

CONSTITUTION AND DISCIPLINE  
of the  
Methodist Protestant  
Church

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Revised by the  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
2012

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# **Historical Sketch of the Origin of the Methodist Protestant Church**

Compiled by Rev. T. H. Lewis, D.D.

and adopted by the General Conference at  
Washington, D.C., 1904

Revised by the General Conference of 1964

The Methodist Protestant Church, instituted in 1828 and organized under its present title in 1830, traces its origin through the Methodist Episcopal Church, back to the Evangelical Reformation begun in England by John and Charles Wesley, of Oxford University and Presbyters of the Church of England.

## **Rise of Methodism**

The rise of Methodism is described by Mr. John Wesley as follows: “In 1729, two young men reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737, they saw holiness comes by faith. They saw likewise that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their point. God then thrust them out, utterly against their will, to raise a holy people.

“In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads.

“That we might have more time for this great work I appointed a day when they might all come together, which, from thenceforward, they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join them (for their number increased daily), I gave those advises from time to time which I judged most needful to them, and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

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

## **Growth and Organization In America**

John and Charles Wesley came to America in 1736 and remained nearly two years. This was before the Methodist movement had taken definite shape even in their own minds, and their labors here were without practical results.

Methodism began in America with the coming of Robert Strawbridge, of Ireland, to Frederick County, Maryland, and Philip Embury of Ireland, to New York

City, in 1766. In 1769 Mr. Wesley sent Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, and in 1771, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright

These and others traveled constantly and labored so abundantly that in 1784, although the work had been seriously interrupted by the Revolutionary War, the number of traveling preachers in America was about eighty, and of members about fifteen thousand.

Up to this time no Methodist Church had been organized. Methodist preachers and members of Methodist societies in America, as in England, were mostly members of the Church of England. As this church ceased to exist in America it became necessary to organize the Methodists into a church, for they were as sheep having no shepherd.

Mr. Wesley, although refusing to the last to consent to a separation from the Church of England, saw the necessity in America and gave his consent in the following words: "As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply 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 set them free."

The letter containing this permission was sent over by Dr. Thomas Coke, he and Francis Asbury being designated joint superintendents over the work in America.

Accordingly, on Dr. Coke's arrival, a conference of the traveling preachers was called to meet in Baltimore, Maryland, in December, 1784. About sixty were present, who proceeded to organize an independent church under the title of "The Methodist Episcopal Church," and to elect Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, Bishops.

The church thus organized was peculiar in several respects, but its most remarkable feature was that the unlimited exercise of the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the church were vested by these traveling preachers in themselves and their successors, to the entire exclusion of all the members of the church, no provision being made for any layman to vote, as such and directly, upon any question in any church meeting.

This fact explains the origin of the Methodist Protestant Church, and fixes its date as well. For, although some forty years intervened before the Methodist Protestant Church emerged into historical fact, yet Methodists began to protest against the kind of government established in 1784 almost before the Conference adjourned, and the protest gathered volume and intensity with every succeeding Conference. In ten years it resulted in a secession on the question of giving preachers an appeal from the stationing authority. In twenty years it produced a delegated General Conference with restrictions upon the legislative power; and in thirty-six years it grew into an overwhelming, although ineffective, majority of the General Conference in favor of electing presiding elders by the annual conferences.

## Origin Of The Methodist Protestant Church

The particular protest made by those who finally organized the Methodist Protestant Church was aimed at the feature of the government which was regarded as the real cause of all the dissatisfaction among Methodists, viz., the exclusion of laymen from the councils of the Church, and withholding from them the right of suffrage.

After years of desultory discussion of this point, William S. Stockton, a layman, of Philadelphia, PA, began in 1821 the publication of a periodical called the "Wesleyan Repository," which was intended to provide a medium for the more formal examination of what began to be called "the mutual rights of the ministry and laity," and also to spread abroad the views of leading ministers and laymen on this subject.

This publication was superseded in 1824 by "The Mutual Rights of Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," published at Baltimore, Maryland, with the same general object in view. A large number of pamphlets, also privately printed, contributed to the stream of discussion which continued to spread over the Church.

### Petition

When the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in 1824, a large number of petitions were presented, praying a representation of ministers and laymen in the law-making department, but no change was promised, and the only answer vouchsafed was: "if by 'rights and privileges' it is intended to signify something foreign from the institutions of the Church as we received them from our fathers, pardon us if we know no such rights; if we do not comprehend such privileges."

Immediately after the close of the General Conference, a meeting was held, composed of distinguished members of the Conference and others from different parts of the country, to determine whether it was advisable to continue efforts for reform. It was recommended that reformers everywhere organize themselves into societies "in order to ascertain the number of persons in the Methodist Episcopal Church friendly to a change in her government." These were called the Union Societies, and their whole object was so to unite the reformers as to present to the next General Conference a petition which would obviate the objection made against the appeals to the Conference of 1824. The objection had been that the reformers were so various and conflicting in their aims that it was impossible to determine what they wanted or who wanted it.

In November, 1827, a General Convention was held in Baltimore, composed of one hundred delegates representing Reformers in seven states, by whom a Memorial was prepared to be presented to the ensuing General Conference, praying for the admission of laymen into the legislative councils of the Church.

The General Conference, after deliberating three whole weeks in committee upon the Memorial, not only denied the necessity or justice of the change pro-

posed, but extended the claim for the exclusive right of ministers to legislate for the Church beyond what had ever been attempted before: “The great Head of the Church Himself has imposed on us the duty of preaching the Gospel: of administering its ordinances, and of maintaining its moral discipline among those over whom the Holy Ghost in these respects has made us overseers. Of these also, namely, of Gospel doctrines, ordinances, and moral discipline, we do believe that the divinely instituted ministry are the divinely authorized expounders; and that the duty of maintaining them in their purity, and of not permitting our ministrations in these respects to be authoritatively controlled by others, does rest upon us with the force of a moral obligation.”

## Expulsion

The resources of peaceable reform would thus seem to have been exhausted. But it is probable that the protestants would have continued discussion and petition indefinitely had they been permitted. It is certain that they professed again and again their loyalty to the church, and their strong desire to remain in its communion. But this they were not allowed to do. Immediately after the “Mutual Rights” began to be circulated, and Union Societies began to be formed, members of the Church in various sections of the country were threatened by their pastors with expulsion unless they would cease to read the “Mutual Rights” and withdraw from the Union Societies.

When they were brought to trial and insisted on being informed what law of the Church or of the Bible they had violated, they were referred to a clause of one of the “General Rules” of John and Charles Wesley, which forbids “speaking evil of Magistrates or of Ministers” and to a regulation of the General Conference forbidding “inveighing against either our Doctrines or *Discipline*,” which the General Conference itself declared admitted of no other construction than “the sense of unchristian railing and violence.”

One Annual Conference went a step further, and replied through its presiding bishop to the demand of an accused minister to know what law of the *Discipline* he had violated that “An Annual Conference has authority to make rules and regulations for its own members.”

These facts would seem to show that the majority were not careful to find the violated law. They had an occasion and they had the power. Their determination was voiced by one of their leaders as follows: “You publish the ‘Mutual Rights’ and say you will not discontinue that publication. You also say you will not withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Now we are reduced to one of two alternatives, either to let you remain members of the Church and go on peaceably publishing the ‘Mutual Rights’ by which you agitate the Church, or expel you. We have come to the determination to take the latter alternative, and expel you.”

It seems difficult to believe, but it is the literal fact of history that this ruthless determination was rigorously executed. In North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and the District of Columbia, able and efficient ministers, prominent and devoted laymen who lived blameless and pious lives and

against whom no charge of heresy or immoral conduct could be brought, were excommunicated because they read and recommended to their friends a religious newspaper in whose columns it was argued that laymen ought to be admitted into the councils of the Church.

The immediate effect of these expulsions was to convince reformers that there was no hope of obtaining any change in the government, and they began to withdraw in considerable numbers in various parts of the country, both as a mark of their sympathy with their persecuted brethren, and as their final protest against a power that struck but would not hear.

## Organization

As for the expelled and their friends, nothing remained but to form a new Church. They were Methodists and the only Methodist Church in existence had cast them out. They had no controversy with Methodism, for its doctrines and spirit and experience were their joy and their crown. But because they did not believe it was necessary for the lovely and free spirit of Methodism to be cast in the mold of absolutism, and because they could not consent to the suppression of free speech in behalf of free suffrage, they sorrowfully took up the task of organizing a new Church, which should hold fast to all the distinctive features of Methodism, and at the same time ally it to all the great heritage which Protestantism had bequeathed to the world; which two ideas they sought to express in its name.

Reformers throughout the country were invited to send delegates to a convention to meet in Baltimore, November 12, 1828. This convention effected a provisional organization under the title of "The Associated Methodist Churches," adopted Articles of Association covering the main features of a church to serve until a Constitution could be matured, and called another convention to meet in 1830.

Meanwhile local churches were gathered, and annual conferences organized; and when the General Conference met in St. John's Church, Baltimore, Maryland, November 2, 1830, fourteen Annual Conferences were represented by one hundred and fourteen delegates.

The title "Methodist Protestant Church" was substituted for the former title, and the *Constitution* and *Discipline* adopted substantially as it still remains.

And so at last the long controversy was closed. The desire of the Reformers to remain in the old Church, and accomplish changes in its government by the peaceable methods of discussion, was not realized. But perhaps it was better so. Set free from the past, albeit by the stern mandate of an angry authority, they were now disentangled from the American as well as the English hierarchy, and at liberty to recur to the advice of Mr. Wesley, which the Conference of 1784 had strangely ignored, and "simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church" in laying the foundations of the new ecclesiasticism. That they did this completely would be too much for uninspired judgment to claim; but that they earnestly desired to do it,

and welcomed discussion or even change of what they did when shown a better way, is asserted with confidence.

