

**DISCIPLINE**  
**OF THE**  
**EVANGELICAL**  
**METHODIST CHURCH**

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## **HISTORICAL STATEMENT**



## HISTORICAL STATEMENT

¶1. The doctrine and spirit of pure Bible Christianity have existed at different times and in different degrees in all branches of the church of Christ.

¶2. “In 1729 two young men in England, reading the Bible, saw that they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw likewise that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out to raise up a holy people.”

¶3. This was the rise of Methodism as described in the words of its founders, John and Charles Wesley. The name “Methodist” was applied to a group of students led by the Wesleys and George Whitefield in the University of Oxford, England, who came together for intellectual and spiritual improvement. Their systematic way of living merited the name, which was given them by fellow students.

¶4. On the evening of May 24, 1738, John Wesley had undergone his “heart-warming” experience at a meeting of a religious society on Aldersgate Street, in London; an experience which his brother, Charles, had previously found. About a quarter of nine, while listening to Luther’s description of the change, which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, he says:

“I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

¶5. The original associations formed by Mr. Wesley and his preachers were called societies. They were voluntary associations of persons for mutual improvement in experimental and vital piety. They were still members of the Church of England; they attended its regular services and received the sacraments at its altars. A great revival began to spread over the British realm. It was a work of great depth and duration. To the Methodists God committed the precious work of awakening the British Kingdom to a sense of God and duty, and by them He wrought a reformation which stands alone as a spiritual revival without admixture of statecraft or patronage, or parliament or king.

¶6. The first Methodist Society was organized in 1739 when eight or ten persons, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin and earnestly groaning for redemption, came to John Wesley. 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. That they might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thence forward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. Their number increased daily. To all these he gave advice, which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meetings with prayer suited to their several necessities.

¶7. After this rise of the United Societies in Europe, the spiritual movement fostered by them spread to America. In 1766 Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, began to preach in New York City and formed a Society in the John Street Church. Another local preacher, Thomas Webb, a captain in the British Army, soon joined him and began preaching. About the same time, Robert Strawbridge, from Ireland, settled in Frederick County, Maryland, preaching there and forming societies.

¶8. In 1769 Wesley sent Richard Broadman and Joseph Pilmore to America and two years later Francis Asbury, who was to become the most memorable and influential man in American Methodism. Wesley ordained Thomas Coke and gave him authority to exercise the office of a bishop, calling him a superintendent, which is only another name for the same thing. Dr. Coke was sent to America with authority to ordain Asbury to the same Episcopal office. These two were to give general superintendency of all the Methodist societies in America.

¶9. The first Annual Conference of American Methodism was held in Philadelphia in 1773. The business was simple and brief. It consisted mainly in the agreement of the preachers to abide by the doctrines and *Discipline* of Mr. Wesley. There were ten traveling preachers, six circuits, and one thousand, one hundred and sixty members. The first circuit was organized in North Carolina and was called the “Carolina Circuit.” During a one year period, in 1777 and 1778, eighteen hundred souls were added to the societies. The work was signally owned of God; at the close of the War of the Revolution the number of traveling preachers was about eighty, and the members in the societies were about fifteen thousand.

¶10. When the independence of the United States was acknowledged by the Treaty of 1783, the American Methodists, most of whom had been members of the Church of England, were, according to the declaration of Mr. Wesley, “totally disentangled both from the state and the English hierarchy.” He added: “They are now at full liberty to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church, and we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.”

¶11. With a firm conviction that the gulf that separates conservative and liberal thought in the church is an ever-widening chasm which can never be healed, the Evangelical Methodist Church came into being to preserve the distinctive doctrines of primitive Methodism, founded upon the inspiration and authenticity of the Bible and upon the Articles of Religion as set forth by John Wesley.

On May 9, 1946, in the city of Memphis, Tennessee, a small group of preachers and laymen met together for consultation and prayer, endeavoring to cope with the growing apostasy of the church. After long hours of waiting before God in prayer, they felt definitely led of God to organize the Evangelical Methodist Church.

¶12. Dr. J. H. Hamblen, of Abilene, Texas, was elected chairman of the group meeting in Memphis, and was elected the first General Superintendent of the Evangelical Methodist Church the following November at the first Annual Conference at Kansas City, Missouri. In praying for the new movement, Dr. Hamblen prayed: “Oh, Lord, if this movement be of Thy will, bless and prosper it; but, Lord, if not of Thy will, then let it die here and now.”

At the first conference session Dr. Ezequiel B. Vargas, Superintendent of the Mexican Evangelistic Mission, founded in 1926, was present and proposed that this work become a part of the Evangelical Methodist Church. At this time the Mexican Evangelistic Mission was made a part of the church. In 1954 the work was designated as the Mexico District. In 1957 the Mexican Evangelistic Conference, including all of the territory of Mexico, was established as the first Mission Conference. Dr. E. B. Vargas was elected by the General Conference to preside as General Superintendent over it.

¶13. On June 4, 1960, the Evangel Church, Inc. in session at its Annual Conference voted to unite with the Evangelical Methodist Church and thus

become a part of the California District. Formerly known as the Evangelistic Tabernacles and founded by Dr. William Kirby and Dr. Cornelius P. Haggard, the group dates back to March 27, 1933. At the time of merger there were 8 churches and about 675 enrolled in Sunday school, with Rev. R. Lloyd Wilson serving as president of the organization. This merger was approved by the Western Annual Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church on June 22, 1960.

¶14. On July 3, 1962, the General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church voted to merge with the People's Methodist Church, formerly known as the People's Christian Movement, which came into being on January 1, 1938, with Rev. Jim H. Green as the first General Superintendent. The merger was finalized by vote of the People's Methodist Church at a subsequent conference in the summer of 1962. Rev. J. Neal Anderson, General Superintendent at the time of the merger, was elected Superintendent of the Virginia-North Carolina District.

¶15. The Evangelical Methodist Church of Myanmar was born from missionary efforts dating back to 1897. The influence of the Welsh revivals in the early 1900's had a great impact on the development of the small but committed Christian community of Myanmar. Within the Methodist Church in Myanmar were two doctrinal persuasions — Arminianism and Calvinism. In 1998 the leaders and pastors who had aligned with historic Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine organized with a desire to identify with a like-minded denomination. In 2001, a contact was made from this group of Methodists to the International Headquarters. After months of inquiry and the seeking of recommendations a visit was made to Myanmar by the Chairman of the General Board of World Missions and the General Superintendent in February 2003. In September 2003, the General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church and the Evangelical Methodist Church of Myanmar began a cooperative ministry relationship. The Evangelical Methodist Church of Myanmar became a Mission Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church in July 2006. Rev. Dar Ro Thanga served as the first General Superintendent of the Evangelical Methodist Church of Myanmar.

¶16. In 2010, the General Conference approved the formation of only two districts: one in Canada and one in the United States. The two mission conferences of Mexico and Myanmar were maintained. Regions (clusters

of churches in close proximity) were established with Conference Superintendents as overseers of the activities of each region.

¶17. The rise and spread of the movement has been evidence of divine approval. The Evangelical Methodist Church in belief and practice knows that the only infallible proof of any genuine church of Christ is its ability to seek and save the lost, to disseminate the Christian spirit and life, to spread scriptural holiness as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Word of God, over all lands, and to transform all people through the Gospel of Christ.

¶18. The sole object of the rules, regulations, and usages of the Evangelical Methodist Church is that it may fulfill in all places and years its original, divine commission as a leader in the evangelistic proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, in moral reforms by being true to the Bible, and seeking the salvation of all men from all sin through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.



# CONSTITUTION



# THE CONSTITUTION

## Chapter 1. Articles of Religion

### *I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.*

¶21. There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; 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.

### *II. Of the Word, or Son of God, who was made very man.*

¶22. 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 his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

### *III. Of the Resurrection of Christ.*

¶23. 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.

### *IV. Of the Holy Ghost.*

¶24. 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.

### *V. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.*

¶25. The Holy Scriptures contain 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 Scriptures, 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:*

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 Song 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.

*VI. Of the Old Testament.*

¶26. 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 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 necessity to be received in any Commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

*VII. Of Original or Birth Sin.*

¶27. 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.

*VIII. Of Free Will.*

¶28. 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 enabling us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

### *IX. Of the Justification of Man.*

¶29. 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: whereof, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

### *X. Of Good Works.*

¶30. 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 evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

### *XI. Of Works of Supererogation.*

¶31. Voluntary works, besides, over and above God's commandments, which are called 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 ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

### *XII. Of Sin After Justification.*

¶32. 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.

### *XIII. Of the Church.*

¶33. 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.

#### *XIV. Of Purgatory.*

¶34. The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping 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.

#### *XV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand.*

¶35. 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.

#### *XVI. Of the Sacraments.*

¶36. 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 the 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 of 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 we worthily receive the same way have they a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith, I Cor. XI. 29.

#### *XVII. Of Baptism.*

¶37. 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.

### *XVIII. Of the Lord's Supper.*

¶38. 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 the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and have 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 means whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith.

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

### *XIX. Of Both Kinds.*

¶39. 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.

### *XX. Of the One Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.*

¶40. 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 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.

### *XXI. Of the Marriage of Ministers*

¶41. 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.

### *XXII. Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches*

¶42. 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 speak against the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the work 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.

*XXIII. Of the Rulers of the United States of America\**

¶43. 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, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitution of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

\*The twenty-third Article of Religion in the Disciplines of all our church in foreign lands shall read:

*XXIII. 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 they 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.

*XXIV. Of Christian Men's Goods.*

¶44. 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.

*XXV. Of a Christian Man's Oath.*

¶45. 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.

## XXVI. Perfect Love.\*

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

[\*Explanation: Christian perfection is a state of righteousness and true holiness, which every regenerate believer may obtain. It consists in being cleansed from all sin, loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This gracious state of perfect love is obtainable in this life by faith, both gradually and instantaneously, and every child of God should earnestly seek to grow in grace. It does not deliver us from temptations, infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes, which are common to man. We accept as our doctrinal interpretation, *Wesley's Sermons*, *Wesley's Notes on the New Testament*, *Wesley's Journal*, and *Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.]

## Chapter 2. General Rules

¶51. 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;

Profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein, or by buying or selling;

Drunkenness, or drinking spirituous liquors unless in cases of necessity;

*Fighting*, quarreling, brawling; *brother going to law with brother*; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; *the using of 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 or 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.

¶52. 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 way kind and 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, reprovng, 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*.

¶53. 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 these ordinances of God; which 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; and  
Fasting, or abstinence.

¶54. 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 all 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.

### **Chapter 3. Church Government**

#### *PREAMBLE*

The founders of the Evangelical Methodist Church took the *Book of Discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church as the basis for their new movement. The goal was to keep the best of the connectional and congregational aspects. The highest legislative body in the denomination is the General Conference.

All local church boards, conference boards and general boards are connected to one another under the Constitution and By-laws enacted by the General Conference in the *Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church*. Our local churches, pastors, and district conferences are not independent affiliates. Together we have one purpose and vision as outlined in “The Basic Denominational Principles”, Chapter 4, ¶71-77. “They can be summed up in six brief statements: The church is *orthodox* in belief, *pre-millennial* regarding the second coming, *missionary* in outlook, *evangelistic* in endeavor, *cooperative* in spirit, and *Wesleyan* in doctrine.”

The Evangelical Methodist Church is a denomination in contrast to an association of churches and ministers. The local church, district

conference, and general conference are connectional in government operating by the *Discipline*.

¶61. The Evangelical Methodist Church is both congregational and connectional in its form of government.

¶62. It is connectional in that the entire church operates under the Constitution and By-Laws enacted by the General Conference in the *Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church*. All local churches who affiliate with the Evangelical Methodist Church operate under the *Discipline*.

¶63. It is congregational in two ways.

First—as to property rights. This can be done in one of three ways:

- (1) Property rights are vested, with respect to ownership and maintenance, in the local church and held in trust to the local church by the trustees of the local church. See ¶208 and ¶209 (7).
- (2) Provided, however, that where a two-thirds majority of the local church expresses their desire by ballot, all properties of the local church may be held by the trustees in the following manner: In trust, that said premises shall be used, kept, maintained, and disposed of as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Evangelical Methodist Church, subject to the *Discipline* and usages of said church, as authorized and declared by the General Conference of said church.
- (3) The General Conference may make provision for the holding of property, other than the above, when mission money or general funds are involved.

¶64. Second—as to calling a pastor. The choice of pastor is vested with the local church for its final authority, subject to the *Discipline* as authorized and declared by the General Conference.

## **Chapter 4. Basic Denominational Principles**

### **DIVISION 1. OUTLOOK**

¶71. There are certain basic principles that underlie and compel the existence of the Evangelical Methodist Church. They can be summed up in six brief statements: The church is *orthodox* in belief, *pre-millennial*

regarding the second coming, *missionary* in outlook, *evangelistic* in endeavor, *cooperative* in spirit, and *Wesleyan* in doctrine.

¶72. We mean by orthodox in belief that we take our stand on the Bible as the Word of God—its plenary, unique inspiration and its supreme authority in our lives.

¶73. We are pre-millennial in belief that the second coming of Christ will precede a literal thousand year reign of Christ and then earthly history will come to a final climax. There will follow a literal ‘new heaven and new earth’ where those who have been washed by the blood of Christ for their sins will live eternally with the Triune God.

¶74. We mean by missionary in outlook that there is a burning desire to keep before the world the size of the plan of redemption, that ‘He by the grace of God should taste death for every man,’ and to hasten under all possible Christian means the salvation of men, and to keep before the church the magnitude of her unfinished task.

¶75. By the statement that we are evangelistic in endeavor we mean that we seek the salvation of men through concentrated effort to win them to Christ. That concentrated effort largely is the awakening that comes in revival spirit when the Holy Spirit convicts of sin in either mass evangelism or personal evangelism. We seek to promote true revivals of religion in our churches as the supreme aim of the church and relate men to Christ in saving and sanctifying grace.

¶76. We are cooperative in spirit. We urge and believe that we should cooperate with other like bodies of the evangelical Christian faith and not withdraw ourselves into a closed religious corporation. The largeness of the undertaking, the brevity of opportunity, and the constraining love of Christ all show that we should cooperate to the fullest with Bible-believing Christians everywhere, and still maintain a deep and abiding loyalty to our own church as a God-directed and Christ-centered movement for such a time as this.

¶77. We are Wesleyan in doctrine, in that we affirm that salvation is received through faith alone, by the grace of God, not human performance. This grace enables a person to make a choice to receive the message of salvation, repent, and be converted to Christ. God’s will is for every person

to be saved, and Christ's death was a universal atonement for the sins of all generations. The work of the Holy Spirit through sanctification is progressive throughout life, resulting in continuing growth into a mature reflection of Christ to the world. The believer experiences a 'Pentecost' that cleanses the heart from self-interest in a defining experience of total surrender to God and empowers him/her to be a greater witness for Christ. We are in this life to fully experience the mind of Christ and the perfect love of God which is single focused to serve God and humanity.

## **DIVISION 2. CONFERENCES**

¶81. There shall be Annual Church Conferences in each church or pastoral charge which shall operate under and in harmony with the General Conference and shall be constituted with powers, duties, and privileges as set forth in the *Discipline*.

¶82. There shall be District Conferences which shall operate under and in harmony with the General Conference and shall be constituted with powers, duties, and privileges as are set forth in the *Discipline*.

¶83. There shall be Mission Conferences, which shall operate under and in harmony with the General Conference and shall be constituted with powers, duties and privileges as are set forth in the *Discipline*.

¶84. There shall be a General Conference for the international church with powers, duties, and privileges as are set forth in the *Discipline*. The General Conference shall constitute the law-making body of our church and shall operate under and in harmony with the Constitution.

## **DIVISION 3. MINISTRY**

¶91. The Constitution provides for one ministerial ordination, that of elder. Active elders, members on trial, and deacons and deaconesses are members with voting privileges of the Conference within which they reside. Elders and members on trial are known as traveling preachers to distinguish them from local preachers who are not members of the Conference.

¶92. The General Conference shall provide the qualifications, duties, powers, and privileges of elders, members on trial, local preachers, and deacons and deaconesses.

## **DIVISION 4. ADMINISTRATION**

¶101. There shall be superintendents to supervise the work of the church.

¶102. The International General Superintendent(s) shall be elected by ballot by the General Conference according to the provisions of the *Discipline*. The qualifications, powers, duties, privileges, and limitations of the General Superintendent(s) shall be defined by the General Conference to whom they are amenable for administrative responsibility. The areas of service shall be assigned by the General Conference, but if no areas are assigned the General Superintendent(s) shall agree as to their respective areas.

¶103. There shall be Conference Superintendents, the number being determined by the General Conference, who shall be elected by ballot by the General Conference according to the provisions of the *Discipline*. The qualifications, powers, duties, privileges and limitations of Conference Superintendents shall be defined by the General Conference, to which they are amenable for administrative responsibility. The areas of their service, both geographical and expertise, shall be assigned by the General Conference, but if no areas are assigned the Cabinet of Superintendents shall determine their respective areas of service.

### **Chapter 5. Amendments to the Constitution**

¶111. The Constitution can be amended only by the following procedure: (1) Three-fourths majority vote of any General Conference, and (2) Ratification by two-thirds of the local churches voting in a referendum according to the provisions set forth in the *Discipline*.

¶112. Proposed amendments to the Constitution may originate in the General Conference, a Mission Conference, or a local church.

### **Chapter 6. By-Laws**

¶121. All which follows in the *Discipline*, not specifically in the Constitution, shall be known as the By-Laws.

¶122. The By-Laws can be amended by any General Conference, but must always be in harmony with and not contrary to the Constitution.

## **Chapter 7. The *Discipline* of the Evangelical Methodist Church**

¶131. The *Discipline* is a comprehensive statement of mutually agreed upon principles, purposes, promises, and procedures guiding that covenant denominational relationship known as the Evangelical Methodist Church. The *Discipline* contains the law of the church.

**PRINCIPLES:** Our principles are included in our Historical Statement (¶1-18), our Constitution (¶21-131) and in our concept of a Christian church (¶201). A clear understanding of those passages will provide and strengthen a realization of who we are and why we are in existence. Although we became a denominational identity in May 1946, our roots reach back for more than two centuries. We are a part of that vital stream of spirituality called Methodism, which God liberated through the lives and ministries of John and Charles Wesley. We share not only an honorable history but also a biblical faith. Point by point our Articles of Religion connect us with the doctrinal teachings of the apostolic church. We are Trinitarians, and we believe in the inspiration, the inerrancy, the authority, and the relevancy of the whole Bible, being persuaded it is the Word of God. We believe in the depravity of the human race and its resultant condemnation. We also believe in a salvation obtainable only through faith in the redemptive death of Jesus the Christ and the regeneration resulting from His bodily resurrection. We believe in and teach the necessity of a second experience of God's amazing grace, the infilling of God the Holy Spirit, cleansing the heart from self-interest and empowering the believer to live a holy life.

**PURPOSES:** The purposes of the Evangelical Methodist Church are contained in the Local Church section of our By-Laws (See ¶201-204). Together they condense into four very specific goals:

- (1) To promote Christian worship through praise, prayer, the exposition of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the sharing of His Sacraments;

- (2) To foster and encourage spiritual growth through Bible-based Christian Education and Discipleship programs, and by providing a context for both religious and social fellowship;
- (3) To proclaim and demonstrate Scriptural holiness in the Wesleyan tradition;
- (4) To evangelize the world by engaging in aggressive missionary outreach at home and abroad.

These are lofty but attainable objectives. However, in order to be successful, there must be an unreserved acceptance of and commitment to each goal by our conferences, laymen and ministers, individuals and congregations. Unity is necessary if we are to succeed in our mission.

**PROMISES:** Promises are the voluntary bond of our unity. While all believers are bound together in the Body of Christ, uniting them in common ministry is often challenging. It requires a group of individuals to share in commitment to an effort greater than any personal ambition. When a diverse group of individuals join together in such a common cause, promises, made and kept, maintain a cohesive, effective group.

Promises to God and each other are found in ¶204, the By-Laws and the Ritual. In ¶204, there are promises exchanged between the local church and the denomination that cover congregational and denominational connectional rights and responsibilities. They become a legal bond through an Affiliation Agreement signed by representatives of both bodies.

There are also promises relating to membership and ministry. All members of the Evangelical Methodist Church are required to take vows of repentance, faith, obedience, and service. These are contained in ¶1281 and ¶1291. Promises concerning the service of Church Officers, Boards and Committees are in ¶1381 and ¶1382, while those for Sunday School and Vacation Bible School workers are in ¶1391 and ¶1392. Making and keeping these promises strengthens the individual and collective ministries of those making the commitments.

Promises and integrity are required from those who are trusted with the responsibility of ordained ministry. Some are contained in ¶852, but most are in the ordination and consecration rituals in that section of the *Discipline*.

**PROCEDURES:** Procedures enter the picture when these promises are understood. They are the tools with which we coordinate and utilize the

promises and resources of congregations, individuals and conferences in fulfilling our purposes and reaching our goals.

We believe God provides each congregation with all that is necessary for it to be successful in accomplishing the task He calls it to do. His provision is adequate in every area—spiritual, material and physical. Regardless of the need, His provision is there, either in hand or on deposit awaiting withdrawal. It is important to remember that we are stewards rather than owners of those assets, and that we are finally accountable to Him for that stewardship. Therefore, great care should be given to carrying out His agenda in the methods and programs we employ.

No claim is made of either past or present perfection of our *Discipline*. Time, experience, and a constantly changing society have prompted frequent revision in the past, and the process is likely to continue in the future. However, the claim is made that it is a good working tool, fashioned by honest men and women in a sincere effort to assist the Evangelical Methodist Church in being effective in ministry. Whether or not it fulfills that purpose depends upon the integrity of the people called Evangelical Methodist.

## **BY-LAWS**



## **THE LOCAL CHURCH**



# THE LOCAL CHURCH

## Chapter 1. Purpose

¶201. The Christian Church is composed of all believers who are trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ for salvation and cleansing from all sin. The local church is a collection of persons who believe and practice that the Holy Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, inerrant in the originals, and is the final authority for life and truth. They are converted to God (born again), accepting the salvation of Jesus Christ through faith in His atonement made for the sins of all men. The local church is also a collection of persons, who by mutual agreement unite for the purpose of worshipping God, for Christian fellowship, to receive the Word of God through preaching, to receive the Sacraments, to pray and work together, to seek and save the lost, to disseminate the Christian spirit and life, and to send out the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is recommended, though not required, that each church consider having an altar rail or mourner's bench in a prominent place in front of the pulpit.

¶202. The local church, acting in its Annual Church Conferences, constitutes the basic governmental body of the Evangelical Methodist Church. All other conferences and officers derive their administrative powers and duties from the local church acting through its delegates at the appropriate conference and General Conference levels. The local churches act cooperatively at the district and general levels by carrying out the programs and following the *Discipline* adopted by their delegates at these conferences, which is the connectional (hierarchical) form of our structure (¶61, 62).

¶203. The local church shall promote Christian worship, teach the whole Bible, cause to be preached the teachings of Christ, evangelize the unsaved, promote missions and multicultural ministries to all ethnic groups both at home and abroad, minister to the local needs, foster and encourage religious and social fellowship among its members, and apply the teachings of Christ to everyday life.

¶204. The word congregation shall refer to the body of members of a local church. One or more churches or satellite churches of a local church

shall constitute a pastoral charge under the *Discipline*, properly organized and to which a minister has been duly called, or appointed, as pastor in charge. Every such local congregation is an integral part of the conferences of churches known as the Evangelical Methodist Church, whose purpose it shall be to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the world in accordance with the Wesleyan tradition: (1) Regeneration — the new birth — in the heart of the repentant sinner; (2) Sanctification — the baptism of the Holy Spirit — subsequent to regeneration, and instantaneously wrought in the heart of the believer; and to serve God and our fellowmen in the fullness of love. The Evangelical Methodist Church does not accept the doctrinal position that speaking in tongues is the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The local church cooperates with the designated conferences of the church and supports the work through all of its organizations as outlined in the *Discipline*. It is represented at and reports to the District Conference and accepts the *Discipline* as to general practice and ritual. It shall not legislate nor promote doctrines or policies not in keeping with the *Discipline*. The local church is congregational in government with property rights vested in the local church, except as provided otherwise in ¶63; in all cases, property rights shall be exercised as provided in the *Discipline*, including without limitation ¶208 and ¶209(7). The church is also connectional and churches desiring to unite with the Evangelical Methodist Church shall sign the following affiliation resolution and secure the approval of the General Council, the Conference Superintendent and the General Superintendent. Two copies of the affiliation resolution shall be sent to the Conference Superintendent who shall forward one copy to the General Secretary. This affiliation resolution has no bearing upon ownership of property or disciplinary provisions thereof.

The affiliation resolution shall read:

Resolution of a congregation located at \_\_\_\_\_ desiring to be known as the \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelical Methodist Church of \_\_\_\_\_ requesting formal affiliation with the Evangelical Methodist Church, with Headquarters at Indianapolis, Indiana.

WHEREAS, this congregation desiring to be known as the \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelical Methodist Church of \_\_\_\_\_ has accepted as to general practice and ritual that body of religious doctrine, and that

collection of rules and procedure and organization entitled, *Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church*, and

WHEREAS, this congregation desires to formally affiliate with, have membership in, support the spiritual and financial programs of said Evangelical Methodist Church, and to send delegates to its Conferences;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by this congregation on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_ that they request said Evangelical Methodist Church accept and approve this request for affiliation and acknowledge that acceptance and approval.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of this congregation is hereby authorized and directed to send two (2) true copies of this Affiliation Resolution, duly certified by him (her) to be such, to the Conference Superintendent.

CERTIFICATION:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the duly elected and acting Secretary in charge of the Minute Book and records of this congregation, hereby certify this to be a full, true and correct record of action taken by this congregation in a legal meeting held on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_, and that the action has not been modified or rescinded and is at the date of this certification in full force and effect.

In witness whereof, I the undersigned have executed this certificate in the presence of these witnesses this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

¶ 205. The local church treasurer shall send 10% of its regular monthly general fund income to the General Treasurer each month. These funds shall be known as *conference support*. Conference support is to be used for the administration of the programs of the denomination as decided

upon by the General Conference. Conference Support shall be capped at \$50,000 for any one church for any conference year, if a church so chooses.

¶206. The church treasurer and pastor shall check to see that all Conference Support has been paid at the end of the fiscal year and shall report the same to the Annual Church Conference on the properly designated annual report forms. If there is a shortage of Conference Support payments, the Conference Superintendent shall annually report to the General Council the deficit. The church shall be encouraged to make up the deficit within thirty days after the Annual Church Conference.

¶207. The pastor, and the chair of the Board of Stewards, or, if there is no pastor, the chair of the Board of Stewards, shall certify annual report accuracy that the church has paid its Conference Support when reports are submitted to the General Conference. If Conference Support is not paid in full, the church shall indicate in writing what plans have been made for fulfilling the obligation within thirty days of submitting the report to the Conference Superintendent. When the deficit is made up, the person or persons responsible must certify the same to the General Conference Treasurer.

¶208. A local church may not sell, transfer, or exchange real property without notification being given to the Conference Superintendent. This protects the accumulation of the investments of people in the local church and ensures the proper procedures of the *Discipline* being followed. As a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization, the federal law and courts consider the *Discipline* the legal and binding authority upon every church that affiliates with the Evangelical Methodist Church. As a legal binding document, the *Discipline* must be followed by the local church and the pastor in all the procedures.

¶209. In the event that a local church requests to vote on the question of withdrawal from the Evangelical Methodist Church, the local church must follow the procedure set out below:

- (1) **Six months prior to vote.** Six months prior to the Annual Church Conference the Cabinet of Superintendents must be notified in writing by the Board of Stewards and the Pastor in charge that a request for withdrawal is pending. The Superintendent(s) shall meet with the Board of Stewards, immediately followed by a

congregational meeting, to be held within one month after receiving the notification, for prayer and discussion of the issues. Additional or subsequent meetings may be held at the option of the congregation or the Cabinet of Superintendents.

- (2) **Four weeks prior to vote.** If a withdrawal vote is requested, the Conference Superintendents must be notified in writing by the Pastor and the Chair of the Board of Stewards at least four (4) weeks prior to the Annual Church Conference that a request for withdrawal will be considered at the Annual Church Conference. Withdrawal may not be considered at a Special Called Conference or congregational meeting. A complete active membership roll must be provided to the Conference Superintendents and no new members may be received from the date of the written notification referred to in paragraph (1) above. The International General Superintendent designates a Conference Superintendent who must preside at the taking of any vote on the subject of (a) the local church's withdrawal from the denomination and/or (b) the local church's conveying, selling, exchanging, or encumbering of property in connection with, or in any way related to, a withdrawal. A written notice from the Board of Stewards and the Pastor must be provided to the congregation with their summary of reasons for a request of withdrawal with a copy to be submitted to the General Secretary.
- (3) **Two weeks prior to vote.** At least two (2) weeks in advance of the withdrawal vote, the General Secretary must certify in writing to the International General Superintendent and Conference Superintendent, with a copy to the local church, that the local church has paid its conference support to date and repaid to the denomination all monies disbursed to that local church by the denomination (the "Disbursed Funds"). The Disbursed Funds include, but are not limited to grants, loans, and monies disbursed to that local church by the denomination for any and all purposes, including amounts paid directly to the pastor as salary. No withdrawal vote may be taken unless the local church has received this written certification two (2) weeks prior to the vote.
- (4) **The initial vote.** A withdrawal vote can be taken only at the time of the Annual Church Conference. The motion to withdraw requires a favorable vote of three-fourths of the eligible church membership present and voting for passage. If an initial withdrawal

motion receives a three-fourths vote, the pastor and any lay persons in the local church who hold offices in the General Conference shall be deemed to have resigned those positions.

- (5) **The one-year waiting period.** If the motion to withdraw receives the necessary three-fourths vote, there shall be a waiting period of one year (the “waiting period”).
- (6) **The second vote.** At the end of the waiting period, a second vote on the motion to withdraw must be taken. If the motion to withdraw again receives the necessary three-fourths vote, the withdrawal shall be effective immediately. The pastor shall surrender his/her credentials or resign as pastor of the church, effective the day of the final vote.
- (7) **Sixty day notice of transactions.** No property belonging to a local church may be conveyed, sold, exchanged, or encumbered unless the local church provides written notice at least sixty (60) days in advance of the proposed transaction to the Conference Superintendent. The written notice must (a) explain the purpose of the planned transaction; (b) state the nature and the address of the person or entity to whom or to which the local church proposes to convey, sell, exchange, or encumber property; (c) list the entity’s trustees and officers; and (d) state the impact of the proposed transaction upon any current member’s ability to attend church (and if there is any such impact, what provision the local church will make to meet that need).
- (8) **No property transaction until after certification of second vote.** The local church may not transfer, sell, exchange or encumber property in connection with, or in any way related to a withdrawal from the Evangelical Methodist Church unless the Conference Superintendent has certified in writing to the International General Superintendent, with a copy to the local church, that the local church has paid its conference support to date and has completed each step of the procedure outlined in ¶209, including but not limited to a vote of three-quarters of the members present and eligible to vote in favor of withdrawal during two consecutive Annual Church Conferences that were presided over by the Conference Superintendent. In addition, any document that transfers, sells, exchanges or encumbers property in connection with, or in any way related to, a withdrawal must be countersigned by the Conference Superintendent in order to be valid.

¶210. Encumbrance of church property shall be made only upon favorable vote of two-thirds of the eligible voting membership of the local church present and voting at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Church Conference according to the disciplinary provision. Notice of such church conference shall be made at least two Sundays prior to such meeting, which may occur as early as the second Sunday.

¶211. In the event a local church is dissolved, the local church shall transfer to the General Board of Trustees the title to all church property, subject to prior claims and lien holders. In disposing the property, any written recommendation(s) of the congregation may be considered.

¶212. Church plants approved as funded projects and receiving General Conference funds shall be considered, for this purpose, equivalent to a local church with all congregational and connectional relationships prior to the actual signing of the Affiliation Resolution. In the event the church plant is dissolved or fails to sign the Affiliation Resolution, all conference funding must be returned to the appropriate conference and all assets become the property of the conference or the parent church if the church plant is a satellite church plant. The representatives of the church plant or church restart must sign a contract provided by the Forms Committee that granted assets will be returned or refunded based upon the listed conditions above. There shall be no transfer of assets of a church plant or restart project directly to another church or individual other than the parent church or General Conference.

¶213. When a local church declines to twelve or less active church members and/or the average attendance is under ten (10), the local church enters a mission church status for a two (2) year period. A local church may also request this status at any time, which may be granted by the Board of Evangelism and the Conference Superintendents. Procedures for a mission-status church include the following:

- (1) Two members of the Board of Evangelism and Cabinet of Superintendents, shall comprise a Relaunch Committee with all administrative functions of the local church, assisted by the local church pastor and selected leadership.
- (2) A redevelopment ministry path may be developed by the Board of Evangelism for the Cabinet of Superintendents who will implement the plan upon their review.

- (3) After the two (2) year period there will be an evaluation and recommendation by the Relaunch Committee to the General Council. The General Council will vote at that time to return the mission-status church to full church status, to maintain the mission-church status, or to recommend closure of the church.

¶214. The Conference Superintendent and/or the International General Superintendent shall have direct access to the pulpit of every local church to carry out their duties and ministry in public worship, to the local church Board of Stewards, and to the Pastoral Relations Committee.

¶215. No Evangelical Methodist Church credential holder shall knowingly perform same sex or transgendered marriages, or same sex unions and, the Evangelical Methodist Church shall deny access to all church property and facilities for same sex or transgendered marriage ceremonies and any other activity that is deemed contrary to the denomination's interpretation of biblical standards or General Conference resolutions or legislation.

## **Chapter 2. Membership**

¶221. All persons who have been saved from their sins, who believe in Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son, that He was born of a virgin, that He died for our sins, that He was buried and the third day rose from the dead, that He ascended into heaven and is coming again, and who have confessed Him as their Lord and Savior before men, and who are willing to walk in the light as given by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God may be considered for membership in the Evangelical Methodist Church.

¶222. When the senior pastor, or in the absence of the senior pastor, a Conference Superintendent, is satisfied that the candidates for membership are born-again Christians, when they have been baptized, and have taken the vows of church membership, and have knowledge of and have expressed willingness to keep the doctrines, rules, and regulations of the Evangelical Methodist Church, he/she shall receive them into membership and present them to the church. The ritual of church membership vows (1-4) in ¶1281 and ¶1291 must be used for valid membership in the local church. The ritual may be added to by the pastor,

but the vows shall not be edited or omitted. The membership ritual defines the legal status of a person's membership in a local church.

¶223. Members in good standing in any evangelical church who desire to unite with us may be received into full membership by taking the vows and after having given satisfactory evidence of their willingness to support and be loyal to the Evangelical Methodist Church.

¶224. Associate membership is available to those who desire membership in a local Evangelical Methodist Church but must hold membership elsewhere. Privileges of associate membership shall exclude voting on the pastoral question (¶251), voting on the pastoral call (¶252), voting on the sale of property (¶208), and voting on the question of withdrawal from the denomination (¶209). Associate membership is non-expiring as long as membership expectations are met.

¶225. When requested by a member, or his/her delegated representative, a certificate of transfer shall be granted and sent to the pastor, or secretary, of the church to which he/she is transferring, by the pastor or secretary.

¶226. A letter of withdrawal shall be issued when requested by an individual, and the reason for withdrawal recorded in the membership roll book.

¶227. In accordance with the criteria set forth in ¶239, anyone joining another denomination without a certificate of transfer or regularly attending another church fellowship shall be recorded as having withdrawn.

¶228. Persons listed in the national and/or a state registry of convicted sex offenders, or convicted of a similar crime, shall not hold a voluntary position of ministry to children, youth, or adults. The local church should approve a policy that governs such persons present in their congregations while maintaining the redemptive work and ministry of Christ to such persons.

### **Chapter 3. Annual Church Conference**

¶231. The Conference Superintendent shall set the time for the Annual Church Conference in consultation with the pastor.

