.

4. Annual conferences shall have authority in like manner to establish, regulate, reconfigure, or abolish their own commissions; provided it is done in accordance with the requirements established by the General Conference. Annual conferences may share commissions between them by joint agreement for the purpose of promoting greater economy, efficiency, and accountability.

5. The program and priorities of the connectional commissions shall be established by the General Conference or the Connectional Council, subject to the provisions of the *Book of*

Doctrines and Discipline and governing law and may be altered by the General Conference as needed. Each connectional commission is permitted to structure itself for maximum effectiveness, subject to the requirements of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the limitation of available funding.

6. Connectional commissions and their sub-units may meet electronically where it is feasible to ensure the full and equal participation of all its members.

7. All general church staff shall be employed by the Connectional Council and assigned to support and resource the various commissions as needed by the connectional operations officer. All staff positions must be approved by the Connectional Council, subject to the budget limits it has set.

¶ 803. MEMBERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS. Except as provided otherwise in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, the members of connectional commissions shall be elected by the General Conference.

1. At the 2024 convening General Conference, persons shall be nominated for each of the connectional commissions in the manner set forth in the Plan of Organization and Covenant of Our Life Together adopted at the convening General Conference and serve for two years or until their successors are elected. Persons elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall be eligible for nomination at the 2026 General Conference and their two-year term shall not count against the term limit specified in ¶ 803.2.

2. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, persons recommended by the annual conferences shall serve as the pool from which nominees are selected. The term of service shall be six years, with members eligible to be reelected once for a total of twelve years. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, the procedure for election shall be as follows:

a. Each annual conference shall nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to sixteen persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for connectional commissions, with at least half being lay. Each nominee shall be designated for one or two connectional commissions based on gifts, training, and experience. Care shall be taken to include persons from a broad range of racial, ethnic, tribal, gender, economic, and age characteristics.

b. Persons eligible for nomination shall have been members of a local church or annual conference within the Global Methodist Church (or its predecessor) for a period of two years at the time of their nomination.

c. The General Conference's administrative nominations committee shall, from the list of candidates received from the annual conferences, propose a diverse slate of individuals to serve on the connectional commissions of the church for election by the General Conference, provided that individuals nominated by annual conferences who do not appear on the slate may be nominated from the floor. The slate for each connectional commission shall include the number of members specified by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, as well as the person the committee nominates to serve as the connectional commission chair.

3. The General Conference shall elect by simple majority two-thirds of the members of each connectional commission. The remaining one-third of the members of each connectional commission shall be elected by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission. Persons interested in serving may apply to the relevant connectional commission. Members elected by the Connectional Council are for the purpose of securing greater inclusiveness, experience, or special skills needed for the connectional commission's

work. Unless otherwise specified, excluding any bishop serving on a connectional commission and the chair, the membership of each connectional commission shall be at least one-half lay.

4. With the exception of bishops, no person may serve simultaneously on more than one connectional commission (not including the Council). Members of connectional commissions, including the chair, shall serve without remuneration. Travel and meeting expenses shall be paid for connectional commission members by each connectional commission out of its budget.

¶ 804. LEADERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS. 1. *Commission Chair* — The presiding officer of each connectional commission shall be the chair of the connectional commission. The chair may be lay or clergy and shall be subject to the membership requirement of ¶ 803.2b. Following the 2024 convening General Conference, the Connectional Council shall elect the chair for each connectional commission from the persons elected to each connectional commission. Each chair elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for a term of two years or until their successor has been elected and shall be eligible for re-election following the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, the chair of each connectional commission shall be elected as provided in ¶803.2c. Each chair elected at the 2026 General Conference and thereafter shall serve for a term of six years, with eligibility to be re-elected once for a second term of six years. Time served as a connectional commission member shall count toward the total term limit for the chair. Any vacancy in the chair position shall be filled by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.

2. *Officers* — The connectional commission shall elect a secretary and may elect other officers to facilitate its work.

3. *Role of Bishops* — No person may serve as the chair of a connectional commission while serving in the episcopal office, except the ecumenical relationships commission. Unless otherwise specified, each connectional commission will have one bishop as a member, selected by the Assembly of Bishops, serving with voice and vote to help maintain communication and coordination with the Assembly of Bishops and to provide spiritual leadership to the commission.

¶ 805. OPERATIONS. Except as provided herein, each connectional commission shall have the authority to structure its own work and business.

1. *Staff* — Each connectional commission may request such staff as is required for the pursuit of its mission. All staff positions must be approved by the Connectional Council, subject to the budget limits it sets. Except for the connectional operations officer, all staff are hired, assigned, and evaluated by the connectional operations officer (¶ 815) and serve as at-will employees.

a. Special grants, or gifts designated for staffing, may be used for the hiring and retention of additional staff on a temporary basis, subject to the availability of said monies and with approval of the Connectional Council. Such staff shall be hired and supervised by the connectional operations officer, respecting the purpose of the grant or designated gift.

2. Connectional commissions may contract with organizations, missions, and denominational entities within the denomination, other ecclesiastical bodies, or parachurch organizations and ministries for the purpose of fulfilling their mission or coordinating on a particular project, provided that no contract will be made with an organization whose mission and/or theological position is inconsistent with those of the connectional commission or of the

Global Methodist Church. Contracts that have financial implications beyond the commission's budget must be approved in advance by the Connectional Council.

3. Each connectional commission shall have the power to dismiss any member of that commission for any of the following reasons: incapacity or a pattern of ineffectiveness, including failure to attend meetings or to perform the duties of their office, immorality, breach of trust, doctrinal incompatibility, or criminal activity. A connectional commission may recommend dismissal or other disciplinary action against a staff person.

4. *Nondiscrimination.* The Global Methodist Church is committed to open and fair processes in its connectional commissions and task forces, including in the hiring, retention, compensation, promotion, and retirement of staff. There shall be no discrimination based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, current or potential pregnancy, or chronic terminal illnesses, including HIV, provided that the individual is able to adequately discharge the duties assigned to her or him. As a part of our witness, individuals employed by the church shall subscribe to the doctrinal and moral standards of the Church and give evidence of the same in their life and ministry.

¶ 806. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND MISSION. The areas of responsibility for each of the connectional commissions of the Church are specified below. No commission may take on other areas of responsibility without the explicit authorization of the Connectional Council or General Conference. No commission may serve as a lobbying agency to engage with governmental bodies, either directly or through other entities, except as explicitly authorized by the General Conference, and a connectional commission shall not profess to speak for the Global Methodist Church unless it reflects statements adopted by the General Conference. Commissions are encouraged to partner with existing ministries or organizations that are effectively accomplishing one or more of the connectional commission's responsibilities. Connectional commissions shall have the flexibility to organize themselves within the resources allotted to that connectional commission. The members of each connectional commission and supporting staff are to coordinate and collaborate in sharing best practices and resources to equip local churches to carry out faithful and fruitful ministry, and are to work together with other connectional commissions where possible in support of the Global Methodist Church's mission and strategic plan.

¶ 807. CONNECTIONAL COUNCIL 1. The Connectional Council shall be the chief missional and administrative body of the Global Methodist Church, providing leadership at the general church level in between general conferences. In addition to the express authority outlined herein, the Connectional Council shall have full legislative authority with respect to all matters expressly delegated to it by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or the General Conference as stated in each such delegation. The Connectional Council shall be amenable to the General Conference, its actions shall be reported to the General Conference, and its actions must be ratified by the next General Conference for those actions to continue to be valid following the adjournment of each General Conference.

2. The Connectional Council shall consist of not more than 24 persons, who shall serve until the adjournment of the next General Conference or until their successors are elected as provided herein. Those persons who are elected to the Council prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve a two-year term or until their successors are appointed or elected. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, except for bishops elected to the connectional

council, an individual is elected to the council for a term not to exceed six years and may not serve on the council for more than a total of twelve years. Service on the Connectional Council prior to the 2026 General Conference shall not count against this term limit. All members of the Connectional Council serve with voice and vote.

a. Each connectional commission identified in ¶¶ 808-811 shall elect one clergy, who is not a bishop, and one layperson, to represent the commission on the Connectional Council. Members shall be elected by each commission at the first commission meeting following the General Conference and shall serve until their successors are elected or their membership on the commission ceases, whichever comes first. In case of a vacancy, a commission shall elect a replacement member.

b. The Assembly of Bishops shall elect two bishops to serve as members of the Connectional Council. Those elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve a two-year term and shall serve until their successors are elected. Beginning in 2026, those elected shall serve a six-year term or until their successors are elected. In case of a vacancy, the Assembly of Bishop shall elect a replacement.

c. The General Conference shall elect four clergy and four laity, from persons nominated in accordance with the Plan of Organization and Covenant of Our Life Together adopted by the 2024 convening General Conference, and beginning with the 2026 General Conference as specified in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (¶ 803). Those elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve a two-year term or until their successors are elected. Beginning in 2026, those elected shall serve a six-year term or until their successors are elected at the next General Conference. In case of a vacancy, the Connectional Council shall elect a replacement.

d. The Connectional Council shall nominate and elect two additional clergy and two additional laity to ensure geographic, racial and ethnic, age, and gender diversity. Those elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve a two-year term or until their successors are elected. Beginning in 2026, those elected shall serve a six-year term or until their successors are elected at the next General Conference. In the case of a vacancy of a person in this category, the Connectional Council shall elect a replacement.

e. Excluding the bishops, at all times the number of clergy and laity shall remain equal on the Connectional Council.

f. The Connectional Council shall elect its own officers from among its members; however, a bishop may not serve as chair or vice-chair of the Council.

g. The connectional operations officer shall serve as the staff person for the Connectional Council, with voice but without vote. The connectional operations officer shall preside over the organizing meeting of the Connectional Council until a chair is elected. All general church executive directors shall participate in Connectional Council meetings with voice, but without vote. Other general church staff shall participate in meetings of the Connectional Council at the invitation of the council, with voice but without vote.

3. The Connectional Council shall meet at least twice per year face-to-face (absent exigent circumstances that would require electronic or other forms of meeting) and electronically at other times for the purpose of communication and coordination of ministry among the commissions.

4. The Connectional Council shall have the following specific authority and responsibilities:

a. To implement the vision of the Global Methodist Church and steward its mission, ministries and resources as determined by the actions of the General Conference and in collaboration with the Assembly of Bishops.

b. To engage in proactive global strategizing, including developing a strategic plan for growth in evangelism, discipleship, and mission, and to implement the priorities established by General Conference.

c. To adopt policies and procedures applicable to the general church, its commissions, and its other entities in alignment with the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the priorities set by General Conference.

d. To establish the general church budget annually in accordance with the priorities and directions established by the General Conference, provided that each annual budget shall not exceed 90% of the average of general church connectional funding received in the prior two years, except that the 2025 budget shall not exceed 90% of the total sum received in general church connectional funding in 2024. In establishing the general church budget, the Connectional Council shall be guided by the following financial values:

i. Accountability to ensure that the assets God has entrusted to us are responsibly managed.

ii. Transparency to create trust throughout the connection of the Global Methodist Church.

iii. Local church centric as the strategic base for optimizing the mission of the Church.

iv. Nimble and lean structure of connectional entities to ensure adaptability to the ministry needs of conferences and local churches.

v. Limited and sustainable policies so as not to restrict, but enable ministry to flourish.

e. To ensure the dissemination of information and communication among the annual conferences, connectional commissions, and the Assembly of Bishops.

f. To coordinate the work of the connectional commissions and the general church staff to ensure that the actions of the General Conference are implemented, and the vision and mission of the Global Methodist Church is advanced.

g. To evaluate the work of the connectional commissions and the ministries of the general church in fulfilling the mission and vision of the Global Methodist Church as established by the General Conference and share the findings with General Conference prior to each called session.

h. In collaboration with the conference superintendents, to adopt and implement services to be performed by the general church which will benefit the annual conferences and produce cost savings based on economies of scale.

i. To evaluate and authorize such changes in the pensions and benefits programs of the Global Methodist Church upon recommendation of the Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission.

j. To hire the connectional operations officer and evaluate his/her work annually (¶ 815).

k. To approve and authorize all staff positions at the general church level.

l. To fill vacancies among the members of a connectional commission that occur between General Conferences, upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.

m. To coordinate proposals coming from the connectional commissions to the General Conference, to assure congruence with the church's mission and strategy, as well as congruence with each other.

n. To initiate, staff, and set parameters for task forces dealing with issues beyond the scope of an individual connectional commission.

o. To recommend to the General Conference such changes and implementing legislation as may be appropriate to ensure the effectiveness of the Global Methodist Church.