## **Outline Of The Methodist Protestant Constitution**

They drew up a Constitution which recognized Christ as the only Head of Church, and all elders in the Church as equal, which secured to every adult layman the right to vote and to be represented in every church meeting, and to every itinerant the right of appeal from an oppressive appointment and a veto upon his/her removal from a charge while in the faithful discharge of his/her duty, until the expiration of his/her term; which made Church trials for matters of opinion impossible, and gave to every accused person the right to challenge his/her jurors and appeal from their verdict; which refused the modern episcopacy and the presiding eldership as unnecessary; which guarded, as a necessary part of organic law, the rights and privileges of individual members and local churches as carefully as those of the Annual and General Conferences, and yet bound all parts of the system together in lawful and loyal cooperation for the advancement of the common good. In fine, they built a Representative Church. And, not being Englishmen, but Americans; having no traditional prejudices in favor of a divine-right monarchy or a divine-right hierarchy, they took for their model “the church without a bishop, and the state without a king,” which had been planted in this new continent at the expense of so much treasure and blood.

They made a church government in harmony with the Republic to which they gave their glad allegiance as citizens; and in conformity, so far as they understood them, with the principles of the kingdom of God.

In 1939, a majority of the Methodist Protestant Churches were swept back into the present-day “Methodist Church” in the so-called union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church.

The basic differences which led to the establishment of the Methodist Protestant Church were not resolved. In addition many Methodist Protestants felt that the “liberal” element in the modern church was so influential that the basic doctrines of Christianity, particularly pertaining to the inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit as taught by Wesley, were threatened. This group, spear-headed by the Mississippi Annual Conference, refused to enter the uniting church and determined to preserve the name, the doctrines, and the form of government so long cherished.

Rev. F. L. Sharp, one of the delegates from the Mississippi Conference to the Uniting Conference held at Kansas City in 1939, saw the situation as it was developing with the “liberal” and “social gospel” element gaining control of the united Methodist Church, walked out of the conference, and returned to Mississippi to save as much of the church from union as possible. The majority of the people and churches in the Mississippi Conference agreed with him and voted to continue as the Methodist Protestant Church.

In 1941 the Methodist Protestant Church joined with other fundamental groups in the formation of the American Council of Christian Churches as a nationwide witness to its faith in the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures and in the historic doctrines of Christianity. It is also a charter member of the International Council of Christian Churches organized in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, in 1948.

A representative of the General Conference has been on the Executive Committee of both the ICCC and the ACCC since their organization.

In May, 1944, the 29th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference (the first to be held after unification) met in Friendship Church in Jasper County, Mississippi. God in His infinite love and mercy had spared the Methodist Protestant Church to continue with its doctrine, its government, its faith, and its name. Rev. F. L. Sharp, the leader in the preservation of the church, was elected President of the General Conference, a position he held until 1960. In the years which followed, churches were organized in various states, and a mission was established in Mexico.

At the General Conference of 1948, held in the Mill Creek Church, Kosciusko, Mississippi, the reorganized Alabama and Missouri Conferences were admitted and given full rights and privileges.

The General Conference of 1952, held at Clear Creek Church, Brooklyn, Mississippi, saw the church reaching new heights. A mission was opened in British Honduras, and a number of new churches added. Efforts were made toward organizing a denominational college. These efforts culminated in the re-opening of Whitworth College, Brookhaven, Mississippi, as a church-related institution in 1961.

In 1964, a new mission was opened in Korea through the cooperation of the International Council of Christian Churches.

For more than 172 years the Methodist Protestant Church has proclaimed the gospel according to the Bible, the inspired, infallible Word of God, and has upheld and defended the "Faith of our Fathers." Its motto is "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

**THE CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH**

# CONSTITUTION

## Elementary Principles

We, the representatives of the Associated Methodist Churches, in General Convention assembled, acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as the only head of the Church, and the Word of God as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice in all things pertaining to godliness; and being fully persuaded that the representative form of church government is the most scriptural, best suited to our condition, and most congenial with our views and feelings as fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and, whereas a written constitution, establishing the form of government and securing to the ministers and members of the church their rights and privileges, is the best safeguard of Christian liberty; we, therefore, trusting in the protection of Almighty God, and acting in the name and by the authority of our constituents, do ordain and establish, and agree to be governed by the following elementary principles and Constitution:

1. A Christian Church is a society of believers in Jesus Christ, and is of Divine institution.
2. Christ is the only Head of the Church, and the Word of God the only rule of faith and conduct.
3. No person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and obeys the Gospel of God our Savior, ought to be deprived of church membership.
4. Every man has an inalienable right to private judgment in matters of religion, and an equal right to express his/her opinion in any way which will not violate the laws of God, or the rights of his/her fellowmen.
5. Church trials should be conducted on Gospel principles only; and no minister or member should be excommunicated except for immorality; the propagation of unchristian doctrines; or the neglect of duties enjoined by the Word of God.
6. The pastoral or ministerial office and duties are of Divine appointment; and all elders in the Church of God are equal; but ministers are forbidden to be lords over God's heritage, or to have dominion over the faith of the saints.
7. The church has a right to form and enforce such rules and regulations only as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and may be necessary, or have a tendency to carry into effect the great system of practical Christianity.
8. Whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations is inherent in the ministers and members of the church; but so much of that power may be delegated, from time to time, upon such a plan of representation as they may judge necessary and proper.
9. It is the duty of all ministers and members of the church to maintain godliness, and to oppose all moral evil.
10. It is obligatory on ministers of the Gospel to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties; and it is also obligatory on the members to

esteem ministers highly for their works' sake, and to render them a righteous compensation for their labors.

11. The church ought to secure to all her official bodies the necessary authority for the purpose of good government; but she has no right to create any distinct or independent sovereignties.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Title**

This Association shall be denominated The Methodist Protestant Church.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Terms of Membership**

1. The conditions required of those who apply for probationary membership in a church are a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with an avowed determination to walk in all the commandments of God blameless.
2. The churches shall have power to receive members on profession of faith or on certificate of good standing in any other Christian church, provided they are satisfied with the Christian experience of the candidate.
3. Children of our members, and those under their guardianship, shall be recognized as enjoying probationary privileges, and held as candidates for membership, and should, with the consent of their parents or guardians, be put into classes as such.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Division of Districts**

1. Those parts of the United States embraced by this church shall be divided into districts, having respectively such boundaries as may be agreed on at this Convention, subject to those alterations which may be made or authorized from time to time by the General Conference.
2. Each district shall be divided into churches and missions by its Annual Conference.
3. Every minister or preacher (a minister is one who is ordained; a preacher acts under a license), removing from one district to another, and every member removing from one pastoral charge to another, having a certificate of his/her good standing, shall be eligible to membership in any other district or pastoral charge within the limits of this church, by the consent of the district or pastoral charge to which he/she may apply for membership.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **On Receiving Churches, Etc.**

1. Any number of believers united as a church, embracing the principles of religious truth held by this church, adopting this *Constitution*, and conforming to our *Discipline* and means of grace shall, at their request made to the President of an Annual Conference, or a pastor of a church, be recognized as a Methodist Protestant Church and be entitled to all the privileges granted by this *Constitu-*

tion; subject, however, to the decision of the Annual Conference in which boundary it lies.

2. A church shall be composed of members residing sufficiently near each other to assemble for the stated purpose of public worship, and of sufficient number to fill the offices and to transact its temporal business. And every church, when it becomes necessary, shall be divided into smaller companies or classes, for the purposes of religious instruction and edification.
3. Each church shall have power to purchase, build, lease, sell, rent, or otherwise dispose of church property for the use and benefit of the Methodist Protestant Church, when authorized by the affirmative vote of a majority of all the qualified members of the church, provided that said votes be given in person at a meeting publicly called for the purpose two weeks in advance, or any adjournment from time to time thereof.
4. Each church shall also have the power to admit persons into full membership and to try, censure or expel unworthy members in accordance with the provisions of this *Constitution* and the *Discipline*.
5. It is required of all churches, as a condition of remaining connected with the general body, that they continue to conform to this *Constitution* and the regulations contained in the *Discipline*.
6. In states where it is required by law that a local church secure a charter, or in case where the local church desires to secure a charter, the church shall have the power to create such offices or to perform such acts as may be required by state laws in order to obtain a charter.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Business Meetings**

There shall be in every church a monthly meeting of the Official Board at which reports shall be received from the board members.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Official Boards**

1. There shall be a monthly meeting of the Official Board with at least semi-annual Church Meetings to be held during the Annual Conference year to conduct the business of the Local Church. The members of the Official Board shall be the Pastor, Associate Pastors, Deaconesses (Ex-Officio), Church Leader, Youth Leader, Sunday School Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, President of the Laymen's Fellowship, President of the Women's Missionary Society, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Chairman of the Board of Stewards, and the Chairmen of the elected committees of the Church. The local church shall have the option to deal with duplications on the Board.

2. Each Official Board shall be vested with the power to examine the official character of its members, and to admonish and reprove, as occasion may require; to grant to persons properly qualified and recommended by the church, of which the applicants are members, license to preach, exhort, or become a deaconess; to renew licenses annually; to admit ministers and preachers coming from any other church; to recommend ministers and preachers to the Annual Conference Ministerial Education and Relations Committee; to recommend deaconesses to the Deaconess Board of the Annual Conference; to hear and decide on appeals; and to perform such other duties as are authorized by this *Constitution* and *Discipline*; provided that no person shall be licensed to preach until he/she shall have been first examined.