¶232. The date of the Annual Church Conference shall be published at least two Sundays prior to said meeting, and the voting members present, who shall be at least sixteen years of age, shall constitute a quorum.

¶233. A Conference Superintendent, or his/her appointed representative, shall act as chairman of the meeting. The Annual Church Conference shall be rescheduled if he or she cannot attend. The church secretary shall keep the minutes and reports. Any member who absents himself/herself for a period of six months from regular and faithful attendance, except for sickness, or has begun attending another local church, shall forfeit the right to vote. All agenda items for the Annual Church Conference must be published for the congregation and the Conference Superintendent two weeks prior to the meeting.

¶234. The Annual Church Conference shall receive written reports from the pastor, chairman of the board of trustees, chairman of the board of stewards, Sunday School superintendent, financial secretary, treasurer, president of Evangelical Methodist Men, president of Evangelical Methodist Women, president of Evangelical Methodist Youth, and all committees necessary. The pastor, or, if there is no pastor, the chair of the board of stewards, shall distribute all reports and materials for the Annual Church Conference no later than the Sunday before the conference.

¶235. The Annual Church Conference, after receiving the report of the Nominating Committee and after giving the opportunity for nominations to be made from the floor, shall elect persons to the following offices: Board of Trustees (one-third each year), Board of Stewards, Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Counselor(s), Church Secretary, Financial Secretary and/or Treasurer.

The Annual Church Conference shall also elect the following committees: Christian Education Committee, Evangelism Committee, Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee, and World Missions Committee.

The Annual Church Conference may also elect as many of the other committees described in ¶261-278 as are deemed necessary. The Annual Church Conference may also elect lay delegates and alternate lay delegates to the appropriate Conferences, or this may be done at a later time by a Special Church Conference called for that purpose. In consultation with

and approval of the Conference Superintendent a local church, church plant, or church restart, may modify its local church structure of boards and committees to fit its unique mission and administrative model.

¶236. No person shall be elected to an office, board or committee in the church who is not a member in good standing (with the one exception indicated in ¶281) or who opposes the doctrine of entire sanctification as a second work of grace, or who is bound by habits detrimental to the highest Christian witness and testimony. The eligibility of divorced and remarried persons to hold office shall be determined by the local church.

¶237. All local church and Sunday School officers shall be elected at the Annual Church Conference and shall take office immediately upon election. Officers of all organizations within the church shall be elected by the time of the Annual Church Conference. A public installation service is recommended.

¶238. The Annual Church Conference may conduct any other business, which shall be in keeping with the *Discipline*.

¶239. The roll of members may be called at the Annual Church Conference, and they may, by majority vote of those present and voting, strike off the name of any who, on account of change of residence or other cause other than sickness, have absented themselves for six months from the services of the church, provided, however, that such member has been contacted by the pastor or chairman of the Membership Committee, if possible, and informed of such proposed action. Such persons so discontinued shall be notified. Absentee votes shall not be accepted at any local church congregational meeting.

¶240. The following is the order of business for the Annual Church Conference:

- (1) Devotional service and prayer.
- (2) Reviews and reports of all the work of the church, including reports from the pastor, chair of the Board of Trustees, chair of the Board of Stewards, Sunday School superintendent, financial secretary and/or treasurer, president of the Evangelical Methodist Men, president of the Evangelical Methodist Women, president of Evangelical Methodist Youth, and all committees necessary to report.

- (3) Receive the report of the Nominating Committee and elect officers, teachers, and committees for the coming year.
- (4) Presentation of the new budget.
- (5) Recommend proper persons to the appropriate Conference. Any additional business must be approved by the pastor in consultation with the Board of Stewards.

¶241. It shall be the duty of the church secretary to present the register and records of the church to the Annual Church Conference for inspection. All records and books kept by the officers of the local church and Sunday School shall be the property of the Evangelical Methodist Church, and shall be surrendered at the end of one's tenure in office.

¶242. The Annual Church Conference, or a Special Church Conference, shall issue lay exhorter's license\* to proper persons. The Annual Church Conference may recommend proper persons to the Board of Ministerial Relations for license to preach, for admission into the appropriate Conference, for Deacon/Deaconess orders, and for persons to enter the path to ordination for ministerial credentials. A ministerial candidate enters into the ministry of the denomination through the local church of which he/she is a member.

**(\*Lay Exhorters.** *Let the congregation encourage people of zeal sincerity to serve Christ and the church. Those limited in their ability because of education, economics, or other reasons may seek license as lay exhorters and be granted the same under the authority of the local church and the supervision of the pastor. Such license shall be granted at the Annual Church Conference, or Special Church Conference, and shall be renewed annually according to the discretion of the local church.*)

¶243. A Special Church Conference may be called by the pastor, Conference Superintendent, Board of Trustees, or Board of Stewards, (or Pastoral Relations Committee according to ¶251). The time for such meetings shall be set in consultation with the appropriate Conference Superintendent and the time and purpose of the meeting shall be published at least two Sundays prior to said meeting, which may occur as early as the second Sunday. The Conference Superintendent or his/her appointed representative shall be in charge of such meetings, in whose absence the pastor shall preside, except in the case of a meeting to determine the pastoral question of ¶251, ¶252, at which time, one of the Conference

Superintendents must preside. The request for withdrawal from the denomination and voting on such a request can only be held at the regularly scheduled Annual Church Conference.

¶244. No meeting to transact business pertaining to the church shall be held without the pastor's knowledge except when a church is without a pastor. The pastor shall have the privilege of attending all such meetings except those of the Pastoral Relations Committee. The Pastoral Relations Committee may invite the pastor for purposes of consultation.

#### **Chapter 4. Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations**

¶251. If the Pastoral Relations Committee determines by a majority vote that a pastoral vote should be held, the committee may, after consulting with the Conference Superintendent, call a Special Church Conference according to ¶243, normally during the months of April or May, for the purpose of voting on the following question: "Shall the present pastoral relationship be continued?" Voting shall be by ballot without debate. If there is an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting, the pastor will be allowed fifteen days in which to notify the church of his decision on the matter. When appropriate conditions arise, the Cabinet of Superintendents may, when requested by the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Board of Stewards or pastor, authorize a pastoral vote at any time in accordance with ¶243.

¶252. The ministry of the pulpit and pastor is subject to the supervision and rules of the denomination in accordance with all approved General Conference legislation dealing with selection and functions of the local church pastors. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Pastoral Relations Committee shall obtain from the Conference Superintendent a list of Elders in good standing and of EMC ministerial credentialed candidates who have fulfilled requirements on the path for ordination and have been approved by the General Board of Ministerial Relations. Since any Evangelical Methodist minister in good standing is eligible for consideration, the Pastoral Relations Committee may also develop its own list of potential candidates from among the ministerial members of the denomination. A pastoral candidate receiving specific endorsement of the Cabinet of Superintendents shall have first consideration by the Pastoral

Relations Committee for their recommendation. From the lists of potential candidates and after consultation with the Board of Stewards, the committee shall choose and submit one name as a candidate for pastoral leadership, subject to the provisions of the *Discipline*. Initial contact with all candidates shall be made by the Conference Superintendent on behalf of the church. The selection of a new pastor shall be by two-thirds ballot vote of those present and voting at the Special Church Conference according to ¶243. Any person occupying the pulpit on a continual basis during a pastoral vacancy shall be considered temporary pulpit supply which requires appointment by the Cabinet of Superintendents.

¶253. The local church shall first attempt to secure its pastor from among the ministerial members of the denomination. In the event a ministerial member of the denomination cannot be secured, the appropriate Superintendent may appoint a pastor as a temporary pulpit supply. He/she shall not receive new members into the local church nor shall he/she sign any legal documents on behalf of the local church. Such pastors are under the direct supervision of the Conference Superintendent in whose region they are serving and can be removed by him at any time.

¶254. Immediately following a congregational vote on a new pastor, the chairman of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall communicate the decision of the church to the candidate and the Conference Superintendent.

¶255. A pastor-elect, having received a call from a local church, must reply within fifteen days after having received notification, regarding his acceptance or rejection of the call.

¶256. The local church shall extend an initial pastoral call for not less than two years, after which time a pastoral vote may be taken. If a vote is taken and it is favorable, by a simple majority, an extended call shall be given for an indefinite period of time.

¶257. It shall be the responsibility of the pastor, except by agreement with the church, to continue his/her ministry through the last Sunday in July. The local church is responsible for the salary and benefits of the outgoing pastor through the last Sunday in July unless, by agreement with the church, he/she voluntarily terminates his/her ministry prior to that date (See ¶824.)

¶258. Persons to be employed in such capacities as assistant pastors, ministers, or directors of Christian education, ministers or directors of youth, ministers or directors of music, or other staff positions, shall be under the authority of the senior pastor. Assistant or associate pastors who practice sacerdotal ministry must be in the ministerial credentialing process or hold Evangelical Methodist Church credentials, or if credentialed from another denomination, he/she must be approved by the Board of Ministerial Relations. Each such staff position must be created by a majority vote of the congregation upon the recommendation of the pastor and the Board of Stewards. Their salaries must be approved by the congregation at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Church Conference. Potential staff persons must be interviewed by the pastor and the Board of Stewards. The duties and services of these persons shall be determined by the pastor and the Board of Stewards. The employment of staff members shall be done by a two-thirds vote of the congregation upon the recommendation of the pastor and the Board of Stewards. Termination of such employment may be done by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Stewards upon the recommendation of the pastor. In the event of a pastoral change, the incoming pastor will be offered the resignations of all other staff members in order that he/she may have the freedom to construct his/her own staff.

¶259. Persons to be employed in such capacities as custodians, secretaries, nursery workers, etc. shall be employed by the Board of Stewards in consultation with the pastor. Such employees' duties, salaries, and continued employment shall be determined by the Board of Stewards in consultation with the pastor.

¶260. The senior pastor shall be an ex-officio member with a vote on all local church boards and committees except the Board of Trustees and the Pastoral Relations Committee. The pastoral staff are not ex-officio members of the Board of Stewards unless given this privilege by the local church, nor are they members of the Pastoral Relations Committee.

## **Chapter 5. Annual Committees**

¶261. The AUDITING COMMITTEE shall audit the financial records of the financial secretary and the treasurers of the church and organizations of the church or churches, following the close of the fiscal year. They

shall report their findings to the stewards. An audit may be called for at any time deemed necessary by the stewards.

¶262. The BUILDING MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE is to be responsible for:

- (1) Maintaining the physical property in good repair, clean and comfortable.
- (2) The janitor, gardener, and other employees to care for the building, in cooperation with the stewards.
- (3) Cooperating with the Evangelical Methodist Women in keeping the parsonage furnishings nice and comfortable.

¶263. The CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE shall be responsible, subject to the overall supervision of the Board of Stewards, for the entire Christian education program of the local church. This shall be understood to include the Sunday School, the Vacation Bible School, and all other Christian education ministries for children, youth, and adults.

¶264. The COMMUNION COMMITTEE shall secure the elements for Holy Communion, see that cloths, cups, trays, etc. are ready for communion in cooperation with the pastor, and care for necessary details.

¶265. The EVANGELISM COMMITTEE shall promote evangelism by every means available. It shall work with the pastor in organizing evangelistic services, conferences, church multiplication strategies, and missional outreach into their community.

¶266. The FINANCE COMMITTEE is to:

- (1) Prepare an operating budget and present it to the Annual Church Conference for action. See ¶240 (4).
- (2) Inform the church as to the needs of the budget.
- (3) Make a study of the pastor's salary previous to the Annual Church Conference or a Special Church Conference, and make a recommendation to the congregation at that meeting concerning the pastor's salary. In the case of a new pastor being called, the Finance Committee shall make a recommendation concerning the new pastor's salary, to be voted upon at the time of the Special Church Conference to consider the new pastor.

¶267. The FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE shall be in charge of greeting people, both before and after the services of the church, endeavoring to make them feel welcome and wanted. They shall work with the Evangelical Methodist Women in securing information for the proper care of the sick, shut-ins, and strangers.

¶268. The MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE shall:

- (1) Be on the lookout for prospective members.
- (2) See that membership records are properly kept up to date.
- (3) Visit the members annually to pray and study with them.
- (4) Do visitation work at the request of the pastor or stewards.
- (5) After consulting with the pastor, present the names of inactive members to be dropped at the Annual Church Conference according to ¶239.

¶269. The MUSIC COMMITTEE shall:

- (1) Provide for the music of the church services by securing an organist, pianist, or other musicians, in consultation with the pastor.
- (2) See that the church is supplied with Gospel hymn books, Gospel choir music, and other Gospel books for use in singing.
- (3) Prepare a budget to be submitted to the Finance Committee for the musical program of the church.

¶270. The NOMINATING COMMITTEE shall be composed of the pastor (as chairman) and six additional members elected by the Annual Church Conference, after nomination by the Nominating Committee, representing the following:

- (1) Board of Trustees
- (2) Board of Stewards
- (3) Sunday School
- (4) Evangelical Methodist Men
- (5) Evangelical Methodist Women
- (6) Evangelical Methodist Youth

The Committee shall meet prior to the Annual Church Conference in order to prepare its report to the said church conference, and the slate of nominees shall be published at least two full weeks prior to the said church conference.

Nominations for local church offices may be made in writing to the Nominating Committee up to three weeks before an Annual Church

Conference. Nominations shall comply with the criterion and job descriptions listed for each office found in Policy and Procedures, Chapter 4, for nominations. There will be no further nominations made when the report of the Nominating Committee is received. In the event multiple nominations are received, the report of the Nominating Committee shall serve as a ballot for those offices contested.

¶271. The PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE shall be composed of six people elected at the Annual Church Conference, after nomination by the Nominating Committee, representing the following:

- (1) Board of Trustees
- (2) Board of Stewards
- (3) Sunday School
- (4) Evangelical Methodist Men
- (5) Evangelical Methodist Women
- (6) Evangelical Methodist Youth

At the option of the pastor, a seventh member may be added to the Pastoral Relations Committee who shall be chosen by the pastor to represent him on the committee. No member of the pastor's family, nor more than one member of any immediate family of the church shall be on the Pastoral Relations Committee.

¶272. The PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE shall assume the responsibility for filling the pulpit during the absence of the pastor, consulting with the pastor and cooperating with him where it is possible in carrying out this duty.

¶273. The POLICY COMMITTEE shall make a careful survey of the work of the church or charge, make recommendations for its improvement or extension, and suggest new projects to the Annual Church Conference for the coming year.

¶274. The RECORDS COMMITTEE shall inspect the records of the various secretaries of the church and organizations of the church or churches. They shall report their findings to the Annual Church Conference.

¶275. The STEWARDSHIP AND TITHING COMMITTEE shall:

- (1) Inform the local church concerning both local and conference needs and ministries around the world.

- (2) Be responsible for a stewardship and tithing campaign within each local church once a year. Tithing is the Bible standard and goal.
- (3) Endeavor to secure signatures on tither's cards and encourage cooperation and help from all available sources.
- (4) Insistently lay on the consciences of all the obligation of each individual member to contribute proportionately of his means to the work of the church. One should give in proportion to his ability above the tithe.
- (5) Train our people to contribute to the church regularly and systematically.
- (6) Urge the people to give weekly as God prospers.
- (7) Recommend the envelope system.

¶276. The CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE shall cultivate the local church's awareness of its responsibility to raise a standard and establish a voice in matters of public morals and social injustices (such as, human trafficking, rights of the unborn, alcohol and drug addiction) and to issue guidelines through church publications in cooperation with the pastor and the board.

¶277. The USHERS COMMITTEE shall:

- (1) Greet the people and see that they are comfortably and quietly seated.
- (2) Receive the offering, making whatever preparation is necessary.
- (3) Properly direct people in the Lord's Supper.

¶278. The MISSIONS COMMITTEE shall be responsible for promoting the cause of world missions within the local church. This shall be understood to include global missions and Evangelical Methodist Church approved home missions and multicultural/ethnic ministries. It shall be the responsibility of the committee to plan and sponsor activities and programs that will enlarge the congregation's understanding of the great world mission of the church as well as to expand the congregation's involvement in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

## **Chapter 6. Board of Trustees**

¶281. The BOARD OF TRUSTEES shall be composed of not fewer than three nor more than nine members of the local church who are at least

twenty-one years of age. Trustees shall be elected for three-year terms with one-third of them being elected each year. One trustee may be a non-member of the local church.

¶282. Each local Evangelical Methodist Church should be incorporated under the laws of the state in which it is located, if the state allows the incorporation of religious bodies. The trustees are the directors of the corporation.

¶283. The Board of Trustees are empowered under the following articles of incorporation and by the church to:

- (1) Hold title to all church property, accept bequests, endowments, and such other valuables as the church may acquire, except tithes and offerings of the regular church budget, and administer the same in accordance with the wishes of the donors.
- (2) Transact a sale of property only when (a) authorized by the congregation with the proceeds deposited according to the wishes of the congregation and (b) consistent with the requirements of the *Discipline*, including without limitation ¶208 and ¶209(7).
- (3) Transact all legal business, safeguarding church property.
- (4) Make a written report to the Annual Church Conference.
- (5) Elect a chair and secretary of the Board of Trustees from among its members at the first meeting of the Board immediately after the Annual Church Conference.

¶284. The duties of the Chair of The Board of Trustees shall be:

- (1) Calling meetings.
- (2) Executing actions taken by the trustees.
- (3) Seeing that all duties of the trustees are carried out.
- (4) Communicating the actions of the trustees to the Board of Stewards.

¶285. The duties of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall be:

- (1) Secure a place of safekeeping for all legal papers of the church including policies, deeds, money deposits, receipts, etc., and be responsible for same.
- (2) Record all legal documents and ascertain legal ownership.
- (3) Keep accurate record of all meetings and transactions of the Board of Trustees.

## Chapter 7. Board of Stewards

¶291. The BOARD OF STEWARDS is a representative body elected by and amendable to the local congregation. It carries out the program and business of the local church as adopted at the Annual Church Conference and Special Church Conferences. The Board of Stewards derives its power and functions from the local church and *Discipline*. A mutual cooperation exists with the pastor in the administrative and pastoral ministry to which the congregation has called him/her.

¶292. The Board of Stewards shall be composed of three or more members of the Evangelical Methodist Church who are at least eighteen years of age, provided they are persons of Christian character with a born-again experience, and who love the Lord and His church. Each member is elected for a one-year term and shall not be re-elected to the Board of Stewards for a period of one year after having served for three consecutive years.

¶293. The Board of Stewards shall be elected at the Annual Church Conference. As soon as possible after their election the stewards shall organize and elect their chair, vice-chair, and secretary, and determine the time of their regular monthly meeting. The church treasurer shall be responsible to the stewards.

¶294. The minutes of all meetings of the Board of Stewards shall be kept in a permanent record by the secretary of the Board, and shall be available to the stewards, the pastor, and church members.

¶295. All committees of the church shall work with the stewards and pastor, and report to them when called upon to do so.

¶296. The Board of Stewards shall:

- (1) Lead the entire congregation in all spiritual matters by precept and example.
- (2) Inform the pastor of any sick, needy, sin-sick, or disorderly person; spend time in visiting these needy people that Christ may be presented to them and help them.
- (3) With the pastor, hold teachers and workers in the church and Sunday school and the youth counselors in the youth departments responsible for doctrinal soundness, moral conduct, efficiency,

and competency; investigate any reported breach of these responsibilities, act in the spirit of Christ, according to the Word of God, and encourage training in leadership and teaching ministries.

¶297. The Board of Stewards shall provide for financial and material interests of the church:

- (1) Provide for the support of the dissemination of the Gospel.
- (2) Make financial provision for the local, conference, missionary, and other properly authorized programs of the church.
- (3) Lay upon the minds and hearts of the members of the church the privilege and duty of systematic giving, with emphasis on the Bible plan of financing God's work by tithes and offerings. The envelope system is recommended as a method whereby tithes and offerings may be received and properly recorded. (See ¶275, item 7.)
- (4) See that monthly financial reports are prepared and see that every member is informed regarding the extent and needs of the various works of the church.
- (5) Make provision for meeting the budget as adopted at the Annual Church Conference.
- (6) See that the local church's Conference Support is paid in full according to ¶205.
- (7) See that the financial matters of the Sunday School are properly conducted, and the fourth Sunday foreign missions or approved Evangelical Methodist Home Missions offering is remitted to the General Conference Treasurer.

¶298. The Board of Stewards shall:

- (1) Encourage the members of the church in personal evangelism and lead them in other types of evangelism.
- (2) Lighten the pastoral load by calling on visitors to determine their interest and encourage them to accept Christ as their personal Savior and live for Christ.
- (3) Work with the Evangelism and Membership Committees in the visitation work, the Sunday School, and mass evangelism efforts, in consultation with the pastor.

¶299. The Board of Stewards shall encourage the Christian education work of the entire church:

- (1) They shall be responsible for the Christian educational work of the church, including all youth activities, and shall cooperate and work with the Sunday School superintendent and pastor.
- (2) They shall provide a regular study group for adults to study the Bible and pertinent subjects in keeping with the *Discipline*.

¶300. The Board of Stewards shall be empowered to fill any vacancies occurring during the year except in the offices of stewards and trustees. Vacancies in these offices may be filled only by a special church conference called for that purpose. The above provision does not apply to the filling of a vacancy in the office of pastor or that of any other paid staff member. The procedure provided elsewhere in the *Discipline* shall be followed in filling these vacancies.

## **Chapter 8. Elected Officers**

¶301. The CHURCH HISTORIAN shall see that all records and books containing minutes that are no longer in current use are collected and kept for historical purposes. All Reports from the Annual Church Conference must be maintained and are exempt from any retention/destruction policy of the local church. International Headquarters General Secretary will electronically scan and store the designated Annual Church Report.

¶302. The CHURCH SECRETARY'S duties:

- (1) To record and preserve the minutes of all Annual Church Conferences, Special Church Conferences, and the meetings of the Church Council.
- (2) To record the names of new members as they present themselves for membership and give such information to the pastor.
- (3) To record and preserve the minutes of all the meetings of the Board of Stewards when requested to do so by the Board of Stewards.
- (4) To handle correspondence for the local church when requested to do so by the pastor or the Board of Stewards.

¶303. The FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S duties:

- (1) To receive and record all money coming to the church, except such funds designated for the trustees of the church.

- (2) To deposit promptly all funds in a bank approved by the Board of Stewards.
- (3) To keep a record of envelope and designated contributions.

¶304. The TREASURER'S duties:

- (1) To assist the Finance Committee in forming the operating budget.
- (2) To pay all bills, approved by the Board of Stewards, promptly.
- (3) To send all Conference Support payments and designated funds to the appropriate treasurer each month. To report to each monthly meeting of the Board of Stewards on the financial condition of the church and to submit a report to the Annual Church Conference.
- (4) To post in the church a monthly financial statement of all the church funds.

¶305. Provision may be made by the Annual Church Conference or Special Church Conference, to operate the financial affairs of the church under the unified financial system, in which one financial secretary and one treasurer handle all finances of the church and Sunday School. Under this system the treasurer shall keep the funds, with the necessary accounts, for all organizations. Such funds shall be deposited in one bank account. Each organization shall receive a receipt from the treasurer for funds so remitted to him (her). The treasurer of each local church organization shall furnish the church treasurer with a voucher indicating the amount and purpose for which a check should be drawn.

¶306. The accounts of all treasurers shall be audited annually, at the end of the fiscal year, by the Auditing Committee elected by the Annual Church Conference.

## **Chapter 9. Sunday School**

¶311. The Sunday School of the Evangelical Methodist Church is not to be considered an independent or isolated agency; rather it is to be an integrated part of the church. All officers and teachers in the Sunday School should be members in good standing of the Evangelical Methodist Church.

¶312. There is to be a Christian Education Committee meeting called periodically by the Sunday School Superintendent or pastor to oversee the

work of Christian education and discipleship ministries in cooperation with the local Sunday School superintendent and Board of Stewards. The duties of the Christian Education Committee shall be:

- (1) To oversee the work of the Sunday School and all discipleship ministries.
- (2) To receive reports and recommendations from the various divisions of the Sunday School and discipleship ministries.
- (3) To review the work of the Sunday School and make recommendations for improvements.
- (4) To give attention to the growth of Christian education and discipleship ministries.
- (5) To propose general plans for the educational ministries and present them to the Board of Stewards for policy consideration.
- (6) To set up periodic training for officers and teachers.
- (7) To fill all vacancies which occur during the year, with the approval of the pastor and Sunday School superintendent.

¶313. The pastor, minister of Christian Education, Christian Education Committee Chair and Sunday School superintendent shall approve all nominated teachers, and children workers giving due consideration to background checks as recommended by the denomination.

¶314. The Sunday School encourages the observance of a Promotion Day and Rally Day annually.

¶315. The Sunday School is to be divided into the following departments:

- (1) Cradle Roll – under 2 years old.
- (2) Nursery – 2 and 3 years old.
- (3) Beginners – 4 and 5 years old.
- (4) Primary – 6 to 8 years old.
- (5) Junior – 9 to 11 years old.
- (6) Junior High – 12 to 14 years old.
- (7) Senior High – 15 to 17 years old.
- (8) Young Adult – 18 to 24 years old.
- (9) Adult – 25 years and up.

¶316. These departments may be divided into general groups as follows:

- (1) Children's Division – to 11 years.
- (2) Young People's Division – 12 to 17 years.
- (3) Young Adult Division – 18 to 24 years
- (4) Adult Division – 25 years and up.

¶317. Except where the unified financial system is used, the offerings of the Sunday School are to be handled by the Sunday School treasurer, submitting all funds or the record thereof, to the financial secretary. All bills are to be approved by the officers and teachers meeting, and on approval are to be paid by the Sunday School treasurer. Approval for certain established expenses can be made at the beginning of the Sunday School year.

## **Chapter 10. Church Council**

¶321. Called meetings of the officials of the church shall be known as the church council. Members of the church council shall be the trustees, stewards, pastor, treasurer, financial secretary, Sunday School superintendent, president of the Evangelical Methodist Men, president of the Evangelical Methodist Women, president of the Evangelical Methodist Youth, youth counselors. The presiding officer shall be the pastor or chairman of the Board of Stewards or the Board of Trustees, and the church secretary shall act as secretary.

¶322. The purpose of the church council shall be to resolve issues or matters of policy referred to it by the Board of Stewards. If deemed advisable, the church council may refer the same to a special called meeting of the congregation.

¶323. A report of all church council action shall be made to the congregation by the church secretary as soon after each meeting as is practical.

## **THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE**



# THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE

## Chapter 1. Composition

¶401. The District Conference is a body of ministers and delegates from local churches in a given area designated by the General Conference. The District Conference shall adopt a program of district activities such as will strengthen and advance the work of each local church. It shall endeavor to strengthen and unite the churches of the district.

¶402. Sessions of the District Conference may be convened by the International General Superintendent when called upon to do so by a majority of the churches, the Cabinet of Superintendents, or the General Council. There shall be at least one Journey session in the districts in each non-General Conference year. The districts may have a joint Journey session.

¶403. The District Conference shall be composed of all Elders, Members on Trial, and Deacons/Deaconesses of the district, one representative each from the Sunday School, Stewards, Evangelical Methodist Men, Evangelical Methodist Women, Evangelical Methodist Youth, all District and General Conference officers living within the bounds of the district, and one elected delegate, 18 years of age or over, from each local church for every 30 members or fraction thereof. See ¶202 and ¶235. The superintendents are members of their respective District Conferences.

¶404. All individuals holding credentials with the Evangelical Methodist Church and living within the boundary of the General Conference shall attend a Journey conference session, regional meetings, and other activities, unless providentially hindered. The Conference Superintendents must grant permission for an absence. Supernumerary and superannuated ministers are exempt from attendance.

## Chapter 2. Business

¶411. The District Conference shall inquire into the condition of and encourage the enhancement of the churches concerning:

- (1) Their spiritual state.
- (2) Missionary work.
- (3) Work of the Sunday School.
- (4) Work of the Evangelical Methodist Men.
- (5) Work of the Evangelical Methodist Women.
- (6) Work of the Evangelical Methodist Youth.
- (7) Support of the general church and its institutions.

¶412. All members of the District Conference shall attend its sessions, and they shall furnish to the District Conference such reports and in such form as the District Conference requires. During the District Conference no minister or lay delegate is excusable from the sessions except for outside conference business.

¶413. The District Conference may make rules to govern its own procedure only in keeping with the *Discipline* and powers granted by the General Conference. A District Conference may not financially obligate the Evangelical Methodist Church or an organizational unit thereof, except the District Conference itself. No District Conference shall create a debt on said conference other than operating expenses without a two-thirds vote of the District Conference.

¶414. The District Conference shall keep an exact record of its personnel, proceedings, reports, and statistics. It shall send a copy of the minutes to the General Conference Secretary and the General Conference Statistician. The secretary of the District Conference shall keep a copy to be handed to his successor in office.

¶415. The District Conference may elect committees as are deemed necessary. Such committees shall present programs for approval to the District Conference and shall implement and supervise the same when so approved.

## Chapter 3. Regions

¶421. There shall be regions which are groupings of Evangelical Methodist churches, pastors, and credential holders in proximity to one another for the purpose of prayer, fellowship, encouragement, mutual accountability, unity, support, group activities for renewal and enhanced ministry. These regions shall operate under and in harmony with administrative conferences and shall be constituted only with the powers, duties and privileges as are set forth in the *Discipline*.

¶422. The number of regions and the churches within each region shall be determined by the General Council, as recommended by the Cabinet of Superintendents, and reported to the General Conference. Both the regions and churches in the region may be adjusted annually by the General Council as need dictates.

¶423. Each region shall be assigned a Conference Superintendent to provide supervision, leadership, support and care to the churches, pastors, and credential holders. The Conference Superintendent shall encourage joint ministries, missional outreach, and other cooperative activities in each region. Joint activities and ministry may involve more than one region.

¶424. A Regional Coordinator shall be designated in each region by the Conference Superintendent. The Regional Coordinator shall be an ordained elder and reside in the region.

¶425. All individuals holding credentials with the Evangelical Methodist Church shall make every attempt to attend meetings and activities in their respective region, unless providentially hindered. If one is unable to attend a meeting or activity, it should be communicated to the Conference Superintendent and Regional Coordinator.

¶426. Host regions will be selected by the International General Superintendent and General Conference Boards for scheduled events involving multiple regions. The Regional Coordinator in the selected region shall assist in planning these events when called upon to do so by a General Board and/or a Superintendent.

¶427. Regions must operate only in keeping with the *Discipline* and such powers as granted by the General Conference. No region shall financially obligate the Evangelical Methodist Church nor create a debt on the respective region except when approved by the General Council.

¶428. The appropriate Conference Superintendent shall compile a list of each credential holder's fulfillment of required Continuing Education Units and report annually to the General Board of Ministerial Relations. Upon recommendation of the General Board of Ministerial Relations, the conference may locate without consent such persons failing to complete the requirements.

¶429. The ordination of elders, consecration of deacons and deaconesses, and the commissioning of missionaries, shall be under the direction of the International General Superintendent in cooperation with the appropriate Conference Superintendent, assisted by other elders. In a General Conference year, and upon the recommendation of the General Board of Ministerial Relations, the two-year period for admission on trial may be modified to no less than eighteen months to enable ordination to take place at the General Conference.

# **THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**



# THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

## Chapter 1. Composition

¶501. The General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church is an international body composed of local congregations who are connected to one another under the Constitution and By-laws enacted by the General Conference in the *Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church*. Churches are grouped together for pastoral oversight, administration and fellowship, in all ways seeking to accomplish the Great Commission by going into all the world to preach the gospel and make disciples of Jesus Christ. The grouping of churches may be made according to geographic boundaries, cultural similarity, or particular needs, forming conferences of churches.

¶502. When an international or trans-cultural group of churches desires affiliation with the General Conference of Evangelical Methodist Church, application shall be made through the office of the International General Superintendent. The General Council shall establish a policy that embraces non-negotiable commitments including our *Articles of Religion*, the doctrine of scriptural holiness and emphasis on evangelism. Upon favorable review and research by the International General Superintendent, the General Council, by two-thirds vote, may grant Provisional International Conference status until approved by the next General Conference.

¶503. The educational and reading requirements for ordination shall be approved by the International General Superintendent, and the General Boards of Ministerial Relations, and Ministerial Education.

¶504. The General Council has the right to disaffiliate an international conference by a two-thirds vote, if the non-negotiable commitments are violated. An international conference that is disaffiliated may no longer use the name Evangelical Methodist Church, denominational resources, or logo.

To initiate any action regarding disaffiliation of an international conference, a complaint must be filed by the International General Superintendent and the General Secretary. Such a complaint must be acted upon by the General Council within 90 days of the filed complaint.

## Chapter 2. Election

¶511. Each International Conference shall elect an International Conference General Superintendent as its chief administrative officer.

## Chapter 3. Rules and Powers

¶521. An International Conference shall be organized as nearly as possible like a General Conference in the United States and shall publish a manual as nearly like the *Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church* as the laws and customs of the respective country/countries allow. The manual must include but is not limited to (a) The Articles of Religion and the General Rules of historic Methodism, (b) the history of the Evangelical Methodist Church, (c) an organizational structure, and (d) ritual and worship.

¶522. Missionaries or others serving in cooperation with an International Conference may hold membership and credentials in said Conference as well as in their home Conference. Personnel employed by the General Conference Board of World Missions working in cooperation with an International Conference shall be under the supervision of the General Conference Board of World Missions.

¶523. An International Conference may retain all internal funds for its own general operating expenses and programs.

¶524. An International Conference may not financially obligate the Evangelical Methodist Church or an organizational unit thereof.

¶525. Funds, other than those raised by an International Conference, for budgets and projects approved by a General Conference Board shall be disbursed according to the policies of that Board.

¶526. Cooperative activities with an International Conference shall be coordinated by the General Board of World Missions through its Chair/Director, including individuals and teams from an Evangelical Methodist Church visiting an International Conference.

¶527. Each International Conference may appoint a representative to participate on General Conference Boards and Committees, with the exception of the Board of Finance and Board of Trustees.

# **THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**



# THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

## Chapter 1. Composition

¶601. The Evangelical Methodist Church shall be composed of the following conferences: General Conference, Mission Conferences, District Conferences, and Annual Church Conference in all local churches. The General Conference adopts programs of a general nature whereby the local churches may carry out cooperatively their Divine commission to all the world.

¶602. The General Conference shall meet once in every four years, the place to be determined by the General Conference or by the General Council. A special session of the General Conference may be called by the General Council when deemed advisable.

¶603. The General Conference shall be composed of all Elders, Members on Trial, one representative each from the Sunday School, Stewards, Evangelical Methodist Men, Evangelical Methodist Women, Evangelical Methodist Youth, all General Conference officers, and one elected delegate 18 years of age or older from each local church for every 30 members or fraction thereof. Members on Trial shall not have voting privileges. Each Mission Conference shall be allowed to send five ministerial and five lay delegates.

¶604. The ministerial and lay members shall deliberate as one body. They shall vote as one body, but a separate vote shall be taken on any question when requested by one-third of either order of delegates present and voting. In all cases of separate voting it shall require the concurrence of a majority of each order to adopt the proposed measure. The only exception is the called Executive Session comprised of the ministerial credential holders to receive and approve the reports and recommendations of the General Board of Ministerial Relations. The General Conference will receive the report without debate.

¶605. There shall be a Cabinet of Superintendents composed of the International General Superintendent(s), Mission Conference General Superintendents, and the North American Conference Superintendents.

The Cabinet of Superintendents shall function in an advisory capacity with respect to church policy and in a promotional capacity with respect to church programs. The Cabinet of Superintendents shall operate as one voice in their respective conferences with regard to pastoral recommendations to the local churches, annual conference dates, regional events, promotion and conducting of leadership training, supervising the Natural Church Development, local church ministry, and the health and welfare of the pastor and the local church in their spiritual and temporal needs.

¶606. The General Council shall be composed of:

- (1) International General Superintendent(s).
- (2) General Conference Secretary.
- (3) General Conference Lay Leader.
- (4) Chairpersons of General Conference boards.
- (5) Conference Superintendents.
- (6) General Conference Presidents of Evangelical Methodist Men, Women, and Youth.
- (7) Mission Conference General Superintendent(s).