5. The Connectional Council shall be an incorporated legal entity.

¶ 808. EVANGELISM, CHURCH MULTIPLICATION, MISSIONAL MOBILIZATION, AND DISASTER RESPONSE COMMISSION. 1. This commission shall consist initially of 14 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 21 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to the commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in the following ministry areas:

a. *Evangelism*. Train and equip both individuals and congregations to lead others to know Christ and to foster spiritual renewal across the denomination, by developing resources for evangelism, and encouraging every person and church to engage in evangelism. The commission shall also (1) establish standards for the ministry and office of evangelist and the certification of those called to serve as approved evangelists in the Church, (2) recommend structures and polices to ensure that those who are appointed to evangelistic ministries function with transparency and accountability, and that they receive professional and pastoral support, (3) interpret and advocate for those serving such appointments to bishops, annual conferences, and local congregations, (4) work to identify quality continuing education opportunities for those appointed as evangelists, and (5) liaise with other Christian faith groups, evangelistic organizations, colleges, theological seminaries and conferences to share the vision and opportunities for evangelists.

b. *Church Multiplication*. Identify and provide resources for church planting and multiplication in various cultural contexts, consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, and local churches to plan and strategize for planting and multiplying churches, identify, recruit, and train church planters, and encourage the planting and multiplication of churches.

c. *Missional Mobilization*. Deepen biblical understanding and passion in local churches for mission outreach; promote active mission engagement, multiplying disciples across linguistic, national, and geographic boundaries globally; provide resources and training to equip local churches for effective mission service, and to develop missionally-healthy partnerships; foster connection and partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences with vetted and approved Global Methodist missional ministries and strategic partners; develop commissioning standards for the ministry and office of missionary, equipping annual conferences for the recruiting, training, and deploying of GM Church missionaries; consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, churches and missional partners to develop and coordinate strategic mission mobilization; foster holistic mission strategies and gospel-centered community development, addressing both spiritual and physical needs.

d. *Disaster Response*. Coordinate the development of disaster response, relief, and recovery ministries in the annual conferences; train, credential, resource, and equip churches and volunteers to respond to communities affected by disaster; collaborate in deployment of response services, empowering local churches and volunteers to lead response activities for their communities, aided by the support of the annual conference and extended GMC connection.

e. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Evangelism, Church Multiplication, Missional Mobilization and Disaster Response.

¶ 809. DISCIPLESHIP, DOCTRINE, AND JUST MINISTRY COMMISSION. 1. This commission shall consist initially of 14 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 21 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to the commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas:

a. *Discipleship*. Encourage and resource the continuing spiritual growth of individuals at all levels of the Church through such discipleship programs as classes, bands, and other small groups, the training of leaders, and through identifying and developing liturgies and orders of worship for use by both local congregations and the general church with General Conference approval, emphasizing racial, tribal, gender, and language equity throughout.

b. *Doctrine*. Increase understanding of the importance of our doctrine through teaching and preaching ministries and the use of liturgical resources that are consistent with our understandings of the faith, study and propose any revisions in our doctrinal statements, and give guidance to ecumenical engagement with other Christian denominations.

c. *Just Ministry*. Enable both individuals and congregations to "do justice" in ways consistent with our social witness and commitments to the sacred worth and equality of all individuals, including developing policies, procedures, and training for addressing sexual harassment and sexual misconduct and advocacy with and on behalf of women, persons of various racial, ethnic, and tribal identities, and persons with disabilities for full and equal participation in the membership and leadership of the Church, monitoring and growing compliance with the non-discrimination policy (¶ 805.4), resourcing annual conferences and local churches in the areas of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, and resourcing local churches in engaging with the Church's social witness rooted in Scripture and the ethical teachings of the historic and catholic church.

d. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry.

¶ 810. MINISTRY AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION. 1. This commission shall consist initially of 14 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 21 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas:

a. *Ministry Credentials*. Implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference, certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders, develop curricula for ministry training courses, resource annual conference boards of ministry, ensure adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates, and approve seminaries as recommended educational institutions.

b. *Higher Education*. Help unite "knowledge and vital piety" by encouraging Christian perspectives within institutions of higher education that are related to the Church, provide a

network of such institutions, and assist in the founding, growth, and vitality of Christian colleges and seminaries with a Wesleyan theological perspective across the world, particularly in underserved regions.

c. *Ministry Endorsement*. Establish and refine criteria and qualifications for various forms of non-parish ministry, such as chaplaincy, evaluate and approve training programs that meet the criteria and qualifications, examine and credential persons for various forms of non-parish ministry, and support persons engaging in non-parish ministry.

d. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Ministry and Higher Education.

3. *Committee on Approval*. The Ministry and Higher Education Commission shall appoint a Committee on Approval, which will recommend to the Commission approval of institutions of higher education for ordination candidates in the Global Methodist Church. Approval shall apply to both degree and non-degree/certificate programs and be renewed following every regular session of the General Conference. No approved school shall go up to seven years without a review. The Ministry and Higher Education Commission shall make the final decision on approval based upon the Committee's recommendations. Schools may be invited to apply for approval or recommended for approval by a board of ministry.

a. The Committee on Approval shall consist of one bishop and up to twenty other people, consisting of elders, deacons, and laity, who shall be members of the Global Methodist Church. The Committee will include people from diverse international contexts and a diversity of academic institutions. To prevent conflict of interest, no employee or trustee of an institution of theological higher education shall serve on the Committee on Approval.

b. The work of the Committee on Approval shall involve (a) developing and refining an evaluation process, (b) ensuring approval by the Association of Theological Schools and/or the Association of Biblical Higher Education in North America or an approved equivalent accrediting body elsewhere whenever applicable, (c) ensuring that schools produce candidates for the GMC who are capable of effective ministry and profess faith consistent with our Doctrinal Standards, (d) addressing any areas of concern with schools following an evaluation, (e) developing a report to the Ministry and Higher Education Commission with a recommendation of approval, approval with areas of concern, or delisting.

c. The Committee on Approval may meet as necessary upon the request of the bishop serving on the Committee. It will consider any requests or recommendations for schools who wish to be approved for education or ordination candidates in the GMC. It may meet to address areas of concern that arise regarding any approved school. It may make recommendations to the Ministry and Higher Education Commission at any time.

d. The CEO (president or dean) of each approved institution for theological education shall serve on an advisory committee to the Committee on Approval. The CEO may appoint a proxy to serve in his or her stead. The advisory committee shall meet biannually to discuss challenges, opportunities, and concerns with one another and with the members of the Committee on Approval.

¶ 811. FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION, PENSIONS, AND BENEFITS COMMISSION.

1. This commission shall consist initially of 14 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 21 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas:

a. *Finance.* Oversee the financial and fiduciary life of the general church, including the Assembly of Bishops, its commissions and programs, to ensure both their integrity and efficiency, reporting publicly the detailed expenses and income of all entities, conducting an annual independent audit of the Assembly of Bishops and each commission's finances, collecting and distributing all income received by the general church, and annually recommending to the Connectional Council a budget for the general church.

b. *General Counsel.* Manage the legal work of the general church and provide legal counsel to annual conferences and local congregations as requested, provide for the ownership and maintenance of any general church property.

c. *Archives and History.* Maintain the historical archives of the Global Methodist Church and encourage the study of its history to better understand how "thus far has the Lord helped us" (1 Samuel 7.12).

d. *Statistics.* Collect, make public, and help interpret accurate and timely statistics on membership, ministry, and the participation of its members in the life of the Church.

e. *Pensions and Benefits*. Give oversight to the pension and benefits (i.e., insurance, disability, etc.) programs for clergy and lay employees of the Church and encourage conferences to provide adequate pension funding and medical care for those who serve in the church's ministry (active and retired).

f. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Finance, Administration, Pension, and Benefits.

¶ 812. GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMISSION. 1. This commission shall consist initially of 14 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to the commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 27 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall have the following responsibilities:

a. Recommend to the Connectional Council the site and the dates of the General Conference up to eighteen years in advance and send the official notice to all elected delegates announcing specifically the opening day and hour of the General Conference and the anticipated time of adjournment.

b. Plan the schedule for the opening day of the General Conference and advise the delegates in advance of all such special events and orders of the day, the dates and times of which have been determined prior to the opening day of the General Conference, so that the delegates may have an overview of the program of the General Conference.

c. Recommend to the Connectional Council contracts for the venue for General Conference and hotels for delegates, staff, and volunteers.

d. Recommend to the Connectional Council the budget for General Conference including for all necessary services, including translation and interpretation.

e. Set the number of legislative committees and the process for the assignment of legislative materials to those committees in consultation with the Connectional Council.

f. Recommend to the General Conference amendments to the Plan of Organization and Covenant for Our Life Together.

g. Establish the number of administrative committees for the General Conference and nominate delegates from the previous General Conference to serve on such administrative committees to be elected by the Connectional Council.

h. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to the preparation and operation of the General Conference.

¶ 813. ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS COMMISSION. 1. The Global Methodist Church recognizes that the global Christian community transcends denominational barriers. Jesus' prayer in John 17 that all his disciples "may be one" compels us to seek closer communion with all Christians. Locally and globally, Christian communions that are committed to the "faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3) will find in the Global Methodist Church a willing partner in worship, evangelism, disciple-making, and works of mercy.

2. Each General Conference shall elect, other than the bishop who chairs the Commission, all of the members of the Ecumenical Relationships Commission. The Commission shall be chaired by a bishop of the Global Methodist Church appointed by the Assembly of Bishops. The Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall consist of four clergypersons and four laypersons in addition to the bishop serving as chair. Those persons elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for two years or until their successors are elected and shall be eligible for re-election at the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, each person shall be elected for a six-year term and is eligible to serve a second six-year term if elected. The chair and members serve until their successors are elected.

3. In its work, the Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall give particular care to uphold the doctrines, moral principles, and polity of the Global Methodist Church.

4. The Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall bring recommendations to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council with respect to membership of the Global Methodist Church in councils, networks, or associations of other Christian bodies, covenants with other Christian denominations or associations of churches, and the potential organic union with other Christian denominations or groups.

5. The Global Methodist Church has a particular interest in fostering greater unity with other Wesleyan and Methodist groups that share a common heritage of theology, history, and polity. Unity among the spiritual heirs of John Wesley is a profound hope and desire of the Global Methodist Church, rooted in our heritage as a "connectional" movement, linking congregations and conferences in cooperative ministry and mutual encouragement. Closer relationships with other Wesleyan groups provide increased opportunities for global mission and evangelism, enrichment in our understanding and practice of ministry, and the sharing of resources and expertise. The Commission shall explore:

a. Membership in the World Methodist Council.

b. The advisability of membership in other Wesleyan/Methodist organizations such as the Asian Methodist Council, the European Methodist Council, the Global Wesleyan Alliance, or the Pan-Methodist Commission.

If membership is recommended in a Wesleyan/Methodist organization, the recommendation shall be presented for approval to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council between General Conferences, each of which must vote affirmatively by a simple majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots. Such action must be presented for ratification to the next General Conference by a simple majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots.

6. The Global Methodist Church welcomes covenant relationships with other Christian denominations or association of churches. The purpose of establishing such covenant relationships is to enhance our mutual Christian witness and effectiveness, and/or to allow for increased reach into regions or nations where one or the other has little or no presence. These covenant relationships may include mutual recognition of baptism and ordained ministry, eucharistic fellowship, shared representation at governing assemblies, and/or plans for shared ministry and resources. Conversations toward formalized relationships as Covenant Churches may be held by the Ecumenical Relationships Commission with such recommendations being presented for approval to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council, each of which must vote affirmatively by a simple majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots. Such action must be presented for ratification to the next General Conference by a simple majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots.

7. The Ecumenical Relationships Commission, or its designated representatives, shall represent the Global Methodist Church in conversations related to union with other Christian denominations or associations of churches. Such plans of union shall include: (1) A statement of vision on a preferred future; (2) a statement on doctrinal and theological alignment; and (3) a plan for integration of ministries, including evidence of consultation with all annual conferences directly affected by the plan of union. Plans which do not require alterations to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church shall be ratified between sessions of the General Conference by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots of each of the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council if the other body is Wesleyan in its theology, or a two-thirds majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots at the General Conference. The union shall become immediately effective upon such ratification. The other body shall have voted to dissolve its own governance structure to become effective upon ratification of the plan of union as provided herein. Plans which require alterations to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or with bodies which are not Wesleyan in their theology shall require a three-fourths majority vote of those delegates present and casting valid ballots at a General Conference for ratification.

¶ 814. CONFERENCES COMMISSION. 1. The Conferences Commission shall make recommendations to the Assembly of Bishops, the Connectional Council, and the General Conference on the creation, organization, or modification of annual conferences. In this work, the Conferences Commission shall be guided by the following:

a. To establish the growth of conferences of the Global Methodist Church around the world.

b. To intentionally identify the regions of the world requiring a Global Methodist Church conference based on missional opportunity.

c. To establish the criteria necessary for the launch of a conference, including geographical considerations, number of churches realistic for the region and evidence of financial stability, and maintaining appropriately sized conferences.

d. To build upon the processes used to establish a conference previously.

e. To identify markers for and assist with the multiplication of new annual conferences from those that already exist.

2. The General Conference shall elect, excluding the bishops, all of the members of a Conferences Commission that shall consist of six clergypersons and six laypersons. The Assembly of Bishops shall elect two bishops who will also serve as members of the Commission.

The chair for the Commission shall be elected as provided for in ¶¶ 803.2c and 804.1 and shall not be one of the bishops.

3. The Conferences Commission shall recommend the establishment of new conferences and the realignment of existing conferences.

4. When applications are made for clergy or congregational membership in the Global Methodist Church by individuals or groups from areas in which no annual conference exists, the Conferences Commission shall evaluate such applications to determine whether such applications should be processed, and to determine how supervision, mentoring, and accountability should be provided to such applicants if processed.

5. In collaboration with the Ecumenical Relationships Commission, the Conferences Commission shall make recommendations on how entities that are uniting with the Global Methodist Church shall be incorporated into the annual conference structure of the Global Methodist Church.

6. Upon request of annual conferences previously aligned with The United Methodist Church, or clergy and churches from such annual conferences, the Conferences Commission shall make recommendations on how such requests shall be responded to and how such groups shall be organized as part of the Global Methodist Church.