## ARTICLE VII

### Composition and Powers of Annual Conferences

1. There shall be held annually within the limits of each district a Conference, to be denominated the Annual Conference, composed of all ministers properly under the stationing authority of the Conference; and of one delegate from each church and mission for each of its itinerant ministers properly assigned by the Annual Conference, except superannuates, ministers left without appointment at their own request, and ministers left in the hands of the President; provided, however, that every church shall have at least one delegate. Each Annual Conference shall regulate the manner of election in its own district.
2. The ministers and laymen shall deliberate in one body, but if, upon the final passage of any question, it be required by a majority of the ministers, or a majority of the laymen present, the ministers and laymen shall vote separately, and the concurrence of a majority of both classes of representatives shall be necessary to constitute a vote of the Conference.
3. Each Annual Conference shall be vested with power to elect a President annually; to receive, by vote, such ministers and preachers into the Conference as come properly recommended, and who can be efficiently employed as itinerant preachers; to elect to orders those who are eligible and competent to the pastoral office; to hear and decide on appeals; to station the ministers and preachers; to make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the itinerant ministers, preachers and their families; to raise the amount of their salaries, and for all other purposes connected with the organization and continuance of said Conference; and to perform such other duties as are prescribed by the *Constitution* and *Discipline*, or may be prescribed by the General Conference.
4. The Annual Conferences, respectively, shall also have authority to perform the following additional duties:  
  
First: To make such special rules and regulations as the peculiarities of the district may require; provided, however, that no rule or regulation be made inconsistent with this *Constitution*, and provided, furthermore, that the General Con-

ference shall have the power to annul any rule or regulation which that body may deem unconstitutional.

Second: To prescribe and regulate the mode of stationing the ministers and preachers within the district, provided, always, that they grant to each minister or preacher the right to appeal during the Conference.

Third: To set off home missions and provide for their proper regulation and their representation in the respective Annual Conferences.

5. Each Annual Conference shall keep a journal of its proceedings and send a copy for the quadrennium, properly authenticated, and printed, to the General Conference.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Constitution of the General Conference**

1. There shall be a General Conference of this Church on the third Wednesday in May, in the year of our Lord, 2004, and on the third Wednesday in May every fourth year thereafter, in such place as the Conference may determine.
2. The General Conference shall consist of not less than sixteen delegates. There shall be an equal number of ministers and laymen. The ratio of representation from each Annual Conference district shall be one (1) minister and one (1) layman for each 150 persons or major fraction thereof in full membership, provided that every Conference district have at least one (1) minister and one (1) lay representative, until a different ratio shall be fixed by the General Conference.
3. The representatives to which each district may be entitled shall be elected as the first item of business on the last day of the Annual Conference, by the ministers and delegates belonging to said Annual Conference. The ministers and delegates shall vote as one body, and a majority of the whole vote shall constitute an election. But if a majority of the ministers, or a majority of the delegates demand it, the ministers and delegates shall vote separately, and the concurrence of a majority of both ministers and delegates shall be necessary to constitute an election.
4. The General Conference shall elect, by ballot, a President to preside over its deliberations, and a Secretary to serve during the sitting of the Conference. The Conference shall also be the judge of election returns and qualifications of its own members, and form its own rules of order. A majority of all the representatives in attendance shall constitute a quorum.
5. The ministers and laymen shall deliberate in one body, but if, upon the final passage of any question, it be required by a majority of the ministers, or a majority of the laymen present, the ministers and laymen shall vote separately, and the concurrence of a majority of both classes of representatives shall be necessary to constitute a vote of the Conference.

6. The yeas and nays shall be recorded at the call of one-fifth part of the members present.
7. The Conference shall publish such parts of the journal of its proceedings as it may deem requisite.
8. All papers, books or other property belonging to the Conference shall be preserved as that body may direct.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Powers of the General Conference**

The General Conference shall have the power to:

1. Make rules and regulations for every department of the church recognized by this *Constitution*.
2. Regulate, from time to time, the number of representatives to the General Conference.
3. Define the boundaries of Annual Conference Districts.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Restrictions on the Legislative Assemblies**

1. No rule shall be passed which shall contravene any law of God.
2. No rule shall be passed which shall infringe the right of suffrage, eligibility to office, or the rights and privileges of our ministers, preachers and members to an impartial trial by committee, and of an appeal, as provided by this *Constitution*.
3. No rule shall be passed infringing the liberty of speech, or of the press; but for every abuse of liberty the offender shall be dealt with as in other cases of indulging in sinful words and tempers.
4. No rule, except it be founded on the *Holy Scriptures*, shall be passed authorizing the expulsion of any minister, preacher or member.
5. No rule shall be passed appropriating the funds of the church to any purpose except the support of the ministers, their wives, widows, and children, the promotion of education and missions, the diffusion of useful knowledge, the necessary expenses consequent on assembling the Conferences, and the relief of the poor.
6. No higher order of ministers shall be authorized than that of elder.
7. No rule shall be passed to abolish an efficient itinerancy. Each Annual Conference shall have authority to determine for itself whether any limit, or if any, what limit, shall be to the renewal of annual appointments.
8. No change shall be made in the relative proportions or component parts of the General or Annual Conferences.

9. Neither the General Conference nor any Annual Conference shall assume power to interfere with the constitutional powers of the civil government, or with the operation of the civil laws; yet nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to authorize or sanction anything inconsistent with the morality of the *Holy Scriptures*.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Officers of the Church**

#### **Presidents of the Annual Conferences**

1. The President of each Annual Conference shall be elected annually by the ballot of a majority of the members of the Conference. He/she shall not be eligible more than five years successively, and shall be amenable to that body for his/her official conduct.
2. It shall be the duty of the President of an Annual Conference to preside at all meetings of that body, and, when required by the Conference, to travel through the district, visit all the churches, be present (as far as practicable) at all the meetings and camp meetings of his/her district; and in the recess of Conference, with the assistance of two or more elders, to ordain those persons who may be elected to orders; to employ such ministers and preachers as are duly recommended; and to make such changes of preachers as may be necessary (provided the consent of said preachers and their charges be first obtained) and to perform such other duties as may be required by his/her Annual Conference.

#### **Ministers**

1. The minister who shall be appointed by the Annual Conference to the charge of a church shall be styled the pastor and shall be amenable to the Annual Conference for his/her official conduct.
2. The minister or preacher appointed by the Annual Conference to assist the pastor in the discharge of pastoral duties shall be styled the associate pastor and shall be amenable to the Annual Conference for the faithful discharge of duty.
3. It shall be the duty of every minister and preacher to render all the pastoral assistance he/she can, consistent with other engagements, but no minister or preacher shall be accountable to the Annual Conference for the discharge of ministerial duty, except he/she be an itinerant minister or preacher; all others shall be accountable to the Official Board of the local church.
4. No person shall be recognized as an itinerant minister, preacher, or missionary whose name is not enrolled on the Annual Conference list, or who will not be subject to the order of the Conference.

#### **Conference Treasurer**

The Conference Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Annual Conference, and shall discharge the duties assigned to him/her by that body, and be amenable to it for his/her official conduct.

### **Church Stewards**

The Church Stewards shall be elected annually by the qualified members, including ministers and preachers.

### **Treasurers**

Each church shall elect a treasurer who shall have charge of the funds of the church and who by virtue of his/her office shall be a member of the Official Board.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Suffrage and Eligibility to Office**

The matter of suffrage and eligibility to office shall be left to the Annual Conferences respectively, provided that each Annual Conference shall be entitled to representation in the same ratio in the General Conference, and provided that no rule shall be passed which shall infringe the right of suffrage or eligibility to office.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **Judiciary Principles**

1. All offenses condemned by the Word of God, as being sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, shall subject ministers, preachers and members to expulsion from the church.
2. The neglect of duties required by the Word of God, or the indulgence in sinful words and tempers, shall subject the offender to admonition, and, if persisted in after repeated admonitions, to expulsion.
3. For preaching or disseminating unscriptural doctrines affecting the essential interests of the Christian system, ministers, preachers and members shall be liable to admonition and, if incorrigible, to expulsion, provided, always, that no minister, preacher or member shall be expelled for disseminating matters of opinion alone, except they be such as are condemned by the Word of God.
4. All officers of the church shall be liable to removal from office for maladministration and for neglect of official duties.

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **Privileges of Accused Ministers and Members**

1. In all cases of accusation against a minister, preacher, or member, the accused shall be furnished by the pastor, or, in his/her absence, by any other minister belonging to the Methodist Protestant Church whom the pastor may select, with a copy of the charges and specifications at least twenty days before the

time appointed for the trial, unless the parties concerned prefer going to trial on shorter notice. The accused shall have the right of challenge, the privilege of examining witnesses at the time of trial, and of making his/her defense in person or by representative, provided such representative be a member of the Methodist Protestant Church.

2. No minister or preacher shall be expelled, or deprived of church privileges or ministerial functions, without an impartial trial before a committee - if a minister, of from three to five ministers; if a preacher, of from three to five ministers or preachers - and the right of appeal; the unstationed preacher, to the ensuing church meeting; the ministers and itinerant preachers to the ensuing Annual Conference.
3. No member shall be expelled or deprived of church privileges without an impartial trial before a committee of three or more lay members, and the right of an appeal to the ensuing church meeting; but no member who shall have sat on the first trial shall sit on the appeal; and all appeals shall be final. Persons whose names are on the church register who cannot be found may be dropped from the record by a vote of the church. But any person whose name has been dropped shall, upon application to the pastor, have his/her name restored.
4. No minister or preacher who may have been suspended by a committee, and who has appealed from its decision, shall perform any of the duties of his/her office while his/her appeal is pending, and no person who sat on the case in committee, or who was the accuser, shall vote on the appeal. When a charge of unfaithfulness to the interest of the church is preferred, the trial shall be had within twenty days from the time the charge was preferred.
5. Under the provisions set forth above, the Annual Conference shall have primary responsibility for the trial of any minister against whom charges of misconduct have been brought which might result in his/her credentials being revoked, and his/her being expelled from the Conference.