¶607. The duties and authority of the General Council shall be defined by the General Conference. The General Council shall be amenable to the General Conference. A quorum shall be a majority of the total number of General Council members.

¶608. The duties of the General Council shall be:

- (1) To give direction to the church by presenting creative and practical programs to the General Conference for adoption, seeking to anticipate the future needs and continued growth of the church.
- (2) To fill vacancies in the General Conference during the quadrennium.
- (3) To implement and coordinate legislation and programs adopted by the General Conference in cooperation with General Conference boards, departments, and committees.
- (4) To perform such other duties commonly cared for by an executive body.
- (5) To distribute copies of the minutes and voting record of the sessions to the local churches and key personnel of the denomination immediately following the meetings.

- (6) To approve the Evangelical Methodist Home Mission Churches and ministries.
- (7) To annually review and maintain the operational rules and procedures for the General boards, committees, departments and Cabinet of Superintendents in the “General Council Operations Manual,” which are binding for all above mentioned entities.

¶609. The General Council at regularly scheduled meetings may, by a two-thirds vote, disaffiliate a congregation at the request of the Cabinet of Superintendents (See ¶643).

¶610. The General Council acts on behalf of the General Conference between sessions. The General Council shall not reverse the action of the General Conference nor begin new programs without General Conference approval. Actions taken by the General Council shall not continue in effect beyond the next General Conference unless approved by the General Conference.

¶611. No Board, Department or Committee has the power to create an indebtedness of more than \$10,000.00 on behalf of the General Conference without the approval of the General Council.

¶612. Procedure for conducting General Council business by correspondence shall be as follows:

- (1) A General Superintendent, or five members of the body, shall be empowered to properly set a matter before the General Council.
- (2) The General Conference Secretary shall process the transaction of business.
- (3) All ballots must be returned within two weeks from the date of mailing dated by electronic date stamp.
- (4) Notice of any action taken shall be sent to each minister and church.

¶613. An Investment and Disbursement Committee shall act in the investment and disbursement of any undesignated gifts received through wills, trusts, and other forms of giving. It shall be composed of the chair of the Board of Finance, head of the Department of Stewardship & Development, General Conference Secretary and two members-at-large elected by the General Council. The International General Superintendent

will serve on this committee as the chair. All investments shall be insured accounts to protect the principal.

## **Chapter 2. Elections**

¶621. The General Conference shall determine the number of International General Superintendents and Conference Superintendents on the first day of the conference, but after the presentation of the General Secretary-Treasurer's report. Nominations for the office of International General Superintendent shall be made from the floor, without discussion of the qualifications of the nominees, on the first day of the conference. They shall be elected by ballot, without debate and according to Disciplinary provisions on the second day of the conference. A resume from each nominee shall be distributed by the General Conference Secretary following their nominations, copies of which shall be made available to the conference delegates to acquaint them with the qualifications of the nominees. Election of the International General Superintendent(s) shall be the order of the day at 10:00 a.m. on the second day of the conference. The newly-elected International General Superintendent(s) and family shall be presented to the Conference and shall be granted the privilege of addressing the conference. The incumbent International General Superintendent(s) and Conference Superintendents and General Secretary shall serve throughout the General Conference and continue in office for three months following the adjournment of the General Conference at which time the International General Superintendent(s)-elect and Conference Superintendents-elect and General Secretary-elect take office.

¶622. Nominations for the office of Conference Superintendents shall be made from the floor without discussion of qualifications of the nominees. They shall be elected by ballot, according to Disciplinary provisions. Nominations shall be made following the election of the International General Superintendent(s). A resume from each nominee shall be distributed by the General Conference Secretary following their nomination, copies of which shall be made available to the conference delegates to acquaint them with the qualifications of the nominees. The election of the Conference Superintendents shall be on the following day.

¶623. The General Conference shall elect a Secretary after nominations are made from the floor. He/she shall be elected by ballot without debate and shall be amenable to the General Council and the International General Superintendent. The General Secretary shall serve as the General Statistician.

¶624. The General Conference shall have the following agencies:  
NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE BOARDS AND

COMMITTEES

Board of Christian Education

Board of Discipline Revision

Board of Evangelism

Board of Finance

Board of Ministerial Education

Board of Ministerial Relations

Board of Trustees

Board of World Missions

Board of Youth and Children's Ministries

Boundary Committee

Camp and Retreat Committee

Conflict Resolution Committee

Court of Appeals Committee

Historical Committee

International School of Ministry Committee

Investigation Committee

Minutes Committee

Nominating Committee

Program Committee

Resolutions Committee

Most Boards and Committees shall be composed of 5 to 7 members, with at least one-third of the members being laypersons, if possible, plus additional members authorized by ¶528. The Boards of Ministerial Education and Ministerial Relations shall be composed of elders only and the Boundary Committee shall be the Cabinet of Superintendents. The chair of the above boards shall be elected by the General Conference upon nomination by the Nominating Committee. The chair of the North American Conference Nominating Committee shall be the International General Superintendent (see ¶1121). The USA District Committees shall be appointed by the General Council as soon as possible following the

General Conference. The Canada District Cabinet shall appoint the Committees in their district and report to the General Council.

¶625. Nominations from the floor for General Conference Board members may be made in writing to the Nominating Committee up until twenty four hours prior to receiving the report at a General Conference. Nominations shall comply with the criterion and job descriptions listed for each office found in Policy and Procedures, Chapter 1, for nominations. There will be no further nominations made when the report of the Nominating Committee is received. In the event multiple nominations are received, the report of the Nominating Committee shall serve as a ballot for those offices contested.

¶626. The General Conference shall have these DEPARTMENTS:

- (1) Department of Fraternal Relations
- (2) Department of Multicultural Ministries
- (3) Department of Prayer
- (4) Department of Publications
- (5) Department of Stewardship and Development
- (6) Department of Chaplains

The heads of these departments shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the General Conference. The elected department heads, in consultation with the International General Superintendent, shall choose personnel as necessary to carry out their duties.

¶627. There shall be a Court of Appeals composed of seven elders elected by the General Conference upon nomination by the Nominating Committee. (See ¶1051.)

¶628. Boards, committees and departments shall present programs to the General Conference for approval and implementation. Members of Boards, Committees and Departments shall serve until the end of the quadrennial General Conference, at which time the newly formed boards, committees and departments shall begin to function. No one shall serve on more than two General Conference Boards at the same time. The International General Superintendent is ex-officio with a vote on all General Boards and Committees.

¶629. Conference officers shall not serve as chairpersons of the General Conference Boards.

### **Chapter 3. Rules and Powers**

¶631. The General Conference shall have power to make rules and regulations for the Evangelical Methodist Church under the following limitations and restrictions:

- (1) It shall not revoke or change the Articles of Religion, or establish any new standards of rules of doctrine contrary to the present and established standards and doctrines, either by legislation or practice.
- (2) It shall not revoke or change the General Rules of the Evangelical Methodist Church.
- (3) It shall not do away with the privilege of ministers of trial by committee, or of appeal. Neither shall it do away with the privilege of members in the local church of trial before the local church trial court.

¶632. The General Conference shall have the power to locate the International Headquarters, and to relocate them when expedient to do so. Transactions of real property for the General Conference must be approved by the General Council by a two-thirds majority vote.

¶633. The church shall be incorporated under the title, *The General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church*.

¶634. The General Conference shall make provision for the salaries and expenses of the general officers of the church and the operating expenses of the general church. All General Conference personnel, except headquarters office employees, must be elected by the General Conference and their duties and salaries fixed by the same.

¶635. The General Conference shall determine the number and boundaries of the District Conferences. It shall have power to change the boundaries at any regular session of the General Conference.

¶636. The General Conference, acting through the Cabinet of Superintendents, shall prepare all report blanks and credential certificates for use throughout the entire church.

¶637. The General Conference (as well as any other conference) may be memorialized through its boards, departments, committees, officers or agencies. Memorials may originate with any conference, board, department, committee, lay organization, officer or agency on the District or General Conference levels. The local church may memorialize the General Council. Memorials are to be sent directly to the appropriate conference, board, department, committee or agency. More than one board, department, committee or agency may be memorialized on the same matter where there is an overlapping of interests. Boards, departments, committees or agencies receiving memorials may accept them in whole or in part or reject them completely as deemed necessary. (For *Discipline* Revision see ¶638.)

¶638. No change shall be made in the *Discipline* unless the proposed change has been duly presented to the Board of Discipline Revision for consideration. Proposed changes must be submitted to the Board of Discipline Revision by October 1 of the year prior to the year of the General Conference. Proposed changes approved by the Board of Discipline Revision must be submitted to the General Council for review and may be returned to the Board with the recommendation for further revision or study. The final report of the Board of Discipline Revision must be submitted in writing to each local church thirty days prior to the General Conference. To otherwise bring it directly to the floor of the General Conference is possible only by a two-thirds majority vote of the conference. If thus brought directly to the floor, it must be postponed overnight before final action. A two-thirds favorable vote of the conference shall be required to effect all changes except changes to the Constitution. (See ¶111 and ¶1112)

¶639. No persons, paper, or organization has the authority to speak officially for the Evangelical Methodist Church except as authorized by the General Conference under the *Discipline*.

¶640. The General Conference shall provide adequate surety bonds for all officers handling funds of the conference. The books shall be audited

annually by a qualified public accountant, and the auditor's report shall accompany the treasurer's report. All books and records kept by General Conference officers are the property of the Evangelical Methodist Church and shall be surrendered at the end of one's tenure in office. Implementation shall be the responsibility of the International General Superintendent.

¶641. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authoritative basis for the parliamentary procedure of the General Conference and shall be followed in all business sessions of the conference as well as in committee, board, or other group meetings of bodies of the General Conference. The presiding officer shall appoint a parliamentarian at each business session of the conference when the elected parliamentarian is absent.

¶642. Final approval of the Constitution and By-laws of the Evangelical Methodist Men, Evangelical Methodist Women, and Evangelical Methodist Youth must be given by the General Conference before these can become effective. The General Conference may make any change deemed necessary for the good of the coordinated work of the general church.

¶643. The General Council shall ratify the final disaffiliation vote of a local church. A written request for re-affiliation with the denomination requires a favorable vote of a majority of the General Council in order for the local church to re-enter the Evangelical Methodist Church.

¶644. The General Council, or a committee thereof, may (a) permit a member, committee or board member to participate in a meeting by, or (b) conduct a meeting through, the use of any means of communication by which all members, committee, or board members participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A member, committee, or board member participating in a meeting by such means shall be considered present in person at the meeting.



# **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

¶701. Peacemaking: Controversies Regarding Non-Doctrinal Matters  
PRINCIPLES. The Bible provides that believers should resolve disputes among themselves or within the Church whenever possible (Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6:1-8). The Bible also provides that believers are subject to and should obey the governing authorities, which include the courts of law (Romans 13:1-5).

RESOLVING DISPUTES. The Evangelical Methodist Church, its districts and congregations (collectively, the "Parties," individually, "party") agree that they will attempt to resolve all non-doctrinal disputes among themselves without resort to the courts. A non-doctrinal dispute is a dispute within the Evangelical Methodist Church that a civil court could otherwise decide and, therefore, does not include matters of church doctrine. For example, all disputes between the Parties concerning real and personal property, including all property questions arising out of or related to the withdrawal of a congregation from the Evangelical Methodist Church, are non-doctrinal disputes. The Parties agree to abide by the requirements of the *Discipline* regarding withdrawal and other non-doctrinal disputes. This Chapter does not govern disputes regarding a minister's or member's alleged violation of church doctrine, including those matters discussed in Paragraphs 1001-1056 of the *Discipline*.

CONCILIATION, MEDIATION, AND ARBITRATION. If the Parties are unable to resolve a future non-doctrinal dispute among themselves, they shall resolve that dispute by means of Christian conciliation, mediation, or arbitration. Any party to the dispute (or the International General Superintendent of the Evangelical Methodist Church, if he or she is not already a party to the dispute) may initiate that process by a written request to the Secretary of the Evangelical Methodist Church, who shall process all such requests. The written request shall state the issues, the amount of money involved, and the remedies sought. If the Parties do not resolve their dispute through conciliation or mediation, they agree to proceed to legally binding arbitration; the arbitrator may impose any remedy available in law or equity. The International General Superintendent shall designate a dispute resolution service provider independent of the EMC at his or her sole discretion. Conciliation,

mediation, and arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the then-current rules of the Institute of Christian Conciliation (ICC), a division of Peacemaker Ministries unless (1) the parties agree to use different rules; or (2) the ICC is no longer in existence, in which case the then-current rules of the dispute resolution service provider designated by the International General Superintendent shall apply.

**SOLE PROCESS; WAIVER OF CIVIL LEGAL ACTION.** Resolution by the Parties themselves or through Christian conciliation, mediation and legally binding arbitration are the sole means by which non-doctrinal disputes may be resolved. Therefore, the parties waive any rights they *may* have to resolve a non-doctrinal dispute by filing a lawsuit in a civil court, except that a party *may* file suit in a civil court if necessary [i] to enforce another party's obligation to participate in a dispute resolution process provided in the foregoing conciliation clause, [ii] to enforce an award made during that dispute resolution process, or [iii] to take any other action permitted under the rules of the dispute resolution provider. A party may institute such a civil action in *any* court having jurisdiction over the Parties.

**ADDITIONAL MATTERS.** These provisions will be interpreted in accordance with Indiana law.

## **THE MINISTRY**



# THE MINISTRY

## *PREAMBLE*

Ministerial Credentials are a sacred covenant of Word, Sacrament, and Order. The historical Methodist terms in the ordination ritual are sacred. Word means the maintaining of biblical preaching and teaching from the whole council of God from the entire Word of God in agreement with our Wesleyan-Arminian understanding of the inspired Scripture. Sacrament means the faithful administration of public and private prayer and of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of grace. Order is willing, loyal cooperation with and submission to the legislation of the General Conference, the Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church, and the advice and admonition of the serving International General and Conference Superintendents.

## **Chapter 1. The Call to Preach**

¶801. The following questions are among those to be asked by the Board of Ministerial Relations concerning those persons who profess to be moved by the Holy Spirit to preach:

- (1) Do they know God as a 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 and life? Are they growing in grace? Are they evangelical in spirit?
- (2) Have they gifts, as well as grace, for His 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, winsomely?
- (3) Have they fruit? Have any been actually convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their preaching?

These we receive as sufficient proof that they are moved by the Holy Spirit and called of God to preach the true Gospel of Christ.

¶802. The Evangelical Methodist Ministerial Profile (EMAP), as adopted by the General Conference, shall be required for all new ministerial candidates, transfers, and present credential holders who move to another local church pastorate as deemed necessary by the Conference Superintendents and the General Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶803. The Board of Ministerial Relations shall schedule meetings at various sites across the country to interview ministerial candidates and conduct other related business. Such meetings may be held in conjunction with a Journey or regionally hosted events. If the chair is unable to be present, he/she shall appoint another member of the board to chair the meeting.

¶804. Ministerial members not serving as pastors shall submit annually a written report of their work to the General Secretary. The appropriate report form is to be in the hands of the General Secretary by January 31. A list of all ministerial members who fail to report for a period of two successive years shall be compiled by the Conference Superintendent and submitted to the Board of Ministerial Relations. Upon recommendation by the Board of Ministerial Relations the General Council may locate without consent such persons. The statistical reports of those serving as pastors shall be accepted as such written report.

¶805 A list of ministerial members not engaged in one of the following activities shall be compiled by the Conference Superintendents for his/her assigned regions and submitted to the Board of Ministerial Relations and upon recommendation by the board, the General Council may locate without consent or discontinue.

- (1) Pastoring an Evangelical Methodist Church.
- (2) Pastoring an approved non-Evangelical Methodist Church.
- (3) Approved administration
- (4) Approved missions.
- (5) Approved evangelists and song evangelists.
- (6) Educators in approved Christian institutions.
- (7) Students in approved courses of study.
- (8) Supernumerary and Superannuated ministers
- (9) Chaplaincy

Approval for continuance in 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 shall be renewed annually upon request of the individual and the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶806. Ministers entering their first pastorate in the Evangelical Methodist Church shall be assigned a counseling elder for a period of one year by the appropriate Conference Superintendent in consultation with the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶807. The Conference Superintendents shall inquire concerning what is being done by the churches to discover those who are called of God to the ministry, to test their fitness for this work, and to aid them in their preparation. They shall take cognizance of all Local Preachers within the regions, and annually inquire, by committee or otherwise, touching their development in the Christian life, their progress in literary and theological studies, and their success in Christian work, and when satisfied of their fitness, on their application, shall renew annually their license.

## **Chapter 2. The Matter and Manner of Preaching**

¶811. This is Section XI of the 1804 *Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*:

Question 1 -- What is the best general method of preaching?

Answer 1 -- To convince, to offer Christ, to invite, to build up, and to do this in some measure in every sermon.

Question 2 -- What is the most effectual way of preaching Christ?

Answer 2 -- The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach Him in all His offices, to declare His law, as well as His Gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches (See John 15).

Question 3 -- Are there any smaller advices which might be of use to us?

Answer 3 -- Perhaps these:

- (1) Be sure never to disappoint a congregation.
- (2) Begin at the time appointed.
- (3) Let your whole deportment be serious, weighty, and solemn.
- (4) Always suit your subject to your audience.
- (5) Choose the plainest text you can.
- (6) Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand.
- (7) Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.
- (8) It is recommended to the yearly Conferences to caution and restrict our preachers from improper publications.
- (9) Do not usually pray extempore above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission.

(10) Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of Scripture, and let your young preachers often exhort without taking a text.

(11) Always avail yourself of the great festivals by preaching on the occasion.

These questions shall be reviewed with all ministerial candidates by the Board of Ministerial Relations.

### **Chapter 3. The Preacher in Charge**

¶821. The pastoral duties include:

- (1) To preach the unsearchable riches of Christ through the Gospel.
- (2) To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform the marriage ceremony, and to bury the dead. Unordained pastors or local preachers serving pastoral charges may administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, and perform the marriage ceremony where the laws of the state permit, within the bounds of their pastoral charge, as long as they are in good standing and their local preacher's license is up-to-date. Only preachers who renew their license annually have this privilege.
- (3) To preach on the doctrinal distinctive of the Evangelical Methodist Church as contained in the Articles of Religion, and to present the General Rules at least once each year in each local church.
- (4) To preach upon stewardship, explaining to the people the meaning of Christian stewardship and tithing, by tithing campaigns and tithers leagues.
- (5) To preach on the subject of evangelical Christian education, and to urge upon parents the importance of training their children in public and private worship, daily Bible reading and study, and setting an example through the family altar and the stewardship of all of life.
- (6) To preach total abstinence from the use of beverage alcohol, tobacco, and drugs in a winsome manner in view of Christian stewardship of the human body. They are to lay the claim of the ministry on young men, and the claims of Christ upon our lives, time, talents, and tithe, including the Lord's Day, Sunday.

- (7) To hold or appoint prayer meetings, love feasts, watch-night services, regular services, and evangelistic campaigns whenever advisable. The preacher in charge of a church as pastor is not required to secure the consent of the trustees of the church property before holding services in any church on his charge.
- (8) To present the missionary program of the church and urge its support by all the people in the church.
- (9) To instruct candidates for membership in the church in the doctrines, rules, and regulations of the church, to receive persons into membership, and to grant letters of transfer on request.
- (10) To visit from house to house in order to give pastoral guidance and help to members of the church and others in need of spiritual help through Christ.
- (11) Upon consultation with the Board of Stewards to obtain evangelists, missionaries, and Bible lecturers for a series of meetings such as he thinks best for the spiritual welfare of the church at large in keeping with the *Discipline*.
- (12) To have oversight of the local preachers in his/her pastoral charge, and to arrange opportunities where their talents can glorify God.

¶822. The administrative duties of the pastor include:

- (1) To administer all the provisions of the *Discipline* in his/her church and see that the ordinances and regulations of the church are duly observed.
- (2) To make a written report to the Annual Church Conference and the appropriate Conference of all items required for the statistics of each conference using the proper forms and observing designated due dates.
- (3) To be amenable to the appropriate Conference for the exercise of his/her office. He/she shall submit to the biblical and godly advice of his/her Conference Superintendent and International General Superintendent in matters relating to Word, Sacrament, and Order.
- (4) To attend the meetings of the board of stewards and work with them, providing inspiration and leadership, in carrying out the program and business of the local church. The pastor may call the stewards into special session whenever it is deemed necessary for the welfare of the church.
- (5) To explain the importance and values of the Conference Support and urge its support by all the people in his charge.

- (6) To keep a membership record for the church in which shall be noted the name and time of reception and/or removal of each member of the church.
- (7) To keep a working file of the membership of the church which shall be ready to assist with addresses, etc., for visitation, evangelism, finance campaigns, and shall be left up-to-date for a new pastor or Conference Superintendent.
- (8) To see that the people are supplied with all our literature and other sound evangelical materials.
- (9) To maintain in consultation with the Board of Stewards contracted duties of the pastor. Time to attend Evangelical Methodist Conferences, Continuing Education Events, and/or denominational duties are to be considered as pastoral responsibilities and do not count as vacation or days off.

¶823. The pastor shall make a written report to each Annual Church Conference on the following:

- (1) The spiritual condition of the church or churches in his charge.
- (2) The names of all who have been received into the church, indicating the method of reception, and of all who have died, transferred, withdrawn, or been expelled during the conference year.
- (3) The enrollment, attendance, and spiritual condition of the Sunday Schools within the charge, including noteworthy events, weekday meetings of children, youth, and adults, as well as fellowship meetings of the church.
- (4) Pastor work done with children.
- (5) Pastoral calls.
- (6) The Conference Support relationship to the conference.
- (7) Other items worthy of record.
- (8) Plans for future work.

¶824. Annual Tenure of Service. When a pastor knows he/she is planning to leave the church for another appointment, the pastor shall give the local church at least thirty days' notice of this proposed move in order to give the church time to secure another pastor. (See ¶257.)

## Chapter 4. The Conference Superintendent

¶831. Qualifications: See ¶103.

- (1) Shall have been faithful in academic pursuits and continuing education units.
- (2) Must be an ordained Elder of the Evangelical Methodist Church for at least eight consecutive years.
- (3) Shall have a history of successful pastoral ministry with proven administrative and relational skills.
- (4) Shall be eminent in piety, blameless in character, and mighty in prayer.
- (5) The itinerant Conference Superintendents shall have the ability to move their permanent residence to the area of the country at the request of the International General Superintendent, with the approval of the General Council, where the majority of their regional assignments are located and near an easily accessible transportation hub.
- (6) Should have a minimum of an undergraduate degree.

¶832. Elections. See ¶103, 621.

¶833. Duties:

- (1) Annual Church Conference. See ¶231, 233, 243, 251, 252, 253.
- (2) Regions. See ¶423, 424, 425, 428, 429.
- (3) District Conference. See ¶403.
- (4) General Conference. See ¶606 (5).
- (5) To preach the Gospel in the churches under his/her supervision when invited by the pastor in charge or by the Board of Stewards when there is no pastor, or when filling his/her duly appointed office.
- (6) To have general oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the churches under his/her supervision.
- (7) To supervise the work of all preachers under his/her supervision, holding them responsible to administer the *Discipline* and for fulfilling the trust placed in them by the General Conference and the local church.
- (8) To counsel with the preachers under his/her supervision in regard to their work and ministry.
- (9) To act as a member of the Cabinet of Superintendents, performing the duties and ministry of the Conference Superintendent in

conjunction with decisions and directions from the Cabinet of Superintendents and the General Conference.

- (10) To report the names and addresses of all Local Preachers under his/her supervision to the Secretary of the General Conference for insertion in the minutes; to report the names and addresses of all who have been licensed to preach during the year; and to report all candidates for the ministry to the Board of Ministerial Relations.
- (11) To advise and encourage Local Preachers, candidates for the ministry, and conference under-graduates in their studies.
- (12) To prepare and deliver to his/her successor an official list of all property, along with a list of all endowments, annuities, trust funds, investments, etc. under his/her supervision.
- (13) To procure statistics from every congregation and report such to the General Conference when necessary.
- (14) To approve, change, or remove preachers during the year according to the *Discipline*; being careful to use only preachers whose teaching, service record, and character are in keeping with the *Discipline*.
- (15) To establish new preaching places and organize new congregations whenever possible, following procedures designated in the *Discipline*.
- (16) To perform such other duties as the *Discipline* may direct.

#### ¶834. Conference Superintendent Emeritus Status.

Former Conference Superintendents who have completed a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive years of superintendency shall be eligible to receive the title, *Conference Superintendent Emeritus*, upon the recommendation of the General Council and approval of the General Conference.

The emeritus status provides for continued ministry to the denomination.

The Conference Superintendent Emeritus privileges:

- (1) Provides, when requested by the International General Superintendent, consultation and assistance in the ministry in the North American Conference and international assistance to the International General Superintendent.
- (2) Receives a stipend for service and travel budget upon approval of the General Board of Finance.

## Chapter 5. The International General Superintendent

### ¶841. Qualifications:

- (1) Must be an ordained elder of the Evangelical Methodist Church for at least eight (8) consecutive years.
- (2) Shall have had successful ministerial experience.
- (3) Shall have proven administrative ability.
- (4) Shall be eminent in piety, blameless in character, and mighty in prayer.
- (5) Shall move, if necessary, securing a permanent residence in the area surrounding the city where the International Headquarters is located.
- (6) Should have at least a seminary degree equivalent to a Masters post-graduate degree.
- (7) Should have experience in global missions and cross-cultural ministry.

¶842. Elections. See ¶102, 621.

### ¶843. Duties:

- (1) General Conference. See ¶621, 640, 641.
- (2) General Council. See ¶606, 612 (1).
- (3) District Conference. See ¶402, 403.
- (4) Regions. See ¶422, 426, 429.
- (5) The International General Superintendent shall be chair of the Cabinet of Superintendents overseeing the ministry and administrative duties of the Conference Superintendents including the spiritual and temporal affairs of the General Church for all the conferences worldwide.
- (6) To promote the interests of Christ in cooperation with the preachers and the people in the churches.
- (7) To send immediately to the secretaries of the appropriate conferences involved, written notices of the transfer or change of a membership with the standing or official relationship.
- (8) To promote the evangelistic activities of the church.
- (9) To recommend to and consult with the Cabinet of Superintendents in the facilitation of denominational goals and priorities.
- (10) To discharge such other duties as the *Discipline* may direct.

#### ¶844. International General Superintendent/Bishop Emeritus Status

This status is conferred upon a retiring International General Superintendent/Bishop by the General Conference upon the recommendation of the General Council. Emeritus status entitles the presiding International General Superintendent/Bishop to assign this individual to specific ministry and mission assignments for the denomination; this includes acting on behalf of the presiding International General Superintendent/Bishop in ordination and other ministries where he/she cannot be present. Emeritus status allows participation at the General Council, voice without vote, and serving in an advisory role when called upon by the Cabinet of Superintendents. In such cases all travel expenses will be at the expense of the General Conference.

## Chapter 6. Ministerial Relations

¶851. It shall be the responsibility of the General Board of Ministerial Relations to determine uniform standards concerning character, competency, and ministry for all applicants: Local Preacher's license, Admission on Trial, Elder, deacon, deaconess, transfer between conferences, and transfer from other denominations. (See flowchart at ¶1115)

¶852. The General Conference may admit into membership in the manner prescribed by the *Discipline* only those who have met all the disciplinary requirements for membership. The General Conference Secretary shall maintain a file on each ministerial member. The Conference Superintendent shall annually update those records with the General Secretary and the chair of the Board of Ministerial Relations. This file shall be made available for use when necessary in conducting church business and shall include the following information: date of birth, date of marriage, name of spouse, date of granting of Local Preacher's License, date of consecration as a Deacon/Deaconess, date of Admission on Trial, and date of ordination. The Code of Ethics for a Minister of the Evangelical Methodist Church shall be signed by all credential holders and a copy filed with the General Secretary. Each subsequent General Conference year all credential holders shall sign a reaffirmation of the Ministerial Code of Ethics, which shall be filed with the General Secretary.

## **Code of Ethics for a Minister of the Evangelical Methodist Church**

### **PERSONAL STANDARDS**

- (1) I will endeavor to be conscious at all times of the sacredness of my calling.
- (2) I will endeavor to prayerfully deepen my commitment to Christ constantly and live this commitment before all in perfect love.
- (3) I will endeavor to give adequate time in developing my intellectual capacities, to keep abreast of current thought, and to prepare my messages.
- (4) I will endeavor to keep my body physically fit.
- (5) I will endeavor to give full-time service to my ministerial duties.
- (6) I will endeavor to maintain a high moral standard in speech and conduct, and be decorous in manners and dress.
- (7) I will endeavor to act above reproach in all business and financial matters, and incur no debts that would embarrass myself or the Evangelical Methodist Church.
- (8) I will endeavor to present a balance of truth tactfully and constructively.
- (9) I will endeavor to honor by acknowledgement the influence of others and their materials in my life and ministry.
- (10) I will endeavor to regulate the demeanor of my own family.

### **PARISH STANDARDS**

- (1) I will occupy a pastorate as a sacred obligation and will faithfully perform all my duties until released.
- (2) I will be a spiritual shepherd of all my people, and endeavor to be a shepherd of those who do not have one.
- (3) I will preach the Gospel of salvation and entire sanctification with love and patience.
- (4) I will endeavor to act above reproach in the performance of my pastoral duties.
- (5) I will regard my service as primary, my remuneration as secondary.
- (6) I will keep confidences inviolate.
- (7) I will represent the Evangelical Methodist Church in my community, and be a messenger of goodwill and unity in the spirit of Christ.
- (8) I will leave the church records and property in good order when my responsibilities are terminated.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- (1) I will respect the parish of another minister, and render a service in such only in emergencies or with the consent of the assigned minister.
- (2) I will seek to enhance, not to degrade, the work of another minister.
- (3) I will deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and successor.
- (4) In the event of a change in my doctrinal position or for any other reason I find myself no longer in harmony or sympathy with the Evangelical Methodist Church, I will voluntarily and peacefully withdraw from the Conference in the spirit of Christ endeavoring to protect the best interests of both the local and general church.
- (5) I will be enthusiastic about and promote the work of the Evangelical Methodist Church.

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Minister

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Date

¶853. LOCAL PREACHER’S LICENSE. The Board of Ministerial Relations shall license to preach Local Preachers. Local Preachers are members in good standing of a local church who desire to serve the Lord through the faithful proclamation of the Word of God. The Local Preacher must be committed to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine and polity of the Evangelical Methodist Church. Local Preachers may serve the local church as the pastor or the Conference Superintendent directs, preaching and serving as opportunities arise and may, upon the recommendation of the pastor, preach in neighboring churches. A Local Preacher is not a ministerial member of the General Conference. However, he/she may be a lay delegate from the church, which he/she serves. Local Preachers may choose to remain at the Local Preacher level. He/she must continue to fulfill educational requirements set by General Board of Ministerial Education. No license shall be issued for Local Preacher until approved by an Evangelical Methodist Church local congregation, the completion of educational requirements set by the General Board of Ministerial Education, and examination by the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶854. Upon completion of the educational requirements for Local Preachers License and examination by the General Board of Ministerial Relations, a Local Preacher, with the approval of the General Board of Ministerial Relations, may choose to stay at that level. Individuals pastoring local churches as a Local Preacher shall serve under the supervision of the Conference Superintendent and may be removed at any time by the Conference Superintendent (see ¶856). The placement and continuation of a Local Preacher as the pastor of a local church shall be made by the Conference Superintendent, in consultation with the local church Pastoral Relations Committee. The Local Preacher may re-enter the appropriate school of ministry in order to proceed toward ordination, upon the approval of the General Board of Ministerial Education and the General Board of Ministerial Relations, and is subject to any current course of study requirements for Local Preachers License before progressing to the next level of the course of study.

¶855. The Conference Superintendent and chair of the Board of Ministerial Relations shall jointly have the power to issue a Local Preacher's License, valid until the following Journey or General Council. The candidate shall have completed the course of study for Local Preacher's License and shall have been recommended by his/her Annual Church Conference.

¶856. Licensed Local Preachers may serve as pastor of a local congregation in the Evangelical Methodist Church only by appointment to this position by the appropriate Conference Superintendent in consultation with the local church Pastoral Relations Committee, and may be removed by the Conference Superintendent at any time. Local Preachers shall furnish a written report of their work to the General Board of Ministerial Relations annually for renewal of license (See ¶853).

¶857. **ADMISSION ON TRIAL.** A candidate for admission on trial into the Evangelical Methodist Church shall have completed the educational requirements for admission on trial. They shall be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and the appropriate Conference Superintendent, and receive a favorable vote by the General Council. A person with admission on trial status is a member of the General Conference, but shall not have voting privileges.

¶858. A candidate who is admitted on trial is actually on trial for two years. His/her character, competency, and preaching must prove to be advantageous to the church and the kingdom of God as determined by the Board of Ministerial Relations before he/she can be admitted into full connection. A candidate on trial may be discontinued without any reflection on his/her character.

¶859. ELDER'S ORDERS. A candidate for admission into full connection in the Evangelical Methodist Church as an Elder shall have served at least two years in the active ministry and shall have passed the course of study for elder's orders. This course of study is a three-year course and must be completed before admission into full connection and granting of elder's orders. The candidate shall be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and the appropriate Conference Superintendent. (See ¶1115)

¶860. It is expected that all candidates for the ministry shall complete four years of college level work, or present a Bachelor of Arts degree or its equivalent.

¶861. Active licensed credential holders in the Evangelical Methodist Church with the exception of missionaries serving on the foreign field shall participate in not less than two continuing education units per year unless excused for exceptional circumstances by the appropriate Conference Superintendent. The Board of Ministerial Education shall determine acceptable programs of study.

¶862. The General Conference shall furnish credentials for Elders, Members on Trial, Local Preachers, and Deacon/Deaconess, signed by the International General Superintendent or other presiding officer, and the Secretary of the General Conference.

¶863. The International General Superintendent and Conference Superintendent, shall call the class to be admitted into full connection, and receive them into conference membership after asking the following questions of the *Discipline*. (Here follow the questions, which every Evangelical Methodist preacher from the beginning has been required to answer upon becoming a full member of a conference. These questions were formulated by John Wesley and have been little changed throughout the years.)

(To be read by the General Superintendent)

- (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 groaning after it?
- (5) Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and His work?
- (6) Do you know the general rules of our church?
- (7) Will you keep them?
- (8) Have you studied the doctrines of the Evangelical 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 diligently instruct the children in every place?
- (15) Will you visit from house to house?
- (16) Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both in precept and example?
- (17) Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?
- (18) Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
- (19) Will you observe the following directions:
  - a. Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be trifling employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at one place than is strictly necessary.
  - b. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time.
  - c. Do not mend our rules, but keep them, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

This examination of the ministers and the passing of their characters should be business of the same session. Then they are entitled to the floor and a vote.

¶864. Upon election by majority vote of the General Conference or the General Council, the candidate for elder immediately becomes a member of the General Conference with full connection. He/she will then receive ordination by the laying on of hands at the time set cooperatively by the International General Superintendent and the appropriate Conference Superintendent.

¶865. RECEIVING MINISTERS FROM OTHER CHURCHES. Ordained ministers who desire to unite with the Evangelical Methodist Church as traveling preachers may be admitted upon recommendation by the Board of Ministerial Relations and the Conference Superintendent of the region in which they reside. The Board of Ministerial Relations shall determine whether they are to be admitted as Elders or at the Admission on Trial level, but in no case shall they be exempt from the examination on the *Discipline* which is required of all candidates for ministerial credentials. They shall give evidence of their agreement with the Evangelical Methodist Church in matters of doctrine and polity, and they shall terminate their relationship with the group from which they are transferring.