7. The recommendations of the Conferences Commission shall be presented to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council for approval between sessions of General Conference, with each body voting to approve by a majority vote of those members present and casting valid ballots. Such recommendations shall be implemented as approved. Such actions must be presented to be ratified at the next session of the General Conference by a majority vote of the delegates present and casting valid ballots.

¶ 815. CONNECTIONAL OPERATIONS OFFICER. The connectional operations officer shall bear responsibility for the fruitful and accountable functioning of all general church boards, commissions, and councils as they work together to fulfill the General Conference's missional mandates between General Conferences.

1. *Selection.*
    a. The connectional operations officer may be either a clergy or lay person.
    b. As necessary, the Connectional Council will be responsible for revising the job description for the connectional operations officer.
    c. The Council will be responsible for posting the position as widely as it believes necessary in order to surface a large pool of qualified candidates.
    d. From the pool of applicants, the Council shall select a minimum of three and a maximum of six candidates, forwarding the chosen candidates' applications to the Assembly of Bishops for its consideration.
    e. From among the candidates forwarded to it by the Council, the Assembly of bishops will determine which candidates it wishes to interview.
    f. The Assembly of Bishops will select its chosen candidate based on a process of its own choosing (e.g., consensus, simple majority, two-thirds).
    g. The Assembly of Bishops will inform the Council of its chosen candidate.
    h. The Council's chairperson will notify the chosen candidate and present her or him a six-year contract.
    i. The Council will be responsible for onboarding the connectional operations officer.

2. *Term.* The connectional operations officer will serve for a six-year term, and if approved by the Assembly of Bishops and the Council, he or she may serve one additional six-year term.
3. *Performance Evaluation.* The Connectional Council's chairperson will annually conduct a performance evaluation of the connectional operations officer, and prepare a report based on the evaluation. The Council may appoint a sub-committee to conduct the evaluation and it may contract with outside personnel organizations in order to complete it. The report will be delivered to the connectional operations officer and the Council. The connectional operations officer will have the right to include a self-evaluation to add to the report.
4. *Vacancy of the Office.* In the event of the connectional officer's resignation, serious illness, approved leave of absence, death, or removal from office, the Council will:
    a. Immediately inform the Assembly of Bishops of the vacancy.
    b. Appoint a qualified individual to serve as the interim connectional operations officer.
    c. If the office is permanently vacated, the provisions of ¶ 815.1 shall apply, except that the new connectional operations officer will be presented with a contract for the balance of the previous occupant's term.
    d. If approved by the Assembly of Bishops and the Council, he or she may serve a full six-year term after completion of the balance of years remaining in the previous occupant's term. And by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly of Bishops and by a sixty percent plus one vote of the Council, a second additional six-year term.
5. *Dismissal From Office.* The connectional operations officer is an "at will" employee of the Global Methodist Church. Therefore the officer may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Connectional Council for any reason and without warning as long as the dismissal does not violate applicable laws in the state where the Global Methodist Church is incorporated. In keeping with Christian principles and ethical standards, the connectional council shall work to remedy any deficiencies in performance before moving to dismiss the connectional operations officer. The Council may choose to propose a severance agreement with a monetary component that includes a non-disparagement clause.
6. *Responsibilities and Duties.*
    a. Serve as the chief operations officer bearing responsibility for the accountable functioning of the Connectional Council, connectional commissions, and task forces as they work to fulfill the General Conference's missional mandates between General Conferences.
    b. Working with the chairperson and secretary of the Connectional Council, the connectional operations officer will:
        i. Schedule all Council meetings, including locations for in-person meetings;
        ii. Ensure all items necessary for meetings are prepared and delivered to Council members at least one week prior to meetings (i.e., agendas, minutes, reports, and proposals requiring the council's action); and
        iii. Deliver an annual report of the Council's work to the Assembly of Bishops, annually appear before the Assembly of Bishops to provide an overview of the report, and be prepared to answer their questions and respond to requests for guidance in fulfilling the General Conference's vision and mandates for the church.
    c. Be responsible for hiring all general church executive director level positions as set forth in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, within the constraints and processes established by the Council.

d. Serve as supervisor for all executive director level positions as set forth in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.
e. In consultation with the Council, exercise the authority to relieve persons holding executive director level positions.
f. Oversee the hiring, assigning, and retaining of all general church administrative staff.
g. Regularly convene meetings of general church executive directors to ensure fulfillment of direction given by the Council.
h. Oversee the connectional budget as approved by the General Conference, and the maintaining of all financial records.
i. Oversee annual audits of all general church assemblies, boards, and commissions.
j. In consultation with the Finance, Administration, Pension, and Benefits Commission and the executive director of finance, prepare the general church budget for deliberation, amendment, and approval.
k. Negotiate and/or oversee negotiation of contracts for general church services and facilities.
l. Lead the Council and all general church executive directors in a bi-annual review and evaluation of the missional effectiveness of the general church's commissions and boards and propose course corrections as necessary to the relevant areas.
m. In consultation with the Council, recommend to the General Conference changes to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and implementing legislation.
n. In consultation with the Council, oversee planning and research to advance the mission of the church.

PART NINE -- JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

¶ 901. ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CHURCH. Founded in the gospel call to faithfulness, and as set forth in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, ordination in the Global Methodist Church and membership in an annual conference is a sacred trust. As such, individual clergy, whether in active ministry, honorable or administrative location, or in senior status, are accountable to the whole church for their behavior and actions as long as they hold orders within the denomination. Similarly, numerous passages within the New Testament remind us of the sacred call given to all those in the church to watch over one another in love, stirring each other to faithfulness and sanctification. Individuals accused of violating the canons of this covenant shall thus be subject to a review aimed at a just resolution of such complaints, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

¶ 902. JUDICIAL PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES. The General Conference shall adopt *Judicial Practices and Procedures (JPP)* that shall govern the complaint, supervisory, administrative, and judicial processes. Such *JPP* shall have the force of church law, but not be included in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline.* In the event of a conflict between the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the *JPP*, the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall govern.

Section I. Complaints

¶ 903. COMPLAINTS. The process of accountability is initiated when a formal complaint is filed. A complaint is a written and signed statement alleging misconduct as defined in ¶ 908.1-2 (a judicial complaint) or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties (an administrative complaint, ¶¶ 906-907). If the complaint is against a bishop, the complaint shall be submitted to the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee. If the complaint is against a pastor, the complaint shall be submitted to that pastor's Staff-Parish Relations committee chair or equivalent, presiding elder, and Conference Superintendent. If the complaint is against a local church member, the complaint shall be submitted to the presiding elder over that local church, the Church Council Chair of that local church or equivalent, the pastor of that local church, and the Conference Superintendent. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Conference Superintendent or their designee shall handle the complaint throughout its process. Upon receiving a complaint, the duly authorized recipient shall describe the complaint process in writing both to the person making the complaint ("complainant") and the person against whom the complaint is made ("respondent"). As the complaint process progresses, the duly authorized recipient of the complaint shall continue to describe in writing to the complainant and recipient new parts of the process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended only once for 30 days upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

¶ 904. JUST RESOLUTION. Complaints may be resolved during the supervisory response stage by a just resolution. A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability, making things right in so far as possible, and bringing healing to all the parties. With the agreement of all parties to the complaint, the assistance of a trained, impartial third-party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) may be utilized to seek a just resolution satisfactory to all parties. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their

understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. A resolution of the complaint at the supervisory response level shall involve a written statement of the allegations, a list of all parties to the complaint, determination of facts, elucidation of context, and plan of action or agreed penalty to address the allegations, including follow-up accountability. Any just resolution that involves an allegation of disobedience to a provision of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall include a commitment by the respondent to abide by all applicable disciplinary requirements, including those alleged to have been violated. Such a resolution shall not be imposed but must be voluntarily agreed to and signed by all parties to the complaint, including as a minimum the complainant, the respondent, and the person authorized to receive the complaint (¶ 903). Such a resolution shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

¶ 905. PRINCIPLES OF FAIR PROCESS. As a part of the holy covenant that exists within the membership and organization of the Global Methodist Church, the following procedures protect the rights of individuals and the church in administrative and judicial processes. The principles set forth in this paragraph shall be followed whenever there is an administrative or judicial complaint. Special attention shall be given to the timely disposition of all matters and to ensuring racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the committees dealing with complaints.

1. *Right to Be Heard.* The person authorized to receive the complaint or their designee, the complainant, and the respondent shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken at any stage in the process.

2. *Right to Notice.* The respondent and complainant have the right to notice of any hearing with sufficient detail to allow the respondent to prepare a response. Notice shall be given not less than twenty (20) days prior to the hearing.

3. *Right to Presence and Accompaniment.* The respondent and the complainant shall have a right to be present at all hearings and the right to be accompanied to any hearing by a support person with the right to voice. The support person shall be a member of the Global Methodist Church. Under no circumstances shall the church award compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's or complainant's use of an attorney.

4. *Access to Records.* The respondent shall have access, at least ten (10) days prior to any hearing, to all records to be relied upon in the determination of the outcome of the process, including the written texts of the complaints themselves.

5. *Ex Parte Communication.* Under no circumstances shall one party, in the absence of the other party, discuss substantive issues with members of the body hearing the pending matter, or with each other, with the exception of ¶ 905.6. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer of the hearing body, with the answers shared with all parties.

6. *Failure to Respond.* In the event that a respondent fails to appear for supervisory interviews, refuses mail, refuses to communicate personally with the person handling the complaint or their designee, or otherwise fails to respond to supervisory requests or requests from official committees, such actions or inactions shall not be used as an excuse to avoid or delay any church processes, and such processes may continue without the participation of such individual.

7. *Healing.* As a part of the accountability process, the bishop and cabinet, in consultation with the presiding officer of the hearing, trial, or appellate body hearing the pending matter, shall provide resources for healing if there has been significant disruption to the congregation, the annual conference, or the context of ministry by the matter. Resources for healing shall include

communication about the complaint and the process and the release of as much information as possible, without compromising the process.

8. *Double Jeopardy.* No person shall be subject to double jeopardy. This means, barring new compelling information or facts, no complaint shall be accepted for the same alleged offenses based on the same set of facts, when a similar complaint has already been adjudicated via just resolution or final action by an administrative or judicial body. For this paragraph, "new compelling information or facts" means information or facts not introduced in the original judicial or administrative process that more likely than not would affect the findings of the hearing body. This does not preclude filing a new complaint for new instances of the same offense.

9. *Immunity From Prosecution.* To preserve the integrity of the church's process and ensure full participation at all times, the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee, the bishop, conference superintendent, cabinet, board of ministry, witnesses, support persons, counsel, administrative review committee, clergy voting in executive session, and all others who participate in the church's process shall have immunity from prosecution of complaints brought against them related to their role in a particular process, unless they have committed a chargeable offense in conscious and knowing bad faith. The complainant/plaintiff in any proceeding against any such person related to their role in a particular judicial process shall have the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence, that such person's actions constituted a chargeable offense committed knowingly in bad faith. The immunity set forth in this provision shall extend to civil court proceedings, to the fullest extent permissible by the civil laws.

10. *Counsel for the Church.* No person who was a member of the Global Episcopacy Committee, cabinet, conference staff, board of ministry, or Committee on Investigation on or after the date of the alleged offense shall be appointed counsel for the Church or serve as counsel for the respondent or any of the persons bringing complaints in a case. By agreeing to serve, the counsel for the Church signifies his or her willingness to uphold the requirements of Church law and the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Counsel for the Church shall represent the interests of the Church in pressing the claims of the person making the complaint.

¶ 906. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING CLERGY. An administrative complaint involves allegations of the unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties through incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform such duties. Allegations of professional or personal misconduct shall not be handled through an administrative complaint but through the provisions of ¶ 908.1-2. Administrative complaints may be filed by laypersons who are within the scope of a respondent's ministry, other clergy familiar with the respondent's ministry, the presiding elder, the conference superintendent, or the bishop. The complaint shall contain specific examples of unsatisfactory performance, including at least approximate dates and times (if appropriate).

1. Processing of an administrative complaint shall be governed by the *JPP* 2 and 3, and shall include an administrative supervisory response, which shall be followed, if warranted, by an investigative response, an administrative review, and an appeal.

2. There shall be an administrative review committee in every annual conference composed of three ordained clergy and two alternates who are not members of the cabinet, the board of ministry, or immediate family members of the above. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character. The committee shall be nominated by the bishop and elected by the clergy session of the annual conference. Its only purpose shall be to ensure

that the disciplinary procedures for resolving a substantiated administrative complaint are properly followed as per the requirements of the *JPP* 2 and 3, and fair process (¶ 905).

3. *Expenses.* All expenses for the administrative process for clergy shall be borne by the annual conference, except for travel and other expenses of the respondent and their support person.

¶ 907. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING BISHOPS. An administrative complaint involves allegations of the unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties through incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform such duties. Allegations of professional or personal misconduct shall not be handled through an administrative complaint but through the provisions of ¶ 908.1-2. Administrative complaints may be filed by laypersons, clergy, and presiding elders in the annual conference in which the bishop is serving, the conference superintendency committee, or another bishop. The complaint shall contain specific examples of unsatisfactory performance, including at least approximate dates and times (if appropriate). The supervisory process shall be administered by the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee or their designee. All expenses for the administrative process for complaints involving bishops shall be borne by the general church. The process for an administrative complaint against a bishop shall be governed by the *JPP* 3.