However, if said Annual Conference is unable to provide for a fair and impartial trial as provided above within its own membership, the District Committee may request the assistance of the Executive Committee of the General Conference in arranging for a trial.

The Executive Committee of the General Conference will review the facts in the case, including any additional information related to the case. The Executive Committee will then decide whether the evidence presented to them is sufficient to justify a trial. If so, the Executive Committee will move to proceed with a trial.

The General Conference President, in cooperation with the President of the Annual Conference, will select a judge and trial committee from any of the Annual Conferences, including the Annual Conference where the person to be tried is a member, and shall select the time and place where the trial will be held.

The accused shall have the right of appeal to the ensuing Annual Conference as provided in paragraph 2 above.

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **Discipline Judiciary**

1. Whenever a majority of all Annual Conferences shall officially call for a judicial decision on any rule or act of the General Conference, it shall be the duty of each and every Annual Conference to appoint, at its next session, two judicial delegates, one minister and one layman, having the same qualifications of eligibility as are required for representatives to the General Conference. The delegates thus chosen shall assemble at the place where the General Conference held its last session, on the third Wednesday in May following their appointment.
2. A majority of the delegates shall constitute a quorum, and if two-thirds of all present judge said rule or act of the General Conference unconstitutional, they shall have power to declare the same null and void.
3. Every decision of the judiciary, with the reasons thereof, shall be in writing, and shall be published in the periodical belonging to this church. After the judiciary shall have performed the duties assigned it by this Constitution, its powers shall cease; and no other judiciary shall be created until after the session of the succeeding General Conference.

## **ARTICLE XVI**

### **Special Call of the General Conference**

1. Two-thirds of the whole number of the Annual Conferences shall have power to call special meetings of the General Conferences.
2. When it shall have been ascertained that two-thirds of the Annual Conferences have decided in favor of such call, it shall be the duty of the Presidents, or a majority of them, forthwith to designate the time and place of holding the same, and to give due notice to all churches and missions.

## **ARTICLE XVII**

### **Provision for Altering the *Constitution***

1. Alterations of this *Constitution* may be effected by means of overtures, submitted by the General Conference, and confirmed by two-thirds of the Annual Conferences.
2. When a change in the Constitution has been so recommended, the Annual Conference shall officially certify its action on the same to the President of the General Conference, who, when two-thirds of the Annual Conferences shall have certified their affirmative action, shall announce the facts in the official papers, and the change so made in the *Constitution* shall be in full force and effect from that time, and shall be entered in the *Discipline* by the Board of Publications.

**ARTICLES**  
**Of**  
**RELIGION**  
**Of The**  
**METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH**

## ARTICLES OF RELIGION

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

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, 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 the Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church.

The names of the canonical books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus. Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the First Book of Samuel, the Second Book of Samuel, the First Book of Kings, the Second Book of Kings. the First Book of Chronicles, the Second Book of Chronicles, the Book of Ezra, the Book of Nehemiah, the Book of Esther, the Book of Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (or the Preacher), Cantica (or 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**

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

## **VII. Of Original Sin**

Original sin 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**

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 Justification**

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

## **X. Of Sanctification**

Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, 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.

## **XI. Of Good Works**

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

evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

## **XII. Of Works Of Supererogation**

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 a bounden duty is required: whereas, Christ saith plainly, "When you have done all that is commanded of you, say 'We are unprofitable servants.'"

## **XIII. Of Sin After Justification**

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

## **XIV. Of The Church**

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

## **XV. Of Purgatory**

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

## **XVI. Of Speaking**

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

## **XVII. Of The Ordinances**

Ordinances of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's professions; but rather they are certain signs of grace and God's good will toward us, by which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.

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

## **XVIII. Of Baptism**

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

## **XIX. Of The Lord's Supper**

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is an ordinance 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 the partaking of the blood of Christ.

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

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

The Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

## **XX. Of Both Kinds**

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

## **XXI. Of The One Oblation Of Christ Finished On The Cross**

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

## **XXII. Of The Resurrection Of The Dead**

There will be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, at which time the souls and bodies of men will be reunited to receive together a just retribution for the deeds done in the body in this life.

### **XXIII. Of The General Judgment**

There will be a General Judgment at the end of the world, when God will judge all men by Jesus Christ, and receive the righteous unto his heavenly kingdom, where they shall be forever secure and happy; and adjudge the wicked to everlasting punishment suited to the demerit of their sins.

### **XXIV. Of The Marriage of Ministers**

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's laws either to vow the state 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.

### **XXV. Of The Rites And Ceremonies of Churches**

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

### **XXVI. Of the Rulers of the United States of America**

The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors and the Councils of States, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of the respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation.

### **XXVII. Of Christian Men's Goods**

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

### **XXVIII. Of A Christian Man's Oath**

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

*(Note affixed by the General Conference at Baltimore, 1884.)*

These articles of religion set forth the doctrinal teaching of the Methodist Protestant Church, and those people who enter the ministry thereof thereby avow their acceptance of the teachings thus formulated; and good faith towards the church forbids any teaching on their part which is at variance with them.

## Christian Duties

The following suggestions, derived mainly from the General Rules of John and Charles Wesley, are commended to the serious attention of the members of the Methodist Protestant Church.

“It is expected that all members of our Societies will continue to evidence their desire for salvation.

First, by doing no harm, but avoid evil of every kind; especially those evils most generally practiced; such as

The taking of the name of God in vain.

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

Drunkenness, or the manufacturing, buying, selling or using intoxicating liquors, unless for mechanical or medicinal purposes, or intentionally aiding others to do so.

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.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, or indulgence in those worldly amusements which do not tend to the glory of God, and which cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus—such as card playing, dancing, games of chance and attending circuses and theatrical performances (and the use of tobacco).

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

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

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

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

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that erroneous 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;

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed;

By running with patience the race that is set before us, denying ourselves and taking up our 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 us falsely, for the Lord's sake.'

Third, by attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are,

The public worship of God; the ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; contributing of our substance for the support of the same; Baptism and the Supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures and meditating thereon."

**THE DISCIPLINE  
OF THE  
METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH**

# THE DISCIPLINE

## CHAPTER I

### THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Christian Church is a society of believers in Jesus Christ and is of Divine institution.

#### ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

##### Section One. Admission to Membership

1. Application for admission to membership in any church or mission must be made to the pastor, the associate pastor, or in their absence to any other minister, preacher, or leader officiating, whose duty it shall be to report the name or names of applicants to the pastor, to be by him/her entered on the list of probationers. In the event of any objection being made by any person present, the matter shall be referred to a called or regularly occurring meeting of the church. On an application for full membership, a vote of the church shall be taken.
2. The children of members of our church shall be under pastoral care and instruction with a view to their admission into full membership; and they shall, on application, be received into full membership if the church is satisfied with their spiritual experience.
3. Any number of believers united as a church, embracing the principles of religious truth held by this church, adopting this Constitution, and conforming to our *Discipline* and means of grace shall, at their request made to the President of an Annual Conference, or a pastor of a church, be recognized as a Methodist Protestant Church and be entitled to all the privileges granted by this *Constitution*; subject, however, to the decision of the Annual Conference in which boundary it lies.
4. A church shall be composed of members residing sufficiently near each other to assemble stately for public worship, and of sufficient number to fill the offices and to transact its temporal business. And every church, when it becomes necessary, shall be divided into small companies or classes for the purposes of religious instruction and edification.

##### Section Two. Transfer and Termination of Membership

1. Members of the church who remove from the community without taking a certificate shall be given pastoral care through correspondence by the pastor and, if they manifest an interest in the church and desire to be continued as members shall remain on the register. But such members, and members remaining in the community but absenting themselves from the church services and failing to give to the support of the church or to cooperate with the church in Christian work for more than one year, shall be visited by the pastor or written to by him if residing elsewhere and appealed to in loving concern for their loy-

alty to their Lord and to the church and to resume active relations to the church. If after six months no change is manifest, it shall be the duty of the Official Board to address to each of such members a kind and Christian letter calling attention to their loss and the loss to the church by such neglect, and beseeching them not to abandon the hope of their calling in Christ Jesus, and admonishing them that if no change is made by them within six months the church will be compelled to regard their silence to mean that they wish to end their communion with us, and to drop their names from our register. If after another interval of six months any member thus advised still manifests no interest, it shall be the duty of the pastor to report his/her name to the church and to show that the requirements of this section have been complied with, and the church shall have authority then to vote whether such members shall be continued or dropped.

2. Members may be otherwise removed from the church for such offenses and in such manner as is outlined under Chapter V, Judicial Principles.
3. Dual Membership - Membership in a local church shall be automatically terminated when a person joins another church, whether of this or any other denomination.

## **ARTICLE II. LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Section One. Pastor**

1. The minister who shall be appointed by the Annual Conference to a church shall be styled the pastor and shall be amenable to the Annual Conference for his/her official conduct.
2. The minister or preacher appointed by the Annual Conference to assist the pastor in the discharge of his/her pastoral duties shall be styled the associate pastor and shall be amenable to the Annual Conference for the faithful discharge of duty.

#### **It shall be the duty of every pastor:**

1. To preach the Word, administer the ordinances, execute the *Discipline*, and faithfully discharge all the duties belonging to the ministerial and pastoral office; and to read and explain such portions of the *Constitution* and *Discipline* as he/she may deem necessary to give our people suitable information in regard to our ecclesiastical economy.
2. To receive persons on probation and assign them to classes when they do not select for themselves.
3. To visit all the classes at least once a quarter, if practical, and see that they are duly and properly met by their respective leaders and that the members regularly attend their classes. And to hold an election, within the last quarter in each conference year, of a class leader in each class of his/her church or mission; but should any class refuse or neglect to elect a leader in accordance with the *Constitution*, the pastor shall then appoint a leader for said class.