¶866. SUPERNUMERARY PREACHERS. A supernumerary preacher is one who is partially or totally disabled so as to be unable to fulfill all the normal ministerial responsibilities. A supernumerary relation shall be granted by a General Conference or the General Council upon the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶867. SUPERANNUATED PREACHERS. A superannuated preacher is one who has reached the age of retirement from active ministerial service. A superannuated relation shall be granted by a General Conference or the General Council upon request from the individual and recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶868. APPROVED SONG EVANGELIST. If one is gifted and feels called of God to the ministry of song evangelism, he/she may request of the Board of Ministerial Relations license as an Approved Song Evangelist of the Evangelical Methodist Church. Approval for General Conference Song Evangelist comes by a majority vote of the General Conference upon the approval and recommendation of the General Board of Ministerial Relations. The certificate for General Conference Approved Song Evangelist is renewable quadrennially. If the original petition is made between General Conference years, approval comes by majority vote of the General Council upon the approval and recommendation of the General Board of Ministerial Relations and is valid until the next General Conference.

¶869. The certificate for General Conference Approved Song Evangelist shall be issued by the General Conference Secretary. This

certificate license shall be signed by the General Conference Secretary and the International General Superintendent.

¶870. APPROVED EVANGELIST. If a Traveling Elder feels called of God to the office of evangelist, he may request of the Board of Ministerial Relations license as an Approved Evangelist. Approval for General Conference Evangelist comes by a majority vote of the General Conference upon the approval and recommendation of the General Board of Ministerial Relations. The certificate for General Conference Approved Evangelist is renewable quadrennially. If the original petition is made between General Conference years, approval comes by majority vote of the General Council upon the approval and recommendation of the General Board of Ministerial Relations and is valid until the next General Conference.

¶871. DEACON/DEACONESS'S ORDERS. The church affirms that particular persons are called, recognized and set apart beyond the normal role of the believer for servant leadership within the body of Christ and the world. This set-apart ministry is not a substitute for the diaconal responsibility of all believers.

Those called to this ministry of service in the church and world may be set apart to the office of Deacon or Deaconess. This ministry exemplifies the servant-hood of every Christian called to live both in the church and the world. The Deacon/Deaconess embodies the unity of the congregation's worship with its life in the world by participating with the elder of his or her local church. This is demonstrated in the leadership of worship, working a serving profession in the church and serving the needs of the poor, the sick, and the oppressed.

A Deacon/Deaconess must be a member in good standing of the Evangelical Methodist Church and have shown fitness in his or her duties by active service in some Christian work. Before consecration, he or she must be recommended by his or her local church and appropriate Conference Superintendent, have completed the prescribed course of study as recommended by the Board of Ministerial Education, have personally met with the Board of Ministerial Relations, be recommended by that Board to the General Council and receive a majority vote. A Deacon/Deaconess is amenable to the Conference Superintendent for conduct, character and attendance, and shall be under the direct supervision of the Conference Superintendent.

¶872. The Global Wesleyan Alliance, composed of Covenant Partner denominations, is recognized by the Evangelical Methodist Church in the mutual recognition of ministerial credentials. The General Board of Ministerial Relations will make all determinations for requests of mutual recognition of credentials in accordance with the adopted resolution of “Mutual Recognition of Credentials” and the requirements of the Evangelical Methodist Church.

## **Chapter 7. Termination of Ministerial Relationship**

¶881. BY TRANSFER. When a minister in good standing desires to transfer to another denomination, his credentials must be surrendered to the conference for the following inscription to be plainly written across them.

\_\_\_\_\_ *has this day been honorably transferred by the*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Conference from the ministry of the Evangelical*  
*Methodist Church after \_\_\_\_\_ years of service. Dated \_\_\_\_\_*  
\_\_\_\_\_, *Superintendent*  
\_\_\_\_\_, *Secretary*

This may be done at any time, provided the minister’s character is in the clear.

¶882. WITHDRAWAL. When a minister desires to withdraw his/her ministerial relation from the Evangelical Methodist Church, he/she may do so upon request to the appropriate Conference Superintendent and the chair of the Board of Ministerial Relations. The Conference Superintendent shall notify the General Secretary and the records (minutes and pastoral service record) shall so indicate his/her withdrawal.

Ministers leaving or absenting themselves from the sessions and seat of a General Conference in protest or lack of sympathy and harmony with the policy and proceedings of the conference, when publicly stated, shall be judged, by vote of the conference, as having withdrawn, and the records of the General Conference be corrected accordingly. Ministers uniting with, or receiving credentials from other denominations, except by transfer, shall be considered as having withdrawn and the records shall so indicate.

¶883. WITHDRAWAL UNDER COMPLAINTS. See ¶1041.

¶884. WITHDRAWAL UNDER CHARGES. See ¶1041.

¶885. VOLUNTARY LOCATION. When a minister in good standing desires to discontinue regular ministerial and evangelistic work he/she may do so, upon request, provided his/her credentials are surrendered to the conference for the following inscription to be plainly written across them: \_\_\_\_\_ has this day been honorably dismissed from the ministry of the Evangelical Methodist Church after \_\_\_\_\_ years of service, who avowedly intends to discontinue regular ministerial, evangelistic, or missionary work. Dated \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent  
\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary

This status is granted without any reflection upon the minister's character or conduct. Upon request by the individual, the credential may be reinstated/restored by a majority vote of the General Conference upon the recommendation of the appropriate Conference Superintendent and the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶886. INVOLUNTARY LOCATION/LOCATED WITHOUT CONSENT. The General Council may locate without consent a ministerial member for any cause listed in ¶428, 804, and 805. The General Council may also locate without consent any ministerial member charged with any of the offenses listed in ¶1001, provided the disciplinary rights of appeal and trial have been waived by the member. The appropriate Conference Superintendent shall submit his/her reasons for considering a minister's involuntary location in writing to the Board of Ministerial Relations, and shall notify in writing the individual involved prior to a regular session of the General Council at which the proposed action is to be considered. The Board of Ministerial Relations shall submit its recommendations to the General Council which may locate without consent the ministerial member which deprives him/her of the right to exercise the ministerial office. The Cabinet of Superintendents will remove immediately a pastor found guilty in secular courts of acts of moral turpitude and report such action to the General Board of Ministerial Relations. These acts include, but are not limited to, embezzlement, violence, and general criminal behavior.

¶887. REHABILITATION FOR RESTORATION OF CREDENTIAL. The process of seeking to bring a minister who has been

disciplined or has voluntarily surrendered the rights, privileges and responsibilities of the clergy to a place of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical health and to a place of usefulness and constructive activity is considered in each individual circumstance by the Board of Ministerial Relations and the appropriate Conference Superintendent. Rehabilitation does not necessarily include the restoration of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of the clergy.

¶888. The General Board of Ministerial Relations shall establish guidelines and develop a written plan that is in harmony with the *Discipline* to be used in each individual case, to aid in the process of response, rehabilitation and possible restoration to ministry of clergy involved in conduct unbecoming of a minister. The objective of the plan should be to return the individual to a place of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical health whether or not the person is returned to previous status. The facilitator(s) or their designee shall report to the Board of Ministerial Relations once each quarter concerning the progress toward rehabilitation using the form established by the Board of Ministerial Relations. The Board of Ministerial Relations may revise the plan of rehabilitation from time to time as the circumstances warrant. This report shall be kept in the individual's secured and confidential file.

¶889. A member of the clergy, who has committed sexual misconduct (such as pornography, fornication, adultery, etc.), must satisfactorily complete a prescribed plan (See ¶888) for rehabilitation for a minimum of four years, before good standing may be restored. Restoration of a credential will be considered upon request by the individual and recommendation of the International General and Conference Superintendents to the Board of Ministerial Relations. Upon approval of the Board of Ministerial Relations, a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy members of the General Conference, meeting in executive session, is required for restoration. Individuals who are guilty of sexual misconduct that involves a high probability of repeated misconduct, such as pedophilia and homosexuality, shall not be restored to clergy status.

¶890. A member of the clergy who is in the rehabilitation process shall not preach, teach or hold any other position of trust or authority in the church or worship services, and shall not be given any ministerial role unless the Board of Ministerial Relations, the appropriate Conference Superintendent and the International General Superintendent determine

that the individual has made sufficient progress toward rehabilitation to warrant once again allowing the individual to be of service in a position of trust or authority. Careful consideration shall be given as to whether or not the individual has appropriately repented of his/her misconduct. True repentance involves a deep sense of godly sorrow resulting in a change of conduct which continues for a length of time sufficient to be evidence that the change is likely to be permanent (II Corinthians 7:10-11). Approval to serve in a position of trust or authority may be granted with or without restrictions.

¶891. No candidate may be accepted into the ministry of the Evangelical Methodist Church who has been divorced and remarried or who has married a divorced person. The only exceptions to this rule that will be considered are:

- (1) When the divorce(s) occurred prior to conversion.
- (2) When the divorced person(s) is/are the innocent party in the case of adultery or desertion.

These exceptions will only be made when, upon recommendation of the appropriate Conference Superintendent, the Board of Ministerial Relations determines that the call of God is strong, the evidence of ministerial gifts is present, and a new life beyond reproach has been established.

¶892. In the event a minister in the Evangelical Methodist Church experiences a marital separation, the appropriate Conference Superintendent shall have the authority to suspend the minister immediately from his pastoral duties. The Conference Superintendent and the Board of Ministerial Relations shall make a thorough investigation, interviewing the parties involved. After completing the investigation, and in accordance with the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations, the Conference Superintendent shall direct the minister to surrender his/her credentials, take a one-year sabbatical from the ministry, or continue in ministry uninterrupted.

## **Chapter 8. Course of Study for Preachers**

¶901. The Board of Ministerial Education shall be composed of five elders from a cross section of the country, and shall be elected by the General Conference after the normal nominating process. The board shall

establish the curriculum and prepare all courses of study for Elder's orders, Admission on Trial, Deacon/Deaconess's orders, and Local Preacher's license. Ministerial Education manuals shall be published separate from the *Discipline*. The General Council shall approve the course of study curriculum.

¶902. The General Conference Board of Ministerial Education shall prepare standardized examinations in all areas of study. These shall be required of all candidates. The board shall be responsible for recruiting, appointing, and maintaining an adequate number of examiners to efficiently administer and complete the examination procedures. Appointed examiners shall serve under the direction of and be amenable to the board. However, elected board members may serve as examiners. All reports and sermons must be submitted 45 days prior to the time the candidate is to appear before the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶903. The General Conference Board of Ministerial Education shall be charged with implementation of the courses of study, corresponding with candidates, administering examinations, and reporting the names of those who have successfully completed the course to the Board of Ministerial Relations. The General Conference Board of Ministerial Education is authorized to accept, in its opinion, equivalent work or books covering identical subjects, with the exception of the *Discipline*. A seminary degree, or its equivalent, from an institution approved by the Board of Ministerial Education may be accepted in lieu of the entire course of study, with the exception of the *Discipline*, the *Catechism*, and the candidate's two written sermons. However, such a candidate for ordination as Elder should serve the full two years in his/her probationary status of Admission on Trial before he/she can be ordained as an Elder, irrespective of his/her course of study or its equivalent. (See ¶429)

¶904. COURSE OF STUDY TIME LIMIT. The maximum time for Local Preacher, Admission on Trial and the Elder's Course of Study is three (3) years each. Any person who does not complete the studies within three (3) years shall be discontinued, unless, because of circumstances clearly unusual, an extension of time may be recommended by the Conference Superintendent and authorized by the Board of Ministerial Relations.

## **JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**



# JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

## Chapter 1. Offenses

¶1001. Offenses for which a General Superintendent, Conference Superintendent, Elder, Member on Trial, Local Preacher, or Deacon/Deaconess, or person serving a local church in any ministerial or sacerdotal function may be tried:

- (1) Disobedience to the *Discipline* of the Evangelical Methodist Church.
- (2) Un-ministerial or imprudent conduct.
- (3) Unchristian tempers, words, or actions.
- (4) Habitual neglect of duties.
- (5) Disseminating doctrine contrary to the Bible or the *Discipline*.
- (6) Crime or immorality.
- (7) Mal-administration in office.

¶1002. The Conference Investigation Committee shall be composed of 3 Elders elected by the General Conference and is authorized to investigate all complaints and give recommendations for all ministerial members together with deacon/deaconesses and local preachers and any person serving in a ministerial capacity regardless of credential status. The duties of the Investigation Committee specifically shall be threefold:

- (1) Investigations having to do with judicial administration as found in ¶ 1001-1056.
- (2) Investigations having to do with the termination of ministerial relations as found in ¶881-887.
- (3) Investigations of all notarized complaints covering ministerial members as to discharge of duties. If a pastor fails to promote the payment of Conference Support in full and fails to submit his/her annual statistical report, it shall be the duty of the Conference Superintendent to present his/her name to the Investigation Committee who shall call upon the pastor to show cause why these have been neglected. After thorough investigation, it shall be their duty to present the pastor's name to the General Council for action as to censure or remand to the Investigation Committee for possible judicial action under ¶1001.

## **Chapter 2. Investigation and Trial of Ministers**

¶1011. INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL OF A GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT. If a General Superintendent shall be accused in writing of any of the offenses hereinbefore mentioned in the course of his/her administration, the Conference Superintendent, within whose region the alleged offense is said to have been committed, shall call the Investigation Committee who shall carefully inquire into the case; and if, in the judgment of the majority of them there is reasonable ground for such accusation, they shall prepare and sign the proper charges and specifications, and send a copy of the same to the accused and to the General Council of the Evangelical Methodist Church. The Conference Superintendent or his appointee in the region where the offense took place shall call together at some convenient place, within fifteen days from the time he/she receives the charges, five Elders and also witnesses by whom the accusation is expected to be proved. The Conference Superintendent or appointee shall preside. The accused shall have the right to make a statement on his own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself/herself present any. If three of the five Elders determine that a trial is justified they shall order one, and they may suspend the General Superintendent pending trial, as hereinafter provided.

¶1012. INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL OF A CONFERENCE SUPERINTENDENT. If a Conference Superintendent shall be accused in writing of any of the offenses hereinbefore mentioned in the course of his/her administration, the General Superintendent or his/her appointee shall call the Investigation Committee who shall carefully inquire into the case; and if, in the judgment of the majority of them, there is reasonable ground for such accusation, they shall prepare and sign the proper charges and specifications and send a copy of the same to the accused and to the General Council of the Evangelical Methodist Church. The General Superintendent or his/her appointee shall call together at some convenient place, within fifteen days from the time he/she receives the charges, five Elders and also witnesses by whom the accusation is expected to be proved. The General Superintendent or his/her appointee shall preside. The accused shall have the right to make a statement in his/her own behalf and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself/herself present any. If three of the five Elders determine that a trial is justified they shall order one, and they may suspend the Conference Superintendent pending trial, as hereinafter provided.

¶1013. Should a trial be ordered, the presiding officer shall, within seven days from the date on which a trial is ordered, fix the time and place of it within thirty days of such order. The trial court shall be constituted as follows.

- (1) The officer shall arrange for a meeting of the accused and his counsel, and the counsel for the church, as early as practicable after the trial is ordered, to select the personnel of the trial court.
- (2) The officer shall nominate, as proposed jurors of the trial court, twelve Elders from a list made up of a cross section of the Elders.
- (3) The church and the defendant each shall have the right of preemptory challenge to the number of four, and of unlimited challenge for cause.
- (4) The officer shall add other Elders, if necessary, until the required number is selected. By the same method four alternates shall be chosen.

The trial court as thus constituted shall have full power to try the accused, and by a two-thirds vote to suspend him/her from the exercise of the function of his/her office; to depose him/her from his/her office, or the ministry, or both; to expel him/her from the church; or, in case of minor offenses, to fix a lesser penalty. Its findings shall be reported to the General Conference for entry in its minutes. The records of the trial, including the testimony, shall be signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the trial court, and shall be placed in the custody of the Secretary of the General Conference, together with all the documents in the case, for preservation with the papers of the General Conference, and shall be the basis of any appeal which may be taken to the General Conference Court of Appeals.

¶1014. A General Superintendent or Conference Superintendent suspended or deposed shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the date of suspension or deposition; but in case he/she is thereafter found not guilty, his/her claim upon the funds for the period during which he/she was deprived of the function of his/her office shall be paid to him/her.

¶1015 INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL OF AN ELDER, OR MEMBER ON TRIAL. If an Elder or Member on Trial shall be accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶1001, the appropriate Conference Superintendent shall call the Investigation Committee to inquire into the same, and, if possible, bring the accused and the accuser

face to face; the accused shall have the right to make a statement in his/her own behalf, but shall not present any witnesses.

¶1016. The chair of the Conference Investigation Committee shall preside throughout the proceedings, and shall certify and declare the judgment of the committee.

¶1017. If, in the judgment of a majority of the Investigation Committee, there is a reasonable ground for such accusation, they shall prepare and sign the proper charges and specifications, send a copy to the accused, to the appropriate Conference Superintendent, and to the Secretary of the General Conference. Upon recommendation of the Investigation Committee, the accused may be suspended from all ministerial services pending the trial. In the matter of a Deacon or Deaconess, he or she shall meet with the Cabinet of Superintendents whose decision will be final in all cases.

¶1018. Should a trial be ordered, the appropriate Conference Superintendent shall, within seven days from the date on which a trial is ordered, fix the time and place of it within thirty days of such order; shall appoint counsel for the church; and notify the accused, in writing, to appear at a fixed time and place no less than seven days after serving such notice to select nine or twelve Elders from a list made up of a cross section of the Elders of the conference. The church and the defendant shall each have the right of preemptory challenge to the number of four and unlimited challenge for cause. By the same method four alternates shall be chosen.

¶1019. The trial court, as thus constituted, shall have full power to try the accused, and by a two-thirds vote to suspend him/her from his/her office, or the ministry, or both; to expel him/her from the church; or, in case of minor offenses, to fix a lesser penalty. Its findings shall be reported to the Secretary of the General Conference for permanent record after the written proceedings have been signed by the president and secretary of the trial court. This shall include the bill of charges, the evidence taken, the decision rendered, together with all documents brought into the trial.

¶1020. A guilty party shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the date of such suspension or deposition; but in case he/she is thereafter found not guilty, his/her claim for funds shall be paid him/her.

¶1021. INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL OF A LOCAL PREACHER OR DEACON/DEACONESS. When a Local Preacher or Deacon/Deaconess, or any person serving in a ministerial capacity regardless of credential status, is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶1001, the appropriate Conference Superintendent shall call the Investigation Committee to meet; the accused shall appear before them. If, in the judgment of a majority of the Investigation Committee, there is reasonable ground for such accusation, they shall prepare and sign the proper charges and specifications, send a copy to the appropriate Superintendent, to the local pastor for his/her information, or, in his/her absence, to the chair of the Stewards where the Local Preacher, Deacon/Deaconess, or other person holds his/her membership. The pastor or chair of the Stewards becomes the presiding officer of the trial. If the pastor is the accuser, the Conference Superintendent shall be the presiding officer of the trial. Upon recommendation of the Investigation Committee, the accused may be suspended from all ministerial services pending the trial.

¶1022. Should a trial be ordered, the appropriate Conference Superintendent shall proceed according to ¶1018 and ¶1019, except that the proposed trial court shall be made up of members of the local church who are at least twenty-one years of age or over.

¶1023. WITHDRAWAL UNDER COMPLAINT OR CHARGES. See ¶1041 and ¶1042.

¶1024. COUNSEL. See ¶ 1043.

¶1025. The General Council may restore the credentials of a minister who has been expelled, suspended, or who has withdrawn from the Evangelical Methodist Church, providing proper restitution has been made and sufficient proof of his good character be presented to the Board of Ministerial Relations.

### **Chapter 3. Investigation and Trial of Lay Members**

¶1031. A member shall be liable to accusation and trial upon any of the following charges:

- (1) Disobedience to the *Discipline* of the church.
- (2) Unchristian tempers, words, or actions.

- (3) Disseminating doctrine contrary to the Bible or the *Discipline*.
- (4) Crime or immorality.

¶1032. In the case of accusation of any of the charges of ¶1031, the pastor shall privately admonish the member; and if there is acknowledgment of fault and proper humiliation, the person may be borne with. Failing such, or on further offense, the pastor may take with him one or two discreet stewards and give further reproof. If the offense be continued, the member shall be brought to trial.

¶1033. If a member of the church shall be accused of endeavoring to sow dissension in the church by inveighing against its doctrines or *Discipline*, its ministers or members, or in any other such manner, he/she shall first be reprovved by the pastor. If he/she persists in such practices, he/she shall be brought to trial.

¶1034. Charges against a member of a local church must be made in writing and be signed by two parties. The written charges are to be given to the pastor in charge who shall appoint an Investigation Committee composed of seven members of the local church in active standing, who are twenty-one years of age or older. The appropriate Conference Superintendent shall fix the time and place of the investigation and shall preside. Such investigations shall normally be held within thirty days after written charges have been made. A quorum of four members of the Investigation Committee shall be necessary to function. The accused and the accuser shall be brought face to face if possible, and the accused shall have the right of making a statement in his/her own behalf and of interrogating witnesses, but shall not have the right of presenting witnesses. The Investigation Committee shall then determine, by secret ballot, whether a trial is justified. The Investigation Committee shall formulate the charges and order a trial, sending a copy of the order to the Conference Superintendent, to the local pastor, to the accused and to the party bringing accusation.

¶1035. Should a trial be ordered, the appropriate Conference Superintendent shall proceed according to ¶1018 and ¶1019, except that the trial court shall be made up of members of the local church who are twenty-one years of age or older. The findings of the trial court shall be reported to the secretary of the local church for permanent record. No

member of a Conference who is also a member of the local church according to ¶912 may be tried by a local church trial court, but only by the appropriate Conference trial court.

¶1036. RESTORATION. An expelled member shall have no privileges of the church or of the sacraments of the church without repentance, contrition, and satisfactory restitution to the determination of the stewards. In such a case, the body may permit the individual to take the membership vows of the church and be restored to full membership.

## Chapter 4. General Directions

¶1041. WITHDRAWAL UNDER COMPLAINT OR CHARGES. When a General Superintendent, Elder, Member on Trial, Local Preacher, Deacon/Deaconess, or lay member of a local church is accused of an offense under ¶1001 or ¶1031, and notarized complaints have been filed with the Investigation Committee, and desires to withdraw from the church, he/she may be permitted to withdraw; in which case the respective record shall be plainly marked: *Withdrawn Under Complaints*. If written charges have been presented he/she may be permitted to withdraw, in which case the respective record shall be plainly marked: *Withdrawn Under Charges*. In either case, his/her status shall be the same as if he/she had been expelled.

¶1042. When anyone mentioned above is deprived of his/her credentials, license, or ordination, by expulsion or otherwise, the necessary authority shall require them of him/her, and file them with the respective records dealing with his/her case.

¶1043. COUNSEL. In all cases of trial, the accused shall be entitled to appear, to be represented by counsel of his/her own selection assuming financial responsibility for their legal counsel, and to be heard in oral or written argument. In all cases of trial where counsel has not been provided, such counsel shall be appointed by the presiding officer. Each counsel shall be allowed one assistant counsel of his/her own choice.

¶1044. All notices required in judicial administration shall be in writing, signed by or on behalf of the person or body giving or required to give such notice, and shall be addressed to the person or body to whom it

is required to be given. Such notices shall be served at least seven days in advance by delivery to the party or leading officer of the body to whom it is addressed in person, or by registered mail addressed to the last known residence or address of such party. The fact of the giving of the notice shall affirmatively appear over the signature of the party required to give such notice, and becomes a part of the record in the case. The types of acceptable service for notification include private courier and email with proof of receipt.

¶1045. In all cases of investigation or trial, notice to appear shall be given to such witnesses as either party may name, shall be issued in the name of the church, and be signed by the presiding officer of the trial court. It shall be the duty of a minister and a member of the church to appear and testify when summoned assuming responsibility for all travel expenses, lodging, and meals. The types of acceptable service for notification include private courier and email with proof of receipt.

¶1046. As soon as the trial court has convened, the accused shall be called upon by the presiding officer to plead the charge, and his/her pleas shall be duly recorded. On his/her neglect or refusal to plead, the plea of “not guilty” shall be entered for him/her, and the trial shall proceed; provided that the court may adjourn from time to time for sufficient cause; and provided that the accused shall at all times during the trial have the liberty to be present to make his/her defense and produce testimony.

¶1047. In case the accused person, after a seven-day notice has been given him/her shall refuse or neglect to appear at the time or place set forth for the hearing, the trial court may proceed in his/her absence. Sufficient time shall be given by the presiding officer for the accused to appear at the given place and time, and for the same to prepare for the trial.

¶1048. RECORDS. In the trial court the records shall be accurate and full; they shall include the proceedings in detail, all the evidence, taken stenographically if possible, the documents admitted, together with the charges and findings, and shall be approved and attested by the presiding officer and secretary.

¶1049. If within sixty days after the conviction of any of the foregoing accused, he/she shall make application in writing to the Conference Superintendent for a new trial on the ground of newly discovered

evidence, and shall submit therewith a written statement of the same, and if it shall appear to the Conference Superintendent that such evidence is material to the issue involved, he/she shall grant a new trial. In no case, however, shall a new trial be granted upon newly discovered evidence which could have been obtained for the trial by the exercise of due diligence, or which is merely cumulative in its effect.

## **Chapter 5. Appeals**

¶1051. The General Conference shall elect seven Elders, not including General Conference officers, to serve as members of the General Conference Court of Appeals during each quadrennium. One member shall be elected chair. A quorum of four members of the court of appeals shall be necessary in order to function. Vacancies which may occur in this body shall be filled by appointment by the General Superintendent. This court shall have jurisdiction to hear and to determine all appeals from the decisions or actions of any Conference trial court.

¶1052. The above courts of appeals shall determine two questions only: (a) Does the evidence sustain the charge or charges? (b) Were there such errors of procedure or interpretation as to vitiate the verdict? These questions shall be determined by the records of the trial and the arguments of a representative of the trial court and of counsel for the accused. The court shall in no case hear witnesses nor admit new evidence.

¶1053. In all cases of appeal the appellant shall within thirty days following the decision of a trial court, give notice of intent to appeal and shall furnish to the chair of the court of appeals a written statement of the grounds of his/her appeal, and the hearing of the court shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement. It shall be the duty of the chair of the court of appeals, on receiving a notice of intent to appeal, to fix the time and place for consideration of the appeal and to notify all persons involved by certified mail.

¶1054. Appeals, properly taken, shall be heard by the appropriate court of appeals, unless it shall appear to the said court that the appellant has forfeited his/her right to appeal by misconduct, such as refusal to abide by the findings of the committee of investigation or of the trial court, or by withdrawal from the church, or by failure to appear in person or by counsel

to prosecute the appeal. The right of appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate court or any arbitration service provider.

¶1055. An appeal shall not effect a suspension of the decision or action of a trial court. The finding of the trial court must stand until it is modified or reversed by the proper appellate court.

¶1056. A court of appeals may refuse to admit an appeal as lacking proper grounds; it may reverse, in whole or in part, the findings of the trial court for a new trial. It may determine what penalty, not higher than that affixed at the trial, may be imposed. If no such modification or reversal is made by the appellate court, the judgment of the trial court shall stand. The appellate court shall not take remedial action because of errors of procedure or interpretation by the trial court, which did not affect the verdict.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**



# Policy and Procedures

## Chapter 1. The General Conference

¶1101. The legal name of our denomination is The General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church. ¶601 through ¶644 should be read thoroughly for a good understanding of all aspects of the General Conference, its work, its powers and its limitations.

¶1102. General Boards, Committees, and Departments:

- (1) All Boards, Committees, and Departments are amenable and accountable to the General Conference and between General Conference sessions, to the General Council.
- (2) Meetings: The majority of boards, committees, and departments meet annually and at such times as are necessary on the call of the chairman or by written request of the International General Superintendent. Attendees of a properly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- (3) Officers: Unless otherwise specified in an adopted procedural manual, the officers of a board are the chair, vice chair, and recording secretary. In cases where the conference does not specify the officers, the board, committee, or department may elect them.
- (4) All boards, committees, and departments are to develop their own purpose and vision statements, along with the specifics of their major responsibilities.
- (5) Duties:
  - a. To give direction to the church by presenting creative and practical programs to the General Conference, local churches, and regions.
  - b. To seek to anticipate the future needs and continued growth of the local church.
  - c. To implement and coordinate programs and legislation adopted by the General Conference. (¶608)

¶1103. THE INTERNATIONAL GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT (¶851-853). The task of superintending in the Evangelical Methodist Church resides in the Episcopal office of the International General Superintendent and extends to the Conference Superintendents, who

possess their distinct responsibilities. From apostolic times, certain ordained persons have been entrusted with the particular tasks of superintending. Those who superintend carry primary responsibility for ordering the life of the Church and enabling the Church to worship and evangelize faithfully.

The International General Superintendent, when elected to serve in keeping with ¶841-842, is the recognized leader of the international denomination. He/she is our chief spokesman and is to be considered the denominational officer with highest rank in all conferences. The office is Episcopal in nature and carries with it special executive duties as the term “International General Superintendent” implies. The title “bishop” used in historical American Methodism is synonymous with the term “International General Superintendent.” (See #8, Historical Section)

The International General Superintendent is available to the entire Evangelical Methodist Church constituency for advice, motivation, and challenge. The office of the International General Superintendent is authorized to perform ordinations and presides over all ordination services, consecration, and commissioning services. The ordination and commissioning services for missionaries, Deacons, and Deaconess, generally are held at the General Conference site every four years or at a Journey annual conference.

The International General Superintendent travels at large over the entire North American Conference and mission conferences, visiting local churches encouraging the preaching and teaching of scriptural holiness. He/she is to function as a pastor for the Conference Superintendents and their families, just as the Conference Superintendents are to function as the pastor for the pastors in their regions. The International General Superintendent works with each Conference Superintendent in promoting the ministry of the local church and coordinating the denominational program for the advancement of the work of Christ through the organization as a whole and in each region.

The International General Superintendent studies the problems, needs, and trends of the church at large and provides leadership in correcting areas of need for the advancement of the cause of Christ. He/she maintains his/her office at the international headquarters of the denomination in Indianapolis, Indiana. All employees, either elected or hired, are amenable to him/her as the chief administrative officer of the denomination.

The International General Superintendent serves as an advisor to all General Conference boards, committees, and departments. His/her duties

include serving as the chair of the General Council sessions and as the presiding officer at the General Conference. The International General Superintendent's preaching ministry also takes him/her to Evangelical Methodist Church fields outside of the United States. He/she is often asked to minister in regional activities, local church special services, and denominational workshops. His/her representation and input on National Association of Evangelicals and the Christian Holiness Boards, as well as College and Seminary Boards, is often requested. The International General Superintendent is elected quadrennially, by ballot, on the second day of the General Conference.

¶1104. THE CABINET OF SUPERINTENDENTS. The Cabinet of Superintendents is composed of the Conference Superintendents, Missions Conference General Superintendents, and the International General Superintendent. They have the option of electing a dean for the Cabinet of Superintendents from among the superintendents. The dean is to work closely with the International General Superintendent and assists in facilitating good communication and unity among the superintendents. The Cabinet of Superintendents functions as a team in carrying out the mandates and missional priorities of the denomination and is to serve as the Forms Committee and Boundary Committee for the denomination. Church plant projects require the approval of the Cabinet of Superintendents followed by a recommendation to the General Board of Evangelism before plans may be initiated or funds disbursed.

¶1105. THE GENERAL CONFERENCE SECRETARY. The General Secretary keeps the official record of the actions of the General Conference and General Council. The Secretary keeps and records the *General Conference* actions and minutes. The minutes are distributed soon after the conferences.

The General Secretary is the office manager at Headquarters with authority to hire and or dismiss office employees except for the International General Superintendent's secretary. From time to time it has been necessary to combine the responsibilities with that of General Conference Treasurer. The General Secretary has traditionally represented the denomination in joint publishing ventures with sister denominations and other similar cooperative efforts as assigned.

As a member of the General Conference Program Committee he/she is responsible for handling the logistical matters related to General Conference sessions.

The Secretary is elected quadrennially, by ballot by the General Conference. His/her salary is set by the Conference upon annual review of the Board of Finance. See ¶623.

¶1106. GENERAL CONFERENCE BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND DEPARTMENTS. These entities provide programs that promote the work of Jesus Christ throughout our denomination. If a department or committee becomes unnecessary the conference does not activate it. The list of Boards, Committees, and Departments are found in ¶624 & 626.

¶1107. THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TREASURER. The General Treasurer receives, records, and disperses the funds of the Conference as directed by the same. He/she works in consultation with the General Conference Board of Finance and the General Council. He/she regularly sends a complete report to the appropriate person indicating the status of each account in his/her ledger.

The General Council engages a certified auditing firm annually. The treasurer is an appointed position by the General Council in consultation with the International General Superintendent and the recommendation of the Board of Finance.

¶1108. THE GENERAL CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN. The General Conference Statistician is the General Secretary and oversees the annual reports of pastors for permanent records. The forms used by a pastor are approved by the Cabinet of Superintendents and distributed from headquarters. The reports cover the calendar year from January 1, through December 31. They are due by January 31<sup>st</sup> to the general statistician. All forms are to be sent to headquarters. The denominational website is now the main medium to record and send all required reports.

## **Chapter 2. Boards**

¶1111. THE GENERAL BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.  
Duties:

- (1) Review and recommend Christian education materials to the annual meeting of the General Council and local churches.
- (2) Provide leadership in the development of Sunday School materials, teacher training programs and all areas related to the Sunday School ministry.

- (3) Provide leadership and materials as it relates to the development of preschools and Christian schools (K-12) within our local churches.
- (4) Serve as a resource to our approved colleges and seminaries.
- (5) Sponsor and encourage the conducting of workshops on the general and regional levels.
- (6) Be responsible for the publication of the *Catechism* and its continued revisions. The *Catechism* provides the introductory level of entrance into local church membership setting the stage for participation in the local church's systematic discipleship programs. Our *Catechism* explains the work and mission of the local congregation, namely, to deepen understanding of the theological position of the denomination and to provide guidance on the basis of discipleship and holy living for our people.
- (7) Recommended materials are: "Systematic Discipleship" curriculum for adults, youth and children. "Systematic Discipleship" material may be ordered from General Headquarters.

¶1112. THE GENERAL BOARD OF DISCIPLINE REVISION. The responsibility of the Board is to consider the whole denomination and not how a particular memorial will affect their own local church. Consideration of the memorials for *Discipline* revisions involves the following elements:

- (1) The authority to create, review, revise, or reject proposed changes to the *Discipline*.
- (2) The editing of words and sentences for clarity in communication without changing the main focus and thrust of the memorial.
- (3) The placement of the memorial within the proper section.
- (4) The correction of grammar or editing errors in the present *Discipline*.
- (5) Renumbering of paragraphs and inclusion of new chapters.
- (6) Updating of the index.

The chair of the Board is elected quadrennially and serves as a member of the General Council. The Board receives memorials for revisions of the *Discipline* from any level of the church. It evaluates them and their placement in the body of the *Discipline*. The Board can only deal with that portion of the *Discipline* to which the received memorial pertains. If a proposed change is in the constitution, a three-fourths affirmative vote of the General Conference is required and a ratification by two-thirds of

the local churches voting within the required time limit is required. If the change is to the by-laws section, a two-thirds affirmative vote of the General Conference is required for approval and immediate inclusion into the *Discipline*.

A local church may pass a memorial at a local church conference for *Discipline* revision that is presented to the Board of Discipline Revision.

Memorials: “A statement of facts addressed to a governing body which is accompanied by a request or petition for change.” All memorials must be received by October 1 of the year prior to the General Conference year. All proposed changes are to be in writing and submitted to every local church at the minimum of 30 days before the first General Conference session.

[*Editor’s Note:* Paragraphs 1113 and 1114 regarding the Boards of Evangelism and Finance were inadvertently omitted from the report of the Board of Discipline Revision to the 31<sup>st</sup> General Conference. Having been adopted by previous General Conferences in the *Handbook of the EMC* the paragraphs are being included in the 2018 *Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church* for reference.]

## ¶ 1113. THE GENERAL BOARD OF EVANGELISM

### *Purpose Statement*

“To develop tools for ministry and facilitate their General Conference *and* Regional-level implementation in order to motivate outreach and growth in local churches.”