¶ 908. JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS. A judicial complaint involves allegations of misconduct as enumerated in the chargeable offenses below. Such complaints may be filed by any layperson or clergy person, a presiding elder, a conference superintendent, or a bishop. The complaint shall contain specific allegations of misconduct, including at least approximate dates and times (if appropriate).

1. *Chargeable Offenses* – A bishop or clergy member of an annual conference, including senior clergy and clergy on honorable or administrative location, may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with one or more of the following offenses:

a. Conviction or admission of guilt in criminal activities, including but not limited to child or elder abuse, theft, or assault;

b. Fiscal malfeasance or gross financial mismanagement;

c. Racial, gender, or sexual discrimination or harassment;

d. Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices, or conducting ceremonies or services, that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church;

e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;

f. Relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor;

g. Engaging in sexual activities outside the bonds of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman, including but not limited to sexual abuse or misconduct, the use or possession of pornography, or infidelity.

2. A professing member of a local church may be charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with the following offenses:

a. Conviction or admission of guilt in criminal activities, including but not limited to child or elder abuse, theft, or assault;

b. Fiscal malfeasance or gross financial mismanagement;

c. Racial, gender, or sexual discrimination or harassment;

d. Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church;

e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;

f. Relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of a pastor;

3. *Statute of Limitations* – No judicial complaint or charge shall be considered for any alleged occurrence that shall not have been committed within six years immediately preceding the filing of the original complaint. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of allegations of sexual or child abuse or crime involving allegations of sexual or child abuse, there shall be no statute of limitation. Time spent on leave of absence shall not be considered as part of the six years.

4.*Time of Offense* – A person shall not be charged with an offense that was not a chargeable offense at the time it is alleged to have been committed. Any charge filed shall be in the language of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect at the time the offense is alleged to have occurred, except in the case of sexual or child abuse or crime involving sexual or child abuse. Then it shall be in the language of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect at the time the charge was filed. Any charge must relate to an action listed as a chargeable offense in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

5. *If the respondent is a bishop,* the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall make all active bishops and conference superintendents aware of the complaint and keep them apprised of its progress.

¶ 909. JUDICIAL SUPERVISORY RESPONSE. 1. The purpose of the judicial supervisory response is to, so far as possible, establish facts, consider circumstances and explanations, determine if there is an issue that merits action, and arrive at a resolution of the complaint that restores compliance and redresses any harms resulting from a violation. Processing of a judicial complaint shall be governed by the *JPP* 4. If the respondent is a bishop*,* the supervisory process shall be administered by the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee or their designee (¶ 911.1). The supervisory response shall result in one of three possible outcomes, including the dismissal or resolution of the complaint or a referral to the committee on investigation (*JPP* 4.4).

2. *Suspension*. To avoid harm to the church or ministry setting or to the respondent, the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee with the affirmative vote of a majority of the Global Episcopacy Committee (if the respondent is a bishop) or the bishop with the affirmative vote of a majority of the cabinet (if the respondent is clergy) may suspend the respondent from all ministry responsibilities during the supervisory and investigative process for a judicial complaint. The respondent retains all rights and privileges, including continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, while suspended from ministerial duties, provided, however, that they shall not interfere with an interim bishop or pastor appointed to carry out their duties while they are suspended. If the judicial complaint does not proceed to trial, the respondent's suspension must be lifted at that time.

Section II. Investigative Response

¶ 910. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION. 1. *When respondent is a bishop*—The Global Episcopacy Committee shall appoint a global committee on investigation as provided in the *JPP* 5.

2. *When the respondent is a clergy person* -- Each annual conference shall elect a committee on investigation to consider judicial complaints against clergy members of the annual conference in accordance with ¶ 710.6.

3. *When respondent is a layperson*—In all cases, the pastor or presiding elder should take pastoral steps to resolve any complaints (*JPP* 4). If such pastoral response does not result in resolution and a written complaint is made against a professing member for any of the offenses in ¶ 908.2, the presiding elder and the district lay leader (if any), shall appoint a committee on investigation consisting of four professing members and three clergy in full connection to serve only for this complaint. Both clergy and professing members must come from other congregations, exclusive of the churches of the respondent or the complainant. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. Five members shall constitute a quorum.

¶ 911. REFERRAL OF A COMPLAINT TO A COUNSEL FOR THE CHURCH. 1. *When the respondent is a bishop:*

a. The chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee or their designee shall handle the supervisory response as per the *JPP* 4.2. If a just resolution is not agreed to and the complaint is not dismissed, the chair or their designee shall notify all active bishops and conference superintendents, of the existence and nature of the complaint and appoint counsel under *JPP* 6.1.

b. If six or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the Global Episcopacy Committee may suspend the respondent, with continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, from all episcopal duties and responsibilities pending the conclusion of the trial process

2. *When the respondent is a clergy person:*

a. If a just resolution is not agreed to and the complaint is not dismissed, the bishop shall notify the pastor-parish relations committee of the existence and nature of the complaint. Within thirty (30) days, the bishop shall appoint an elder within the annual conference in which the alleged violation took place who shall serve as counsel for the Church under *JPP* 6.2.

b. If five or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the bishop may suspend the respondent, with continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, from all duties and responsibilities relating to their appointment pending the conclusion of the trial process. The respondent retains all rights and privileges as a member of the annual conference while suspended from pastoral duties, provided, however, they shall not interfere with an interim pastor appointed to carry out their duties while they are suspended.

3. *When the respondent is a layperson:*

a. If a just resolution is not agreed to and the complaint is not dismissed, the presiding elder shall within thirty (30) days appoint a Global Methodist Church clergy or layperson to serve as counsel for the church under the *JPP* 6.3.

b. If five or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the pastor or presiding elder may suspend the respondent from exercising any church office pending the conclusion of the trial process.

¶ 912. COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES. 1. *Introduction* – The role of the committee on investigation is to investigate the allegations made in the judicial complaint and to determine if reasonable grounds exist to bring a bill of charges and specifications to trial. Reasonable grounds is defined as sufficient reason based on the known facts to believe that a chargeable offense has been committed. If so, it shall prepare, sign, and certify a bill of charges and specifications. The committee's duty is only to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to support the charges. It is not the committee's duty to determine guilt or innocence.

2. The investigation process shall be administered according to the provisions of the *JPP* 7.

Section III. Trials

¶ 913. GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND PRE-TRIAL PROCEDURES. *Fundamental Principles for Trials* – Church trials are to be regarded as an expedient of last resort. Only after every reasonable effort has been made to correct any wrong and adjust any existing difficulty should steps be taken to institute a trial. No such trial as herein provided shall be construed to deprive the respondent or the Church of legal civil rights, except to the extent that immunity is provided as in ¶ 905.9. All trials shall be conducted according to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in a consistent Christian manner by a properly constituted court after due investigation. Trials shall be administered under the provisions of the *JPP* 8-13.

¶ 914. CONVENING OF A TRIAL COURT. 1. In the trial of a bishop, the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of the *JPP* 9 and 11.

2. In the trial of a clergy member, the bishop of the respondent shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of the *JPP* 9 and 12.

3. In a trial of a lay member, the presiding elder of the respondent shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of the *JPP* 9 and 13.

¶ 915. POWER OF THE TRIAL COURT. 1. *Instruction, Disqualification, Voting, and Verdicts* – The trial court shall have full power to try the respondent. The trial court shall be a continuing body until the final disposition of the charge. If any regular or alternate member of the trial court fails to attend any part of any session at which evidence is received or oral argument is made to the trial court by counsel, that person shall not thereafter be a member of the trial court, but the rest of the trial court may proceed to judgment.

2. *Votes* – A vote of at least nine members of the trial court is required to sustain the charge(s) and nine votes also shall be required for conviction, unless the number of the trial court falls below thirteen. (In that case, a two-thirds vote shall be required.) Fewer than nine votes for conviction shall be considered an acquittal. In order to be sustained, the church must establish each specification and the charge by clear and convincing evidence. In order for evidence to be clear and convincing, the evidence provided to the trial court must demonstrate that the specification is highly and substantially more likely to be true than untrue. The trial court shall present to the presiding officer a decision on each charge and each individual specification under each charge. Its findings shall be final, subject to appeal to the Council on Appeals.

3. *Penalties – If the Trial Results in Conviction* – Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. (If the number of the trial court falls below thirteen, a majority vote shall be required.) The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership, and revoke the credentials of conference membership, ordination, or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office (with or without pay, if applicable) for a defined period of time, or fix a lesser penalty. The trial court shall determine whether a bishop or clergy person suspended from office as a penalty for a

defined period of time shall have any continuation of housing, salary, and benefits during such suspension. The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate by the general church if a bishop and by the annual conference if clergy, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

Section IV. Appeals

¶ 916. APPEAL PROCEDURES -- GENERAL. 1. In all cases of appeal, the appellant shall give written notice of appeal within thirty (30) days of the verdict and announcement of penalty by the trial court or the issuance of a written decision of an appellate body other than the Connectional Council on Appeals. At the same time the appellant shall furnish to the officer receiving such notice (*JPP* 14.2) and to the counsel for the opposing party a written statement of the grounds of the appeal. The hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.

2. When any appellate body shall reverse in whole or in part the findings of a committee on investigation or trial court, or remand the case for a new hearing or trial, or change the penalty imposed by the trial court, it shall return to the convening officer a statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be copied to the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church.

3. An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel at the investigation and the trial. Appeals shall be heard by the proper appellate body unless it shall appear to the said body that the appellant has forfeited the right to appeal by misconduct, such as refusal to abide by the findings of the trial court; or by withdrawal from the Church; or by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal; or, prior to the final decision on appeal from conviction, by resorting to suit in the civil courts against the complainant or any of the parties connected with the ecclesiastical court in which the appellant was tried.

4. The right of appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate body.

5. The right to prosecute an appeal shall not be affected by the death of the person entitled to such right. Heirs or legal representatives may prosecute such an appeal as the appellant would be entitled to do if living.

6. The records and documents of the trial, including the evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.

7. The appellate body shall determine two questions only:

a. Were the charge(s) sustained by clear and convincing evidence?

b. Were there such errors of Church law as to vitiate the verdict and/or the penalty?

These questions shall be determined from the records of the trial. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses but shall receive and/or hear argument of the counsel for the Church and respondent. It may have legal counsel present, who shall not be the conference chancellor for the conference from which the appeal is taken, for the sole purpose of providing advice to the appellate body.

8. In all cases where an appeal is made and admitted by the appellate committee, after the charges, findings, and evidence have been read and the arguments concluded, the parties shall withdraw, and the appellate committee shall consider and decide the case. It may reverse in whole or in part the findings of the committee on investigation or the trial court, or it may remand the case for a new trial to determine verdict and/or penalty. It may determine what penalty, not higher than that affixed at the hearing or trial, may be imposed. If it neither reverses in whole or in part the judgment of the trial court, nor remands the case for a new trial, nor modifies the penalty, that judgment shall stand, subject to possible appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor remand the case for a new hearing or trial on account of errors plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.

9. In all cases, the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the case has been heard once on its merits in the trial court, but questions of Church law may be carried on appeal, step by step, to the Connectional Council on Appeals (¶ 922.8).

10. The Church shall have no right of appeal from findings of fact of the trial court. The Church shall have a right of appeal to the committee on appeals and then to the Connectional Council on Appeals from findings of the committee on investigation or trial court based on egregious errors of Church law or administration that could reasonably have affected its findings. In this paragraph, "egregious errors of Church law or administration" refers to the misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation (whether knowing or not) of Church law or judicial process as required by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, with such errors more likely than not (in the judgment of the appellate body) affecting the findings of the trial court or committee on investigation. The committee on investigation's decision not to certify a bill of charges does not alone constitute an egregious error of Church law or administration. When the committee on appeals shall find egregious errors of Church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new hearing or trial on verdict and/or penalty, in which event it shall return to the chair of the committee on investigation or presiding officer of the trial court a statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be copied to the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church. This action is not to be considered double jeopardy.

11. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer or secretary of the appellate body, with the answers shared with all parties. Under no circumstances shall one party in the absence of the other party discuss substantive matters with members of any appellate body while the case is pending (¶ 905.5, 905.6).

12. The appeal of a bishop or clergy member shall be administered according to the provisions of the *JPP* 14.

13. The appeal of a lay member shall be administered according to the provisions of the *JPP* 15.

¶ 917. APPEAL OF QUESTIONS OF LAW. 1. The order of appeals on questions of law shall be as follows:

a. From the decision of the presiding elder presiding in the charge or district conference to the bishop presiding in the annual conference and then to the Connectional Council on Appeals;

b. From the decision of the bishop presiding in the annual conference to the Connectional Council on Appeals;

c. From the bishop presiding in the General Conference to the Connectional Council on Appeals.

2. When a question of law is raised in writing during a session of a conference. It shall be the secretary's duty to see that an exact statement of the question submitted and the ruling of the chair thereon shall be entered in the journal and minutes of the conference. The secretary shall then make and certify a copy of the question and ruling and transmit the same to the person or body to which an appeal is taken.

¶ 918. APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS (see ¶ 906). 1. The order of appeals on procedures in an administrative process shall be as follows:

a. From the decision of the board of ministry investigative committee to the annual conference administrative review committee;

b. From the administrative review committee to the full board of ministry; and

c. From the full board of ministry to the clergy session.

d. Questions of law arising from an administrative process should be raised in the clergy session for ruling by the bishop and review by the Connectional Council on Appeals.