4. To give due notice from the pulpit in his/her church of the time and place of the next Official Board meeting.
5. To hold love-feasts, general class meetings, and prayer meetings; and to visit the sick, the poor, the aged and infirm members, as well as those in health and better circumstances.
6. To recognize the children of members of our church as under pastoral care and instruction with a view to their admission into full membership; and they shall be received into full membership, on application, if the Church is satisfied with their spiritual experience.
7. To organize the children of members in classes of moderate size, provided the parents or guardians of the children concur in the measure, and appoint suitable teachers, male or female, whose duty it shall be to instruct them in the principles and precepts of the Christian religion; and to organize, as far as practical, Sunday Schools at each appointment within his/her charge.
8. To keep an exact record of all members belonging to his/her church and of the baptisms and marriages. To keep during the tenure of his/her pastorate the Church register in official form, which shall be a permanent and historical record of the relationship of all members of the church. To submit a written report to his/her Official Board, setting forth the spiritual condition of the charge, together with all changes that have been made since the last report.
9. To report quarterly to the President of the Annual Conference by letter, and only items of general interest to the official organs. At the close of his/her term, he/she shall leave the successor a plan of the charge.
10. To give certificates to those who desire to remove to another church, and when such certificates are issued, they shall at once, if able to do so, notify the pastor of the charge to which the removal is intended to be, or has been made.

No pastor shall withhold a certificate from a person whose moral character stands fair. Such certificates shall not be valid for a longer period than six months, and shall be so marked on the certificate. Persons holding such certificates shall be amenable to the Church from which the certificate comes until it has been deposited elsewhere.

11. The pastor is a member of all Sunday School societies and teachers' meetings belonging to his/her pastoral charge, and when present shall be the chairman of the meeting. Teachers' meetings shall be held weekly, or at least monthly.
12. It shall be the duty of each pastor to present to the people of his/her charge annually the claims of the respective general interests of the church, as required by the *Discipline*, to observe and emphasize the special days, to receive such contributions as the people are willing to give for these general interests, and to forward them promptly through the proper channel to the Treasurer of the Annual Conference.

13. It shall be the duty of the associate pastor to preach statedly, in all the appointments, and to aid the pastor in the general work of the Gospel in the charge to which he/she has been appointed.

### **Section Two. Church Leaders**

1. The Church Leader shall be elected annually by the congregation and shall act as spiritual leader of the church when the church is without a pastor. At such times it shall be his/her duty to see that all services are conducted and begun on time. He/She shall preside over the Official Board and all other Church Meetings in the absence of the pastor.
2. It shall be the duty of the Church Leader to assist the Pastor in any way needed to instruct the members in the principles and duties of Christianity, to comfort them in affliction, to advise them in cases of difficulty, and to exhort them to diligence and perseverance in doing and suffering the will of God.
3. It shall be the duty of each Church Leader to visit the sick and those members who frequently absent themselves from the means of grace; and to promote the spiritual, temporal and eternal interest of the members of the church.
4. It shall be the duty of each Church Leader to report to the pastor all cases of neglect of duty or improper conduct on the part of the members of his/her church, which, in his/her opinion, require the exercise of discipline.

### **Section Three. Trustees**

1. Trustees shall be elected annually by the qualified members of the Church, except where charters otherwise provide. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to hold the property in trust for the use and benefit of the church, and to fill any vacancies occasioned in their board by death, resignation, or ceasing to be a member of the Methodist Protestant Church. All trustees shall remain in office until their successors shall have been elected.
2. Trustees shall hold periodical meetings and keep a fair and regular record of all the transactions of the Board of Trustees, which shall at all times be open for the inspection of the members of the church. The record shall be examined and the accounts audited annually by a special committee appointed for the purpose by the church.
3. Trustees shall take care of the church property of all kinds and the necessary funds to defray the expense incurred in repair and improvement.
4. The Trustees shall have power, when authorized by a majority of all the qualified members of the church, to purchase, build, repair, lease, sell, rent, mortgage, or otherwise procure or dispose of property; and on no other condition or conditions whatever. Said authorization shall be given at a meeting called for the purpose by public notice two weeks in advance or any adjournment from time to time thereof. Provided, the Trustees shall not deny the use of the Church to any Christian work recognized by the General Conference; and provided further, that nothing in this article shall be construed to give power to the

Trustees to divert the property or the proceeds thereof from the Methodist Protestant denomination, except as provided in Article IV, Property, Paragraph 4.

#### **Section Four. Stewards**

1. The Stewards shall ascertain current expenses for all causes and shall prepare the church budget to be adopted at the annual Church Meeting and shall have general oversight of the finances of the church, except as otherwise provided.
2. It shall be the duty of the Stewards of each church to insure that proper records be kept of all receipts and debits in the accounts of each church, and that each contributor be given an annual receipt of their contributions to the church upon request. These records should be duly audited periodically for the protection of the church and the treasurer.
3. The Stewards shall make the necessary provision and preparation for the Lord's Supper and love-feasts and shall make a quarterly report to the church of their collections, disbursements; and state of the church funds.
4. The Stewards shall provide a *Discipline* to be given to each full member at the time of his/her reception into the Church.
5. In all cases where an Annual Conference shall omit or decline to prescribe the mode of election for delegates to the Annual Conference, election shall be by the qualified members under the direction of the Stewards, who shall designate the time and place and serve as judge of the election. The election shall be by ballot, and be held at least thirty days before the sitting of the Annual Conference. Notice shall be given from the pulpit for two Sundays of the time and place of holding the election. The person receiving a majority of all the votes cast shall be declared elected.

It shall be the duty of the Stewards in every church to hold an election prior to the last Official Board Meeting in each year for delegate or delegates to the Annual Conference and to report the results at the last Official Board Meeting. The person or persons receiving a majority of the whole number of votes cast shall be declared elected.

#### **Section Five. Sunday School Board**

The Sunday School Board shall consist of the officers and teachers of the Sunday School. The pastor shall be an ex officio member of this Board. The Sunday School Board shall have responsibility for coordination of the work of the Sunday School in the local church and shall be amenable to the Official Board for its action.

#### **Section Six. Treasurers**

Each church shall elect a treasurer who shall have charge of the funds of the church and who by virtue of his/her office shall be a member of the Official Board.

### **Section Seven. Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep a list of the officials of the church and minutes of all Business Meetings, and may assist the pastor with the records of the church.

### **Section Eight. Other Officers**

Sunday School Superintendents, Youth Leaders, Presidents of the Woman's Missionary Society (Woman's Auxiliary), of the Brotherhood or Laymen's Fellowship, and of the Deaconess Circle, shall also be termed Officers of the Church.

### **Section Nine. Election of Officers**

All officers shall be elected at the Annual Church meeting except as otherwise provided. The term of office for all officers shall be for one year or until successors are elected.

## **ARTICLE III. BUSINESS MEETINGS**

### **Section One. Monthly Meetings**

There shall be in every Church a monthly meeting of the Official Board, at which reports shall be received from the Board Members.

### **Section Two. Official Boards**

1. There shall be a monthly meeting of the Official Board with at least semi-annual Church Meetings to be held during the Annual Conference year to conduct the business of the Local Church. The members of the Official Board shall be the Pastor, Associate Pastors, Deaconesses (Ex-Officio), Church Leader, Youth Leader, Sunday School Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, President of the Laymen's Fellowship, President of the Women's Missionary Society, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Chairman of the Board of Stewards, and the Chairmen of the elected committees of the Church. The local church shall have the option to deal with duplications on the Board.
2. The actions of the Official Board shall be amenable to the local church.

### **Section Three. Duties of the Official Board**

1. Each local church shall have an Official Board to conduct the administrative work of the church.
2. This Board shall have the authority to carry out all the decisions of the local church and conduct business when the Church Meetings are not in session. The Official Board shall meet monthly, and each member of the Official Board shall give a written report detailing their official work performed since the last Church Meeting.
3. The Pastor or Church Leader, whichever is elected by the Official Board, shall be its chairman. The Annual Conference President may preside if in attendance.

4. The Official Board shall serve as the general administrative agency of the church. It shall receive and approve all reports from the officers, standing committees, church organizations, and the committees of the Board. The Official Board shall share joint responsibility with the pastor in the work belonging to the congregation in the spirit of truly Christian cooperation.
5. The Official Board shall assist the pastor in the care of the general welfare of the congregation and shall see to it that the house of God is not diverted to any uses alien to its character.
6. The Official Board shall organize such committees as are necessary for the work of the Church. It shall promote discipleship, evangelism, leadership, missions, church extension, lay activities, and other enterprises as directed by the Annual and General Conferences. It shall consider the overall work and progress of the church and make recommendations for the improvement to the appropriate committee or department at the monthly meeting.
7. Vacancies on the Official Board due to death, extended illness, or removal from membership for any cause, may be filled at the monthly meeting.
8. Special meetings of the Official Board or Church meetings may be called by the chairman, by three members of the Official Board, or by a petition of five (5) Church Members. Public notice must be given two weeks prior, or all active members must be notified. Actions of special Official Board meetings shall be presented to the Official Board at its next regular meeting, and shall be subject to the approval of the full Official Board. The actions of a special Church meeting shall stand without Official Board approval.
9. At the Annual Meeting, or when Church elections are called, an Examining Committee, composed of at least three members, shall be elected. It shall be the duty of this committee to thoroughly examine those who are members of their local church who wish to enter the ministry or become exhorters or deaconesses. The Official Board shall write an official letter of recommendation for preachers and deaconesses referring these candidates to the appropriate Annual Conference committees.
10. At the monthly meeting prior to Annual Conference, the Official Board shall review the budget submitted by the Board of Stewards for the ensuing year to be approved at the Annual Church Meeting.
11. The Official Board shall appoint an Advisory/Investigating Committee, whose duty shall be to advise the Pastor on matters of his/her administration, and investigate any charges conferred against any member of their local church. This committee shall make known to the pastor the wishes of the church in all matters. This appointment shall be made at the first monthly meeting of the Conference year.
12. Any number present at a regularly scheduled meeting shall constitute a quorum. Specially called meetings shall require a minimum of five members of the Official Board to constitute a quorum.