### Duties:

- (1) Endorsement and promotion of the General Conference Evangelists.
- (2) Promotion of the denomination-wide fifth Sunday ‘SEEDS OF FAITH’ offering for Century II Church Planting.
- (3) Maintaining the Century II Church Planters Fund and approval of applicants. Applications require approval of the General Board of Evangelism and the appropriate Conference Superintendent.
- (4) Promotion of Church Restart and Redevelopment across the denomination with each Conference Superintendent trained in the procedures. When a local church membership and attendance decline to eight members and less than 10 in attendance, a two-year process called Mission Church Status begins. The Board of Evangelism and the Conference Superintendents will assist the

local pastor and leadership, and a redevelopment plan will be implemented. The details are found in the *Discipline*, ¶213. However, the General Board of Evangelism will do all possible to assist a local congregation in decline to resolve the cause of the trend before it reaches this point.

- (5) Develop and maintain with updates a written plan and strategies of church planting, church redevelopment and church restart for the denomination. An annual review is to be included in the report to General Council.
- (6) Approve church profile systems for Conference Superintendents to use in the development of goals and strategies in the local church.

#### ¶1114. THE GENERAL BOARD OF FINANCE

Duties:

This Board reports the budget to the General Council and the audit report to the General Conference and Council. Other matters relating to the General Conference finances, such as proposals regarding unified budget, also come under the province of this Board.

For this Board to do its work properly it must work with each General Conference office, department, committee, and board in ascertaining what its budgetary requirements will be. The Board of Finance, in consultation with the General Council, makes adjustments in the budget in between quadrennial conferences and annually reviews and sets the salaries of the general officers. The Board recommends and reviews all investments of the denomination and provides that all endowed funds fulfill the donor's intentions. The Board meets at the call of the chair in between General Conferences.

#### ¶1115. THE GENERAL BOARD OF MINISTERIAL RELATIONS

Duties:

- (1) To determine uniform standards concerning character, competency and ministry for all applicants for credentials in the Evangelical Methodist Church. See ¶851
- (2) To oversee and maintain the standards in the credential and ordination procedures.
- (3) To examine all applicants for credentials and make appropriate recommendations to the General Council concerning these candidates.

The chair and General Secretary are to maintain a file on each ministerial member and Local Preacher. The Board shall also be empowered to grant temporary credentials between General Council meetings.

### **Local Preacher's License**

(See ¶853, 854, 855, 856)

Local Preacher's License must be renewed annually by recommendation of the individual's local church and the General Board of Ministerial Relations and by a favorable vote of the General Council.

It is assumed that one receiving Local Preacher's License is called of God to ministerial service and work and that he/she will continue to pursue studies leading to full ordination as a Traveling Elder. Once one has received a Local Preacher's License, he/she must complete the required work in the Course of Study for Admission on Trial within three years unless pursuing studies in an institution of higher learning. Extension may be granted by the recommendation of the Conference Superintendent and authorized by the Board of Ministerial Relations, when they are satisfied that the candidate is giving due diligence to complete his/her studies. (¶904)

One is deemed active in the Course of Study if he/she is pursuing studies in an institution of higher learning and regularly submits his/her transcripts for evaluation to the chairman of the Board of Ministerial Education. Local Preachers are under the direct supervision of the Conference Superintendent or his/her appointed representative and are accountable to him/her. Local Preachers may fill positions of ministry at the discretion of the Conference Superintendent and may be removed by him/her at any time. It is strongly advised that Local Preachers avail themselves of the opportunity of working under the mentoring of a Traveling Elder.

*Note: Local Preacher's License may be bypassed if educational requirements are in order for the next step, which is Admission on Trial, and the candidate is so recommended by the Conference Superintendent and the Board of Ministerial Relations.*

### **Admission on Trial**

(See ¶603, 857, 858)

The status of Admission on Trial is a probationary period in which a candidate's character, competency, preaching, or other ministerial activity

must prove advantageous to the church and kingdom of God. During this time the candidate should give clear evidence of the certainty of his or her calling and spiritual gifts and abilities to fulfill that calling. The candidate must:

- (1) Have satisfied all the requirements as set forth by the *Discipline* and the General Conference Board of Ministerial Education. This is done either by completion of the required work in the Course of Study or its equivalent with work done in an institution of higher learning.
- (2) Have the recommendation of the Conference Superintendent.
- (3) Appear personally before the General Board of Ministerial Relations of the conference where the candidate is seeking Admission on Trial and be approved by the Board.
- (4) Receive a favorable vote by the General Council.

Those receiving the status of Admission on Trial must serve in that status for a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years, unless the Board of Ministerial Relations grants an extension (see ¶430 and ¶923). During this time the candidate shall be diligently pursuing studies for Elder's orders and is expected to complete those studies in the two-year period.

Those receiving Admission on Trial status may serve in any capacity permitted by the *Discipline* and are granted speaking privileges but not voting privileges in the General Conference. They are directly accountable to the Conference Superintendent of the region in which they are ministering. A candidate on trial may be discontinued without reflection on his or her character.

### **Elder or Traveling Elder**

(See ¶859)

The highest order of ministerial rank in the Evangelical Methodist Church is that of Elder, or Traveling Elder. One who has received ordination as an Elder assumes and receives all the responsibilities and privileges incumbent with the office and is recognized as being in full ministerial connection with the Evangelical Methodist Church.

- (1) Prior to ordination each candidate must satisfy all the requirements as set forth by the *Discipline* and the General Board of Ministerial Education. Equivalent work done in pursuit of college and seminary degrees may be accepted in lieu of all parts of the Course of Study with exception of the examinations on the

*Discipline*, the *Catechism* and the two written sermons. Transcripts of studies in institutions of higher learning must be submitted to the Board of Ministerial Education for evaluation and determination of remaining work that needs to be completed.

- (2) Candidates for ordination must have the recommendation of the Conference Superintendent where they are entering.
- (3) Candidates must personally appear before the Board of Ministerial Relations and be recommended by the Board to the General Council. It is recommended for married candidates to have their spouse present during the interview with the Board of Ministerial Relations whenever possible.
- (4) Before ordination, the candidate must have had a minimum of two years in active ministry and have been in the status of Admission on Trial for two years (except see ¶429 and ¶903).
- (5) The candidate must receive a favorable vote of the General Council and Executive Session of the Clergy.

Ordination of Traveling Elders will normally occur as part of the General Conference and annual meetings.

It is assumed those that pursue Traveling Elder's Orders are called of God to Christian ministry and intend to pursue that calling through active ministry. That calling may include, but is not limited to pastoral ministry, evangelism, teaching, administration, missions, counseling, or other recognized Christian ministries and service. If a Traveling Elder leaves the ministry and shows no interest in returning, he/she may be required to surrender his credentials and be dropped from ministerial rolls.

### **Approved Evangelist**

(See ¶870)

If a Traveling Elder feels called of God to the office of evangelist, he/she may request of the Board of Ministerial Relations license as an Approved Evangelist. That Board may then recommend the individual to the General Council. Upon favorable vote of the General Conference or General Council, the individual will be granted license as an Approved Evangelist.

### **Approved Song Evangelist**

(See ¶868, 869)

If one is gifted and feels called of God to the ministry of song evangelism, he/she may request of the General Board of Ministerial Relations license as an Approved Song Evangelist. The board may then

recommend him to the General Council and upon favorable vote of the General Conference or the General Council, the individual shall be granted such license. An Approved Song Evangelist license does not give one membership in the General Conference.

### **Supernumerary Preacher**

(See ¶866)

A Supernumerary Preacher is one who is so disabled as to be unable to preach regularly, but who is willing to do any work in the ministry he/she may be able to perform. The status of Supernumerary Preacher may be granted by the General Council upon recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations. When the status of Supernumerary Preacher is granted, it releases that one from the incumbent responsibilities of his/her ministerial office.

### **Superannuated Preacher**

(See ¶867)

A Superannuated Preacher is one who has reached the age of retirement from active ministerial service. A superannuated relation may be granted by the General Council upon request from the individual and recommendation from the Board of Ministerial Relations. Superannuated Preachers are released from the incumbent responsibilities of their office.

### **Lay Exhorter**

(See ¶242)

When local churches see in individuals' evidence of exceptional zeal and sincerity to serve Christ and the church, but who are limited in their ability because of education, economics, or other reasons, they may be recommended to the Annual Church Conference or a Special Called Church Conference for Lay Exhorter's License. Upon favorable vote of the Church Conference, the Conference Superintendent may issue such persons license. Lay Exhorter's License must be renewed annually according to the discretion of the local church. No special studies are required to receive Lay Exhorter's License and such license is not considered the same as ordination or consecration. A Lay Exhorter is not a member of the General Conference.

### **Deacon/Deaconess**

(See ¶871)

For those who have demonstrated unusual gifts and abilities for ministry and service in the local church setting above and beyond ordinary

lay ministry, but who do not feel called of God to pursue a course leading to ordination as a Traveling Elder, they may pursue a path to consecration to the office of Deacon or Deaconess.

The church affirms that certain persons are called, recognized, and set apart for servant leadership within the body of Christ and the world. The purpose of such leadership is the equipping of the general ministry of the church, to the end that the whole church will be built up as the body of Christ for the work of ministry. This set apart ministry is not a substitute for the service responsibilities of all believers in servant ministry, but rather to intensify and make more effective the understanding of the whole people of God as servants in Christ's name. In its early history as recorded in the Book of Acts, the Church instituted an order of consecrated ministers to personify or focus the servanthood to which all Christians are called. These people were named deacons or deaconesses.

Those called to this ministry of service in the church and world may be set apart to the office of Deacon/Deaconess. Their ministry should exemplify the servanthood of every Christian called to live in both the Church and world. Those so consecrated embody the unity of the congregation's worship with its life in the world by participating with the pastor of his or her local church. This is demonstrated in the leadership of worship, working in a serving profession in the Church, and serving the needs of the poor, the sick, and the oppressed.

Those consecrated to the office of Deacon/Deaconess may be involved in service ministries including but not limited to lay leadership, teaching, administration, visitation, serving the needs of others, assisting in Holy Communion, baptisms, and weddings, and other ministries in the local church setting that edify and build up the body of Christ. If one consecrated to the office is so gifted, he or she may be called upon to fill and supply pulpits.

### **Requirements for Consecration as a Deacon/Deaconess**

- (1) Those seeking consecration to this office must complete the studies required by the Board of Ministerial Education.
- (2) They must have the recommendation of their local church and their Conference Superintendent.
- (3) They must personally meet with the Board of Ministerial Relations and be recommended by that Board to the General Council.
- (4) They must receive a favorable vote by the General Council.

The office of Deacon/Deaconess shall be a lifetime calling and ministry but shall not restrict one from moving to full ordination if one is so called, according to the New Testament pattern as seen in Stephen and Philip.

Those consecrated as Deacon/Deaconess are members of the General Conference in which their license is granted and are directly amenable to the Conference Superintendent and General Council for their conduct, character, and attendance.

A person wishing to transfer to the credential path for Elder and ordination will enter at the Local Preacher level and begin their Admission on Trial studies and requirements.

### **Understanding Ordination in the Evangelical Methodist Church**

Every member of the church, both laity and clergy, receives and accepts the call of God to embody and carry forth Christ's ministry in the world. Ordination originates in God's will and purpose for the church as it did for the Levitical priesthood under the Old Covenant. There are persons within the local church whose gifts, graces and leadership qualities are observable to the church, who respond to God's call and offer themselves for leadership as ordained ministers.

Ordination for ministry is a gift from God to the church. In ordination, the church affirms and continues the apostolic ministry in that it authorizes and authenticates that ministry through persons empowered by the Holy Spirit. Those who are ordained are committed to being ambassadors for Christ for the transmission of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Their ordination is fulfilled in the ministry of the Word, Sacrament, and Order.

The General Conference or a Journey Conference, following the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations and the candidate's(s') response to the historical questions asked of every Methodist minister, votes to admit the candidate(s) to the Conference membership as an Elder. Following the granting of Elder's Orders, the General Church ordains the Elder into the clergy of the Evangelical Methodist Church.

Ordained persons are authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to be the shepherd of the flock with pastoral oversight, to equip the laity for ministry, and administer the *Discipline* of the church. Acceptance of the call of ordained ministry, together with the authentication of such call by the Church, grants to the person ordained authority to serve the Church in the name of Christ.

The ordination to the office of Elder requires the person to model servanthood to the church under their charge and to be an example of holiness in attitude, words, and conduct.

The ordination vows follow the pattern of:

- (1) Emptying of Self
- (2) Anointing of the Holy Spirit for Ministry
- (3) Authority for Shepherding the Flock
- (4) Benediction of Blessing

## **EMAP**

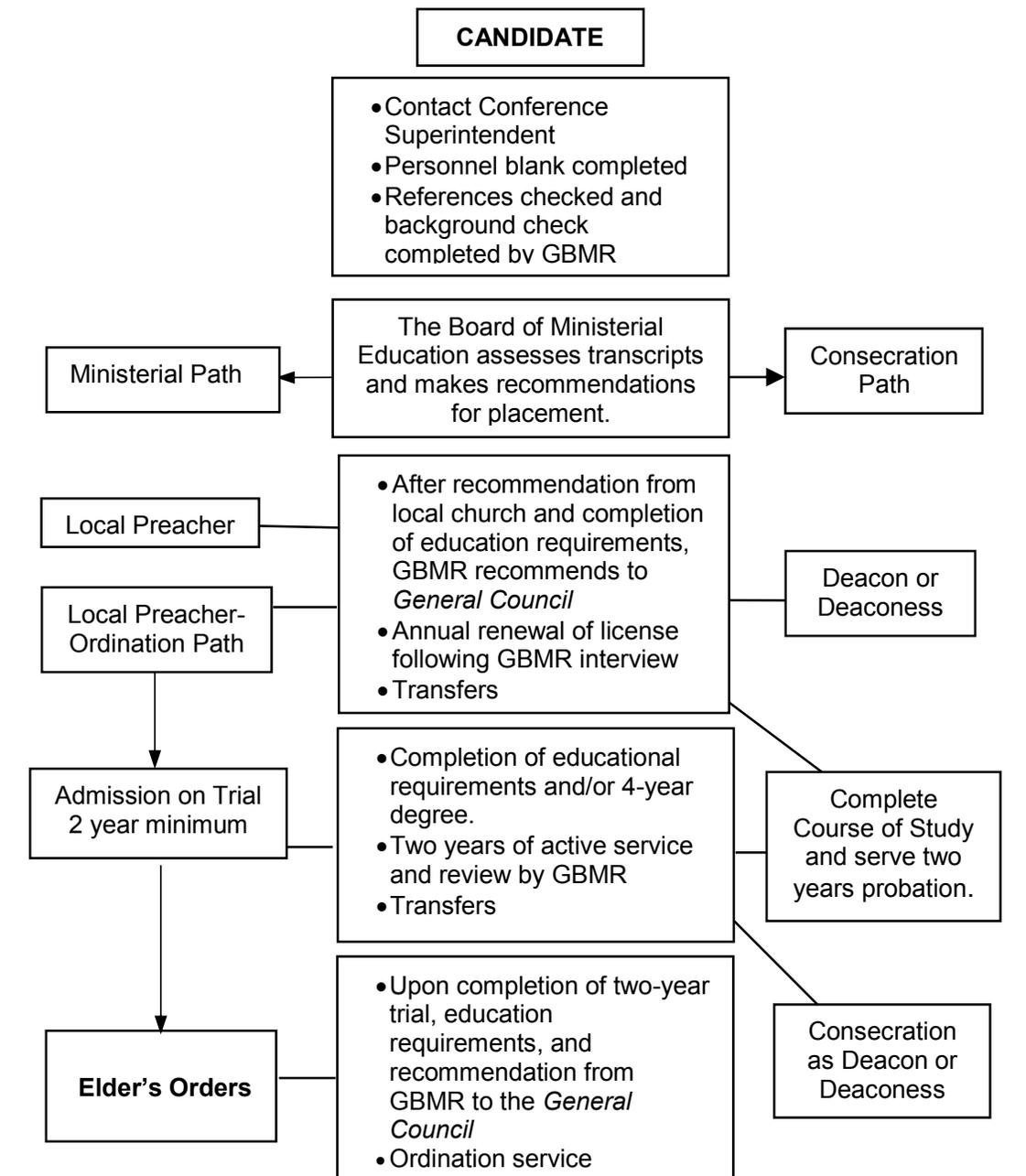
(Evangelical Methodist Ministerial Assessment Profile)

- (1) EMAP is an evaluation system for the clergy. The process was approved by the 2006 General Conference.
- (2) EMAP is an assessment instrument which provides the Conference Superintendent and Board of Ministerial Relations with a useful tool for evaluation of potential candidates for a local church ministry.
- (3) EMAP will be used for the following clergy and ministerial candidates:
  - a. All persons entering the path for ordination with the EMC.
  - b. Anyone assuming a new pastoral assignment. This includes present EMC pastors seeking a new/different pastorate. (Note: This is optional depending upon the request of the Board of Ministerial Relations and/or the Conference Superintendent.)
  - c. Persons completing their education requirements prior to entering pastoral ministry.
  - d. Clergy transferring into the EMC from another denomination.
  - e. All persons seeking to plant an approved EMC local church.
- (4) EMAP includes persons already in the process of becoming an Elder. They may be required to take the EMAP by the Board of Ministerial Relations and/or Conference Superintendent.

The goal of using EMAP is to increase the ‘resource pool’ of possible pastoral candidates from which superintendents may choose as possible well qualified individuals to recommend to a local church seeking a pastor.

## PATH TO CREDENTIALS IN THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH

There are two pathways from which a candidate may choose to seek ministerial credentials in the Evangelical Methodist Church. The first would be the path to ordination as an Elder, the other consecration as a Deacon or Deaconess. It is understood that anyone entering the Course of Study to be a Local Preacher is working toward ordination as an Elder. If that is not what a candidate desires, then he or she should enter the program leading to consecration as a deacon or deaconess.



## ¶1116. THE GENERAL BOARD OF MINISTERIAL EDUCATION (School of Ministry)

Purpose Statement: “The General Board of Ministerial Education will create an appropriate and comprehensive curriculum to facilitate the progress of persons toward ordination, consecration, and ministerial service in the Evangelical Methodist Church, and, provide opportunities for continuing education. The General Board of Ministerial Education will establish educational policies and standards and facilitate the following: educational financial assistance, internship financial assistance within the Evangelical Methodist Church, and educational opportunities beyond the Evangelical Methodist structure.”

Duties:

- (1) Conduct and maintain the Haggard School of Ministry.
- (2) Report the names of those who have successfully completed the course to the Board of Ministerial Relations.
- (3) Administer and monitor the Ministerial Education Loan Fund and educational grants.
- (4) Establish a continuing education program that is relevant, productive, and accessible for all Evangelical Methodist credential holders in cooperation with the International General Superintendent at the Journeys and in the regions.

### **Ministerial Education Fund of the Evangelical Methodist Church**

The Ministerial Education Fund is a service loan, which means that it is paid back by years of service to the Evangelical Methodist Church. These funds are available to students in an accredited Christian College in the Wesleyan tradition that are majoring in Bible, Pastoral Ministry, Christian Education or Missions. These funds are also available for seminary students enrolled in an accredited Theological Seminary in the Wesleyan tradition and approved by the Board of Ministerial Education. Students enrolled in a Theological Seminary will be assisted at a higher level than students in an undergraduate program. For each year of full time ministry service, while under a call to an Evangelical Methodist Church or the Board of World Missions, after being ordained an Elder, one sixth (1/6) of the debt is cancelled. Otherwise, six years of full time ministerial service under a call to an Evangelical Methodist Church as an Elder cancels all outstanding loan obligations.

If an applicant does not complete the process of Ordination as an Elder or drops out of school, the loan is repayable at an interest rate of 6% per annum or the interest rate specified at the time the loan is issued in writing.

The Conference Treasurer should be contacted to set up a plan for repayment. Years of service as a Member On Trial do not qualify toward repaying the loan debt. Years of service prior to the loan do not qualify toward repaying the loan debt. If an Elder withdraws or is discontinued from ministerial service, the balance of the unpaid loan becomes due and is repayable at an interest rate of 6% per annum or the interest rate specified at the issuance in writing.

Checks for distribution of the Ministerial Education Fund resources are made jointly to the applicant and the school that he/she is attending. The funds must be used only for tuition expenses at the school and cannot be reimbursed to the student. If all funds allocated are not needed by a student, the individual school should refund any surplus to the General Conference Treasurer.

An applicant must be an Elder or a person in process toward ordination as an Evangelical Methodist Elder to receive funds and must be recommended by the applicant's home Conference Superintendent and the Board of Ministerial Relations.

Applications are good for the entire academic year (September-May). One does not need to reapply for funds for the Winter/Spring Semester. No funds will be distributed retroactively.

If an applicant is less than a full time student (at less than 12 hours per semester), then the loan will be prorated based upon credit hours being taken.

The loan amount will be set per year by the General Board of Ministerial Education based upon funds on hand and interest rates at the time. The General Board of Ministerial Education will confirm the ministerial loan amount.

The purpose of the Ministerial Education Loan Fund is to assist in providing an adequately trained ministry for Evangelical Methodist Churches by the following:

- (1) Relieving some of the pressure of limited means where such pressure may well prevent a ministerial candidate from obtaining the necessary education.
- (2) Reducing the necessity for too much employment while attending school thus allowing more time for adequate study.
- (3) Financially assisting students so that Evangelical Methodist pastors will be well trained, well read, and well educated to minister fully and freely in Evangelical Methodist churches.

- (4) Assist financially in churches acquiring program/ministry interns for brief periods of time.
  - a. An intern may receive financial assistance for three months or one semester whichever is appropriate by the proposed job description.
  - b. An intern must be a member of good standing in an Evangelical Methodist Church.
  - c. An intern must be a College, Bible College, or Seminary student intending to finish their degree.
  - d. The local church must submit a job description to the Chair of the Board of Ministerial Education and a report of their conference support being paid in full.
- (5) Assist in funding the EMC Pastor's Schools.
- (6) Provide scholarships for continuing education events as approved by the Chair of the Board of Ministerial Education.

(Applications are available from International Headquarters' General Secretary. A completed form is to be returned to the General Secretary who will distribute it to the Chair of the General Board of Ministerial Education.)

#### Regulations and Guidelines for Ministerial Fund Service Loans:

- (1) Loans are made to students who are Elders, or who are preparing for ordination as an Elder, in the Evangelical Methodist Church.
  - a. All applicants must be members in good standing in an Evangelical Methodist Church.
  - b. All applicants must provide a photocopy of the following:
    1. High School diploma
    2. College or University diploma, if applicable.
  - c. All applicants must maintain a "C" average or better to be eligible for additional loans the following school year.
  - d. All applicants must provide a letter of certification of enrollment from the academic institution.
    1. A letter from the Board of Ministerial Education indicating progress toward ordination as an Elder.
    2. A letter from the Board of Ministerial Relations stating that the applicant is an candidate for ministry and seems to be a person with gifts and graces for ministry.

3. A letter of recommendation from the academic institution.
  4. A letter of recommendation from the Conference Superintendent.
- (2) The Board of Ministerial Education will consider only applicants who are enrolled in a Christian College with a major in Bible, Christian Education, Pastoral Ministry, Youth Ministry, or Missions or an equivalent discipline.

Criteria for approving applications for scholarships and loans: The resources being available in the Ministerial Education Fund.

#### ¶1117. THE GENERAL BOARD OF WORLD MISSIONS

Purpose Statement: “The supreme aim of missions is to make the Lord Jesus Christ known to all peoples in all lands as their divine Savior, to persuade them to become His disciples, and to gather these disciples into Christian churches and enlist them to evangelize others; to co-operate with these churches; to promote world Christian fellowship; and to bring to bear on all human life the spirit and principles of Christ.”

The objectives of this Board are religious, philanthropic, and educational, designed to diffuse the blessings of Christianity in every part of the world and to promote missionary activities, interest, zeal and information throughout the Evangelical Methodist Church.

The General Board of World Missions no longer supervises Evangelical Methodist Church (EMC) missionaries, but has EMC missionaries serving under the supervision of other agencies. The General Board of World Missions supports the call, training, and financial support of Evangelical Methodist Church members to serve as missionaries.

Duties:

- (1) To have general oversight of the mission program of the Evangelical Methodist Church, with special reference to its development and expansion through local church ministry and the Mission Conferences.
- (2) To determine and carry out the approved policy and program of the mission interest of the Evangelical Methodist Church, subject to review and revision by the General Conference or General Council.
- (3) To investigate fields for potential ministry and to devise plans of ministry and budget. New fields may be established with General Council approval. Mission Conferences must have approval of the General Conference.

- (4) To solicit, secure, and expend money for the support of all work under its care, i.e.; to build and maintain churches and other institutions of Christian service; and to enlist and train workers.
- (5) To receive, record, and properly administer all properties and funds for mission purposes.
- (6) To create and maintain co-operative relations with the boards, committees, and other agencies of the Evangelical Methodist Church, as well as with affiliated and approved missionary organizations, interdenominational and other missionary agencies of home and foreign fields.
- (7) To recommend to the General Council one member of the Board of World Missions as a representative to each Governing Board of Affiliated Missionary Organizations.
- (8) To prepare annual financial reports to the General Council. This is given in the *Financial Report of Treasurer*.
- (9) To make a report of its activities during the quadrennium to the General Conference. This report shall include an audited financial report. The Board shall make an annual report through its chairperson to the General Council.
- (10) To promote mission interest, education, and projects of the EMM, EMW, and EMY.
- (11) To receive reports from EMC missionaries on their activity and assist their agency to provide care for these missionaries upon their return from their field of service.
- (12) Insure that returning missionaries are properly assisted in their deputation and funding.

*Board of World Missions Fields*  
Mexico and Myanmar (Burma).

*Mexican Field*

The work began in 1926 and was united with the Evangelical Methodist Church when it was founded in the United States in 1946. The field is completely self-governing under the Mexican Mission Conference. An extensive work to reach Tarahumara Indians is carried on, as well as relief work to help the needy.

The Life and Truth Bible Institute at Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico, serves not only as a training center for pastors and workers but is utilized as a central location for ministry in Mexico. The Life and Truth Bible Institute

forms a part of the Mexican Evangelistic Mission (the EMC in Mexico) and is under the authority of the Mexican Mission Conference. It exists to equip Mexican nationals to fulfill the Great Commission, providing training for Christian ministry. The programs offered by the Bible Institute take place both on campus (Torreon) and in satellite centers established where most needed.

Dr. Ezequiel B. Vargas founded the Life and Truth Bible Institute in 1948. It has been located in Chihuahua City and Parral and is presently in Torreon.

### *Myanmar (Burma) Field*

Establishment of the Evangelical Methodist Church of Myanmar was born out of the liberalism in the Methodist church in that country. The heart of many pastors longed for a return to traditional Wesley Methodism. They inquired about and strongly desired to be in a connectional Methodist relationship with a group who had faithfully been the custodians of original Methodism. During the two years of dialogue, the group organized officially in their country, downloaded our *International Discipline* and adopted it and the name Evangelical Methodist Church of Myanmar. At the same time, OMS International evaluated the possibilities with our International General Superintendent and General Board of World Missions. This field became a Myanmar Missions Conference at the 28th General Conference in 2006.

### Affiliated Organizations

The Evangelical Methodist Church has affiliation with One Mission Society, International. The EMC has, and continues to have, missionaries serving with OMS in a number of countries.

### November Mission Offering

Every local church receives an offering in November for missions. The goal is \$10 per member/attendee. This annual offering is distinctly separate from all other mission appeals.

## ¶1118. THE GENERAL BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

### Mission

The mission is to equip and prayerfully support each child, youth, youth leader, and pastor to realize Christ's perfect plan for their life and to take an active part in sharing their faith to impact our world for Christ.

### Vision

The vision of the General Board of Youth and Children's Ministry is to equip children, youth, and the leaders of children and youth to impact our world for Christ through the fulfillment of our four core values. Our core values are Unity, Equipping/Mentoring, Evangelism, and Missions

### Core Values

#### Unity

- (1) Committed to unified leadership that works to maintain a strong connection between the general and local levels.
- (2) Committed to striving for a unified focus for youth and children's ministries denomination wide.

#### Equipping/Mentoring

- (1) Committed to the development and implementation of effective strategies for the equipping and training of youth leaders.
- (2) Committed to training youth leaders to mentor the next generation of youth for present and future leadership.
- (3) Committed to "making disciples" in a comprehensive children's ministry.

#### Evangelism

- (1) Committed to belief in the power of God to radically change lives.
- (2) Committed to provide opportunities and resources to effect change and impact lives for Jesus Christ.

#### Missions

- (1) Committed to raising awareness of the Biblical command to take the message of the Gospel to all the world.
- (2) Committed to creating opportunities for youth and children to experience missions both at home and abroad.

### ¶1119. GENERAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees holds in trust all property on behalf of and for the benefit of the denomination. The trustees are the legal signatories to transact business when authorized by the General Conference, *Discipline*, or General Council. The trustees hold title to all General Conference property and accept bequests, endowments, and such valuables as the denomination may acquire. In the event of the dissolution of a local church, the trustees shall transfer title of the property in accordance with ¶211. The chairman shall be a member of the Board of Finance.

## **Chapter 3. Committees**

### ¶1121. THE GENERAL CONFERENCE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The criteria for nominations of chairpersons is based primarily on leadership experience and expertise in the area of ministry being considered, following the guidelines of the General Council Operations Manual. There is a conscious effort for lay representation, opportunities for women in leadership, variety in ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and district representation. The five-fold standard is:

- (1) Loyalty to Christ and the denomination in maintaining a good reputation of personal holiness and participation in denominational ministries both personally and in the local church,
- (2) Having a passion for the specific area of ministry,
- (3) Having a skill set with the spiritual gifts, natural talents and abilities for the area of ministry,
- (4) Having experience of a successful ministry and fruit that relates to the specific nomination,
- (5) Attending or pastoring a church that is up-to-date in their conference support.

The International General Superintendent shall be the chair of this Committee.

### ¶1122. THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Description: The Committee will create an appropriate and comprehensive curriculum that will facilitate the progress of persons toward ordination, consecration, and ministerial service in the Evangelical

Methodist Church in international regions of the USA and Canada districts.

Duties: The Committee in cooperation with the appropriate Conference Superintendent will establish educational policy, curriculum scope and sequence, and administration of an Evangelical School of Ministry (ESOM) or likeness thereof, that corresponds to the country and culture, yet thoroughly Wesleyan in doctrine and practice. Upon completion of the candidate's studies for Local Preacher, Admission on Trial, Elder Orders, or Deacon/Deaconess consecration, the committee shall make recommendations to the Conference Superintendent for a report to the General Board of Ministerial Relations.

## Chapter 4. Auxiliaries

### ¶1131. THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST WOMEN

The Evangelical Methodist Women is the duly authorized women's organization of the Evangelical Methodist Church

**PURPOSE:** Is to unite the women of the Evangelical Methodist Church by promoting

***The Four-Fold Plan:***

- (1) Make a continuing, organized effort to develop Christian living and service.
- (2) Promote a wider knowledge and interest in both the home and foreign mission fields.
- (3) Assist in and encourage the Christian education of our youth.
- (4) Take part in such Christian activities as will strengthen the local church and community.

**EMW EMBLEM:** Designed as a shield to show in word and picture our four areas of service;

- (1) Open Bible/Spiritual Life: Signifying our dependence on God's Word for guidance and development of Christian living and service. *2 Timothy 2:15*
- (2) Compass/Missions: Encouraging a wider knowledge and involvement in home and global mission fields. *Matthew 28:19-20*

- (3) Graduation Cap/Mentoring: Encouraging and assisting in the Christian education of our youth. *2 Timothy 3:16*
- (4) Open Door/Service: Encouraging Christian service activities to help strengthen the local church and community. *Romans 12:10-13*

**Scripture:** *“For we are laborers together with God...”* 1 Corinthians 3:9a

**Operational Strategy:** The holding of annual Women’s Conferences/Retreats in the East and the West. The regions and local church groups will create their focus of ministry for their churches and communities. The North American Council will assist and counsel the leadership of each region in women’s ministry through their ministry committees.

**MEMBERSHIP:** The North American Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Women shall consist of all women who are regular attendees of an EMC - Evangelical Methodist Church.

**EMW Officers:**

- EMW President
- EMW VP of Spiritual Life
- EMW VP of Finance
- EMW VP of Mission
- EMW VP of Local and Community
- EMW VP of Christian Education

¶1132. THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST MEN

Evangelical Methodist Men for Missions (EMMFM) is a dynamic movement of God's Spirit in the hearts of laymen in our local churches. Through EMMFM, men and their families from all walks of life find a channel for harnessing and releasing personal skills and abilities in practical, direct missionary involvement. By participation in overseas witness and work teams, they catch new zeal for soul winning at home, as well as abroad. This produces men mobilized for ministry in their local churches.

Evangelical Methodist Men for Missions has a partnership agreement with the Men for Missions which is a ministry of One Mission Society, a Charter Member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). One Mission Society (OMS) and the Evangelical Methodist Church have been in an Affiliation agreement since 1952.

Without dues or organizational trappings EMMFM asks men to respond or contribute only as directed by the Holy Spirit. As a result, as exemplified in Men for Missions, scores of missionary homes, schools, churches, clinics, etc., stand as monuments to the obedience of individual laymen. Millions of dollars are given to support missionaries, national workers, and evangelistic outreach.

Participation in Evangelical Methodist Men for Missions is open to any man willing to affirm:

- (1) I will do whatever God asks me to do.
- (2) I will go wherever God asks me to go.
- (3) I will give whatever God asks me to give.

EMMFM Members help missionaries by utilizing their personal skills and abilities in a variety of practical, direct ways, including work teams, medical and disaster relief teams, evangelism teams, intercessory prayer teams, and teams of professionals who are prepared to teach. Often teams are involved in a combination of these ministries.

Our mandate is compassion; our priority is establishing the Lordship of Jesus Christ in each man's life; and our goal is to provide opportunities for personal obedience to the Great Commission.

The Council of officers of the EMMFM is comprised of EMC laymen, a representative of the MFM of OMS, and mission minded EMC pastors elected by the General Conference.

## **Chapter 5. Departments**

### **¶1141. THE DEPARTMENT OF PRAYER**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving...”* (Phil. 4:6 NIV)

Purpose Statement:

The objective of the Prayer Department is to unify the prayer efforts of our churches in order to pray for the pastors, churches, missionaries, and programs of our denomination in a systematic way. Special requests are communicated to headquarters and those requests are brought before the Lord at our staff prayer sessions.

### **¶1142. THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATIONS**

Purpose Statement:

To communicate information for and to the Evangelical Methodist Church in a variety of styles. To challenge, in print, people to grow in knowledge,

in commitment to discipline, and in commitment to world evangelism at home and abroad.

Duties:

- (1) To prepare and produce “The Connection” which is the denomination’s official magazine and is published regularly through the year. The EMC “Connection” is a source of sharing and communication among the Evangelical Methodist churches. The *International General Superintendent* or his designee is the Editor.
- (2) To maintain an inventory of books in the Course of Study at the Headquarters.
- (3) To supervise and maintain the denomination’s web page online store.

#### ¶1143. THE DEPARTMENT OF MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

The Department of Multicultural Ministries grew out of a program of the General Conference Board of World Missions. The success of the “Mexico-USA” effort prompted the General Conference to launch this Department.

As the diversity of ethnicities grows, the Department helps local churches in their outreach to all peoples in the North American Conference. Its goal is to assist in evangelizing the unsaved, discipling new believers, and establishing healthy multicultural/multiethnic churches. Personnel, resources, training, promotion, and periodic evaluations of current ministries are each a part of the Department’s responsibilities.

The Director of the Department of Multicultural Ministries is elected by the General Conference, accountable to the International General Superintendent, and responsible for creating a financial base for the support of the Department’s budget. The director and his staff develop programs that effectively promote the denomination’s missional goals.