2. In all cases of such an appeal, the appellant shall within thirty (30) days give written notice of appeal and at the same time furnish to the officer receiving such notice a written statement of the grounds of appeal, and the hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.

3. The appellate body shall return to the convening officer of the administrative hearing and to the appellant a written statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be placed in the appellant's personnel file.

4. An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel during the administrative hearing. Appeals shall be heard by the proper appellate body unless it shall appear to the said body that the appellant has forfeited the right to appeal by misconduct; by withdrawal from the Church; by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal; or, prior to the final decision on appeal, by resorting to suit in the civil courts against any of the parties connected with the ecclesiastical administrative process.

5. The right to appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate body.

6. The right to prosecute an appeal shall not be affected by the death of the person entitled to such right. Heirs or legal representatives may prosecute such an appeal as the appellant would be entitled to do if living.

7. The records and documents of the administrative process, including any evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.

8. The appellate body shall determine one question only: Were there such errors of Church law or procedure as to vitiate the recommendation and/or action of the administrative body? The records of the administrative process and the arguments of the official representatives of all parties shall determine this question. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses. It may have legal counsel present for the sole purpose of providing advice to the appellate body.

9. If the appellate body determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error, decide the error is harmless, or take other action. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor

remand the case for a new hearing on account of error plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.

10. In all cases, the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the case has been heard once on its merits in the proper administrative hearing body, but the decision of the administrative hearing body may be appealed as outlined in ¶ 918.1. Questions of Church law may be raised in the clergy session and carried on appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals (¶ 918.1d).

Section V. Other Provisions

¶ 919. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS. 1. Any clergy members residing beyond the bounds of the conference in which membership is held shall be subject to the procedures of ¶¶ 901-919 and the *JPP* exercised by the appropriate officers of the conference in which the alleged violation took place, unless the presiding bishops of the two annual conferences and the clergy member subject to the procedures agree that fairness will be better served by having the procedures carried out by the appropriate officers of the annual conference in which he or she is a member, or if the clergy person has elected senior status, where they are currently residing.

2. When a bishop or clergy member is the respondent to a complaint under ¶¶ 906-908 and desires to withdraw from the Global Methodist Church at any point in the process, the bishop or clergy member shall surrender his or her credentials and his or her name shall be removed from conference membership. In such case the record shall be "Withdrawn under complaint" or "Withdrawn under charges," whichever is appropriate. If the person desires their credentials to be restored, they must first resolve the complaint, with the complaint process picking up at the point at which it ended when they withdrew. Time spent as "withdrawn under complaint or charges" does not count toward the statute of limitations (¶ 908.3).

3. When a professing member of the Global Methodist Church is charged with an offense and desires to withdraw from the Global Methodist Church at any point in the process, the charge conference may permit such member to withdraw his or her name from the roll of professing members, in which case the record shall be "Withdrawn under complaint." If formal charges have been referred by a committee on investigation, such member may be permitted to withdraw, in which case the record shall be "Withdrawn under charges." If the person desires to be restored as a professing member (or become a professing member in another local congregation of the Global Methodist Church), they would first have to resolve the complaint, with the complaint process picking up at the point at which it ended when they withdrew.

4. For procedural purposes, the judicial process shall be governed by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the *JPP* in effect on the date a complaint is forwarded to the counsel for the Church.

Section VI. Connectional Council on Appeals.

¶ 920. MEMBERSHIP. 1. The Connectional Council on Appeals is the highest judicial body in the Global Methodist Church. The Council shall be composed of seven members. When the initial Council is elected by the convening General Conference, four members shall be clergy and three members shall be laity. A member's term of office shall be six years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive six-year terms. The number of clergy and laity shall alternate every six years so that the clergy have the four members during one six-year term and

the laity have the four members during the next six-year term. Members shall either be elders or laity who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church. Bishops shall be ineligible for election to the Council.

2. *Alternates*. Clergy and laity shall be elected to serve as alternates in a number equal to the number to serve on the Connectional Council on Appeals during the ensuing six-year term. Alternates shall serve in their category at any session of the Council in the absence of a member of the Council in the order of their election. In the event a member of the Council cannot serve the balance of a term, the next elected alternate in the category impacted shall serve the balance of the term and such service shall not count against the maximum time of serving.

3. *Expiration of Term.* The term of office of the members of the Connectional Council on Appeals and of the alternates shall expire upon the adjournment of the General Conference at which their successors are elected.

4. *Ineligibility.* Members of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall be ineligible to serve as delegates to the General Conference, or to serve on any general or annual conference board or commission.

5. *Nominations*. In advance of the General Conference, the administrative Nominations Committee shall nominate by majority vote a total of 21 persons representing the church's geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity in the appropriate lay and clergy categories. On the first day of the General Conference, nominations of clergy or laity may be made from the floor. Name, annual conference membership and biographical information not to exceed 100 words shall be published for review by delegates to the General Conference at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of election. Election shall occur without discussion or debate, by ballot and majority vote.

¶ 921. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE. 1. *Connectional Council on Appeals Rules of Practice & Procedure and Officers* – The Connectional Council on Appeals shall provide its own rules of practice and procedure not in conflict with the provisions of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, including the election of a President, Vice-President, and Secretary of the Council, who shall be elected by the members of the Council.

2. *Time & Place of Meeting* – The Connectional Council on Appeals shall meet at the time and place of the meeting of the General Conference and shall continue until the adjournment of that body, at least one other time in each calendar year, and at other times as the Council may deem appropriate, and at such places as it deems appropriate from time to time. Where necessary due to international or local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of the Council, it may, by a two-thirds vote, decide to meet via electronic or other digital means.

3. *Quorum* – Seven members or alternates duly seated shall constitute a quorum. One lay and one clergy alternate shall attend the meeting to be available in case of illness or recusal. An affirmative vote of at least five members or duly seated alternates shall be necessary to declare any act of the General Conference unconstitutional. On all other matters, a majority vote of the entire Connectional Council on Appeals shall be sufficient to arrive at a decision.

4. *Docket* – The secretary of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall publish a list of the matters which will be decided at any session at least thirty (30) days prior to the deadline for submission of briefs. The description of each matter pending shall be sufficient to enable persons who might file briefs to know the subject of the pending matter.

5. *Public Access* – Unless the Connectional Council on Appeals decides otherwise on a case-by- case basis, all materials filed with the Connectional Council on Appeals are matters of

public record and are to be made available to clergy and members of the Global Methodist Church. The deliberations of the Council are private. The Council may schedule a hearing open to the public for the presentation of oral argument in any matter.

¶ 922. JURISDICTION. 1. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any act of the General Conference is in compliance with this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* upon an appeal of one-fifth of the members of the General Conference present and voting, or by a majority of the Assembly of Bishops.

2. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any proposed legislation is in conflict with this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* when such a declaratory decision is requested by one-fifth of the members of the General Conference presenting and voting, or by a majority of the Assembly of Bishops.

3. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any act of a annual conference is in compliance with this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* upon an appeal by one-fifth of the delegates present and voting to that annual conference.

4. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine the legality of any action taken by any body created or authorized by the General Conference or by any body created or authorized by an annual conference upon appeal by one-fifth of the delegates present and voting of such General or annual conference wherein the action was taken, or one-third of the governing members of the created or authorized body present and voting, or a majority of the Assembly of Bishops .

5. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to determine the legality of any action taken by a body or agency created or authorized by the General or annual conference upon petition for certiorari by one-fifth of the delegates present and voting of any annual conference.

6. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to render a declaratory decision as to the meaning, application, or effect of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or any portion thereof or the legality, meaning, application, or effect of any act or legislation of an annual conference. Petitions for certiorari may be filed by

(a) the General Conference upon the vote of one-fifth of the delegates present and voting,

(b) the Assembly of Bishops upon the vote of a majority of the bishops present and voting,

(c) any body created or authorized by the General Conference or an annual conference on matters relating to or affecting the work of such body upon the vote of a majority of the body's governing entity present and voting, or

(d) an annual conference upon the vote of one-fifth of its delegates present and voting.

7. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall affirm, modify, or reverse the decisions of law made by bishops in annual or General Conference. No such episcopal decision of law shall be authoritative, except in the conference where it is made, until review by the Council has been completed.

8. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to review a decision of a committee of appeals of any annual conference if it should appear that such decision may be at variance with the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, a prior decision of the Connectional Council

on Appeals, or a decision of a committee on appeals of another annual conference on a question of Church law.

¶ 923. CERTIORARI. Certiorari is discretionary and is granted upon the affirmative vote of three members of the Connectional Council on Appeals.

¶ 924. DECISIONS. All decisions of the Connectional Council on Appeals are final. Decisions shall immediately be delivered to the parties of interest in each matter and be published electronically for public review.

¶ 925. PRECEDENTIAL VALUE. The decisions of predecessor Methodist bodies such as the Judicial Councils of The Methodist Church and of The United Methodist Church may be cited in arguments before the Connectional Council on Appeals but shall only have precedential value to the extent determined by the Connectional Council on Appeals.

PART TEN -- PROPERTY

¶ 1001. THEOLOGY OF PROPERTY. God owns all of creation (Psalm 50:9-10); we are but stewards of it for a period of time. Property (real, personal, tangible, and intangible) deeded or titled in the name of the Global Methodist Church and its entities (including its local churches) is to be used for the glory of God and to carry out the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the land (⁋ 401).

¶ 1002. STEWARDSHIP OF ASSETS. There is no trust clause for property held by local churches, annual conferences, connectional commissions, or any other entities of the Global Methodist Church. Each local church, annual conference, or connectional commission shall designate in its corporate records how its property shall be disposed of in the event of the entity's dissolution.

¶ 1003. PROCESS OF DISAFILLIATION. After at least a 90-day period of discernment and prayer, a congregation of the Global Methodist Church may disaffiliate from the denomination by a majority vote of its church conference.

¶ 1004. REGISTRATION OF THE NAME "GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH". The words "Global Methodist Church" are not to be used as, or as a part of, a trade name or trademark or as a part of the name of any business firm or organization, except by local churches, conferences, corporations, or other business units created for the administration of work undertaken directly by the Global Methodist Church. The Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church is charged with supervision and registration of "Global Methodist Church" and the denomination's logo.

¶ 1005. COMPLIANCE WITH LAW. 1. *Conformity with local law.* All provisions of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* relating to property, both real and personal, and relating to the formation and operation of any corporation, and relating to mergers are conditioned upon their being in conformity with local laws, and in the event of conflict with local law, local law shall prevail; provided, however, that this requirement shall not be construed to give the consent of the Global Methodist Church to deprivation of its property without due process of law or to the regulation of its affairs by state statute where such regulation violates any constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and separation of church and state or violates the right of the church to maintain its connectional structure. Local laws shall be construed to mean the laws of the country, state, or other like political unit within the geographical bounds of which the church property is located.

2. Incorporation Requirements. Any corporation which is or has been formed or is affiliated with the Global Methodist Church, shall include in its articles of incorporation (or charter) and its bylaws the following:

a. Recognition that its corporate powers are subject to this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline;*

b. Recognition that the corporation's powers cannot exceed those given by this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and language consistent with the taxation codes of the country in which the corporation operates to protect its tax-exempt status (if applicable); and

c. Designation of the recipient(s) of corporate property in the event the corporation is abandoned, discontinued, or ceases to exist as a legal entity.

¶ 1006. TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS ARE SYNONYMOUS. The terms "trustee(s)" and "Board of Trustees" used in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* may be construed to be synonymous with "director(s)" and "Board of Directors" applied to corporations. If a local church chooses an alternative structure, it shall designate which body shall act as the Board of Directors.

¶ 1007. CONFORMITY OF DEEDS AND CONVEYANCES WITH LOCAL LAW. To secure the right of property of entities within the Global Methodist Church, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in due conformity to the laws of the respective states, provinces, and countries in which the property is situated and also in conformity with this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Deeds shall be registered or recorded directly upon their execution.

¶ 1008. INSTITUTING AND DEFENDING CIVIL ACTION. Because of the nature of the Global Methodist Church, no individual or affiliated church body or unit, nor any official thereof, may commence or participate in any suit or proceeding in the name of, or on behalf of, the Global Methodist Church, excepting, however, the following:

1. *Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church.* The Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church or any persons or church unit served with legal process in the name of the Global Methodist Church may appear for the purpose of presenting to the court the non-jural nature of the Global Methodist Church and to raise issues of lack of jurisdiction of the court, lack of capacity of such individual or unit to be served with process, and related constitutional issues in defense of denominational interests.

2. *Protecting Denominational Interests.* Any denominational unit authorized to hold title to property and to enforce trusts created by others for the benefit of the Global Methodist Church may bring suit in its own name to protect denominational interests.

¶ 1009. LIMITATION OF FINANCIAL OBLIGATION. No local church, district, annual conference, connectional commission, or any other unit can financially obligate the Global Methodist Church or, without prior specific written consent, any other organizational unit thereof.

¶ 1010. AUDITS AND BONDING OF CHURCH OFFICERS. All persons holding trust funds, securities, or moneys of any kind belonging to a unit of the Global Methodist Church (not including a local church) shall be bonded by a reliable company in such good and sufficient sum as the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church or its designated agent may direct. The accounts of such units shall be audited at least annually by a recognized public or certified public accountant or equivalent. A report to a unit of the Global Methodist Church containing a financial statement that this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* requires to be audited shall not be approved until the audit is made and the financial statement is shown to be correct. Other parts of the report may be approved pending such an audit.