#### **Section Four. ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR OFFICIAL BOARDS**

1. Roll Call noting those present and absent
2. Reading of the minutes from the last meeting
3. Examination of the official character of membership
4. Changes in Official Board membership
5. At the first monthly meeting following elections, the elections results will be reported by the Board of Stewards and certified by the Official Board.
6. Reports:
  - a. Pastor and Associates
  - b. Unstationed Ministers, Superannuated Ministers, Exhorters, and Deaconesses
  - c. Church Leader
  - d. Sunday School Superintendent
  - e. Youth Leader
  - f. President of the Laymen's Fellowship
  - g. President of the Women's Missionary Society
  - h. Chairman of the Trustees
  - i. Chairman of the Stewards
  - j. Treasurer
7. Previous business
8. New business to be presented
9. Recommendations from the Advisory/Investigating and Examining Committees
10. Benediction.

#### **Section Five. Powers of the Official Board**

1. Each Official Board shall be vested with the power to examine the official character of its members, and to admonish and reprove, as occasion may require; to grant to persons properly qualified and recommended by the Examining Committee of the local church of which the applicants are members, license to preach, exhort, or become a deaconess; to renew licenses annually; to admit ministers and preachers coming from any other church; to recommend ministers and preachers to the Annual Conference Ministerial Education and Relations Committee; to recommend deaconesses to the Deaconess Board of the Annual Conference; to hear and decide on appeals; and to perform such other duties as are authorized by this *Constitution* and *Discipline*; provided that

no person shall be licensed to preach until he/she shall have been first examined and recommended by the Examining Committee.

2. The Official Board, in conjunction with the Pastor, shall have authority to receive ministers and preachers from other denominations, on satisfactory testimonials, examination by the Examining Committee, and background check.
3. Each Official Board shall have supervisory authority over all the Sunday Schools belonging to the local church to require that papers and lesson helps used be doctrinally sound; to provide that officers and teachers chosen be suitable persons in Christian experience, character, and doctrinal belief; and to secure the observance of missionary, college, and other anniversary days for making offerings in support of the general interests of the church, as specified by the General Conference.
4. Should a charge of immorality, neglect of Christian duty, or of disseminating unscriptural doctrines be preferred against a member of the church during the examination of official character, the accusation, together with the names of the accuser and witnesses, shall be referred to the Advisory/Investigating Committee to be investigated in accordance with the provisions of the *Constitution* and the *Discipline*. When a case is so referred, a prosecutor shall be appointed by the Official Board on behalf of the church.

#### **Section Six. LICENSING OF PREACHERS, EXHORTERS AND DEACONESSES**

1. The Examining Committee, elected by the church, shall assist, advise and examine candidates for the ministry, exhorter or deaconess. It shall be the duty of the Committee to see that the candidates pursue the Course of Study prescribed by the General Conference Board of Christian Education and under the direction of the Annual Conference Ministerial Education and Relations Committee or Deaconess Board; to examine them occasionally on doctrines and religious experience; and when the candidates are deemed worthy, to give them a written recommendation of their qualifications. But no Committee shall give a recommendation unless the candidate be of exceptional moral character, demonstrate practical holiness and respectable accomplishments, be grounded in the beliefs as stated in our Articles of Religion and be faithful in the discharge of Christian duties.
2. The following questions shall be asked of candidates, and are required to be affirmed before they are licensed:

Do you believe that Jesus is the virgin-born Son of God, the Christ, and that He died on the cross to forgive your sins? Are you born again of the Spirit of God?

Do you believe that the Holy Bible is the infallible Word of God and has everything needed in it to lead us to salvation?

Do you believe that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to cleanse and empower every believer for service in the Church? Have you been sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit since you believed in Jesus as your Savior?

Do you believe that the Holy Spirit has given you the gifts to accomplish the work to which you are now making application?

Will you live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this world so as not to bring shame to the name of Jesus and the ministry?

Will you study the Word diligently, and uphold the *Constitution* and *Discipline* of the Methodist Protestant Church as you serve in its ministry?

Are you a good example of Stewardship to the rest of the church, faithfully tithing and giving of the blessings God has given to you?

3. Licenses to Preach or Exhort and Deaconess' Licenses shall be renewed annually upon the recommendation of the Examining Committee, and approval of the church.
4. Candidates who meet satisfactorily all of the provisions above may be given, by vote of the Official Board, a recommendation to the Ministerial Education and Relations Committee or Deaconess Board of the Annual Conference, as appropriate.

#### **ARTICLE IV. PROPERTY**

1. Each church shall have power to purchase, build, lease, sell, rent, or otherwise dispose of church property for the use and benefit of the Methodist Protestant Church, when authorized by the affirmative vote of a majority of all the qualified members of the church; provided that said vote be given in person at a meeting publicly called for the purpose two weeks in advance, or any adjournment from time to time thereof. Title to property shall be vested in the Trustees.
2. In case of any church being determined extinct by the Annual Conference, the church property, if any, shall be vested in the Annual Conference Trustees, who shall pay off any indebtedness, and divert any assets to the Annual Conference Board of Church Extension. (A church is judged extinct when its membership dies and/or it ceases to hold services or function as a church.)
3. When a Church has been tried and is expelled from the Methodist Protestant Church, it shall be considered extinct, and the property, if any, shall be disposed of in the manner provided for the disposition of the property of extinct churches.
4. In the event a question arises in a local church with regard to its continued affiliation with the Methodist Protestant denomination and with the Annual Conference of which it is a part, the church may terminate its relationship with the Conference and with the denomination on the following terms and conditions:
  - a. The church must notify the Annual Conference President and the Annual Conference Trustees at least three months in advance that such a vote is to

be taken. The Annual Conference President or another official designated by the Annual Conference President shall be present when such vote is taken.

- b. Notice shall be given from the pulpit and by mail to all the active members of the church at least twice before such a vote is taken. The first notice shall be given at least three months in advance, and the final notice at least thirty days in advance. Such notice shall include the date and time of the meeting, and shall clearly state the purpose of the vote to be taken.
- c. A three-fourths majority vote of all members voting (including absentee ballots) shall be required for a vote to withdraw from the denomination to carry. Balloting shall be by secret ballot, and certified by the Stewards and Trustees of the church. A record of the certified vote shall be sent to the Annual Conference President and Annual Conference Trustees.
- d. If the vote carries, and the church decides to withdraw from the denomination, all claims against the church by the Conference, or by any denominational agencies, must be settled. Such claims will include any assessments due the Conference and any loans or other funds invested in the church by the Conference or any other denominational agencies.
- e. The Conference President, the Conference Trustees, or whomever they may have appointed, shall report to the Annual Conference at its next regular session the results of the vote in the local church. The Conference Trustees shall determine, and certify to the Conference, whether all claims against said church by the Conference or other denominational agencies have been settled. The petition by said church to withdraw from the Conference and from the Methodist Protestant denomination shall be presented to the Conference for final action. The Conference, by a simple majority vote, may accept or reject said petition.
- f. If the petition is granted by the Conference, the Trustees of said church may make whatever disposition of the property and other assets of the Church as the membership of the church may direct, as provided in Chapter I, Article II, Section Three: Trustees, of the *Discipline* of the Methodist Protestant Church; and provided that such action is not in conflict with the laws of the State or with the rules and regulations of the Internal Revenue Service governing religious and other nonprofit organizations.
- g. When the question of withdrawal from the Methodist Protestant Church is being considered by a church, anyone who has been received into the church during the tenure of the pastor under which withdrawal is proposed shall not be eligible to vote on said issue (or member of church for less than two (2) years).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

There shall be held annually within the limits of each district a Conference, to be called the Annual Conference.

#### **ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP**

1. The Annual Conference shall be composed of all ministers properly under the stationing authority of the Conference; and of one delegate from each church for each of its itinerant ministers properly assigned by the Annual Conference, except superannuates, ministers left without appointment at their own requests, and ministers left in the hands of the President; provided, however, that every church shall have at least one delegate. Each Annual Conference shall regulate the manner of election in its own district.
2. The Conference shall be the judge of the qualifications of the delegates.
3. Ministers or preachers, in order to be eligible to membership in an Annual Conference, must have a written recommendation from an Official Church Board of a Methodist Protestant Church, or a certificate from some other Annual Conference or the president thereof, or suitable testimonial from some other ecclesiastical body. No minister shall be given a supernumerary or superannuated relation, except by vote of the Annual Conference.
4. No minister shall be recognized as belonging to our fellowship whose name is not recorded on the list of an Annual Conference, to which he/she is amenable, or who does not hold a valid certificate of transfer.
5. No Annual Conference shall receive anyone who has been a scholarship recipient under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education, without a testimonial of honorable fulfillment of requirements of the Board.
6. Any minister of the Methodist Protestant Church who joins another church or another religious body exercising the function of a church as a member or minister shall forfeit his/her membership in the Methodist Protestant Church both as a member and a minister.

#### **ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS**

1. Districts and their Boundaries shall be determined by the General Conference. The General Conference shall have the authority to constitute Mission Districts who have a smaller number of members. The Mission Districts shall be entitled to representation in the General Conference of one Ministerial and one Lay Messenger from each district who shall have the right of discussion but not the right to vote.
2. The organization of Annual Conferences during the interim of the General Conference shall be under the supervision of a commission composed of three (or three ministers from any organized Conference until three Annual Conferences shall have been organized) presidents of adjacent Annual Conferences, appointed by the president of the General Conference. The Commission shall

see that the requirements of the *Constitution* and *Discipline* are complied with, and report in writing to the secretary of the General Conference the facts of such organization. The secretary shall certify the same to the General Conference at its next succeeding session. No such commission shall be appointed looking to the division of the territory of any Annual Conference, except upon the request of the said Conference by a two-thirds vote thereof.