#### ¶1144. THE DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Stewardship and Development exists to plan and promote a program of stewardship education throughout the denomination and to assist members and constituents of the Evangelical Methodist Church in estate planning. The Department of Stewardship and Development shall do the following:

- (1) Emphasize the need for adults of all ages to have a will and secure estate planning.
- (2) Provide opportunities to local Evangelical Methodist churches, assisting members and constituents to have wills prepared through the Department of Stewardship and Development.
- (3) Stress the opportunities of church members to make provision for giving through Evangelical Methodist churches, ministries, and auxiliaries by means of wills, annuities, trusts, life insurance, memorials, and other such means as may be available.
- (4) Assist in the establishing of a living will.

#### ¶1145. THE DEPARTMENT OF CHAPLAINS

The ministry of the chaplain extends in pastoral care, spiritual guidance, and advice on issues of ethics and morals. Their ministry extends to all individuals regardless of race, creed, or religion, supporting their religious rights and beliefs. The Department provides support to our chaplains in their respective ministries and endorsements required by the military, hospital and prison institutions, and law enforcement agencies.

- (1) **Military Chaplain:** Military personnel and their families face many unique challenges, from serving in a high stress and often dangerous job to frequent family separations. Military personnel and their families often rely on chaplains to help them through many of these challenges. The role of a military chaplain is similar to that of a civilian pastor. Military chaplains preach, teach, counsel, and offer religious programs to help military personnel and their families. However, they also serve as part of the Commanding Officer's staff as advisors on matters of religion, culture, morals, ethics, and morale.
- (2) **Hospital Chaplain:** A hospital chaplain provides spiritual support in the hospital environment to patients, hospital staff, and family members. A hospital chaplain usually works a shift in the hospital, often walking the halls to connect with people who might need spiritual support. He or she provides assistance for members of the staff who may be struggling with religious issues and may offer religious counseling to patients and family members. This person may lead religious services in the hospital's chapel or in patient rooms and may offer such services as Communion.
- (3) **Workplace Chaplain:** In every business and industrial facility, in all types of industries, people have to deal with tough issues. Issues of stress, marital and family strife, substance abuse,

loneliness, financial concerns, disappointment, anger, illness, and anxiety follow people to work and are frequently intensified by changing circumstances in the workplace, such as layoffs, restructurings, staff changes, and altered employee relationships. Workplace or Industrial Chaplains offer what has been called a “ministry of presence,” quietly working behind the scenes, being there for employees when they need them. They lend a listening ear, a supportive and caring presence, individual attention, and effective referrals to those who need additional support.

- (4) Prison Chaplain: Jesus gave instructions to visit those in prison and the early Methodists followed that directive. Chaplains shall raise the awareness of this ministry to our local churches and be available for instruction and advice to our pastors to develop these ministries.
- (5) Law Enforcement Chaplain: Local law enforcement agencies are often seeking qualified church leaders to assist in death notifications, civil disturbance counseling, and other emergency situations where a spiritual leader is requested.

## **Chapter 6. Local Church**

¶1151. The intent of the *Discipline* is to provide a framework of boards and committees that cover all areas and aspects of ministry and administrative functions of the church’s ministry. The titles, specific functions, and make-up of the local church structure can be adapted, combined, and adjusted to meet the specific ministry needs and administrative functions for each local church situation. A pastor and local church must work with the Conference Superintendent in these situations to guarantee those areas that are connectional or congregational in nature are not changed. For example, a Board of Trustees and their duties cannot be altered, but a local church could add the Building and Maintenance Committee into this board. Another example is that a local church board cannot vote to decrease the amount of conference support percentages or vote to not send their conference support to the conference. Such action would be in violation of the *Discipline* and not allowed by the pastor or the superintendent. Every local church is encouraged to have their own policy and procedure manual designed for their local church.

Boards and committees are vital to the conduct of the mission of the church. The congregation at the Annual Church Conference elects them

annually, usually after nomination by the Church Nominating Committee. This is a vital committee, and the pastor chairs it. It is important that each person considered for each nomination be evaluated as to their suitability for the work of that body. Spiritual and natural gifts, availability, interest, and compatibility with other nominees, should be carefully evaluated. Boards and committees are specialized task forces within the congregation and their membership must work well together.

The *Discipline*, in ¶261–278, lists and defines the purpose of a number of committees which experience has shown are useful in fulfilling the ministry of the church. They are annual committees and personnel can be changed in the Annual Church Conference. It is important to remember that each committee is intended to be a working part of the ministry of the church. Cooperation is an absolute necessity if success is to be achieved.

#### ¶1152. BOARD OF STEWARDS (¶291-300)

As the pastor serves in the role of a managing officer, the Board of Stewards functions as an executive committee. With the pastor, the members of the Board cooperate as the managing team described in ¶291. The full scope of its duties and the qualifications of its members are outlined in ¶291–300 in the By-Laws. Spiritual maturity should characterize the composition of this Board because of its heavy load of spiritual and temporal responsibility.

This Board of Stewards (Elders in some churches & denominations) is elected by and amenable to the local congregation. “Amenable” means, “willing to follow advice or suggestion, submissive, responsible to authority and accountable, open to testing, criticism, or judgment”, (taken from Webster’s Dictionary). This Board carries out the purposes and programs of the church. They are to approve all financial disbursements. They are to work in cooperation with the Senior Pastor in his/her administrative and pastoral ministry of the local church.

The Senior Pastor is an ex-officio member of the Board of Stewards (The Senior Pastor is ex-officio of all boards and committees, except the Trustees and Pastoral Relations Committee, ¶260). The pastoral staffs, including assistant pastors, directors of education, and directors of music, (¶260), are not ex-officio members of the Board of Stewards, unless given this privilege by the local church. The pastoral assistants report to the Board when called upon. All ministry positions (¶258) require a one-time two-thirds vote of the congregation upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Stewards.

The hiring of non-ordained ministerial persons is under the authority of the Board of Stewards (§259). The Board of Stewards is elected yearly and members are permitted to serve no more than three consecutive years (§292).

#### ¶1153. CHURCH COUNCIL (§321-323)

This is a called meeting to resolve issues or matters of policy referred to it by the Board of Stewards. The Church Council does not replace the Board of Stewards or function under their job description.

#### ¶1154. ELECTED OFFICERS (§236, 292)

All the elected leadership should be members in good standing. This means faithful in tithing, attendance, and service in ministry. Every leader should be seeking and experiencing the infilling of the Holy Spirit which is a reflection of Christ-likeness in lifestyle, word, and deed. An annual leadership covenant is recommended for use by each church.

#### ¶1155. BOARD OF TRUSTEES/BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE (§281-285)

Great responsibilities of a different kind are placed upon the members of the Board of Trustees. The legal titleholders in trust of the church's real estate, they are accountable to the membership for the real estate's protection. They are also responsible for real estate acquisition and sale when authorized by the congregation in a Local Church Conference. There is a legal responsibility making them accountable to state and local governments. In those states where a church can be incorporated, they are the trustees of the corporation. In all instances, they are responsible for the safekeeping of all legal documents pertaining to the church, and for the managing, as directed by the donor and congregation, of all church valuables other than regular tithes and offerings.

The Building and Maintenance Committee is in charge of the upkeep of building and grounds. They should have a budgeted amount each year to maintain the facilities (§262). Some churches place this responsibility under the Board of Trustees and eliminate the Building and Maintenance Committee.

#### ¶1156. FINANCIAL MATTERS (§303-306)

All church monies are to be handled in a responsible manner following sound fiscal procedures. Offerings should be counted and recorded by the designated persons on a written record. The Financial Secretary will

recount the monies, maintain accurate lists of donations and donors, and deposit the monies in the bank. The deposit ticket and the written record of the counters should agree.

At no time should the same person be the Financial Secretary and the Church Treasurer. The Church Treasurer should receive the deposit ticket and maintain accurate accounting. Absolutely no monies can be disbursed without the authorization of the Board of Stewards (§293-297). A monthly report form from Headquarters for the local treasurer's use corresponds to the annual report as to categories and numbered line items. This simplifies the year-end reporting.

#### ¶1157. TREASURER'S MONTHLY REPORT

Evangelical Methodist Churches pay conference support to the General Headquarters based on income. The church treasurer's report is to be sent with a check each month to the general treasurer. At the end of the year, the monthly treasurer's reports may be totaled to quickly prepare the financial section of the church's Annual Report for General Conference.

##### *Income on which conference support is based*

- (1) **Regular Monthly Income** includes all monies received during this month for support of the operations of the local church. Included are contributions and/or offerings; rental income; interest earned from funds on deposit, mortgages, or contracts, etc.
- (2) **Sunday School Offerings:** how much the church received through Sunday School offerings.
- (3) **Subtotal:** that on which the Conference Support is calculated and recorded in box (A) "Conference Support 10% of Line 3."

##### *Additional income to report*

- (4) **Missions:** any amounts received through faith promises or otherwise for international missions outside the North American Conference (NAC). List the specific designation of such funds in "a)" through "d)".
- (5) **Designated Building Fund:** are funds received, regular or special, for present building or remodeling projects. (Transfer of monies not initially received as building funds are considered Regular Monthly Income and therefore, not exempt from Conference Support.).
- (6) **NAC Special Projects:** are denomination-wide designated home mission projects approved by the General Council. These may

- include multicultural ministries or marginalized-people outreaches within the bounds of the North American Conference.
- (7) **Other Special Offerings:** are monies the church received, such as for a Gideon speaker, a love offering for a revival speaker, etc.
  - (8) **Flow-through Income:** are monies received for camps, registrations, tuitions, etc., for which ordinarily no charitable receipt is issued.
  - (9) **Total Income:** is the sum of lines (3) through (8).
  - (10) **Starting Balance:** total amount the church had in checking at the beginning of the month.
  - (11) **Total Income plus Balance:** add lines 9 and 10.

#### ¶1158. PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

##### Calling of the Pastor and Special Church Conferences (¶251-260)

The Pastoral Relations Committee should meet annually to evaluate the local church ministry with their pastor. This Committee, in consultation with their Conference Superintendent, determines whether a pastoral vote for an incumbent pastor is necessary. Some pastors ask for a vote of affirmation periodically. The process is for the chairman to call a meeting of the Committee and he or she is not authorized to act alone without Committee approval. The Conference Superintendent has to be consulted before a congregational meeting is called and before a pastoral vote can be taken (¶243). The criteria for considering a pastoral vote of the present pastor should be made based upon the facts and not personality. The facts are an answer to the question, “Is the church growing or declining?” It should be considered whether the pastor is providing leadership, scriptural preaching, plans and goals for the future; a “new” pastor would not solve the lack of growth. The committee, Board of Stewards, and pastor should ask the Conference Superintendent to conduct a church profile and plan for growth.

The Pastoral Relations Committee and the Conference Superintendent shall secure candidate(s) for new pastoral leadership recommended by the superintendent. These candidates must hold credentials in the Evangelical Methodist Church before he/she can be an acceptable pastoral candidate. Interim pastoral leadership must have the approval of the Conference Superintendent or the Conference Superintendent can appoint an interim pastor until the election of a new pastor. A consecrated deacon or deaconess can serve as a supply pastor when appointed by the Conference Superintendent. It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Relations Committee to keep the Conference Superintendent informed of persons being used in

pulpit supply during an interval between pastors. The Conference Superintendent does not submit every application in his possession to the local church. He seeks to match the specific talents and pastoral experience with the present needs of the church.

The entire process for calling a new pastor is one of mutual responsibility between the Conference Superintendent and the local church represented by the Pastoral Relations Committee. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall keep the Board of Stewards informed and receive their counsel. Joint meetings of the Committee with the Board of Stewards are recommended. The superintendent prayerfully considers the needs of the church and the style of pastoral leadership and the shepherding gifts that will be necessary for a fruitful ministry in a particular local church. When the superintendent finds a match, a recommendation and resume is sent to the Pastoral Relations Committee for their prayerful consideration. If the Committee concurs with the recommendation, following interviews and discussions, then the pastor becomes an official pastoral candidate for that local church. The pastor also prayerfully makes a decision whether to be a pastoral candidate. The pastoral candidate is presented to the congregation for a pastoral vote. The church must extend to a pastor a minimal two-year call, although they are not confined to only two years. It is recommended that an extended call be given to the pastor (§256).

The initial call of the pastor requires a two-thirds majority. Recall votes require a simple majority. All pastoral candidates, including assistants shall meet with the Board of Ministerial Relations and receive proper credentials and approval prior to a congregational vote. (§258)

When a pastor determines to be available for a pastoral change, he/she shall share this intention with the Conference Superintendent and then follow his/her counsel as to when it is wise to notify the local church leadership, i.e. Board of Stewards and/or Pastoral Relations Committee. A pastor is ethically bound to share with the local church leadership when they candidate at another church. The reason for such disclosure is for prayer and the seeking of God's will for all concerned.

The EMC is committed to maintaining a high commitment to integrity and openness in the process of pastoral changes. A pastor cannot contact a local church unless the Conference Superintendent grants permission.

The local pastoral relations chairman and committee must maintain the same integrity and follow the same procedure. They do not contact pastoral candidates independent of their Conference Superintendent.

## ¶1159. MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The duties of the Local Church World Mission Committees shall be as follows:

- (1) To promote missions in the Evangelical Methodist Church. Every local Evangelical Methodist church should have a conference each year. The conference should be the climax of a campaign to enlist the total church membership in the cause of missions and should be the primary means of raising monetary support for missions.
- (2) To provide for the diffusion of mission information, the distribution of literature, the circulation of periodicals, and the use of all means and materials available to the church.
- (3) To plan the foreign mission program for the church and organize the mission conferences of the church in cooperation with the Board of Stewards and the Pastor, so that the entire congregation may be informed and challenged to support the world mission program of the Evangelical Methodist Church.
- (4) To cooperate with the Pastor, the EMMFM, the EMW, the EMY, and other church organizations in the coordination of their world mission interests, education, and projects.
- (5) To give special attention to the Fourth Sunday and November Annual Missions offering.
- (6) To set up a priority system for supporting missions through the local church. A suggested priority is as follows:
  - a. EMC Missionaries serving with the Board of World Missions
  - b. EMC missionaries serving with Affiliate or Associated Boards.
  - c. Missionaries from the local church serving with other missionary sending organizations.
  - d. Other missionaries serving with other missionary sending organizations.

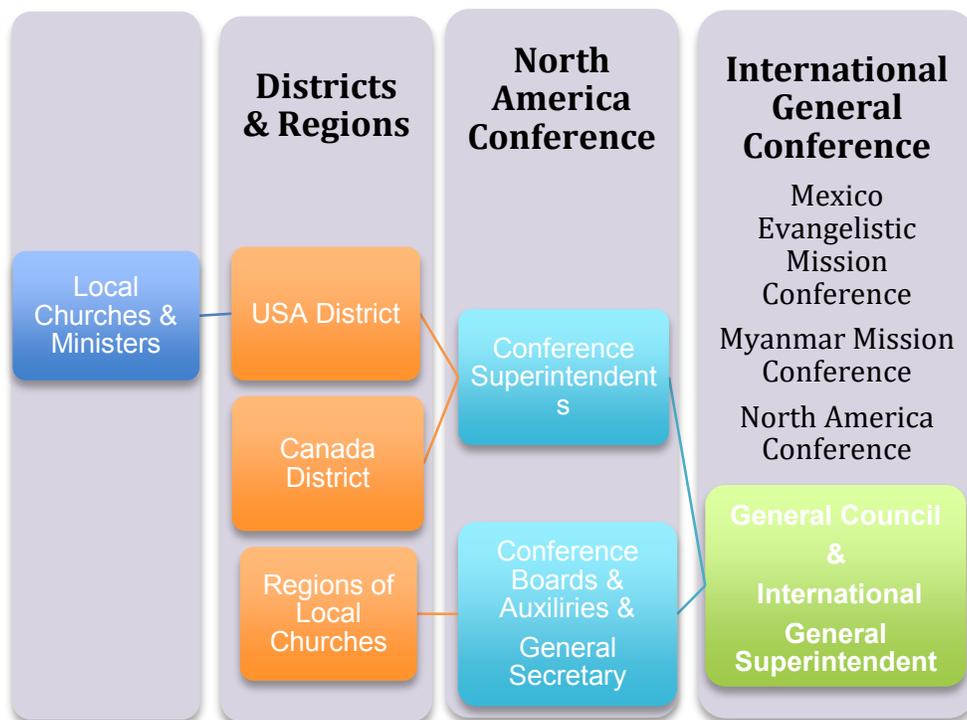
¶1160. Guidelines for local churches who desire to merge into one local church

- (1) In the event two or more local congregations come together as one church, all assets, both financial and real property, will become the property of the newly formed congregation.
- (2) The properties not being used by the merged congregation may be used for any ministry to which the congregation agrees.

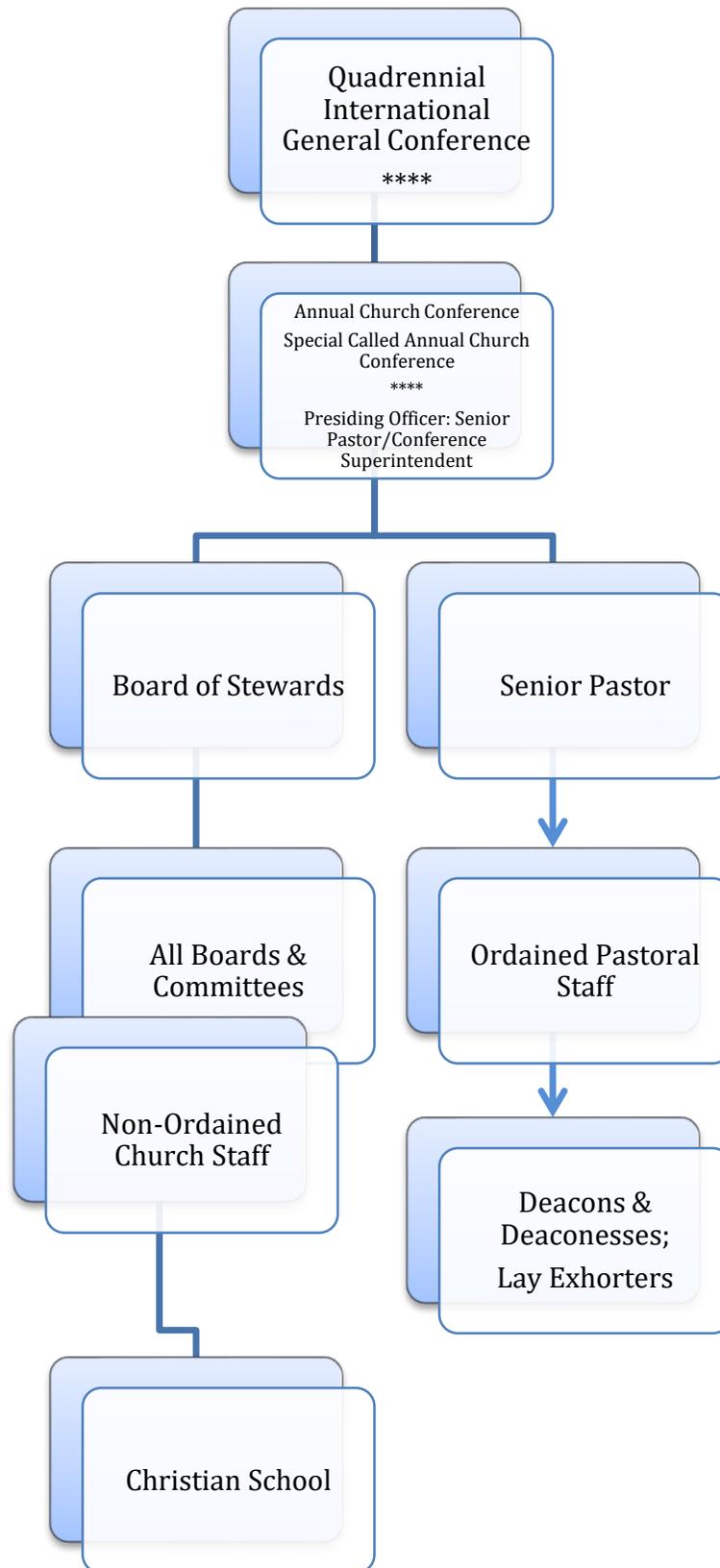
- (3) If the unused property is sold, the proceeds must go into the treasury of the newly formed congregation.
- (4) Anyone who was a member of the former congregation will become a charter member of the newly formed congregation if they so choose.
- (5) In the event a member chooses not to be a part of the merger, he/she will have six months from the date of the merger to activate their membership with the newly formed congregation or forfeit their right of membership with the newly formed congregation.
- (6) If a member of either of the former congregations elects not to be a part of the newly formed congregation, they may transfer their membership to another Evangelical Methodist church. If they choose not to transfer membership to another Evangelical Methodist church or if they join another organization without a letter of transfer, their membership in the Evangelical Methodist Church will be terminated (see ¶225-227).

## Chapter 7. Denominational Organizational Charts

### ¶1161. DENOMINATIONAL STRUCTURE



## ¶1162. LOCAL CHURCH STRUCTURE



## Chapter 8. Resolutions

### ¶1171. RESOLUTION CONCERNING ABORTION

Whereas the Holy Scriptures clearly teach that life begins at conception and that the taking of that life is clearly repugnant to God, the Evangelical Methodist Church does not sanction nor condone abortion. We encourage our churches to help women in problem pregnancies by providing understanding, forgiveness, and counseling in a spirit of love. They should be helped morally, spiritually, and financially when possible.

We should do all we can to help unmarried girls to trust in the grace of Christ and lead them to new help in a non-judgmental spirit of love and understanding.

In the same spirit we should help those mothers who have had an abortion to a realization of the redeeming grace of Christ and the complete forgiveness of that sin. We should open our arms of Christian fellowship to those who Christ redeems, “restoring such a one in the spirit of meekness, lest we also be tempted.”

*(The General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Wilmore, Kentucky in July 1990 passed the above resolution.)*

### ¶1172. RESOLUTION CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALITY

Whereas the Holy Scriptures state that God created male and female and declares sexual union was established exclusively for the male-female relationship (Genesis 2:24) and is consecrated in the marriage relations; and

Whereas the Holy Scriptures also declare that “...a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be united to his wife, and they shall become one flesh...” (Genesis 2:24, 25; Mark 10:7, 8); and

Whereas the biblical record clearly condemns homosexual activity:

- (1) Leviticus 18:22: God reveals homosexual practice to be an abomination in His sight.
- (2) Romans 1:26, 27: Declare that homosexual activity is a lust of the flesh which is unnatural, degrading, and totally contrary to God’s will.
- (3) I Corinthians 6:9, 10: Reveal that homosexuals are to be denied entrance into the eternal Kingdom of Heaven if they do not repent, receive Christ as their personal Savior, and abolish their homosexual life style.

Therefore, by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, we, the Evangelical Methodist Church, believe homosexual practices to be sin leading to spiritual death and eternal punishment. Moreover, we agree that no individual who practices homosexual acts shall be permitted to be an official member of any Evangelical Methodist Church; nor shall any known practicing homosexual be a candidate for the licensed ministry of the Evangelical Methodist Church. Therefore, any person who does not positively affirm that he/she is not a homosexual may not become a member of the Evangelical Methodist Church. Every Board of Ministerial Relations and every local church pastor will ask for this affirmation during their respective interviews for licensing of ministers and the confirmation of church leaders.

We, the Evangelical Methodist Church, uphold that all individuals are entitled to certain rights and protection of civil law; nevertheless, we oppose all civil legislation that supports homosexuality as a normal life style based upon sexual preference. Moreover, the Evangelical Methodist Church opposes all civil legislation that would force us to compromise our religious beliefs on homosexuality. Hence, the Evangelical Methodist Church stands upon its constitutional right, under the first amendment, to oppose homosexual practices according to our religious conscience and biblical understanding.

Whereas we recognize that the Bible verifies that homosexuality is no greater sin than adultery, murder, stealing, etc., we, therefore, affirm that homosexuals are redeemable according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, we encourage all Evangelical Methodists to present God's plan of salvation and deliverance from sin to all homosexuals. Moreover, all homosexuals who seek faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and cease to practice homosexual acts the Evangelical Methodist Church welcomes into the fellowship of the Church.

*(The General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Wilmore, Kentucky in July 1990 passed the above resolution.)*

#### ¶1173. RESOLUTION CONCERNING INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Whereas, many nations are intolerant of Christianity and deny them human rights; and

Whereas, according to the U. S. State Department, the governments of over 60 nations around the world condone the persecution of Christians; and

Whereas, the people called Methodists have traditionally taken the lead in opposing injustice, prejudices, and violation of human rights; and Whereas, Evangelical Methodists believe in the power of prayer to demolish strongholds and set people free,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Evangelical Methodist congregations observe an International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Be it further resolved, that we may grow in our sense of unity with Christians around the globe and become more aware of the needs of our brothers and sisters who suffer because of their Christian faith.

*(The General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Arlington, Texas in July 2002 passed the above resolution.)*

#### ¶1174. RESOLUTION ON “OPEN THEISM”

A recent theological movement that calls itself “Open Theism” has entered the evangelical milieu. Open theology rejects or redefines the classical doctrine of God’s omniscience. Its proponents declare that God is “open” to the future, meaning He does not fully know all events and is bound by time. As one proponent states “. . . if history is infallibly known and certain from all eternity, then freedom is an illusion . . . I stand against classical theism which has tried to argue that God can control and foresee all things. . .”<sup>1</sup> As a result of this challenge the meaning of “Classical Theology” has come under careful scrutiny. Openness theology claims to be a reaction to “classical” views of God that result in an ultra-transcendent, impersonal, static, and intransigent divine being which arise from a predominantly philosophical theology. Openness theologians have attempted to offer another paradigm for God’s relationship with the world. Openness thinkers over-emphasize the traditional transcendent aspects of God and underscore His immanence and understand Him as more relational.

As with most attempts at ‘correction’ in church history, this new school of thought has produced an unsettling revision -- one that has produced great concern among evangelical theologians.

At base, this debate comes down to the understanding of “classical theology.” “Classical theism” can be easily misunderstood in the present theological context. The best of classical theism offers a concept of God who is the creator of time and thus is outside of time but enters into time

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<sup>1</sup> Predestination and Free Will, ed by David Basinger, 1986. InterVarsity Press. p. 150-151

and knows, without coercion, the implication of all human choices. The eternal Triune God knows all details of future events without manipulation, or the production of any illusion.

The theological tradition out of which the EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH is birthed has found that the crucial issue of God's omniscience and human free will is best guided by a biblically based Trinitarian theology. The EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH stands in the consensual guidelines of the historic Christian tradition. Orthodox Christian thought has sensitively and adequately dealt with the relation of transcendence and immanence for two millennia. The transcendent God is eternally personal and from creation through eschaton the Three-in-One God has created humans to image that triune life in holy love. The transcendent Holy One has revealed Himself in immanent self-giving love.

A Trinitarian view of God helps us focus on His relationships with humanity. "One of the benefits of a Triune approach to understanding the nature of God is that it holds together the biblical data on both the transcendence and the immanence of God."<sup>2</sup> The Old Testament prophets consistently upheld God's understanding of future events in such a way that He would have to know all the details of the future. This is what separates Him from pagan gods and His creation (Is 41:21-24; 44:6-8; 46:9). The Bible has many prophecies concerning future events -- many that foretold the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ) and that remain to be fulfilled with His second coming. These events require God's foreknowledge in detail. God is the Alpha and the Omega, He is "I AM," implying that He is eternal, unchanging and timeless.

The EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH stands with the classical formulation of God's omniscience, as it has historically been understood. God knows all details of the past, present and future.

*(The General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana in July 2006 passed the above resolution.)*

#### ¶1175. RESOLUTION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING SYNOPSIS

This position statement gives expression to the concern of The Evangelical Methodist Church about the issue of global human trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining

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<sup>2</sup> Trinitarian Theism by Allen Coppedge, unpublished manuscript.

of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion, for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, debt bondage, or slavery.

#### PREAMBLE

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10 NASB).

Trafficking in persons is a modern day form of slavery. It is in most cases a trans-border crime that affects all regions of the world. Men, women, and children are trafficked for the purposes of labor, sex, begging, body parts, and conscription into rebel armies. According to a 2006 United Nations global report on trafficking, 127 countries have been documented as countries of origin, and 137 as countries of destination. The main countries of origin are reported to be in Central and Southeastern Europe, The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Asia, followed by West Africa, Latin American, and the Caribbean. The most commonly reported countries of destination are in Western Europe, Asia, and North America. Estimates run as high as four million trafficked persons within countries and across country borders per year. The scope of human trafficking is second only to drug trafficking. It has been estimated that the profits of human trafficking will surpass drug trafficking, in that an ounce of cocaine may be sold only once, but a human being may be sold over and over.

Trafficking in persons is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, debt bondage, or slavery. Human trafficking has a devastating impact on individual victims who often suffer physical and emotional abuse, as well as rape, threats against self and family, and even death. However, the impact of human trafficking goes beyond individual victims; it undermines the health, safety, and security of all nations.

The nationalities of trafficked people are as diverse as the world’s cultures. Some fall victim to forced or bonded labor in their own countries. Women eager for a better future are susceptible to promises jobs that traffickers turn into the slavery of prostitution without exit. Some families give children to adults, who promise education and opportunity, but sell the children instead into exploitive situations.

Today it is estimated there are 27 million slaves in our world. Approximately 80 percent of transnational victims are women and girls and up to 50 percent are minors. The majority of transnational victims are

females trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation. Some have been trafficked for these purposes as young as two years of age.

There are many components that perpetuate human trafficking: poverty, fear, violence, lack of opportunity, lack of education language barriers, physical and psychological abuse. Traffickers thrive on demand, greed, dehumanizing attitudes, pornography, strip clubs, cultural tolerances, myths and lack of prosecutions. Society in general is unaware and apathetic.

The abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in the Nineteenth Century led by William Wilberforce required a nation to deepen and expand its definition of human dignity. It required a nation to declare that moral values outweigh commercial interests. Nothing less is required of nations today. Defeating human trafficking is a great moral calling of our day.

#### CALL TO THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH

The prophetic voice of the Church must speak into this darkness. Isaiah 59 gives a very vivid description of sin at its worst. The call goes out begging for someone to respond with hope and redemption. No one responds. God does not then stand there and wring His hands. He is appalled. He stands up in His power and acts.

In this 21st century The Evangelical Methodist Church is appalled! The Spirit of the Lord is rising up. The liberating truth will be articulated and engaged, bringing light to the darkness.

#### ACTION STEPS:

- Evangelical Methodists will seriously pray to end human trafficking.
- Global Evangelical Methodists will become aware of what is happening within their own countries. Further, they will avail themselves of the “Hands that Heal” training materials available through World Hope International.
- Evangelical Methodists will be willing to become trainers and lead in this capacity.
- Evangelical Methodists will provide avenues of healing to trafficked victims.
- Evangelical Methodists will advocate on the part of the victims, as well as for laws that need to be enacted to end human trafficking.
- Evangelical Methodists leaders will preach on these issues, particularly as it relates to the demand in sex trafficking for

pornography, internet porn, entitlements to abuse those of lesser status, etc.

- Evangelical Methodists will support the prosecution of buyers and consumers of trafficked persons.

RESOLUTION—WHEREAS, The Evangelical Methodist Church worldwide recognizes its biblical responsibility to those who are weak, oppressed, powerless, helpless, impoverished and exploited;

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Methodist Church abhors the profoundly evil personal and social sin of human trafficking, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, debt bondage or slavery;

WHEREAS, Trafficking in persons is a modern-day form of slavery, involving as many as four million men, women, and children being taken, bought and sold each year within countries and across country borders for labor, sex, begging, body parts, conscription into rebel armies, and other purposes;

BE IT RESOLVED that the following position statement on global human trafficking be adopted by the International General Conference and be recommended for implementation across The Evangelical Methodists Church, and that all leaders and members champion it as integral to the life and mission of the Church.

¶1176. THE INTERNATIONAL 30<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH STATEMENT ON GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

- (1) We, The Evangelical Methodist Church worldwide, are committed to eliminating human trafficking in all its forms. We recognize and accept our biblical responsibility to those who are weak, oppressed, powerless, helpless, and exploited; our duty of advocacy for those who cannot speak for themselves; and the need to raise our prophetic voice in loud protest against the profoundly evil personal and social sin of human trafficking.
- (2) We will demonstrate our concern and compassion locally, nationally, and internationally by:
  - a. Praying earnestly for the end of human trafficking.

- b. Becoming aware of what is happening within our own countries.
- c. Raising awareness about human trafficking and potential Christian responses, availing ourselves of training materials such as the “Hands that Heal” resources available through World Hope International of the Wesleyan Denomination, and providing leadership in this capacity.
- d. Providing avenues of healing to trafficked victims.
- e. Advocating on the part of the victims of human trafficking, as well as for laws that need to be enacted to end human trafficking.
- f. Preaching on the issues related to human trafficking, particularly as it relates to the demand in sex trafficking for pornography, Internet porn, entitlements to abuse those of lesser status, etc.
- g. Supporting the prosecution of buyers and consumers of trafficked persons.

*(The 30<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Indianapolis, IN, in March 2010 passed the above resolution.)*

¶1177. RESOLUTION ON THE GLOBAL WESLEYAN ALLIANCE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF CREDENTIALS

WHEREAS, One of the objectives of the Global Wesleyan Alliance (GWA) is to assist its Covenant Partners in amplifying their missional fruitfulness for Christ through cooperation that may include mutual recognition of ministerial credentials (when approved by their respective appropriate governing bodies):

RESOLVED, That the following standards be established as the basis for the mutual recognition of ministerial credentials by Covenant Partners of the Global Wesleyan Alliance whose governing bodies desire to provide for such; and

RESOLVED, That these standards be incorporated into the governing documents of ministerial credentialing regulations of the General Board of Ministerial Relations.

- (1) We affirm that ordination is a service to and sign of the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. The ordained minister is a symbol of Christ in the work of making God’s living voice heard through the proclamation of the Word and the demonstration of its transforming, sustaining power through the administration of the

sacraments as visible means of grace. Ordination is an invocation of the Holy Spirit, a consecration of those set apart by the Church for spiritual leadership and service, a certification of spiritual gifts and graces that qualify one for such leadership and service, and an authorization and empowerment for one to preach and serve as a leader in the community of faith.

- (2) The mutual recognition of ordained ministers' credentials by sister Christian bodies is not based upon organizational unification, but upon communion in our one, holy faith. It is a sign of the unity of the Church universal; a symbol of mutual trust and visible unity as a testimony to the world; a demonstration of our shared commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment as the primary mission of the Church; a recognition of one another's apostolicity authority; and a celebration of our unity in diversity, growing out of confidence that we enrich one another and that the Holy Spirit can speak to us through one another.
- (3) Mutual recognition of ministerial credentials by Covenant Partners of the Global Wesleyan Alliance (GWA) is established by agreement and adherence to a standardized list of minimum educational training requirements for ordination, so that ministers transferring from one body to another while in the process of or after having completed their ministerial training will each have been required to meet the same basic educational qualifications. While each Covenant Partner may exceed these minimum training requirements by the addition of other courses, internships, periods of supervised ministry, mentoring, etc. based on their own organizational leadership objective and criteria, Covenant Partners assure one another that the credentials of all ministerial personnel are issued based only after compliance with agreed minimum training standards.
- (4) Any background screening (including but not limited to criminal or sexual offender records checks, personal credit history reports, driver's records, etc.) for ministers "temporarily on loan" to another GWA Covenant Partner shall be the sole responsibility of the receiving body. Each body is responsible for completing its own due diligence in matters of ministerial hiring and supervision.