¶ 1011. GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH FOUNDATIONS. An annual conference or conferences may establish a Global Methodist Church Foundation for its conference(s). The purposes for establishing such a foundation may include:

1. The promotion of planned giving programs on behalf of local churches, conferences, and other bodies within the Global Methodist Church;

2. Furnishing counsel and guidance to local churches with regard to promotion and management of permanent funds;

3. Receiving funds on deposit, investing said funds, and loaning funds for construction and renovation of local churches; and

4. Other responsibilities as requested by the annual conference.

All foundations shall have an independent governing board as determined by the incorporating documents approved by the annual conference. The governing board will establish all policies and procedures upon which the foundation will operate. Due care will be exercised to maintain prudent organizational separation from beneficiary organizations while striving to maintain missional purpose and connection.

¶ 1012. POWERS OF BOARDS OF DIRECTORS. Each unit within the Global Methodist Church shall be incorporated unless local law prevents it. Each incorporated unit shall have a Board of Directors as set forth within this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. The Boards of Directors (or equivalent bodies) of each unit within the Global Methodist Church shall have the following authority with respect to their properties:

1. *Donations and bequests.* The said corporation shall receive, collect, and hold in trust for the benefit of the recipient any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind of character, real or personal, tangible or intangible, that may be given, devised, bequeathed, or conveyed to the said board for any benevolent, charitable, or religious purpose, and shall administer the same and the income therefrom in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, settlor, or testator and in the interest of the church, society, institution, or agency contemplated by such donor, trustor, settlor, or testator, under the direction of the corporation. When the use to be made of any such donation, bequest, or devise is not otherwise designated, the same shall be used as directed by the corporation.

2. *Holding property in trust.* When so directed by the Board of Directors, the corporation may receive and hold in trust for and on behalf of the respective unit of the Global Methodist Church any real or personal property previously acquired to be used in carrying out their mission, ministry, and program. When such property is in the form of investable assets, the Board of Directors may consider placing the assets for investment in the care of a responsible investing firm subject to the laws of the jurisdiction in which the unit is located. A conscious effort shall be made to invest in a manner consistent with the Social Witness (Part Three) of this *Doctrines and Discipline.*

3. *Power to convey assets.* Unless otherwise restricted by this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, the Board of Directors shall have the power to invest, reinvest, buy, sell, lease, transfer, and convey any and all assets that it may hold in trust, subject always to the terms of the legacy, devise, or donation.

a. Before the Board of Directors (or equivalent body) of a local church conveys property, it must seek the approval of the charge conference. Approval requires a simple majority vote. Additionally, the appointed pastor must be fully aware and consulted on the conveyance.

b. In the case of a multi-point charge, the Board of Directors (or equivalent body) of the individual church conveying property must seek the approval of the individual charge conference. Approval requires a simple majority vote. Additionally, the appointed pastor must be fully aware and consulted on the conveyance.

c. Before the Board of Directors (or equivalent body) of a district or annual conference conveys property, it must seek the approval of the district or annual conference. Additionally, in the case of a district conveying property, the presiding elder must consent to the conveyance. In the event an annual conference conveying property, the conference superintendent must consent to the conveyance.

4. *Authority to execute board decisions.* Any contract, deed, lease, bill of sale, mortgage, or other necessary written instrument needed to implement any resolution authorizing proposed action regarding property or assets owned by the corporation may be executed by and on behalf of the Board of Directors by any two of its officers, who thereupon shall be duly authorized to carry out the direction of the corporation; and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as to the action of the unit of the Global Methodist Church.

5. *Protection of assets.* The Board of Directors may intervene and take all necessary legal steps to safeguard and protect the interests and rights of the corporation anywhere and in all matters relating to property and rights to property whether arising by gift, devise, or otherwise, or where held in trust or established for the benefit of the individual unit of the Global Methodist Church or its membership.

6. *Gifts acceptance policy.* It shall be the duty of the pastor of a charge that receives any such gift, bequest, or devise to give prompt notice to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall take such steps as are necessary and proper to conserve, protect, and administer the gift; provided, however, that the Board of Directors may decline to receive or administer any such gift, devise, or bequest for any reason satisfactory to the Board.

7. *Insurance.* The Board of Directors shall annually compare the existence and adequacy of the insurance coverages for the unit of the Global Methodist Church that it governs. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the church, its properties, and its personnel are properly protected against risks.

8. *Disclosure of board actions.* The Board of Directors shall annually inform its corporation with a faithful report of its doings, of all funds, monies, securities, and property held in trust by it, and of its receipts and disbursements during the year. The beneficiary of a fund held in trust by the Board shall also be entitled to a report at least annually on the condition of such fund and on the transactions affecting it.

9. *Local church provision.* The following provisions pertain to the Boards of Directors (or their equivalent bodies) of local churches in the Global Methodist Church:

a. *Local church usage* (¶ 446.5a). Subject to the direction of the charge conference, the Board of Directors (or its equivalent) shall have the supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by the local church and of all property and equipment acquired directly by the local church or by any society, board, class, commission, or similar organization connected to it, provided that the Board of Directors shall not permit the property to be used in a manner which is inconsistent with the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or violate the rights of any local church organization granted elsewhere in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline.* Further, the Board of Directors shall not prevent or interfere with the pastor in the use of any of the local church's property for religious services or other proper meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of the Global Methodist Church, or permit the use of said property for

religious or other meetings without the consent of the pastor or, in the pastor's absence, the consent of the presiding elder. Additionally, the Board of Directors and pastor of the local church shall ensure that the pews in the Global Methodist Church shall always be free.

b. *Usage by outside groups* (¶ 446.5b). Upon the consent of the pastor, the use of a local congregation's facilities or properties by an outside organization may be granted by the Board of Directors after consideration of whether the purposes and programs of that organization are consistent with the mission and values of the congregation and the Global Methodist Church.

c. *Parsonage*. (¶ 446.5c). Should the congregation possess a parsonage offered to the pastor for housing, the chair of the Board of Directors or his or her designee, accompanied by a member of the pastor-parish relationship committee, shall make an annual review of the home to ensure that it is properly maintained. Parsonages shall be mutually respected as the property of the congregation and the home of the pastoral family.

d. *Accessible buildings* (¶ 446.5e). The Board of Directors shall conduct an annual accessibility audit of their buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any physical, architectural, or communication barriers that exist that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers.

e. *Annual Report* (¶ 446.6). The Board of Directors shall annually make a written report to the charge conference, in which shall be included the following:

i. The legal description and the reasonable valuation of each parcel of real estate owned by the church;

ii. The specific name of the grantee in each deed of conveyance of real estate to the local church;

iii. An inventory and the reasonable valuation of all personal property owned by the local church;

iv. The amount of income received from any income-producing property and a detailed list of expenditures in connection therewith;

v. The amount received during the year for building, rebuilding, remodeling, and improving real estate, and an itemized statement of expenditures;

vi. Outstanding capital debts and how contracted;

vii. A detailed statement of the insurance carried on each parcel of real estate, indicating whether restricted by co-insurance or other limiting conditions and whether adequate insurance is carried;

viii. The name of the custodian of all legal papers of the local church, and where they are kept;

ix. A detailed list of all trusts of which the local church is the beneficiary, specifying where and how the funds are invested;

x. An evaluation of all church properties, including the chancel areas, to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities; and when applicable, a plan and timeline for the development of accessible church properties.

f. *Purchase, sale, lease, construction, and mortgage of property* – Notwithstanding the powers granted in ¶1012.3 above, prior to the purchase, sale, lease, or mortgage by a local church of any real estate, or the construction or renovation of a building, a resolution authorizing such action shall be passed by the charge conference, with the members thereof acting in their capacity as members of the corporate body, by a majority vote of those present and voting at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose, provided that not less than ten days' notice of

such meeting and the proposed action shall have been given from the pulpit and in the weekly bulletin, newsletter, or electronic notice of the local church or other means if required or permitted by local law, and provided further, that written consent to such action shall be given by the pastor. The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct and authorize the Board of Directors to take all necessary steps to carry out the action and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument. The Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required by the local laws. Any required contract, deed, lease, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument necessary to carry out the action so authorized shall be executed in the name of the corporation by any two of its officers, and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the corporation.

g. *Restrictions on proceeds of mortgage or sale* - No real property on which a church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged or sold to provide for the current budget or operating expense of a local church without the approval of sixty percent of the members and the full awareness of and consultation with the presiding elder.

h. *Local church permanent endowment committees* – Subject to the direction of the charge conference, the Board of Directors may establish a permanent endowment or local church foundation. The Board of Directors shall create a legal document guiding the direction of the permanent endowment and the charge conference shall designate or elect its leadership.

¶ 1013. MERGER OF LOCAL GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCHES. Two or more local churches, to more effectively fulfill their ministry, may merge and become a single church by pursuing the following procedure:

1. The merger must be proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches by a resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger.

2. The plan of the merger as proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches shall be approved by each of the charge conferences by at least a simple majority vote for the merger to be affected.

3. The pastor of each of the merging churches along with the presiding elder must give their consent to the merger.

A Brief History of the Global Methodist Church

As detailed in the opening paragraph of this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (¶101), Methodism began as a reform movement within the Church of England during the eighteenth century. It found its first expression as an independent ecclesiastical body with the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America in 1784. The new denomination quickly grew in the young nation under the leadership of Bishops Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke, as well as through the indefatigable labors of a core of 2,500 lay preachers known as circuit riders, each of whom were committed to the vision of spreading "scriptural holiness across the land." Despite the harsh living conditions of itinerant ministry, which resulted in an average life expectancy of only 33 years, those "riders of the Spirit" faithfully carried the message of Methodism to the growing frontier and beyond.

Others who shared the same Wesleyan ethos, such as Jacob Albright, Martin Boehm, and Philip Otterbein who worked among German-speaking Americans, and Richard Allen within the African American community, also contributed to the rapid spread of Methodism. As a result, by the middle of the nineteenth century, one-third of all Americans who belonged to any church were Methodists. Conflicts over slavery, the role of bishops and church government, as well as the developing holiness movement, however, led to numerous splits in Methodism in the decades that followed, until three of the larger groups reunited once more to form The Methodist Church in 1939. Almost three decades later, a further merger of that body with those who had come from the German-speaking side of the Wesleyan family, the Evangelical United Brethren, created The United Methodist Church in 1968.

For all the optimism that marked that reunion, however, from the very beginning there was also imbedded within the new denomination the idea of a theological latitude or pluralism aimed at creating a "big tent" for varying philosophical ideas and practical expressions of the faith. Unfortunately, however, as the practicalities of church life unfolded after the merger, what was intended to be a strength also revealed an inherent weakness. Without theologically clear directives in place, both opinions and practices varied dramatically, both between individuals and between segments within the broader church, making genuine unity difficult.

In addition to differing theological ideas and views of biblical interpretation, questions regarding abortion, human sexuality, euthanasia, war, and other social issues became points of contention at numerous General Conferences, leading to efforts on the part of numerous groups to reform and revive Methodism from within. Due in no small part to the witness of the African portion of the church, United Methodism stayed closer to the historic evangelical understandings of the Christian faith than many other mainstream denominations did. Still, with each successive General Conference it became more and more of a struggle to maintain a common witness to the faith.

A special session of the General Conference in 2019, meant to resolve the conflict once and for all, reaffirmed the existing traditional standards of the church regarding human sexuality. That assembly also established a process for congregations who could not agree with traditional standards to disaffiliate from the denomination. However, significant portions of the United Methodist Church elected to disregard the church's official traditional stance for the sake of conscience.

In an attempt to sort it all out, an impromptu group of sixteen individuals, including bishops, traditionalists, and progressives, led by a well-respected outside mediator, produced a "Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation" in January 2020. It received surprisingly strong support from all quarters of the denomination across both geographical and theological lines. The Protocol would have provided for an organized, amicable separation of the UM Church, with those maintaining the traditional perspective allowed to leave the church with their property and assets.

The Protocol stood an impressive chance of passing at the 2020 General Conference. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the 2020 General Conference was canceled. Conservatives continued to wait, but when the bishops and the General Commission on General Conference cancelled it again in 2021 and in 2022, a point of no return was finally reached for many. Some of the Protocol participants who favored changing the church's traditional stance moved away from their initial pledged support, and the lines of disagreement began to harden once more.

The Wesleyan Covenant Association led by Keith Boyette had been working since 2016 to develop a new expression of Methodism more closely akin to our original understandings in case separation became necessary. Following consultations with leading pastors and lay leaders, it made the decision not to wait any longer and became the midwife of sorts for that expression. It officially launched the Global Methodist Church on May 1, 2022, as a new and independent Wesleyan denomination.

Beginning with the Bulgaria Annual Conference, traditionalist congregations across the church began using the disaffiliation option passed in 2019 to exit the denomination. Before the United Methodist disaffiliation window closed at the end of 2023, more than one-quarter of its congregations had left their former denomination. Many joined the new body, while others remained independent or formed other connections. The Global Methodist Church held its convening General Conference in Costa Rica in September 2024. The GM Church at this writing includes more than 5,000 congregations in 15 countries around the world. Like earlier expressions of Methodism, it is growing rapidly once more as a testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit alive in the hearts of many who are excited to be among "the people called Methodists" in this new truly global expression.