3. The Annual Conference shall set the time and place of its annual meeting. When a president and standing district committee, or a majority of them, shall become satisfied of the necessity for changing the time or place of holding a succeeding Annual Conference, they shall do so by giving public notice in the district at least two months previous to the time of holding such Conference.

When it becomes necessary, a special session of the Annual Conference may be called on the following conditions:

- 1) Upon the consent of a majority of the members of the District Committee.
- 2) Upon a petition signed by a majority of the members of the Annual Conference, or
- 3) Upon a petition signed by at least ten ministers stating the cause for calling a special session.

The Conference may then be called, with the time and place being publicly announced and proper notice given to all pastors, and churches at least two months in advance of the meeting.

4. The Conference shall be called to order by the President, who shall open it with religious services, and preside until the election of his/her successor. If the President is not present, the religious services shall be under the direction of the Secretary. In the absence of both, a President and Secretary (pro tempore) shall be elected to serve until the Conference shall elect permanent officers.
5. A majority of all the members in attendance shall constitute a quorum. It shall be the duty of every minister belonging to the Annual Conference to attend its annual sessions, or, if unable to attend, to inform the Conference by letter of said inability, and the causes thereof, and to forward the statistical report of his/her field to the Conference. Any minister who shall neglect the above duties shall be subject to the censure sure of the Conference; and if he/she shall persist in such neglect for two years in succession, he/she shall be liable to lose his/her membership in said Conference by a vote thereof.
6. No member of Conference shall withdraw himself/herself from its sittings without permission.
7. Each Annual Conference shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and send a copy for the quadrennium, properly authenticated, and printed, to the General Conference. The names of ministers and preachers stationed and unstationed shall be registered and published in the minutes of the Conference within whose bounds they hold their membership. The full minutes shall be published

in pamphlet form, and a synopsis shall be furnished the official papers. The Secretary of each Annual Conference shall forward each year a certified copy of the journal to the Secretary of the General Conference, who shall preserve and forward the same to the General Conference. The Secretary of each Annual Conference shall also, as soon as practical after the close of the Conference, furnish the Secretary of the General Conference a full summary of the reports of his/her Conference. Any Annual Conference failing to comply with this requirement of the *Constitution* without sufficient reason shall lose its representation in said General Conference, by a vote thereof.

8. Each Annual Conference shall require that each church file the official Annual Church Form provided by the Annual Conference Treasurer.

### **ARTICLE III. OFFICERS**

#### **Section One. President**

1. The President of each Annual Conference shall be elected annually by the ballot of a majority of the members of the Conference. He/she shall not be eligible more than five years successively; and shall be amenable to the body for his/her official conduct.
2. The Annual Conference President shall be an ex officio member of all standing committees or boards with the exception of the Standing District Committee.
3. It shall be the duty of the President of an Annual Conference to preside at all meetings of that body, and, when required by the Conference, to travel through the district, visit all the churches, be present, as far as practical, at all the meetings, and camp meetings of his/her district; and in the recess of Conference, with the assistance of two or more elders, to ordain those persons who may be elected to orders; to employ such ministers and preachers as are duly recommended; and to make such changes of preachers as may be necessary; provided, the consent of said preachers and their charges be first obtained; and to perform such other duties as may be required by his/her Annual Conference.
4. The President of the Annual Conference is the executive head of the Conference. He/she shall visit officially the several charges as the Conference may direct, and when present on a charge, he/she shall have preference of the pulpit, and all records shall be open to him/her for examination. If he/she desires to do so, he/she may call a meeting of the Official Board for the time of his/her visit, stating the reason for the call.
5. The President shall see that every pastor in the district duly enters upon and continues in the discharge of all his/her official duties. This executive duty shall be his/her chief duty, to which all other matters shall be subsidiary. No Conference shall require of the President any service that will interfere with this duty. He/She shall have the privilege, if it is necessary, to preach less, hold fewer revival meetings, travel over the district less, and shall be excused from these duties to whatever extent may be necessary.

Where it is necessary, this executive duty shall include a regular inspection

of Church registers, inquiring into the methods used by the pastor in carrying on the work of the charge, conferring with the Official Board and examining their records, examining what is being done in response to matters referred to the charge by the Annual Conference, consulting with the stewards as to payment of pastor's salary and other expenses, hearing the Advisory Committee as to the pastor's faithfulness and efficiency, and in every other respect doing the full work of a supervising executive. Where a charge is without a pastor, the President shall have power to perform any of the duties of the pastor.

6. The President of an Annual Conference shall not employ any minister or preacher belonging to another Annual Conference without a certificate of good standing from the President of the Conference to which such minister or preacher belongs, and bearing date not more than ninety days previous to his/her employment.

No member of an Annual Conference shall enter the territory of any other Annual Conference to work or to preach within the bounds of that Conference without the consent of the President of the Conference. This is not to be understood as interfering with a pastor's securing help in special services.

7. When a President makes an exchange of a minister or preacher from one church to another, it shall be his/her duty to give him/her a written certificate of said change, which shall be his/her passport to the new appointment. He/She shall also give a certificate of employment to ministers, preachers and missionaries, whom he/she may employ in the recess of the Conference, without which no minister, preacher or missionary shall be recognized as regularly appointed. He/She shall provide for the regular administration of the ordinances of the Church in such charges as are supplied by unordained men. To enable him/her to carry out this provision he/she may call to his/her assistance any pastor within the bounds of the Conference over which he/she presides; provided, however, that he/she shall not call any pastor from his/her field of labor more than once during a Conference year.
8. It shall be the duty of the President of each Annual Conference in the absence of a regular agent, at each of its annual sessions, to call the attention of the Conference to the claims of the missionary, education, periodical and such other general interests of the Church as may properly come before it for such action as may be deemed necessary.
9. No Annual Conference President shall give a letter of standing to any minister or preacher in his/her Conference until he/she knows positively that such minister or preacher is not indebted to the Board of Christian Education.
10. Every minister received by the President, during the interval of Conference, shall be subjected to a vote of the Conference before his/her name can be printed in the minutes as a stationed minister.
11. Whenever, in the interval of Conference, a call shall be made upon the President of an Annual Conference for a minister or preacher to render service in any place not already included in some other church within his/her district, or

upon ground without the territorial limit of any district or in case the President shall be fully satisfied, from his/her own personal knowledge or otherwise, of the need of such services, without any special call upon him/her for aid, he/she shall have authority in all such cases to appoint a missionary.

12. No minister or preacher who shall have been rejected by an Annual Conference shall be employed by its President.
13. No Conference or President shall be obliged to employ any person as pastor or missionary unless his/her labors can be profitably directed.
14. The President and Secretary of the Annual Conference shall forward to the secretary of the General Conference a certified list of representatives and alternates to the General Conference.
15. Vacancies on standing committees or boards shall be filled by nomination of Conference President subject to approval of said Board.

### **Section Two. Secretary**

1. Each Annual Conference shall keep a journal of its proceedings and send a copy for the quadrennium, properly authenticated, either written or printed, to the General Conference.
2. The full minutes may be published in pamphlet form, and a synopsis shall be furnished the official papers. The Secretary of each Annual Conference shall forward each year a certified copy of the Journal to the Secretary of the General Conference, who shall preserve and forward to the General Conference. The Secretary of each Annual Conference shall also, as soon as practical after the close of the Conference, furnish the Secretary of the General Conference a full summary of the reports of his/her Conference.
3. An Annual Conference failing to comply with this requirement of the *Constitution* without sufficient reason, shall lose its representation in said General Conference, by a vote thereof.
4. In the absence of the President, the Secretary shall call the Annual Conference to order and shall be in charge of religious services, and shall preside until the election of permanent officers.

### **Section Three. Treasurer**

1. The Conference Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Annual Conference, and shall discharge the duties assigned to him/her by the body, and be amenable to it for his/her official conduct.
2. The Treasurer shall be properly bonded and shall receive all money belonging to the Conference.
3. All funds collected in the churches for General Conference Interest shall be sent monthly to the Treasurer of the Annual Conference to which these churches belong. The Treasurers of the Annual Conferences shall remit to the Treasurer of the General Conference, not later than the 15th day of the month, all

funds in hand for General Conference Budget at the end of the preceding month.

4. Each Annual Conference shall collect an amount sufficient to pay all the expenses of its representatives while attending the sessions of the General Conference, and forward the same to the Treasurer of the Annual Conference by whom it shall be disbursed.

#### **Section Four. Standing Committees**

##### **No. 1. District Committee**

1. Each Annual Conference shall annually elect a standing district committee of three elders and three laymen whose duty it shall be, in the event of the death, resignation, or suspension of the President, to appoint a President pro tem, to serve until the sitting of the next Annual Conference.
2. Should charges be preferred against the President of the Annual Conference, the committee shall call upon one of the elders of the Conference to make the official notifications and to preside at the trial in accordance with the rule provided for the trial of ministers.
3. When a President and standing district committee, or a majority of them, shall become satisfied of the necessity for changing the time or place of holding a succeeding Annual Conference, they shall do so by giving public notice in the district at least two months previous to the time of holding such Conference.

##### **No. 2. Ministerial Education and Relations Committee**

1. Each Annual Conference shall elect a standing committee of at least three elders and three laymen that shall be called the Ministerial Education and Relations Committee.
2. The duties of this committee shall include the following:
  - A. Oversee candidates for ordination.
  - B. Oversee ministerial relations.
  - C. Perform the duties as stated in the *Discipline*, Chapter 3, Article IV, Section 1.