- (5) Ministers “temporarily on loan” between GWA Covenant Partners may be restricted from voting membership on any official judicatory or denominational board, commission, task force or conference by the receiving body. The right to determine who is or is not entitled to voting privileges vests solely with each Covenant Partner.
- (6) A credentialed minister wishing to serve in a capacity under the supervision of another GWA Covenant Partner shall request a duly-signed “letter of good standing” from his or her jurisdictional supervisor in the originating body to present to the proper official of the receiving body. GWA Covenant Partners agree not to transfer or receive any credentialed minister whose good standing has not thus been established.
- (7) Mutual recognition of credentials means the action of one body in approving ministerial qualifications and authority involves a reciprocal element of respect for one another’s disciplinary procedures and decisions. GWA Covenant Partners agree that ministers placed under the discipline in one body shall not be allowed to avoid biblical submission to authority or escape such accountability by transferring to another body unless and until the disciplinary issue is resolved satisfactorily by officials of the originating body.
- (8) All GWA Covenant Partners participating in the mutual recognition of ministerial credentials shall insure equal treatment and placement opportunity for all credentialed persons, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or age.
- (9) Recognition of ministerial status is not automatic simply because GWA Covenant Partners have agreed to the mutual recognition of ministerial credentials. Ministerial status is subject to a receiving body’s case-by-case review of a minister’s good standing and qualifications for the particular placement being considered. It is also the right of each originating body to refuse to issue a “letter of good standing” to a minister for cause (as determined by the disciplinary standards of the originating body).
- (10) Persons seeking recognition of their ministerial credentials by another GWA Covenant Partner shall be required to sign a legal waiver allowing for release to the appropriate official(s) of the receiving body of confidential personnel files, including applications and questionnaires related to ministerial

credentialing, resumes, academic transcripts, performance evaluations, disciplinary records, documentation regarding previous background checks, reference interview notes and other information gathered by the originating body.

- (11) A receiving body shall be allowed to require a transferring minister or one “temporarily on loan” to complete a study course within a reasonable period of time as it shall determine related to its own history and polity as a condition for initial or continued appointment.
- (12) A receiving body may require ministerial personnel from a GWA Covenant Partner desiring to transfer from another country of origin to provide proof of legal immigration status and educational equivalency, or to complete remedial or contextual training requirements.
- (13) GWA Covenant Partners whose governing bodies have approved mutual recognition of credentials agree to include a statement in their respective ordination rituals proclaiming that ministers are set apart for ministry in their particular denomination, as well as for service in the Church universal.

*(The 31<sup>st</sup> General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Indianapolis, IN, in March 2014 passed the above resolution.)*

#### ¶1178. RESOLUTION ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

As an evangelical denomination of believers who embrace the historic Christian understanding of Scripture, the Evangelical Methodist Church holds that sexuality is a gift from God and basic to human identity as well as a matter of behavioral expression. We hold that the full behavioral expression of sexuality is to take place within the context of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman and that individuals remain celibate outside of the bond of marriage. Therefore, we seek to cultivate a community in which sexuality is embraced as God-given and good and where biblical standards of sexual behavior are upheld.

#### **Biblical Foundation**

Foundational principles from the Bible on human sexual relationships are as follows:

- (1) Humans, being created in the image of God, are inherently relational beings (Genesis 1:26).

- (2) The inherent relational nature of humankind is expressed in a variety of contexts including family, marriage, work, and for Christians, the Body of Christ (Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 12:14).
- (3) Humans were created as gendered beings. They were expressly blessed by God to be fruitful and multiply and to exercise dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28).
- (4) Heterosexuality is God's design for sexually intimate relationships. Sexual union between a man and a woman is only to take place within the marriage covenant (Genesis 2:18, 21-24; Hebrews 13:4).
- (5) Jesus reaffirms the marital covenant as existing between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-9).
- (6) The New Testament teaches that followers of Christ are to remain celibate outside the bond of marriage. In sexual union, both body and soul are deeply impacted. A person who engages in sexual unions outside the bond of marriage sins against his or her own body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:13, 18-20).
- (7) The sexual union between a husband and wife has been designed by God to bring them together as "one flesh," creating a solid foundation on which to build a family (Genesis 2:18-24; Ephesians 5:31).
- (8) In Scripture, several sexual behaviors are expressly forbidden, which include but not limited to: fornication, adultery, incest, unnatural sexual intercourse, and homosexual acts (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7-23; 20:10-21; Matthew 5:27-28; Romans 1:20-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17-19; Colossians 3:5).

It is the intention of the Evangelical Methodist Church that the conversations regarding human sexuality take place in "biblical and theological contexts." The primary source and authority for the church in dealing with these questions is the inspired and revealed truth of God's nature and character as witnessed to in the Holy Scripture. The Word of God – interpreted through the lenses of Christian orthodox tradition, reason, and personal experience – occupies the privileged position as the final authority for the faith and practice of the people of God in all aspects of our lives, including our sexuality.

The Evangelical Methodist Church further intends that our

conversations regarding human sexuality take place in “pastoral contexts.” It is imperative that the body of Christ commit to loving unconditionally. God so unconditionally loved the world that He sent His one and only Son, not to condemn but to save. Although sin and brokenness in the areas of sexuality are deeply personal and therefore often difficult conversations, it still remains just one aspect of our all-encompassing human sinfulness. Loveless judgmentalism and ungracious reactions do little to enable Christ’s body to grant grace and to show forth God’s unconditional love. As the complexities of local contexts for doing ministry increase, the need for the church to grant not only wisdom but also grace to those who are attempting to show love, accountability, grace, and transformation to those caught in the bondage of sin will also increase.

The Evangelical Methodist Church is committed to a biblical understanding of our God-given sexuality as reflected in this statement. Any deviation from a biblical standard of sexual behavior is sin and therefore is an opportunity for repentance, grace, and redemption, so that as a community we might honor one another and glorify God.

*(The 31<sup>st</sup> General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Indianapolis, IN, in March 2014 passed the above resolution.)*  
*(The 32<sup>nd</sup> General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church meeting in Indianapolis, IN, in April 2018 passed the above expansion to the resolution.)*

## **RITUAL AND WORSHIP**



# RITUAL AND WORSHIP

## Chapter 1. Order of Worship

### ¶1201. A SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Let the service of worship begin at the time appointed. Let the people kneel or bow in silent prayer upon entering the sanctuary.

#### *\*Congregation Standing*

Prelude

Call to Worship

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

\*Hymn

\*Affirmation of Faith

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and 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, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the blood bought Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Anthem

\*Gloria Patri or Doxology

Gospel Choir or Special Music

\*The Lesson from the Holy Scriptures

Silent Meditation

Offertory

\*Hymn

Special Music

The Sermon

An Invitation to Christian Discipleship

\*Hymn

\*Benediction

Postlude

¶1202. A SERVICE OF BLENDED WORSHIP

**\*Congregation Standing**

The Prelude

*Organist*

The Chiming of the Hour

The Acts of Entrance

\*The Processional Hymn

*“Name of Hymn”*

\*The Christian Greeting

*Mr./Mrs. Name*

\*The Gathering Prayer: *Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known, and from You no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

\*The Songs of Adoration

The Anthem

*“Name of Hymn” The Chancel Choir*

The Service of the Word

\*The Old Testament Reading (Psalm 103)

*Mr./Mrs. Name*

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord

**People:** Thanks be to God

The Prayers of the People

*(When prompted by the leader with each, “Let us pray to the Lord,” the people will pray, “Lord, hear our prayer.”)*

\*The New Testament Reading (Matthew 18:21-35)

*Mr./Mrs. Name*

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord

**People:** Thanks be to God

The Sermon

*“Sermon Title” The Reverend Mr. Name*

The Worship of Giving

*Ushers*

The Offertory

\*The Doxology with the Presentation of the Sacraments

The Service of the Table

The Ministry of Exhortation

*Mr./Mrs. Name*

The Acts of Confession

**Minister:** Let us now confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

**People:** Most merciful Father, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbor as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

**The Absolution:** The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. May the God of mercy, who forgives you all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

**The Celebrant's Prayer:** Holy and Gracious Father, in Your infinite love you made us for Yourself; and when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, You in Your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, Your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to You, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out His arms upon the cross, and offered Himself in obedience to Your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night He was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when He had given thanks to You, He broke it, and gave it to His disciples and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper He took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Amen.

### **The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

*(Please understand that we do not view this as the Methodist Table, but the Lord's Table. Therefore, you do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive the Sacrament with us. Please follow the Ushers' direction as you process forward for the taking of the Sacraments. As you wait, please join in the Songs of Worship. You may leave your Communion Offering at the Altar when you take the Sacrament. After you have taken the Sacrament, you may request Prayers for Healing by coming to the kneeler.)*

The Songs of Worship

*Congregation*

The Acts of Dismissal

The Acts of Closing

*Mr./Mrs. Name*

\*The Song of Blessing *(Congregation will hold hands across the aisle.)*

\*The Sending Forth

The Postlude

*Organist*

*(Personal Ministry available after each service.)*

- The service of blended worship is the blending of the major historic streams of worship into one convergent order for the purpose of engaging

the maximum number of worshipers with worship styles emerging from their culture.

- The service of public worship is a primary responsibility and opportunity for the Church. Therefore, preparation is critical. All participants should be prepared for their responsibilities, while at the same time relying upon the anointing of God for enabling. The service of worship is planned under the direction of the presiding pastor.

- Announcements and extraneous statements should be kept to a minimum in the service of worship.

- The worship processional is an act of movement by a group of people for the sake of all. The procession symbolizes the entire congregation coming before the Lord to worship and give thanks.

- Prayers for healing occur privately and quietly at the kneeler while other communicants receive the Sacrament. The minister applies oil to the forehead using any of the historic statements for anointing. Extemporaneous prayers for healing follow.

#### ¶1203. TENEBRAE GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

The service of Tenebrae or “shadows” grew out of a combination night prayer and early morning prayer, with an additional focus upon the commemoration of the Passion. The latter was usually read by several deacons, and later, in the Middle Ages, was read by Monastic choirs. The most striking feature of this service is the gradual extinguishing of the lights and candles in the sanctuary and on the altar. The bare altar table and the unvested furnishings emphasize the starkness of the events recalled. The candles represent the apostles and all the followers of Christ, and the larger candle represents Christ. The dramatic high point occurs with the complete darkness and the loud noise, or *strepitus*, at the death of Jesus. At the end of the service the congregation is asked to leave in silence in remembrance of the darkness the world experienced during Christ’s three days in the tomb.

The Gathering

The Greeting

**Minister:** And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light.

**People:** *God is light, in Whom there is no darkness at all.*

**Minister:** For God sent the Son into the World, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

**People:** *Everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light.*

**Minister:** Come, let us worship in spirit and truth.

The Hymn

“What Wondrous Love Is This”

The Opening Prayer

**Minister:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** *And also with you.*

**Minister:** Let us pray: Most gracious God, look with mercy upon your family gathered here for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed, given into sinful hands, and suffered death upon the cross; strengthen our faith and forgive our betrayals as we enter the way of His Passion; through Him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

### THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

Reading #1

Luke 22:39-46

Hymn or Special Music

### FIRST CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

Reading #2

Luke 22:47-53

The Betrayal

Hymn or Special Music

### SECOND CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

Reading #3

Luke 22:54-62

Peter’s Denial

Hymn or Special Music

### THIRD CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

Reading #4

Luke 22:63-71

Jesus Before the Elders

Hymn or Special Music

### FOURTH CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

Reading #5

Luke 23:1-12

Jesus Before Herod

Hymn or Special Music

### FIFTH CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

Reading #6

Luke 23:13-25

Jesus Before Pilate

Hymn or Special Music

### SIXTH CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

Reading #7

Luke 23:26-38

The Crucifixion

Hymn or Special Music

### SEVENTH CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

Reading #8

Luke 23:39-46

His Death

Hymn or Special Music

### EIGHTH CANDLE(S) EXTINGUISHED

READING #9

Luke 23:47-56a

His Burial

Hymn or Special Music

†*All sanctuary lights are turned off.*

CHRIST CANDLE REMOVED\*

STREPITUS\*\*

Moment of Silence

Reading of Song of The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53:4-9

*(Sanctuary lights turned on.)*

The Blessing

Go in peace, May Jesus Christ, who for our sake became obedient unto death, even death on the cross, keep you this night and forever. Amen.

†PLEASE LEAVE SANCTUARY IN TOTAL SILENCE.

\*The Christ candle (still lit) is carried out of the sanctuary and is returned on Resurrection Sunday.

\*\*A loud noise signifying the death of Christ and His final words “It is finished.”

¶1204. JOHN WESLEY COVENANT SERVICE (ABBREVIATED)

*In 1663 Richard Alleine, A Puritan, published a Vindication of Godliness in the Greater Strictness and Spirituality of It. In 1753, it was again published in John Wesley’s A Christian Library. Wesley used one chapter, The Application of the Whole, on Monday, August 11, 1755, in what probably was the first real celebration of the Covenant Service in the Methodist movement. Wesley found the service rich and meaningful, as expressed in his journal: “Many mourned before God, and many were comforted” (April 1756); “it was, as usual, a time of remarkable blessing” (October 1765); “it was an occasion for a variety of spiritual experiences...I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing. Afterwards many desired to return thanks, either for a sense of pardon, for full salvation or for a fresh manifestation of His graces, healing all their backslidings: (January 1, 1775.)*

*Around the country the Covenant Service was conducted whenever John Wesley visited the Methodist societies. After the time of Wesley, several versions of the Covenant Service were developed. The service has been used frequently on the first Sunday of the New Year.*

The sections used in this worship service are taken directly from Wesley’s service of 1780.

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Renewal of our Covenant with God

Prelude

Invocation

Call to Worship

Worship in Song

Scripture Lesson:

Deuteronomy 31:9-13

Prayer Choruses

The Morning Prayer

Scripture Lesson:

2 Kings 23:1-3

Scripture Lesson:

Joshua 24:11-18

The Renewal of Our Covenant

**Minister:** Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is redeemed from sin and consecrated to God. Through baptism, we have entered this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator.

He sealed it with his own blood that it might last forever.

On one side, God promises to give us new life in Christ, the Source and Perfecter of our faith.

On the other side, we are pledged to live no more for ourselves but only for Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

From time to time we renew our covenant with God, especially when we reaffirm the Baptismal Covenant and gather at the Lord's Table.

Today, however, we meet as the generations before us have met, to renew the covenant that binds us to God. Let us make this covenant of God our own.

**Minister:** And now, beloved, let us bind ourselves with willing bonds to our covenant God, and take the yoke of Christ upon us.

This taking of his yoke upon us means that we are heartily content that he appoint us our place and work, and that he alone be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done; some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honor, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and temporal interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves; in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is assuredly given us in Christ, who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make the covenant of God our own. Let us engage our heart to the Lord, and resolve in his strength never to go back.

Being this prepared, let us now, in sincere dependence on his grace and trusting in his promises, yield ourselves anew to him.

**People:** Let me be your servant, under your command.

I will no longer be my own.

I will give up myself to your will in all things, be satisfied that Christ shall give me my place and work.

Lord, make me what you will.

I put myself fully into your hands:

Put me to doing, put me to suffering,

Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,

Let me be full, let me be empty,

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal. It is in the name of Jesus that I pray, Amen.

**Minister:** Therefore, let us go to Christ and pray.

**People:** I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Invitation

*Deacon/Deaconess*

The Consecration

*Pastor*

The Prayer of Humble Access

**Minister:** And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

**People:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Minister:** We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies.

We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

*(When the bread is delivered, the following words are said.)*

**Minister:** The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

*(When the cup is delivered, the following words are said.)*

**Minister:** The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

Closing Hymn

The Benediction

## Chapter 2. Calls to Worship

¶1211. ...the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. *Habakkuk 2:20*

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. *Psalms 122:1*

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. *Psalms 118:24*

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. *Psalms 27:14*

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. *James 4:8*

...the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. Surely the Lord is in this place . . . this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. *Habakkuk 2:20; Genesis 28:16, 17*

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. *Psalms 33:8*

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. *Psalms 95:6, 7*

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! *Psalms 107:1, 8*

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. *Revelation 3:20*

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. *Psalms 84:2*

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. *Psalms 124:8; 121:1*

...the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. *John 4:23, 24.*

### **Chapter 3. Calls to Evening Worship**

¶1221. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as an incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. *Psalms 113:3; 141:2*

...the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out ...but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. *Jeremiah 6:4; Zechariah 14:7*

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord; and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High. To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. *Psalms 92:1, 2*

...the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. *Psalms 42:8*

...it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. *Zechariah 14:7*

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled ...came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. *John 20:19*

## Chapter 4. Invocations

¶1231. Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen. *Gregorian Sacramentary, 7th Century.*

O thou who art our Creator and our Friend, we bow before Thee in humble trust, craving a deeper knowledge of Thy nature and Thy will. Take away, we pray Thee, all thoughts and feelings which separate us from Thee, and help us to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. Amen. *Charles E. Jefferson.*

O Lord our God, who art always more ready to bestow thy good gifts upon us than we are to seek them, and art willing to give more than we desire or deserve: Help us to seek that we may truly find, so to ask that we may joyfully receive, so to knock that the door of thy mercy may be opened unto us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Book of Common Order of St. Giles' Cathedral*

O Thou Holy One, who inhabitest eternity, visit us with the inward vision of thy glory, that we may bow our hearts before thee, and obtain that grace which thou hast promised to the lowly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen. *Charles E. Jefferson*

Almighty God, who dwellest in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see; grant that we may know thee in him whom thou hast given to be the light of the world, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the joy of his gospel may worship thee in spirit and in truth. *Hugh Cameron*

O God, author of eternal light, lead us in our worshiping this day; that our lips may praise Thee, our lives may bless Thee, our meditations may glorify Thee; through Christ our Lord. Amen. *Sarum Breviary, 11th Century*

O Lord, our merciful Father, we pray Thee to look upon us gathered here in Thy presence now, and to shed upon us as a congregation, and upon each of us individually, the helpful spirit of Thy grace, that all our thoughts and desires now may be such as Thou canst sanction and satisfy, and that in our worship we may each of us be aware that we have come into Thy presence. Amen. *Alexander Maclaren*

## Chapter 5. Affirmations of Faith

### ¶1241. THE APOSTLES' CREED

**Minister:** Let us unite in this historic confession of the Christian faith:

**Minister and People:** I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And 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, dead and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the blood-bought Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

### ¶1242. THE NICENE CREED

**Minister:** Let us unite in this historic confession of the Christian faith:

**Minister and People:** I believe in one God: the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God: begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## Chapter 6. The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion

¶1251. *The Lord's Table should have upon it a fair linen cloth. Let the pure, unfermented juice of the grape be used. It is custom to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper kneeling, but if persons so desire, they may receive the elements while seated or standing. Upon entering the church let the communicants bow in prayer and in the spirit of prayer and meditation approach the Blessed Sacrament.*

*The minister shall read one or more of these sentences, during the reading of which the stewards shall take up the offering for the needy. Communicants may place offering on the altar.*

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. *Matthew 5:16*

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. *Matthew 6:19, 20*

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. *Matthew 7:21*

And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my good I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. *Luke 19:8*

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. *II Corinthians 9:6, 7*

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. *Galatians 6:10*

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. *I Timothy 6:6, 7*  
*Then shall this general confession be made by the minister and all those who are to receive the Holy Communion, both he and they humbly kneeling and the minister saying:*

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways; draw near by faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and

make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

*Then may the minister say:*

We do not presume to come to this Thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table. But Thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood that our sinful souls and bodies may be made clean by His death, and washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. Amen.

*Then the minister shall say the prayer of consecration as follows:*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of Thy tender mercy didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by His oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and did institute and in His holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of His precious death until His coming again: hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech Thee, and grant that we, receiving these Thy creatures of bread and wine, according to Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of His death and passion, may be partakers of His most blessed body and blood; who in the same night that He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, brake it, and gave it to His disciples saying, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise after supper He took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. Amen.

*Then shall the minister first receive the Holy Communion in both kinds himself, and then proceed to deliver the same to the other ministers in like manner, if any be present. Then shall he say the Lord's Prayer, the people still kneeling and repeating with him every petition:*

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*(If a healing service is included during the distribution of the elements, a place of prayer is designated and those desiring anointing for healing approach this altar. Laying on of hands for healing by those designated by the pastor and deacons/deaconess.)*

### Thanksgiving Over the Oil

*(If not read earlier in the service, James 5:14-16a may be read here as an introduction to the anointing; If desired, this act may precede Holy Communion)*

*Let us pray:*

“O God, the giver of health and salvation, we give thanks to you for the gift of oil. As your holy apostles anointed many who were sick and healed them, so pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on this gift, that those who in faith and repentance receive this anointing may be made whole; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

### Prayers for Healing and Laying On Of Hands

*(People may be invited to partake of the sacraments then proceed to the altar for anointing with oil and express specific request for healing. They may be ministered to by the pastor, deacon and deaconesses, prayer team of two or three members, and church leadership. All healing team members lay on hands and share in silent and spoken prayer.)*

*The leader touches a thumb to the oil and the person’s forehead, in silence or using these or similar words:*

“(Name), I (We) anoint you with oil in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (in the name of the Holy and Triune God); (in the name of Jesus, the Christ, your Savior and Healer), for healing name specific purpose.

May the power of God’s indwelling presence heal you of all illnesses – of body, mind, spirit, and relationships – that you may serve God with a pure heart.”

*Then a hymn may be sung, and the communicants shall be invited to the Lord’s Table. The minister shall deliver both kinds to the people into their hands, dismissing each table with prayer. When he delivers the bread he shall say:*

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

*And the minister that delivers the cup shall say:*

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

*When all have communed, the minister shall return to the Lord's Table and place upon it what remains of the consecrated elements, covering the same with a fair linen cloth.*

Doxology.

*Then the minister, if he sees it expedient, may offer an extempore prayer, and afterward shall let the people depart with this blessing:*

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

## **Chapter 7. Dedication and/or Baptism of Children and Infants**

### ¶1261. A Liturgy of Dedication of Children and Infants

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men, though fallen in Adam, are born into this world in Christ the Redeemer, heirs of life eternal and subjects of the saving grace of the Holy Spirit; and that all children, not having attained the age of accountability, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the kingdom of God, and therefore graciously entitled to baptism (dedication); and that our Saviour Christ saith, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God (Luke 18:16); I beseech you to call upon God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous goodness He will so grant unto this child, now to be baptized (dedicated), the continual replenishing of His grace, that he/she may become a faithful member of God's holy church by faith that is in Jesus Christ.

*Then shall the minister offer personal prayer or say:*

Almighty and everlasting God, we beseech You that of Your infinite mercies You will look upon this child, and grant that by the aid of the Holy Spirit he/she may be steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in the love of the Word, and that he/she may so live a godly life now, that he/she will enter triumphantly the life which is to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Then shall the minister address the parents or sponsors:*

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as this child is now presented by you for dedication to God, and is thus consecrated to God and His church, it is your responsibility to live before him/her the life that becometh the Gospel, and see that he/she is taught the meaning of his holy Sacrament; to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all carnal desires of the flesh, so that he/she may not follow or be led by them; to know the Holy Scripture that is able to make him/her wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus; to instruct him/her in its doctrines; to help him/her obediently keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of his/her life; and that in every way, by precept and example, you shall seek to lead him/her into the love of God and the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Will you train him/her to regularly worship God both publicly and privately so that when he/she has reached the age of discretion, he/she being willing, and showing evidence of living faith in Christ, will ratify and make his/her own the act of dedication which you this day have undertaken? Do you solemnly assume these obligations?

Answer: **We do, God being our helper.**

*Then shall the minister say:*

Hear the words of the Gospel as recorded in Mark 10:13-16, "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

*Then the minister shall take the child into his hands (A parent may read a Bible verse they have chosen for their child.) and say to the parents of the child, "Will you dedicate (baptize) this child? What name shall be given this child?"*

*And then, repeating the name, he shall dedicate or baptize the child with the laying on of the hand, or the laying on of the hand with water, saying:*

\_\_\_\_\_, I dedicate (baptize) thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Then shall the minister offer an extemporaneous prayer, or the following:*

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, grant that this child, as he/she grows in years, may also grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ through His holy Word. Grant that the restraining

and renewing influence of God may so guide him/her that he/she may ever be a true child of God, serving thee faithfully all his/her days, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

Benediction.

## ¶1262. A Liturgy of Baptism of Children and Infants Introduction and Preparation

Baptism is a sacrament and is considered a sacred time in the life of the Church. Following the practice of the ancient Church, the church celebrates Baptism on Sunday. Communion table coverings should be white in most cases, the traditional color for baptism and most holy days. Sometimes red is used as a symbol for the Church. Clergy robes and stoles serve to reinforce the event as a special time and help mark it as sacred time rather than simply another activity of the church. The stole for the officiating minister is usually white, while assistants or associates may use the appropriate color for the season of the church year.

### Godparents

The practice of incorporating the naming of godparents or sponsors into the baptismal liturgy is an ancient practice in the Church. Sponsors for adults or godparents for infants were to be spiritually mature and trustworthy Christians who would serve as spiritual guides and mentors, taking upon themselves the responsibility of encouraging and guiding the person baptized into the Christian faith.

For infants, the parents and immediate family are always the primary godparents, along with the congregation into which the child is baptized. However, one or two godparents who are not part of the immediate or extended family can be named. In most church traditions, godparents must be baptized and professing members of the Christian faith. In most instances, the godparent should be located close enough to the infant actually to participate in their spiritual nurture. For infants, the responsibility of godparents is active to take part in the child's spiritual development through prayer, encouragement, spiritual nurture and instruction, and exemplary living, guiding the child to make his/her commitment to the Christian faith.

In this liturgy, a section for godparents is included. However, in many churches, the godparents do not take a separate role in the baptism but rather respond with the family members.

The Liturgy

**Minister to the Congregation:** Dearly beloved, baptism replaces the circumcision of the Old Testament which was the sign the person is part of the covenant community and is an outward and visible sign of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Water baptism is the sign that this child is a member of the family of God (Colossians 2:11-12). It is through this grace that we become partakers of his righteousness and heirs of life eternal. Those receiving the Sacrament of Baptism experience the fellowship of Christ's holy Church. The Apostle Paul stated the children of Christian parents are 'holy.' Our Lord has expressly given little children a place among the people of God, a holy privilege that must not be denied them. Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how he said, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Christian children experience the grace offered through this sacrament by the work of prevenient grace for them to confirm at an early age their personal faith, the forgiveness of their sins, and faith in Christ alone for their salvation.

*[The Minister then calls for the parents to bring the child to the front for baptism. Grandparents, godparents, and immediate family members are also invited to join them.]*

**Minister to the Congregation:** [Parent's name] and [parent's name] are today presenting their child for Christian baptism. Since baptism is a sacrament, this is a sacred time in the life of these parents, this child, and this community of faith. We do not believe that baptism imparts the regenerating grace of God to this child. We do believe that Christ gave this holy sacrament as a sign and seal of the new covenant. Christian baptism signifies for this young child God's gracious acceptance by prevenient grace. It is an acknowledgment of God's grace at work in the life of this child within the care of [his/her] mother and father and extended family and under the nurture of this community of Faith. It points forward to [his/her] personal response to that grace when [he/she] exercises conscious saving faith in Jesus Christ.

**Minister to the parents:** [Parent's name] and [parent's name], do you desire for your child to be baptized?

**Parents' Response:** I do.

**Minister to the parents:** In presenting this child for baptism, you are at this moment witnessing to your Christian faith. [Parent's name] and [parent's name], do you announce your faith in Jesus Christ, and show that you want to study him, know him, love him, and serve him as his disciple and that you want your child to do the same?

**Parents' Response:** I do.

**Minister to the parents:** To this end it is your duty to teach [him/her], as soon as [he/she] can learn, the nature of this holy sacrament; to watch over [his/her] education, that [he/she] may not be led astray; to direct [his/her] feet to the sanctuary; to restrain [him/her] from evil associates and habits, and as much as in you lies, to bring [him/her] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

[Parent's name] and [parent's name], will you nurture this child in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example [he/she] may be guided to accept God's grace for [him/her] self, to profess [his/her] Faith openly, and to lead a Christian life? If so, answer, "With God's help, I will."

**Parents' Response:** With God's help, I will.

**Minister to the Family:** Nurturing a child is not only the duty of the parents, but is also the responsibility of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and the larger extended family. Do all of you as members of this child's family agree to offer [parent's name] and [parent's name] and this precious child your unqualified love and care, and to share responsibility for the physical and spiritual nurture of this child? If so, answer, "I will."

**Family Members' Response:** I will.

{Optional for Godparents}

{**Minister to Godparents:** Godparents fill a special role in the life of a child. In accepting the role of Godparents, you promise to participate in the life of this child, doing everything in your power in the strength of God to assist the parents in the spiritual nurture of this child. Do you as the Godparents of this child, promise to share responsibility with [parent's name] and [parent's name] for this precious child, 'to pray for [him/her], and walk with [him/her] in the way of Christ to help [him/her] take [his/her] place within the life and worship of Christ's Church. If so, answer, "With God's help, I will."

**Godparents' Response:** With God's help, I will.}

**Minister to Parents:** What name have you given your child?

**Parents' response:** [Full name of the child]

Minister (after taking the child): [Full name of child], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**Minister's Prayer:** Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that you will take [name of child] into your loving care. Abundantly enrich [him/her] with your grace; bring [him/her] safely through the perils of childhood; deliver [him/her] from the temptations of youth; lead [him/her] to a

personal knowledge of Christ as Savior; help [him/her] to grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and people; and to persevere in [his/her] faith. Uphold the parents with loving care, that with wise counsel and the holy example they may be faithful to fulfill their responsibilities both to [name of child] and to You. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Minister to the Congregation:** I present to you [full name of the child] and ask you to welcome [him/her] into this community of faith (softly).

Minister to the Congregation: Everyone, please stand.

Brothers and Sisters of this household of Faith, as representatives of the community that welcomes [name of the child], you also have responsibilities to this child.

People of God, will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life, and include [parent's name] and [parent's name], and now [name of the child] in your care? Will you surround them with a community of love and forgiveness? Will you pray for them, extend Christian fellowship to them, and as much as in you lies assist [parent's name] and [parent's name] in raising [name of the child] in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

**Congregation's Response:** With God's help, we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that steadfast love surrounds both children and parents, that they may be established in the faith and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.

**Minister to the Parents:** [Parent's name] and [parent's name], will you allow the fellowship of God's people, where ever you may be, to assist you in raising [name of the child] in Christ, allowing them to be a witness to Christ's grace, a voice of God's Spirit, and a friend both to [him/her] and to yourselves?

**Parents' Response:** I will.

**Minister to the Child:** Little [Brother/Sister], you are now a part of a Community of Faith that spans race, gender, generations, and nations. We welcome you into this flock that you may both give and receive of God's graces.

**Minister:** Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for the gift of [name of the child]. It is our prayer that [name of the child] will come to know the joy and suffering of being concerned about everyone [he/she] meets; that [he/she] will see each person worthy of dignity and acceptance. We pray for [him/her] a growth into fuller and deeper levels of humanity as [he/she] lives the example of Jesus.

We pray that [name of the child] will understand that You alone can give life meaning and purpose and direction, O God; and that [he/she] will be on [his/her] knees before You with words of repentance and thanksgiving; and on [his/her] feet for You with deeds of love. This is our prayer, in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Chapter 8. Baptism

¶1271. *Let each choose the mode of baptism: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The minister shall use the following.*

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men do inherit a nature so fallen that no man, of his own strength, can so live as to please God, and that our Saviour Jesus Christ saith, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. I beseech you to call upon God the Father, that of His bounteous goodness He will grant unto these the renewing power of the Holy Spirit and enable them by divine grace to attain unto the fullness of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Then may the minister read the following lessons:*

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.  
*Acts 2: 38-42*

*Then shall the minister say to the persons to be baptized:*

Dearly beloved, who have come hither desiring to receive holy baptism, the congregation give thanks to God for your coming, and prays that the Holy Spirit may dwell within you, and that your faith may not fail. In the hearing of this congregation you should now make known your purpose to accept the obligation of this holy Sacrament.

Do you truly repent of your sins and accept and confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

Answer: **I do.**

*Then the minister, asking the name of each person, shall baptize them, repeating the name and saying:*

\_\_\_\_\_, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Prayer.

## Chapter 9. Receiving Persons into the Church

¶1281. Dearly beloved, the church is of God and will be preserved to the end of time for the promotion of His worship and the due administration of His Word and Sacraments, the maintenance of Christian fellowship and discipline, the edification of believers, and the conversion of the world. All, of every age and station, stand in need of the means of grace which it alone supplies.

Into this holy fellowship the persons before you who have received the Sacrament of Baptism, who have learned the nature of these privileges, and these duties, and who have also been instructed in the teachings and the aims of the Evangelical Methodist Church, come seeking admission. We now propose in the fear of God to question them as to their faith and purpose. (*Here an opportunity should be given for a short personal testimony by those wishing to do so.*) Dearly beloved, you profess to have a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from your sins, and to become a faithful servant in the kingdom of God; you seek the fellowship of the people of God, to assist you in working out your salvation; I therefore require of you:

*Then shall the minister demand of each of the persons to be received; and let all the Christians answer the vows together:*

- (1) REPENTANCE: Question: Do you renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all its covetous desires, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow or be led by them?

Answer: **I renounce them all.**

- (2) FAITH: Question: Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, that He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, that the third day he rose from the dead; that He ascended into heaven, and is sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and that from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead? And do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the

blood bought church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

Answer: **All this I steadfastly believe.**

(3) OBEDIENCE: Question: Will you then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life?

Answer: **I will endeavor so to do, God being my helper.**

(4) SERVICE: Question: Will you be loyal to the Evangelical Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

Answer: **I will.**

*The minister shall say to the candidates:*

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the church of Christ, and bid you welcome to all its privileges; and in token of our brotherly love we give you the right hand of fellowship, and pray that you may be numbered with His people here, and with His saints in glory everlasting.

Prayer: The Lord defend thee with His heavenly grace, and by His Spirit confirm thee in the faith and fellowship of all true disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*And the minister shall say to the congregation:*

Brethren, I commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day recognize as members of the church of Christ. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

*Then may the minister say:*

The blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

*Let all the members be invited to give the new members the right hand of fellowship at the close of the service.*

## **Chapter 10. Receiving Persons by Transfer**

¶1291. Dearly beloved, the church is of God, and according to the Holy Scriptures the Lord adds to the church daily those who are saved by His grace and power. The persons before you have been members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and they have presented themselves for membership in this church as transfers from that church.

*Then shall the minister address the persons to be received:*

Do you publicly declare that you have confessed your faith in Jesus Christ, and have witnessed to it by being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Answer: **I do.**

You are not a stranger to the church, but a fellow citizen with the saints and members of the household of God. Will you be loyal to the Evangelical Methodist Church and this local church and uphold it with your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

Answer: **I will, by the help of God.**

We are happy to recognize you as members of this congregation. Be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might. May God bless you in the worship and work of the Lord.

*Then shall the minister say to the congregation:*

Brethren, I commend to your love and care these persons who this day we recognize as members of this congregation. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

*Prayer by the minister.*

*Let all the members be invited to give the new members the right hand of Christian fellowship at the close of the service.*

## Chapter 11. Wedding Ceremonies

¶1301. Let us pray: O God of love, creator of man and woman, bless these sacred moments together. Thou hast ordained marriage as a means of joining Thy two separate creations as one and only in Thy presence is such a union complete. Be with us now, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony.

It is a solemnly unique and treasured moment in life, when two people, who were once strangers to one another, are drawn together by an irresistible attraction, so that their souls care not to be henceforth divided by time or space. When a man sees in a woman his dreams of helpmate, comforter, and lover, and when a woman finds in a man the security, companionship, and love her heart has been longing for, God has ordained marriage.

Who giveth this woman to be the bride of this man?

Answer: **Her mother and I do.**

Song.



held in union, loving, honoring, and providing for each other's needs. And I promise to love and care for you until one of us shall lay the other in the arms of God.

**Bride** repeats: I take thee, Name of Groom to be my faithful and loving husband. Throughout the remainder of our life together we will be held in union, loving, honoring, and providing for each other's needs. And I promise to love and care for you until one of us shall lay the other in the arms of God.

Have you a token of your love to and for each other that will seal the vows you have made to each other?

The unbroken circle, the emblem of eternity, and the gold, the emblem of that which is least tarnished and most enduring, are to show how lasting and imperishable is the faith and love you both promise by the giving and receiving of these rings. With these emblems of purity and endless devotion, you are sealing your marriage vows forever.