BISHOPS IN THE METHODIST TRADITION

1784 Thomas Coke (MEC)
1784 Francis Asbury (MEC)
1800 Richard Whatcoat (MEC)
1800 Phillip William Otterbein (CUBC)
1800 Martin Boehm (CUBC)
1807 Jacob Albright (EA)
1808 William M'Kendree (MEC)
1813 Christian Newcomber (CUBC)
1816 Enoch George (MEC)
1816 Robert Richford Roberts (MEC)
1817 Andrew Zeller (CUBC)
1821 Joseph Hoffman (CUBC)
1824 Joshua Soule (MEC, MECS)
1824 Elijah Hedding (MEC)
1825 Henry Kumler, Sr. (CUBC)
1832 John Emory (MEC)
1833 Samuel Heistand (CUBC)
1833 William Brown (CUBC)
1836 Beverly Waugh (MEC)
1836 Thomas Asbury Morris (MEC)
1837 Jacob Erb (CUBC)
1839 John Seybert (EA)
1841 Henry Kumler, Jr. (CUBC)
1841 John Coons (CUBC)
1843 Joseph Long (EA)
1844 Leonidas Lent Hamline (MEC)
1844 Edmund Storer Janes (MEC)
1845 John Russel (CUBC)
1845 Jacob John Glossbrenner (CUBC)
1845 William Hanby (CUBC)
1846 William Capers (MECS)
1846 Robert Paine (MECS)
1849 David Edwards (CUBC)
1850 Henry Bidleman Bascom (MECS)
1852 Levi Scott (MEC)
1852 Matthew Simpson (MEC)
1852 Osman Cleander Baker (MEC)
1852 Edward Raymond Ames (MEC)
1853 Lewis Davis (CUBC)
1854 George Foster Pierce (MECS)
1854 John Early (MECS)
1854 Hubbard Hinde Kavanaugh (MECS)
1858 Francis Burns (MEC)
1859 William W. Orwig (EA)
1861 Jacob Markwood (CUBC)
1861 Daniel Shuck (CUBC)
1863 John Jacob Esher (EA)
1864 Davis Wasgatt Clark (MEC)
1864 Edward Thomson (MEC)
1864 Calvin Kingsley (MEC)
1865 Jonathan Weaver (CUBC)
1866 William May Wightman (MECS)
1866 Enoch Mather Marvin (MECS)
1866 David Seth Doggett (MECS)
1866 Holland Nimmons McTyeire (MECS)
1866 John Wright Roberts (MEC)
1869 John Dickson (CUBC)
1870 John Christian Keener (MECS)
1871 Reuben Yeakel (EA)
1872 Thomas Bowman (MEC)
1872 William Logan Harris (MEC)
1872 Randolph Sinks Foster (MEC)
1872 Isaac William Wiley (MEC)
1872 Stephen Mason Merrill (MEC)
1872 Edward Gayer Andrews (MEC)
1872 Gilbert Haven (MEC)
1872 Jesse Truesdell Peck (MEC)
1875 Rudolph Dubs (EA)
1875 Thomas Bowman (EA)
1877 Milton Wright (CUBC)
1877 Nicholas Castle (CUBC)
1880 Henry White Warren (MEC)
1880 Cyrus David Foss (MEC)
1880 John Fletcher Hurst (MEC)
1880 Erastus Otis Haven (MEC)
1881 Ezekiel Boring Kephart (CUBC)
1882 Alpheus Waters Wilson (MECS)
1882 Linus Parker (MECS)
1882 John Cowper Granberry (MECS)
1882 Robert Kennon Hargrave (MECS)
1884 William Xavier Ninde (MEC)

1884 John Morgan Walden (MEC)
1884 Willard Francis Mallalieu (MEC)
1884 Charles Henry Fowler (MEC)
1884 William Taylor (MEC)
1885 Daniel Kumler Flickinger (CUBC)
1886 William Wallace Duncan (MECS)
1886 Charles Betts Galloway (MECS)
1886 Eugene Russell Hendrix (MECS)
1886 Joseph Stanton Key (MECS)
1888 John Heyl Vincent (MEC)
1888 James Newbury FitzGerald (MEC)
1888 Isaac Wilson Joyce (MEC)
1888 John Philip Newman (MEC)
1888 Daniel Ayres Goodsell (MEC)
1888 James Mills Thoburn (MEC)
1889 James W. Hott (CUBC)
1890 Atticus Greene Haygood (MECS)
1890 Oscar Penn Fitzgerald (MECS)
1891 Wesley Matthias Stanford (UEC)
1891 Christian S. Haman (UEC)
1891 Sylvanus C. Breyfogel (EA)
1893 William Horn (EA)
1893 Job S. Mills (CUBC)
1894 Rudolph Dubs (UEC)
1896 Charles Cardwell McCabe (MEC)
1896 Joseph Crane Hartzell (MEC)
1896 Earl Cranston (MEC)
1898 Warren Akin Candler (MECS)
1898 Henry Clay Morrison (MECS)
1900 David Hastings Moore (MEC)
1900 John William Hamilton (MEC)
1900 Edwin Wallace Parker (MEC)
1900 Frances Wesley Warne (MEC)
1902 George Martin Matthews (CUBC)
1902 Alexander Coke Smith (MECS)
1902 Elijah Embree Hoss (MECS)
1902 Henry Burns Hartzler (UEC)
1902 William Franklin Heil (UEC)
1904 Joseph Flintoft Berry (MEC)
1904 Henry Spellmeyer (MEC)
1904 William Frasier McDowell (MEC)
1904 James Whitford Bashford (MEC)
1904 William Burt (MEC)
1904 Luther Barton Wilson (MEC)
1904 Thomas Benjamin Neely (MEC)
1904 Isaiah Benjamin Scott (MEC)
1904 William Fitzjames Oldham (MEC)
1904 John Edward Robinson (MEC)
1904 Merriman Colbert Harris (MEC)
1905 William Marion Weekley (CUBC)
1905 William Melvin Bell (CUBC)
1905 Thomas Coke Carter (CUBC)
1906 John James Tigert III (MECS)
1906 Seth Ward (MECS)
1906 James Atkins (MECS)
1907 Samuel P. Spreng (EA)
1908 William Franklin Anderson (MEC)
1908 John Louis Nuelsen (MEC)
1908 William Alfred Quayle (MEC)
1908 Charles William Smith (MEC)
1908 Wilson Seeley Lewis (MEC)
1908 Edwin Holt Hughes (MEC)
1908 Robert McIntyre (MEC)
1908 Frank Milton Bristol (MEC)
1910 Collins Denny (MECS)
1910 John Carlisle Kilgo (MECS)
1910 William Belton Murrah (MECS)
1910 Walter Russell Lambuth (MECS)
1910 Richard Green Waterhouse (MECS)
1910 Edwin Dubose Mouzon (MECS)
1910 James Henry McCoy (MECS)
1910 William Hargrave Fouke (UEC)
1910 Uriah Frantz Swengel (UEC)
1912 Home Clyde Stuntz (MEC)
1912 William Orville Shepard (MEC)
1912 Theodore S. Henderson (MEC)
1912 Naphtali Luccock (MEC)
1912 Francis John McConnell (MEC)
1912 Frederick DeLand Leete (MEC)
1912 Richard Joseph Cooke (MECS)
1912 Wilbur Patterson Thirkield (MEC)
1912 John Wesley Robinson (MEC)
1912 William Perry Eveland (MEC)
1913 Henry Harness Fout (CUBC)
1913 Cyrus Jeffries Kephart (CUBC)
1913 Alfred Taylor Howard (CUBC)
1915 Gottlieb Heinmiller (EA)
1915 Lawrence Hoover Seager (EA)
1916 Herbert Welch (MEC)
1916 Thomas Nicholson (MEC)
1916 Adna Wright Leonard (MEC)
1916 Matthew Simpson Hughes (MEC)

1916 Charles Bayard Mitchell (MEC)
1916 Franklin Elmer E. Hamilton (MEC)
1916 Alexander Priestly Camphor (MEC)
1916 Eben Samuel Johnson (MEC)
1917 William H. Washinger (CUBC)
1918 John Monroe Moore (MECS)
1918 William Fletcher McMurry (MECS)
1918 Urban Valentine Williams Darlington (MECS)
1918 Horace Mellard DuBose (MECS)
1918 William Newman Ainsworth (MECS)
1918 James Cannon, Jr (MECS)
1918 Matthew T. Maze (UEC)
1920 Lauress John Birney (MEC)
1920 Frederick Bohn Fisher (MEC)
1920 Charles Edward Locke (MEC)
1920 Ernest Lynn Waldorf (MEC)
1920 Edgar Blake (MEC)
1920 Ernest Gladstone Richardson (MEC)
1920 Charles Wesley Burns (MEC)
1920 Harry Lester Smith (MEC)
1920 George Harvey Bickley (MEC)
1920 Frederick Thomas Keeny (MEC)
1920 Charles Larew Mead (MEC)
1920 Anton Bast (MEC)
1920 Robert Elijah Jones (MEC)
1920 Matthew Wesley Clair (MEC)
1921 Arthur Raymond Clippinger (CUBC)
1922 William Ben Beauchamp (MECS)
1922 James Edward Dickey (MECS)
1922 Samuel Ross Hay (MECS)
1922 Hoyt McWhorter Dobbs (MECS)
1922 Hiram Abiff Boaz (MECS)
1922 John Francis Dunlap (EC)
1924 George Amos Miller (MEC)
1924 Titus Lowe (MEC)
1924 George Richmond Grose (MEC)
1924 Brenton Thoburn Badley (MEC)
1924 Wallace Elias Brown (MEC)
1925 Arthur Biggs Statton (CUBC)
1926 John S. Stamm (EC)
1926 Samuel J. Umbreit (EC)
1928 Raymond J. Wade (MEC)
1928 James Chamberrlain Baker (MEC)
1928 Edwin Ferdinand Lee (MEC)
1929 Grant D. Batdorf (CUBC)
1929 Ira David Warner (CUBC)
1930 John W. Gowdy (MEC)
1930 Chi Ping Wang (MEC)
1930 Arthur James Moore (MECS)
1930 Paul Bentley Kern (MECS)
1930 Angie Frank Smith (MECS)
1930 George Edward Epp (EC)
1930 Joshwant Rao Chitamber (MEC)
1932 Juan Ermete Gattinoni (MEC)
1932 Junius Ralph Magee (MEC)
1932 Ralph Spaulding Cushman (MEC)
1932 Elmer Wesley Praetorius (EC)
1934 Charles Henry Stauffacher (EC)
1935 Jarrell Waskom Pickett (MEC)
1936 Roberto Valenzuela Elphick (MEC)
1936 Wilbur Emery Hammaker (MEC)
1936 Charles Wesley Flint (MEC)
1936 Garfield Bromley Oxnam (MEC)
1936 Alexander Preston Shaw (MEC)
1936 John McKendree Springer (MEC)
1936 F.H. Otto Melle (MEC)
1937 Ralph Ansel Ward (MEC)
1938 Victor Otterbein Weidler (CUBC)
1938 Ivan Lee Holt (MECS)
1938 William Walter Peele (MECS)
1938 Claire Purcell (MECS)
1938 Charles Claude Selecman (MECS)
1938 John Lloyd Decell (MECS)
1938 William Clyde Martin (MECS)
1938 William Turner Watkins (MECS)
1939 James Henry Straughn (MPC, MC)
1939 John Calvin Broomfield (MPC, MC)
1940 William Alfred Carroll Hughes (MC)
1940 Lorenzo Houston King (MC)
1940 Bruce Richard Baxter (MC)
1940 Shot Kumar Mondol (MC)
1941 Clement Daniel Rockey (MC)
1941 Enrique Carlos Balloch (MC)
1941 Z.T. Kaung (MC)
1941 Wen Yuan Chen (MC)
1941 George Carleton Lacy (MC)
1941 Fred L. Dennis (CUBC)
1944 Dionisio Deista Alejandro (MC)
1944 Fred Pierce Corson (MC)
1944 Walter Earl Ledden (MC)

1944 Lewis Oliver Hartman (MC)
1944 Newell Snow Booth (MC)
1944 Willis Jefferson King (MC)
1944 Robert Nathaniel Brooks (MC)
1944 Edward Wendall Kelly (MC)
1944 William Angie Smith (MC)
1944 Paul Elliot Martin (MC)
1944 Costen Jordan Harrell (MC)
1944 Paul Neff Garber (MC)
1944 Charles Wesley Brashares (MC)
1944 Schuyler Edward Garth (MC)
1944 Arthur Frederick Wesley (MC)
1945 John Abdus Subhan (MC)
1945 John Balmer Showers (CUBC)
1946 August Theodor Arvidson (MC)
1946 Johann Wilhelm Ernst Sommer (MC)
1948 John Wesley Edward Bowen (MC)
1948 Lloyd Christ Wicke (MC)
1948 John Wesley Lord (MC)
1948 Dana Dawson (MC)
1948 Marvin Augustus Franklin (MC)
1948 Roy Hunter Short (MC)
1948 Richard Campbell Raines (MC)
1948 Marshall Russell Reed (MC)
1948 Harry Clifford Northcott (MC)
1948 Hazen Graff Werner (MC)
1948 Glenn Randall Phillips (MC)
1948 Donald Harvey Tippett (MC)
1948 Jose Labarrete Valencia (MC)
1949 Sante Uberto Barbieri (MC)
1950 Raymond Leroy Archer (MC)
1950 David Thomas Gregory (EUB)
1952 Frederick Buckley Newell (MC)
1952 Edgar Amos Love (MC)
1952 Matthew Walker Clair (MC)
1952 John Warren Branscomb (MC)
1952 Henry Bascom Watts (MC)
1952 D. Stanley Coors (MC)
1952 Edwin Edgar Voigt (MC)
1952 Francis Gerald Ensley (MC)
1952 Alsie Raymond Grant (MC)
1952 Julio Manuel Sabanes (MC)
1953 Friedrich Wunderlich (MC)
1953 Odd Arthur Hagen (MC)
1954 Ferdinand Sigg (MC)
1954 Rueben Herbert Mueller (EUB)
1954 Harold Rickel Heininger (EUB)
1954 Lyle Lynden Baughman (EUB)
1954 Prince Albert Taylor, Jr. (MC)
1956 Eugene Maxwell Frank (MC)
1956 Nolan Bailey Harmon (MC)
1956 Bachman Gladstone Hodge (MC)
1956 Hobart Baumann Amstutz (MC)
1956 Ralph Edward Dodge (MC)
1956 Mangal Singh (MC, MCI)
1956 Gabriel Sundaram (MC, MCI)
1957 Paul E.V. Shannon (EUB)
1957 John Gordon Howard (EUB)
1958 Hermann Walter Kaebnick (EUB)
1958 W. Maynard Sparks (EUB)
1958 Paul Murray Herrick (EUB)
1960 Bowman Foster Stockwell (MC)
1960 Fred Garrigus Holloway (MC)
1960 William Vernon Middleton (MC)
1969 William Ralph Ward, Jr. (MC)
1960 Oliver Eugene Slater (MC)
1960 William Kenneth Pope (MC)
1960 Paul Vernon Galloway (MC)
1960 Aubrey Grey Walton (MC)
1960 Kenneth Wilford Copeland (MC)
1960 Everett Walter Palmer (MC)
1960 Ralph Taylor Alton (MC)
1960 Edwin Ronald Garrison (MC)
1960 Torney Otto Nail, Jr. (MC)
1960 Charles Franklin Golden (MC)
1960 Noah Watson Moore, Jr. (MC)
1960 Marquis LaFayette Harris (MC)
1960 James Walton Henley (MC)
1960 Walter Clark Gum (MC)
1960 Paul Hardin, Jr. (MC)
1960 John Owen Smith (MC)
1960 Paul William Milhouse (EUB)
1962 Pedro Ricardo Zottele (MC)
1964 James Samuel Thomas (MC)
1964 William McFerrin Stowe (MC)
1964 Walter Kenneth Goodson (MC)
1964 Dwight Ellsworth Loder (MC)
1964 Robert Marvin Stuart (MC)
1964 Edward Julian Pendergrass, Jr. (MC)
1964 Thomas Marion Pryor (MC)
1964 Homer Ellis Finger, Jr. (MC)

1964 Earl Gladstone Hunt, Jr. (MC)
1964 Francis Enmer Kearns (MC)
1964 Lance Webb (MC)
1964 Escrivao Anglaze Zunguze (MC)
1964 Robert Fielden Lundy (MC)
1964 Harry Peter Andreassen (MC)
1964 John Wesley Shungu (MC)
1965 Alfred Jacob Shaw (MC)
1965 Prabhakar Christopher Benjamin Balaram (MC)
1965 Stephen Trowen Nagbe (MC)
1966 Franz Werner Schäfer (EMC)
1967 Benjamin I. Guasing (MC)
1967 Lineunt Scott Allen (MC)
1968 Paul Arthur Washburn (EUB)

UNITED METHODIST BISHOPS

1968 Carl Ernst Sommer
1968 David Frederick Wertz
1968 Alsie Henry Carleton
1968 Roy Calvin Nichols
1968 Arthur James Armstrong
1968 William Ragsdale Cannon
1968 Abel Tendekayi Muzorewa
1968 Cornelio M. Ferrer
1968 Paul Locke A. Granadosin
1968 Joseph R. Lance
1968 Ram Dutt Joshi
1969 Eric Algernon Mitchell
1969 Federico Jose Pagura
1970 Armin E. Härtel
1970 Ole Edvard Borgen
1972 Finis Alonzo Crutchfield, Jr.
1972 Joseph Hughes Yeakel
1972 Robert E. Goodrich, Jr.
1972 Carl Julian Sanders
1972 Ernest T. Dixon, Jr.
1972 Don Wendell Holter
1972 Wayne K. Clymer
1972 Joel Duncan McDavid
1972 Edward Gonzalez Carroll
1972 Jesse Robert DeWitt
1972 James Mase Ault
1972 John B. Warman
1972 Mack B. Stokes
1972 Jack Marvin Tuell
1972 Melvin E. Wheatley, Jr.
1972 Edward Lewis Tullis
1972 Frank Lewis Robertson
1972 Wilbur Wong Yan Choy
1972 Robert McGrady Blackburn
1972 Emilio J.M. de Carvalho
1972 Fama Onema
1972 Mamidi Elia Peter
1973 Bennie de Quency Warner
1976 J. Kenneth Shamblin
1976 Alonzo Mark Bryan
1976 Kenneth William Hicks
1976 James Chess Lovern
1976 Leroy Charles Hodapp
1976 Edsel Albert Ammons
1976 C. Dale White
1976 Ngoy Kimba Wakadilo
1976 Almeida Penicela
1976 LaVerne D. Mercado
1977 Herman Ludwig Sticher
1979 Shantu Kumar A. Parmar
1980 John Alfred Ndoricimpa
1980 William Talbot Handy, Jr.
1980 John Wesley Hardt
1980 Benjamin Ray Oliphint
1980 Louis Wesley Schowengerdt
1980 Melvin George Talbert
1980 Paul Andrews Duffey
1980 Edwin Charles Boulton
1980 John William Russell
1980 Fitz Herbert Skeete
1980 George Willis Bashore
1980 Roy Clyde Clark
1980 William Boyd Grove
1980 Emerson Stephen Colaw
1980 Marjorie Swank Matthews
1980 Carlton Printess Minnick, Jr.
1980 Calvin Dale McConnell
1980 Kainda Katembo
1980 Emerito P. Nacpil
1980 Arthur Flumo Kulah
1984 Felton Edwin May
1984 Ernest A. Fitzgerald
1984 R. Kern Eutsler
1984 J. Woodrow Hearn

1984 Walter L. Underwood
1984 Richard B. Wilke
1984 J. Lloyd Knox
1984 Neil L. Irons
1984 Roy Isao Sano
1984 Lewis Bevel Jones III
1984 Forest C. Stith
1984 Ernest W. Newman
1984 Woodie W. White
1984 Robert Crawley Morgan
1984 David J. Lawson
1984 Elias Gabriel Galvan
1984 Rueben Philip Job
1984 Leontine T. Kelly
1984 Judith Craig
1986 Rüdiger Rainer Minor
1986 Jose Castro Gamboa, Jr.
1988 Thomas Barber Stockton
1988 Harold Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr.
1988 Richard Carl Looney
1988 Robert Hitchcock Spain
1988 Susan Murch Morrison
1988 R. Sheldon Duecker
1988 Joseph Benjamin Bethea
1988 William B. Oden
1988 Bruce P. Blake
1988 Charles Wilbourne Hancock
1988 Clay Foster Lee, Jr.
1988 Sharon A. Brown Christopher
1988 Dan E. Solomon
1988 William B. Lewis
1988 William W. Dew, Jr.
1988 Moises Domingos Fernandes
1988 Joao Somane Machado
1989 Walter Klaiber
1989 Heinrich Bolleter
1989 Hans Växby
1992 Alfred Lloyd Norris
1992 Joe Allen Wilson
1992 Robert Eugene Fannin
1992 Amelia Ann B. Sherer
1992 Albert Frederick Mutti
1992 Raymond Harold Owen
1992 Joel Neftali Martinez
1992 Donald Arthur Ott
1992 Kenneth Lee Carder
1992 Hae Jong Kim
1992 William Wesley Morris
1992 Marshall LeRoy Meadors, Jr.
1992 Charles Wesley Jordan
1992 Sharon Zimmerman Rader
1992 S. Clifton Ives
1992 Mary Ann Swenson
1992 Done Peter Dabale
1994 Benjamin Gutierrez
1996 G. Lindsey David
1996 Joseph E. Pennel, Jr.
1996 Charlene Payne Kammerer
1996 Alfred Johnson
1996 Cornelius L. Henderson
1996 Susan Wolfe Hassinger
1996 J. Lawrence McCleskey
1996 Ernest S. Lyght
1996 Janice Riggle Huie
1996 Marion M. Edwards
1996 C. Joseph Sprague
1996 Peter D. Weaver
1996 Jonathan D. Keaton
1996 Roy W. Chamberlain, Jr.
1996 John L. Hopkins
1996 Michael J. Coyner
1996 Edward W. Paup
1996 Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda
1998 Edward W. Williamson (EMC, GMC)
2000 Larry M. Goodpaster
2000 Rhymes H. Moncure, Jr.
2000 Beverly J. Shamana
2000 Violet L. Fisher
2000 Gregory Vaughn Palmer
2000 William W. Hutchinson
2000 B. Michael Watson
2000 D. Max Whitfield
2000 Benjamin Roy Chamness
2000 Linda Lee
2000 James R. King
2000 Bruce R. Ough
2000 Warner H. Brown, Jr.
2000 José Quipungo
2000 Gaspar Joao Domingos
2000 Leo A. Soriano
2000 Benjamin A. Justo

2000 John G. Innis
2001 Øystein Olsen
2001 Timothy W. Whitaker
2001 Solito K. Toquero
2004 Marcus Matthews
2004 Sudarshana Devadhar
2004 Jeremiah J. Park
2004 Hope Morgan Ward
2004 William H. Willimon
2004 James E. Swanson, Sr.
2004 Hee-Soo Jung
2004 Robert E. Hayes (UMC, GMC)
2004 Alfred W. Gwinn, Jr.
2004 John R. Schol
2004 Richard J. Wills, Jr.
2004 Robert C. Schnase
2004 Deborah L. Kiesey
2004 Jane Allen Middleton
2004 Thomas J. Bickerton
2004 Scott J. Jones (UMC, GMC)
2004 Charles N. Crutchfield
2004 Robert T. Hoshibata
2004 Mary Virginia Taylor
2004 Sally Dyck
2004 Minerva G. Carcaño
2004 Eben K. Nhiwatiwa
2005 Hans Växby
2005 David K. Yemba
2005 Rosemarie J. Wenner
2005 Benjamin Boni
2005 Patrick Ph. Streiff
2006 Daniel A. Wandabula
2007 Kefas K. Mavula
2008 Paul Lee Leeland
2008 Wilbert Earl Bledsoe
2008 Peggy A. Johnson
2008 John Michael Lowry (UMC, GMC)
2008 Julius Calvin Trimble
2008 Grant J. Hagiya
2008 James E. Dorff
2008 Elaine J.W. Stanovsky
2008 Joaquina Filipe Nhanala
2008 Roldofo Alfonso Juan
2008 Lito Cabacungan Tangonan
2008 John Kpahun Yambasu
2009 Christian Alsted
2012 Kenneth H. Carter
2012 Sandra Lynn Steiner Ball
2012 William T. McAlilly
2012 Deborah Wallace-Padgett
2012 Martin McLee
2012 Young Jin Cho (UMC, GMC)
2012 Cynthia Fierro Harvey
2012 Mark J. Webb (UMC, GMC)
2012 Gary E. Mueller
2012 Michael McKee
2012 Gabriel Yemba Unda
2012 John Wesley Yohanna (UMC, GMC)
2012 Eduard Khegay
2012 Pedro M. Torio, Jr.
2012 Ciriaco Q. Francisco
2016 Sharma Lewis
2016 David Graves
2016 Leonard Fairley
2016 Lawson Bryan
2016 Sue Haupert-Johnson
2016 Cynthia Moore-KoiKoi
2016 Tracy Smith Malone
2016 Frank Beard
2016 David Bard
2016 LaTrelle Easterling
2016 Ruben Saenz
2016 Laurie Haller
2016 James Nunn
2016 Robert Farr
2016 Karen Oliveto

GLOBAL METHODIST BISHOPS

2023 Mark James Webb (UMC, GMC)
2023 Scott Jameson Jones (UMC, GMC)
2023 Robert E. Hayes (UMC, GMC)*
2023 Edward Williamson (EMC, GMC)*
2023 Young Jin Cho (UMC, GMC)*
2023 John Michael Lowry (UMC, GMC)*
2024 John Wesley Yohanna (UMC. GMC)*
2024 John Pena Auta
2024 Carolyn Capers Moore
2024 Leah Hidde-Gregory
2024 Kimba Kyakutala Evariste
2024 Jeffrey Edward Greenway

2024 Kenneth Ray Levingston

* *Received as bishops emeriti*

DENOMINATIONAL KEY

EA – The Evangelical Association
EC – The Evangelical Church
EMC- Evangelical Methodist Church
EUB – Evangelical United Brethren
CUBC – Church of United Brethren in Christ
GMC – Global Methodist Church
MC – The Methodist Church
MCI- Methodist Church in India
MEC – Methodist Episcopal Church
MECS – Methodist Episcopal Church, South
MPC – Methodist Protestant Church
UB – United Brethren
UEC – United Evangelical Church
UMC – United Methodist Church

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