**Groom** repeats: This ring I give you, Name of Bride our marriage vows. May it ever be a symbol of the unbroken bond of our love.

**Bride** repeats: I accept this ring from you, Name of Groom and I wear it as a sign of my love for you.

**Bride** repeats: This ring I give you, Name of Groom in token of our marriage vows. May it ever be a symbol of the unbroken bond of our love.

**Groom** repeats: I accept this ring from you, Name of Bride and I wear it as a sign of my love for you.

For as much as you, Name of Groom and you, Name of Bride have openly declared your desire to be united in holy matrimony, and have pledged your love and faith each to the other before God and these witnesses, I declare you to be husband and wife in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As the first act of your married life, let us pray.

*Couple kneels; prayer by the minister.*

*Song.*

*After prayerful song, couple rises.*

May the Lord's richest blessings be with you as you travel together the pathway of life. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you now and forever. Amen.

*Remove veil. Bride takes flowers from attendant. Minister congratulates couple and afterward says:*

And now it is my pleasure to present to you Mr. and Mrs.

---

Recessional.

### ¶1302. THE MARRIAGE ANNOUNCEMENT

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony. This is an honorable estate, instituted by God, and signifying unto us the mystical union which exists between Christ and His church. It is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons come now to be joined.

### **The Sacred Charge**

God has given definite guidelines for successful living in a Christian marriage. They are found in *Ephesians 5:22-31 (read)*. In the light of His Word, I charge you both, as you stand in His presence, to remember that love and loyalty to Him and each other alone will avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. If these solemn vows be kept inviolate, and if you steadfastly endeavor to do the will of your heavenly Father, your life will be full of joy, and the home which you are establishing will abide in peace. No other human ties are more tender, no other vows more sacred than those that you now assume.

### **The Covenant with God**

    *Name of Groom*    , will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep yourself only unto her, as long as you both shall live?

Answer: **I will.**

    *Name of Bride*    , will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep yourself only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

Answer: **I will.**

### **The Presentation of the Bride**

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Answer: **Her mother and I do.**

### **The Covenant with Each Other**

I, Name of Groom, take you, Name of Bride, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death parts us, according to God's holy law; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

I, Name of Bride, take you, Name of Groom, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death parts us, according to God's holy law; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

### **The Exchange of Rings**

*The minister shall take the ring and say:*

The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love.

*The man shall place the ring upon the woman's finger and repeat:*

In token and pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring I thee wed: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*When a second ring is to be given, the woman shall place the ring upon the man's finger and repeat:*

In token and pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring I thee wed: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **The Prayer of Consecration**

### **The Marriage Pronouncement**

Forasmuch as Groom and Bride have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have pledged their faith each to the other, and have declared the same by joining hands and by giving (and receiving) a ring; I pronounce that they are husband and wife together in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Amen.

## Chapter 12. Burial of the Dead

¶1311. *The minister shall begin the service by reading one or more of the following sentences:*

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. *John 11:25, 26*

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. *Deuteronomy 33:27*

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. *I Timothy 6:7*

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. *Job 1:21*

*Then shall the minister say:*

Let us pray.

*Here may the minister offer one or both of the following prayers, ending with the Lord's Prayer:*

Almighty God, Fount of all life; Thou art our refuge and strength; Thou art our help in trouble. Enable us, we pray Thee, to put our trust in Thee, that we may obtain comfort, and find grace to help in this and every time of need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our Father, from whom we come, and unto whom our spirits return; Thou hast been our dwelling in all generations. Thou art our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Grant us Thy blessing in this hour, and enable us so to put our trust in Thee that our spirits may grow calm and our hearts be comforted. Lift our eyes beyond the shadows of earth, and help us to see the light of eternity. So may we find grace and strength for this and every time of need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Music.*

*Here may be read one or more of these lessons from the Old Testament:*

*Psalms 1, 23, 37, 39, 46, 90, 103, 121, 130; Isaiah 40:1, 2; 6-31.*

*Here may be read one or more of these lessons from the New Testament:*

*John 11:14; Romans 8; I Corinthians 15:20-58; II Corinthians 4:16 to 5:10; Ephesians 3:14-21; Revelation 21, 22.*

*Music.*

*Here may follow an address, closing with extempore prayer or the following prayer:*

O Lord and Master, who Thyself didst weep beside the grave, and art touched with the feeling of our sorrows; fulfill now Thy promise that Thou wilt not leave Thy people comfortless, but wilt come to them. Reveal Thyself unto Thy sorrowing servants, and cause them to hear Thee say, I am the resurrection, and the life. Help them, O Lord, to turn to Thee with true discernment, and to abide in Thee through living faith, that, finding now the comfort of Thy presence, they may have also a sure confidence in Thee for all that is to come; until the day break, and the shadows flee away. Hear us for Thy great mercy's sake, O Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

AT THE GRAVE . . .

*When the people are assembled the minister shall say:*

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.  
*Psalm 124:8*

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children. *Psalm 103:17*

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. *Psalm 103:18*

*The minister may say:*

Forasmuch as the spirit of the departed hath returned to the God who gave it, we therefore commit the body to the ground, looking for the resurrection, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed and make like unto His own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

*Then may be said:*

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.  
*Revelation 14:13*

*Here may the minister and people unite in the Lord's Prayer:*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our

daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*Then the minister may offer one of the following prayers:*

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and whom the souls of the faithful after death are in strength and gladness; those Thy servants who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labor. And we beseech Thee that we, with all those who have finished their course in faith, may have our perfect consummation and bliss in Thy eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally; we meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him, and may receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying, Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Grant this, we beseech Thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

*Then may the minister say:*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

### **Chapter 13. Burial of a Child**

¶1321. *The minister shall begin the service by reading the following sentences:*

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. *John 11:26-27*

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom. *Isaiah 40:11*

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. *Matthew 5:8*

*Then shall the minister say:*

Let us pray.

*Here may the minister offer one of the following prayers:*

Our heavenly Father, look upon us in our sorrow, and abide with us in our loneliness. O Thou who makest no life in vain, and who lovest all that Thou hast made, lift upon us the light of Thy countenance and give us peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God our Father, we pray that Thou wilt keep in tender love the life which we shall hold in blessed memory. Help us who continue here to serve Thee with constancy, trusting in Thy promise of eternal life, that hereafter we may be united with Thy blessed children in glory everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Here may be read one or more of these lessons from the Old Testament:*

*II Samuel 12:16-23; Psalm 23, 121.*

*Here may be read one or more of these lessons from the New Testament:*

*Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 10:13-16; John 14.*

*Music.*

*Here may follow an address, after which the minister shall say:*

Let us pray.

*Here shall the minister offer extempore prayer or one or more of the following prayers:*

O God, who art the Father of the families of the earth; look with compassion upon this bereaved family, and pour Thy heavenly comfort into their hearts. Help them by faith to see this child, over whom they grieve, safe in that home where sin and sorrow cannot enter. Enrich with Thy presence those who mourn; abide in their home; lift up their hearts; bless them with Thy favor, which is better than life; and so guide them through the trials and temptations of this world that their reunited family may know fullness of joy in Thy presence for evermore. Grant this through Him who loved little children and blessed them, even Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O merciful Father, whose face the angels of Thy little ones do always behold in heaven; grant us steadfastly to believe that this Thy child hath been taken into the safekeeping of Thine eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

AT THE GRAVE . . .

*When the people are assembled the minister shall say:*

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. *John 16:22*

Forasmuch as the departed has entered into the life immortal, we therefore commit the body to its resting place, but the spirit we commend

to God, remembering how Jesus said upon the cross, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

*Then shall the minister say:*

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life for our redemption and who promised the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, strengthen, we beseech Thee, the faith of these bereaved ones, that thy may so live here that they shall enter in the blessedness of that eternal home which Thou hast prepared for all who love and serve Thee. Grant that, and all others whose joy is turned into mourning, may cleave closely unto Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, so that they will be led by Thy Spirit through this uncertain life, till the day break and the shadows flee away. Amen.

*Then may the minister say:*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

## **Chapter 14. Ordination of Elders**

¶1331. *When the day appointed cooperatively by the International General Superintendent and the Conference Superintendents is come, there shall be a sermon or exhortation declaring the duty and office of such as come to be admitted Elders; also how the people ought to esteem them in their office. After this the Secretary shall present unto the International General Superintendent all who are to be ordained Elders, and say:*

I present unto you these persons to be ordained Elders.

*Then their names being read aloud, the International General Superintendent shall say unto the people:*

Brethren, these are they whom we propose, God willing, this day to ordain Elders, for after due examination, we find that they are called by God to this office and ministry, and that they are persons meet for the same. But if there be any of you who knoweth any valid reason for which any one of them ought not to be received into this holy ministry, let him come forth in the name of God, and show what the impediment is.

*If any impediment be alleged, the International General Superintendent shall not ordain that person until such time as the party accused shall be found innocent.*

*Then shall be read the following:*

Old Testament Reading – *Joel 2:12-32*

New Testament Reading – *Ephesians 4:7-13*.

Gospel Reading – *Matthew 9:35-38*

*And that done, the International General Superintendent shall say unto them as hereafter follows:*

You have heard, brethren, in the exhortation which was now made to you, and in the holy lessons taken out of the Gospel, and the writings of the apostles, of what privilege and of how great importance this office is whereunto ye are called of God. And now again we exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep in remembrance how great an opportunity, and how weighty an office and charge, ye are called; that is to say, to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this evil world, that they may be saved through Christ forever.

We have good hope that you have all weighed and pondered these things yourselves long before this time; and that you have clearly determined, by God's grace, to give yourselves wholly to this office, whereunto it hath pleased God to call you; so that, as much as lieth in you, you will apply yourselves wholly to this treasure committed to your charge, and draw all your cares and studies this way, and that you will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Spirit; that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, you may wax riper and stronger in your ministry; and that ye may so endeavor yourselves from time to time to minister to the sheep of Christ, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that ye may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow.

And now that this present congregation of Christ, here assembled, may understand your minds and wills in these things, and that this your promise may the more move you to do your duties; ye shall answer plainly to these things, which we, in the name of God, and of His Church, shall demand of you touching the same.

Do you think in your heart that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the order of Elders in the Evangelical Methodist Church and universal Body of Christ?

Answer: **I believe so.**

Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures have all truth necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you

determined, out of the same Holy Scriptures, so to instruct the people committed to your charge? Will you teach nothing else as necessary to eternal salvation but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures?

Answer: **I am so persuaded and have so determined, by God's grace.**

Will you then give your faithful diligence, always so to minister the doctrine and ordinances, and the *Discipline* and ordinances, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded?

Answer: **I will so do, by the help of the Lord.**

Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and to use both public and private admonitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole within your charge, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?

Answer: **I will, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you be diligent in prayers, and in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help in the love and knowledge of the Lord?

Answer: **I will endeavor so to do, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you be diligent to discipline your own lives, and the lives of your families, according to the teachings of Christ; and to make yourselves as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?

Answer: **I shall apply myself thereto, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to your charge?

Answer: **I will so do, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you reverently obey your chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their admonitions in the Lord?

Answer: **I will so do, the Lord being my helper.**

*Then shall the International General Superintendent say:*

Almighty God, who hath given you this will to do all these things, grant also unto you strength and power to perform the same; that He may accomplish His work which He hath begun in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Next follows a prayer by the International General Superintendent. When this prayer is done, the International General Superintendent and some of the Elders present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every*

*one that receiveth the order of Elders; the receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees, and the International General Superintendent saying:*

The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Spirit for the office and work of an Elder in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Ordinances; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*Then the International General Superintendent shall deliver the Bible into the hands of every one of them, kneeling, saying:*

Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to administer the Holy Sacraments in the congregation. Amen.

*Then shall come prayer and the following benediction:*

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

## **Chapter 15. Dedication of a General Superintendent**

¶1341. *One of the Elders present shall offer the following prayer:*

Almighty God, who by Thy Son Jesus Christ didst give Thy disciples many excellent gifts, and didst charge them to feed Thy flock; give grace, we beseech Thee, to all the ministers and pastors of Thy Church, that they may diligently preach Thy Word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof; and grant to the people, that they may obediently follow the same; that all may bear fruit to Thy glory and receive the crown of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Then shall be read by one of the Elders:*

The Epistle -- *Acts 20:17-35.*

*Then shall another read:*

The Gospel -- *John 21:15-17 or Matthew 28:18-20.*

*After the sermon is ended, the elected person shall be presented by two Elders saying:*

We present unto you this Elder, chosen to be a general superintendent for the next quadrennium.

*Then the leader shall call upon the congregation present to pray, saying:*

Brethren, it is written in the Gospel of Luke, that our Saviour Jesus Christ continued the whole night in prayer before He did choose and send forth His twelve apostles. It is written also in the Acts of the Apostles,

that the disciples who were at Antioch did fast and pray before they laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them forth. Let us therefore, following the example of our Saviour Christ and His apostles, first go to prayer before we send forth this person presented unto us, to the work we trust the Holy Spirit hath called him to do.

*Then shall follow prayer:*

Almighty God, giver of all things, who by Thy Holy Spirit has appointed divers orders of ministers in Thy church; mercifully behold this Thy servant now called to the work and ministry of a general superintendent; and replenish him so with the trust of Thy Word, and adorn him with the innocency of life, that, both by word and deed, he may faithfully serve Thee in his office, to the glory of Thy name, and the edifying and well-governing of Thy church, through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, world without end. Amen.

*Then the leader shall say to him/her that is to be dedicated:*

Brother/sister, forasmuch as the Holy Scripture commands that we should not be hasty in admitting any person to a position of leadership in government of the church of Christ, which Christ hath purchased with no less price than the effusion of His own blood; before you are admitted to this ministration I will examine you on certain articles, to the end that the congregation present may have a trial and bear witness how you are minded to behave yourself in the church of God.

Are you persuaded that you are truly called to this administration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Answer: **I am so persuaded.**

Are you persuaded that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God and contains sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same Holy Scripture to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach or maintain nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but the shed blood of Christ applied to the human heart and life as set forth in the Word of God?

Answer: **I am persuaded and determined, by God's grace.**

Will you then faithfully exercise yourself in the same Holy Scripture, and call upon God by prayer and study for the true understanding of the same, so that you may be able to teach and exhort the Bible truth, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers?

Answer: **I will so do, by the help of God.**

Are you willing with faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to seek and promote the Bible truth?

Answer: **I am willing, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, that you may show yourself in all things an example of good works unto others, so that God can receive glory?

Answer: **I will, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in you, quietness, love, and peace among all men; and faithfully do God's will and work in the church as shall be committed unto you?

Answer: **I will, by the help of God.**

Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending or laying hands upon others?

Answer: **I will, by the help of God.**

Will you show yourself gentle, and be merciful, for Christ's sake, to poor and needy people, and to all strangers needing help?

Answer: **I will, by God's help.**

*Then shall the leader say:*

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who hath given you a good will to do all these things, grant unto you strength, wisdom, and power to perform the same; that He accomplishing in you the good work He hath begun, may find you perfect and blameless at the last day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And remember, that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee; for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

*Following prayer by the leader, some of the Elders present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected person kneeling before them upon his knees, the leader saying:*

The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Spirit, for the office and work of a general superintendent of the church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Then shall the leader deliver him/her the Bible saying:*

Give heed unto reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in this Bible. Be diligent in them, that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men. Take heed unto thyself,

and to thy doctrine; for by so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not; hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcast, seek the lost. Be so merciful, that you may not be too remiss; so minister discipline that you forget not mercy; that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive the never-fading crown of glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Immediately following the benediction shall be said the following prayers:*

Most merciful Father, we beseech Thee to send down upon this Thy servant Thy heavenly blessing, and so endue him/her with Thy Holy Spirit that he/she, preaching Thy Word, be earnest to reprove, beseech, and rebuke with all patience and doctrine, and a wholesome example in word, in conversation, in love, in faith, in deed, and in purity; that faithfully fulfilling his course, so that Christ and His church may be strengthened and built up in the hearts of the people to the glory of God. Amen.

Help us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name, and finally, by Thy mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Chapter 16. Commissioning Of Missionaries**

### ¶1351. COMMISSIONING OF MISSIONARIES.

*The people in devout meditation.*

Hymn -- "Publish Glad Tidings" (standing).

*Here let the people be seated.*

Invocation.

Gospel music or selected Bible verses.

*The lesson from the New Testament:*

*Mark 3:13-15 and Matthew 10:38-42.*

Silent meditation.

Prayer, by a missionary if possible.

The Lord's Prayer (by all).

Offertory and the dedication of tithes and offerings.

Special music.

Message.

*The presentation of the missionaries to be commissioned. Those to be commissioned shall take their places at the altar facing the International General Superintendent who shall say to them:*

Do you believe in your heart that you have been led by the Spirit of God to engage in this work and to assume its responsibilities?

Answer: **I believe God has called me.**

Will you endeavor, as much as lieth in you, to perform faithfully the duties of missionaries in the church of Christ?

Answer: **I will endeavor so to do, by the help of God.**

Will you be diligent in prayer, in the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of God and his kingdom?

Answer: **I will, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you strive so to live that the power of God may be manifest in your life, enabling you to convey the blessed sense of God's presence to those you would serve?

Answer: **I will, by God's grace.**

Will you be loyal to the Evangelical Methodist Church, and accept the authority of those to whom the church has committed the direction of your work?

Answer: **I will.**

*Then shall all kneel for a brief period of silent prayer after which the International General Superintendent shall pray. Then the International General Superintendent, placing his hand on each one and repeating the name, shall say:*

*\_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_, I commission you to take the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into all the world, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*When all have been commissioned, the International General Superintendent shall turn to the missionaries in the congregation. They shall rise and the International General Superintendent addressing them shall say:*

Beloved in the Lord, once you stood where these now stand, answering the call of God in your hearts. Obedient to this divine imperative, you have labored at home and abroad, ministering to the needs of men and bringing to them the Gospel. We are justly proud of your work, and are continually thankful for the fullness of your devotion.

These newly commissioned missionaries will look to you for help and guidance as they go forth to serve with you. I commend them to your love and care.

*Those who have just been commissioned shall then turn to face these missionaries who will step forward and encourage them with a handshake.*

*Then the congregation shall stand, and the International General Superintendent, addressing them, shall say:*

Members of this congregation, I commend to you these whom we this day have commissioned to carry into all the world the “Good News” of our Savior Jesus Christ. In this holy moment we too are called to a renewed consecration of our lives to Christ and His saving mission. As these, our fellow workers, go forth upon their mission, let us assure them that we are with them in spirit and are supporting them by word and gift and deed.

*Here let the people be seated and with heads bowed offer their personal intercessions for those who have just been commissioned and for the missionary enterprise.*

Benediction

Postlude.

## **Chapter 17. Consecration of Diaconal Ministries Deacons and Deaconesses**

¶1361. *At the time appointed those to be consecrated Deacon or Deaconess shall be presented to the International General Superintendent and Conference Superintendents by the Chairman of the Board of Ministerial Relations, who shall say:*

I present to you *these persons* to be consecrated in the diaconal ministry of the Evangelical Methodist Church as Deacon or Deaconess.

*Then the International General Superintendent shall say,*

Dearly beloved, these are they who we purpose this day to consecrate Deacon/*Deaconess* in the Kingdom of God. After proper inquiry and due examination we have found *them* to be worthy and count *them* to be proper *persons* for this work and office.

*This lesson then shall be read,*

Matt. 25:31-40 (NIV): "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I

needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

*Then the International General Superintendent shall say,*

Dearly beloved, we rejoice that in the providence of God a door of usefulness has been opened to you in the work of the Kingdom. You are to give *yourselves* to the service of the Lord, going about doing good. You are to minister to the poor, visit the sick, pray for the dying, care for the orphaned, seek the wandering, comfort the sorrowing, and lead the sinning to their Savior. Such service lays upon you solemn responsibility.

Do you believe that you are led of God to engage in this work and to assume the duties of this office?

Answer: **I do.**

Do you in the presence of God and of this congregation promise faithfully to perform the duties of a deacon/deaconess in the Kingdom of God?

Answer: **I do.**

Will you be diligent in prayer, in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and in such other devotions as will help you to grow in the knowledge and love of God?

Answer: **I will.**

Will you be guided by the will and direction of those whom the Church may place over you in the doing of your work?

Answer: **I will.**

*Laying On of Hands and Prayer*

*Then the General Superintendent calls the people to prayer, saying:*

As these persons are consecrated by God and the Church as diaconal ministers, let us pray for them.

*Then candidates kneel. The people pray for the candidates in silence. The International General Superintendent prays:*

We give thanks to you, Eternal God, that in your great love you sent Jesus Christ, to take the form of a servant for the sake of us all, becoming

obedient even to death on the cross. We praise you that you have highly exalted Jesus Christ your servant and that you have taught us, by his word and example, that whoever would be great among us must be servant of all. We thank you that Jesus Christ has poured forth your gifts,

for equipping the saints for the work of ministry,  
for serving the poor, the sick, and the oppressed,  
for building up Christ's body the Church,  
and for fulfilling your gracious purpose in the world.

Give to these servants the grace and power to serve you in this ministry so that your people may be strengthened and your name glorified in all the world.

*Family members and friends may be invited to stand where they are for silent prayer during the laying on of hands.*

*Those to be consecrated shall stand for silent prayer after which shall be said by the International General Superintendent:*

O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who called Stephen, Phoebe and Dorcas into the service of your Church: Look upon these your servants who *are* now to be set apart to the office of /Deacon/Deaconess. Give to them, we pray, such understanding of your Gospel, such firmness of Christian purpose, such diligence in service, and such beauty of life in Christ to the people, so that they become to all they teach or serve a worthy revelation of the meaning and power of the Christian life. May they so order their time and nourish their minds and hearts that they may constantly grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and may steadily increase in power to lead others unto him.

Grant that they may have strength of body, mind and soul for the fulfillment of your will in the holy task to which you have called them; and grant them your Holy Spirit, that they may worthily discharge the work committed to them, to the blessing of mankind and to the praise of Christ our Savior. Amen.

*The International General Superintendent shall call the candidates one by one to kneel at the altar. Calling each candidate by name, the International General Superintendent lays both hands on the head of each one. Other participating superintendents also lay on hands. While hands are imposed, the prayer continues.*

Eternal God, pour upon (*Name*) your Holy Spirit for the office and work of a diaconal minister, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*Then the candidate places his/her hand on a Bible, and the General Superintendent continues, saying:*

*\_\_\_\_\_ (Name \_\_\_\_\_), take authority as a diaconal minister of the Church to teach the Word, to practice grace, mercy and justice, and to serve God's people and the world.*

*After all have received the laying on of hands, the General Superintendent, with both hands extended concludes the prayer:*

We thank you, God, for raising up among us faithful servants for diaconal ministry in your Kingdom. Clothe them with your righteousness, and grant that we, with them, may glorify You by giving ourselves to others; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*A diaconal pin or other appropriate sign may be given to the diaconal ministers.*

*A hymn may then be sung, all standing, after which the General Superintendent shall let the people depart with this blessing:*

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and ground in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him, who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

## **Chapter 18. Installation of a New Pastor**

¶1371. *The service of installation may be set within the service on the Lord's Day on the day designated by the Conference Superintendent. The service becomes an act of dedication on the part of the pastor, the congregation and the Conference Superintendent to God and one another. A reception may follow the service.*

Call to Dedication

*Conference Superintendent*

Today this church celebrates an important and decisive milestone in its history. We gather to formally install \_\_\_\_\_ as the pastor of \_\_\_\_\_ Church. He/she has moved to our locality with his/her family: wife/husband: \_\_\_\_\_, and children: \_\_\_\_\_.

Reading of the Scriptures

*Local Church Leadership*

Old Testament: *Isaiah 61:1-3; Numbers 27:12-23*

New Testament: *Romans 10:9-15; Matthew 28:18-20*

Presentation and Reading of Credentials

Chair of the Pastoral Relations Committee

*Charge from the Conference Superintendent:*

Will Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ please come forward and stand before the altar of our Lord?

We believe that the call to the pastorate is first from God and then his people. This day you present yourself in this place of your future ministry by means of the superintendent's recommendation, because this congregation under God has extended the call, and you as its pastor under the leading of God the Holy Spirit have responded to this call.

Inasmuch as this sacred act involves mutual obligations, my responsibility and privilege as the Conference Superintendent of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church is to call upon Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, the Board of Stewards, and the congregation of the \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelical Methodist Church to make the following commitments:

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, do you accept the responsibilities of the office to which you have been called, (and do you reaffirm your ordination vows), and promise to give yourself wholly to your ministry, to exemplify the life and mind of your Master, and to conduct yourself in such a manner as to glorify God and His church?

*Response of the Pastor*

Willingly I reaffirm my ordination vows, believing with all my heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and accepting the Holy Scriptures as inspired of God through the Holy Spirit. It is my desire to devote my life in the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order, to glorify God by living the Gospel which I preach and to fulfill to my utmost ability the office of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. I will diligently and faithfully perform all of my pastoral duties on behalf of the congregation, fulfilling God's call.

*Conference Superintendent to the Board of Stewards*

Will the members of the Board of Stewards please stand and make their commitment?

*Board of Stewards (in unison):*

We covenant with God and with our new pastor to be loyal to this church and her godly vision by our consistent attendance, willing service,

cooperative spirit, abiding friendship, supportive conversation, and faithful sacrificial stewardship in offerings.

*Conference Superintendent to the Congregation:*

Will the members of the congregation please stand and make your commitment?

*Congregational Response (in unison):*

We affirm our membership in Christ's Church and our fellowship with one another in this congregation. We renew our vows of fidelity to our Lord Jesus Christ, and our allegiance to His church, solemnly covenanting to work together with our pastor to extend the pure Gospel in its power to this community and the world. We promise, as faithful servants of the Lord, to give our pastor our utmost support.

*Conference Superintendent's Declaration:*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we rejoice to receive and install Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ and hereby charge him/her with the responsibilities and privileges of shepherding God's flock in this local congregation.

*(Now follows a prayer of installation by the superintendent.)*

Benediction: The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

## **Chapter 19. Installation of Church Officers and Committees**

¶1381. *This should be done as soon after election as possible.*

Will you prayerfully and faithfully meet the responsibilities and discharge the duties of the office to which you have been elected?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Will you strive to have, by the grace of God, as a Christian example for others, wherever you are, at home, at work or at school, and at play, as well as in church?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Will you be loyal to the Evangelical Methodist Church, her doctrines and practices, as set forth in the Word of God and the *Discipline* of the church?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Prayer.

¶1382. *This should be done as soon after election as possible.*

We are met here in the presence of God to recognize these who have been chosen to fulfill the various offices and responsibilities of this church. From *Romans 12:3b-6a* we read: . . . think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.

Do you believe in your heart that you are compelled by the Spirit of God to perform the duties to which you have been chosen?

Answer: **I do so believe.**

Will you prayerfully and faithfully, meet the responsibilities and discharge the duties of the position to which you have been elected?

Answer: **I will, by the help of God.**

Will you strive to live, by the grace of God, as a Christian example for others, wherever you are, at home, at work or at school, and at play, as well as in church?

Answer: **I will, by the help of God.**

Will you be loyal to the Evangelical Methodist Church, her doctrines and practices, as set forth in the Word of God and the *Discipline* of the church?

Answer: **I will, by the help of God.**

Prayer of Dedication.

## **Chapter 20. Installation of Sunday School and VBS Teachers and Workers**

¶1391. *This should be done as soon after election as possible.*

The Charge

The Questions

Will you pray daily for your co-workers, the children in your class, and the entire school?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Will you prepare diligently and prayerfully for each class session?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Will you rely on the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in your preparation and presentation?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Will you be true to the Word of God, and uplift Jesus Christ by your teaching and your example?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

The Prayer of Dedication

¶1392. *This should be done as soon after election as possible.*

We are met here in the presence of God to recognize those who have been chosen to the work of teaching and directing the Sunday School of this church. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building (*I Corinthians 3:9*). I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (*Romans 12:1*). If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. (*James 1:5-6a*).

Are you constrained by the love of Christ to serve God and the church in the Sunday School?

Answer: **The love of Christ constrains me.**

Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Answer: **Without Him we can do nothing.**

Will you strive to live, by the grace of God, as a Christian example for others, wherever you are, at home, at work or at school, and at play, as well as in the church?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Answer: **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

Will you be loyal to the Evangelical Methodist Church, her doctrines and practices, as set forth in the Word of God and The *Discipline* of the church?

Answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord (*I Corinthians 12:4-5*). Neglect not the gift that is in thee . . . (*I Timothy 4:14*). Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching.

*Prayer of Dedication:* Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end (*Ephesians 3:20-21*).

## Chapter 21. Groundbreaking

¶1401. GROUNDBREAKING.

Invocation

Hymn -- “All Hail The Power of Jesus’ Name”

Introduction of Guests

Scripture Reading -- (*I Chronicles 29:11-18*).

Prayer

Exhortation

Response (Chair of Stewards or Trustees)

Groundbreaking

Hymn -- “The Church’s One Foundation”

Benediction (Pastor)

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.  
*I Corinthians 3:11.*

## Chapter 22. Laying the Cornerstone of a Church

¶1411. *At the time and place of laying the cornerstone, let the minister cause a suitable hymn to be sung. Then shall the minister say:*

Let us pray: Enable us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name, and finally, by Thy mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Following personal prayer the minister shall lead in:*

The Lord’s Prayer.

*Then shall the minister read or cause to be read I Corinthians 3:9-16 or the following:*

Blessed be thou, Lord of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all.

Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thy hand is power and might; and in Thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly, for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.

For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is nothing abiding.

O Lord, our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee a house for Thy holy name cometh of Thy hand, and is all Thine own.

I know, also, my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things; and now have I seen with joy Thy people, who are present to offer willingly unto Thee.

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain.

Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for His habitation.

This is my rest forever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread.

I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

The stone which the builder refused is become the headstone of the corner.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

*Then shall the minister, standing by the stone, announce the articles to be deposited therein. These may be a copy of the Bible, the hymnal, the Discipline, church periodicals, a document setting forth the name of the church, with the names of the pastor, Trustees, and Building Committee, and such other articles as may be desired. The stone shall then be laid by the minister, or someone appointed by him; placing his hand upon the stone the minister shall say:*

We lay this cornerstone of a house to be built and set apart, from all worldly uses, for divine worship, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Then may follow an address, the collection (if any), the doxology, and the benediction.*

## Chapter 23. Dedication of a Church

### ¶1421. DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

*(International General Superintendent presiding; Conference Superintendent assisting, minister of the church as the worship leader)*

Call to Worship. *Minister of Church:* Psalm 24

Hymn: “*The Church’s One Foundation*” or “*God of Grace and God of Glory*”

Reading.

**Conference Superintendent:** “Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place?”

**Congregation:** “He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol, or swear by what is false.”

**Conference Superintendent:** “Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

**Congregation:** “Who is He, this King of glory?”

**Unison:** “The Lord God Almighty-- He is the King of glory.”

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Conference Superintendent)

SCRIPTURE LESSON (Deacon or Deaconess)

II Chronicles 6:1, 2; 18-21; 40-42; II Chronicles 7:1-4

SPECIAL MUSIC (optional)

MESSAGE: (By one of the superintendents, International General Superintendent if present)

THE DEDICATORY RITE

*At this point let the Trustees stand in a body and the Chair say to the Superintendent:*

We present to you this building to be dedicated and consecrated as a church for the worship of Almighty God and service of all people”

Let the congregation stand to participate

**Superintendent:** “Surely the Lord is in this place. This is none other but the house of God, a light to the nations.”

**Congregation:** “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

**Minister:** “Thus says the Lord, I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a place of sacrifice.”

**Congregation:** “Now arise, O Lord God, and come into your resting place, You and the ark of your might. May your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, may your saints rejoice in goodness.”

**Superintendent:** To the glory of God, our heavenly Father, under whose guidance this house we have built; to the honor and majesty of Jesus, Son of the living God, Master of People, our Lord and Savior; to the praise and honor of the Holy Spirit, the source of light and life and glory--

**Congregation:** This is Your house, O Lord, we dedicate this building for ministry in your Name.

**Superintendent:** For the Word of God, this is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, for the call of God upon individuals to go into the entire world with the Gospel.

**Congregation:** We dedicate this Your house, O Lord of hosts.

**Superintendent:** For worship in praise and sacred melody: for the ministry of prayer; for the celebration of the holy sacraments, as comfort for those who mourn; for strength for the tribulations in Christian living—

**Congregation:** We dedicate this holy abode, O great Jehovah.

**Superintendent:** To the memory of our beloved dead, who have served faithfully this congregation; to the welfare of the living; to the defense of the weak; to the ministry of the strong, to the bringing of light into darkness; to the giving of hope and courage and special help to human hearts—

**Congregation:** We your children do now solemnly dedicate this abode of the living God.

**Superintendent:** For the sanctity of the home, the purity and guidance of children, the challenge and inspiration of youth, and the honor and duty of the aged—

**Congregation:** We come now and dedicate this as a house of worship.

**Unison:** Unto You, our God and loving Father; unto You Jesus Christ, our Savior most blessed Lord; unto You, Holy Spirit, who indwells us and anoints this our sanctuary, we dedicate this building as a house of worship for all people and all nations. May Your presence abide to sanctify it and all people who come to worship. Amen.

Hymn of praise: “To God Be the Glory”

*(At this point a lay person (Deacon or Deaconess if present) may read, or cause to be read, Ray Palmer's hymn of invitation at the dedication of God's house.)*

Come, Jesus, from thy sapphire throne,  
Where thy redeemed behold thy face.  
Enter this temple, now thine own,  
And let thy glory fill the place.

We praise thee that today we see  
Its sacred walls before thee standing.  
'Tis thine for us, 'tis us for thee,  
Reared by thy kind assisting hands.

Here in the dark and sorrowing days  
Bid thou the throbbing heart be still.  
Oh wipe the mourners' tears away,  
And give them strength to meet thy will.

Come faithful Shepherd, feed thy sheep,  
In thine own arms the lambs enfold.  
Give help to climb the heavenly steep,  
Till thy full glory we behold.

#### PRESENTATION OF THE KEYS AND PLEDGING THE DEDICATORY COVENANT

*At this point the superintendent may ask the officials of the church to stand. The pastor presents the keys of the church to the General Superintendent and addresses him as follows:*

**Pastor:** "I present to you the keys of this church, founded and built for the glory of God and to spread scriptural holiness."

**Superintendent:** "And I charge you, each and all, that you keep inviolate this house of God as a sanctuary of the Almighty, which all ministry be done for His glory and for the spiritual and physical needs of all people. I charge you that this house is a house of prayer for all nations. This is His house; keep it ever holy to the Lord's kingdom work until He returns for His people. Do you solemnly subscribe to the following covenant?"

**People's response:** We solemnly affirm it to be our purpose to keep this God's house holy as His sanctuary, to be a place for making disciples, for preaching the good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim

the year of the Lord's favor, to proclaim to our community and the world the GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom of God. We do so pledge and covenant, God being our helper.

The keys are symbolically returned to the pastor.

### CONSECRATION OF THE BUILDING

*(By a Superintendent and others as designated)*

O eternal God, mighty in power and of incomprehensible majesty, whom the heavens cannot contain, much less the walls of temples made with hands, you have promised your special presence whenever two or three are assembled in your name to offer praise and prayer.

By the power of your Holy Spirit consecrate this house of worship. Bless us and sanctify what we do here, that this place may be holy for us and a house of prayer for all people.

Guide and empower in this place by the same Spirit the proclamation of your Word and the celebration of your Sacraments, the pouring out of prayer and the singing of your praise, professions of faith and testimonies to your grace, the joining of men and women in marriage and the celebration of death and resurrection.

Save us from that failure of vision which would confine our worship and ministry within these walls, but send us out from here to be your servants in the world, sharing the blessings of Christ with the world he came to redeem.

*The pastor of the church concludes:*

Now, O God, sanctify this place, for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the dominion, and you are exalted as head above all.

Closing Hymn or Special Music

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**Youth, Evangelical Methodist:** 234, 240(2), 270(6), 271(6), 321, 403, 411(6), 603, 606(6), 642.

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