#### **Section Five. Church Extension**

Each Annual Conference shall organize a Board of Church Extension within its district, to be called the Board of Church Extension of \_\_\_\_\_ Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, to be located in the State of \_\_\_\_\_ under the following Articles of Incorporation:

The Conference shall elect four members - two ministers and two laymen who shall constitute the Board of Church Extension, and continue in office for one year, or until their successors are elected by the Annual Conference.

It shall be the duty of the Board to meet immediately after their election and organize by electing a president, secretary, treasurer and executive committee, and proceed without delay to become an incorporated body under the laws of the State in which it may be located.

The Board thus incorporated shall have power to make its own laws, and meet at such times and places as it may determine.

It shall receive all moneys raised by the Conference for the Board of Church Extension, and disburse the same under the direction of the Annual Conference.

The Board shall keep a faithful oversight of all the mission work and property of the Conference, and see that none of it is placed in jeopardy for debt or otherwise.

In the interval of the Conference, if it shall be necessary, the Board may make appropriations; but in all such cases it shall report the same, with a full report of all its proceedings, to the Conference at its next annual session.

The Board shall report to the Conference at each annual session the amount of money needed for the ensuing year, and if the Conference approves the report it shall proceed to make arrangements to raise the same and pay it into the treasury of the Board.

It shall also be the duty of the Board to inquire into the wants of all parts of the Conference District, and locate new missions in such places only as there is a prospect of building up self-sustaining churches.

All the funds that shall come into the hands of the Board from the sale of church property shall go into a building fund to be carefully controlled by the Board, which shall be loaned to incorporated Boards of Trustees on real estate mortgage, at not more than half its value, to aid in building chapels and parsonages under the provisions of the *Discipline*.

## **ARTICLE IV. MINISTERS**

### **Section One. Ordination**

1. Persons ordained or licensed to administer the ordinances shall:
  - A. Be of exceptional moral character
  - B. Demonstrate practical holiness
  - C. Demonstrate respectable accomplishments
  - D. Be grounded in the beliefs as stated in our Articles of Religion
  - E. Be faithful in the discharge of Christian duties.
2. The Annual Conference shall not receive a person into its membership until he/she has obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent at a minimum.
3. Ministers or preachers, in order to be eligible to membership in an Annual Conference, must have a written recommendation from an Official Board of a Methodist Protestant Church, or a certificate from some other Annual Confer-

ence or its President, or suitable testimonial from another Wesleyan-Armenian denomination.

4. If a person under the auspices of the Ministerial Education and Relations committee is assigned to a church as pastor, he/she will be issued a license to administer the ordinances on an annual basis by the Annual Conference, signed by the President and Secretary of the Conference.

If the progress of the candidate for ordination does not satisfy the requirements of the Ministerial Education and Relations Committee, his/her license shall not be granted; neither shall he/she be assigned to a pastoral charge the following year.

(Note: This does not give the licentiate a right to vote in the Annual Conference until after he/she is ordained.)

5. In order to be ordained or to be licensed to administer the ordinances, a person shall first pass the respective examination provided by the Board of Christian Education and administered by the Ministerial Education and Relations Committee elected by the Annual Conference.
6. Ordination shall be performed by the President, assisted by two or more elders. When circumstances make it necessary, the Annual Conference may substitute an elder in place of the President.
7. No minister or preacher shall hold membership in any Annual Conference who does not believe in and preach Sanctification as a "Second Definite Work of Grace."
8. Following ordination, ministers are expected to continue their education by whatever means is available. Continuing education hours should be pursued at a minimum of three (3) hours per year. The Ministerial Education and Relations Committee shall provide educational sessions for ministers to meet this obligation.

### **Educational and Probationary Requirements for Ordination**

1. Candidates for ordination shall serve under the supervision of the Ministerial Education and Relations Committee and may choose one of the following:
  - A. Complete the Course of Study as set forth in the Candidate Handbook for Ministerial Ordination provided by the Board of Christian Education with a minimum of three years' probation and having preached three consecutive years under the appointment of an Annual Conference.
  - B. Have a pastoral ministries or equivalent degree from a College approved by the Board of Christian Education with a minimum of three years' probation and having preached three consecutive years under the appointment of an Annual Conference.
  - C. Have a degree from a Theological Seminary approved by the Board of

Christian Education with a minimum of three years' probation and having preached three consecutive years under the appointment of an Annual Conference.

2. Time required for educational requirements, pastoral assignments and probation may run concurrently but each requirement must be met.
3. Each candidate is required to attend instruction provided by the Ministerial Education and Relations Committee of each District on the Historical, Articles of Religion, Constitution and Discipline Sections of the Methodist Protestant *Discipline*.
4. All Candidates for ordination must pass an examination provided by the Board of Christian Education on the Methodist Protestant *Discipline* covering the Historical, Articles of Religion, Constitution and Discipline Sections. The Board of Christian Education shall determine the proficiency standards.

### **Section Two. Duties, Rights and Privileges**

1. It shall be the duty of every minister to preach the Word, administer the ordinances, execute the *Discipline*, and faithfully discharge all the duties belonging to the ministerial office.
2. Only elders and those who have been licensed to administer the ordinances shall have authority to administer the Lord's Supper, to baptize, and to celebrate matrimony; but they shall not celebrate the marriage of divorced persons who have violated their marriage vows.
3. No minister, or preacher, appointed to a church shall cease from the labor assigned him/her by the stationing authority, until his/her term of service expires, except by consent of the president and of the charge.
4. No minister, in good health, shall be left without regular ministerial work for more than two years in succession. At the end of that time he/she shall resume his/her itinerant labor, or be transferred to the unstationed list; and where so transferred he/she shall receive a certificate of his/her standing. This rule shall apply to all ministers so transferred.
5. A minister may retire from the service of the Conference, and be received back again without recommendation from the Official Board, if he/she makes the application within three years; provided his/her moral character stands fair. An Annual Conference may leave a minister without an appointment, at his/her own request, the ensuing year.

Any minister not assigned to a church is amenable to the Annual Conference in which he/she resides.

This rule shall apply to editors, publishing agents, presidents of colleges, professors, etc.; to those living beyond the bounds of their Annual Conferences as well as those living within the bounds thereof.

6. It shall be the duty of every minister belonging to an Annual Conference to attend its annual sessions, or if unable to attend, to inform the Conference by let-

ter of said inability, and the causes thereof, and to forward the statistical report of his/her field to the Conference. Any minister who shall neglect the above duties shall be subject to the censure of the Conference; and if he/she shall persist in such neglect for two years in succession, he/she shall be liable to lose his/her membership in said Conference by a vote thereof.

### **Section Three. Transfers**

1. Ministers laboring under the direction of the Conference may be transferred from one district to another, by negotiations between the presidents of said districts; provided the minister consents to the transfer; and, provided, the transfer paper has the signature of both presidents; and provided that it be presented to the Annual Conference to which the minister is to be transferred before it shall have closed its next session following the date of the transfer, and receive the sanction of the Conference, otherwise it shall not be valid; and provided further that if such transfer be not presented to the Conference to which it was given in accordance with the above rule, it must be returned to the Conference by which it was given before the close of the next succeeding session. Otherwise, the holder of the said transfer shall lose his/her right and privileges as a member of that Conference. The transfer, when made for a period not exceeding three years, and when the transfer of such is requested by the Board of Missions and approved by the Annual Conference granting the transfer, shall be viewed as temporary; and if the minister returns to his/her own Conference before or at the time specified, he/she shall, if his/her moral character stand fair, be again admitted to membership, and shall be entitled to all the privileges and claims he/she would have possessed had he/she not been thus transferred. All ministers holding transfers shall be responsible to the Conference giving such transfer, until the transfer shall receive the signature of the president of the Conference to which he/she designs to make his/her application.
2. Ministers coming from other denominations may be received and employed by the Annual Conference, provided they present suitable testimonials of good standing; and provided, also the Conference shall be satisfied with the faith, Christian experience and qualifications of the applicant; and provided also that the applicant be held on probation for a period of one year.
3. Every minister received by the President, during the interval of Conference, shall be subjected to a vote of the Conference before his/her name can be printed in the minutes as a stationed minister.
4. No minister or preacher who shall have been rejected by an Annual Conference shall be employed by its President.
5. No Conference shall withhold a testimonial, if the minister requiring it has complied with his/her engagements, and his/her moral character stands fair.
6. No Conference or President shall be obliged to employ any person as pastor or missionary unless his/her labors can be profitably directed, and no Conference shall employ or station a minister who has remarried after being divorced, unless he/she is the innocent party.

## Section Four. Stationing

1. The Annual Conferences, respectively, shall have authority to prescribe and regulate the mode of stationing the ministers and preachers within the district.
2. Each minister or preacher stationed shall have the right of appeal during the sitting of the Conference.
3. In stationing the ministers and preachers, the Annual Conference shall not give appointment to anyone who, in the opinion of a majority of the members, is incompetent to perform the duties thereof, or who, they may believe, will neglect the appointment; and such minister or preacher may be transferred by the Conference to the unstationed list. Nevertheless, no minister who, in the judgment of the Conference, is entitled to a superannuated status, shall be so transferred. An Annual Conference may loan ministers to the General Boards, Colleges and other institutions and work of the denomination at large from year to year; and such ministers shall be regarded as sustaining an active relation to the Conference.

Ministers may be loaned by one Annual Conference to another Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church for a period of two years. If the minister desires to serve longer in the Conference to which he/she has been loaned, he/she shall renew the loan or take a transfer to that Conference. Ministers may be loaned to kindred organizations annually. Ministers who are actively employed full-time in General Conference work may retain membership in their local Annual Conference. Special loan relations not herein provided for shall be left with each Annual Conference.

4. Each Annual Conference shall have authority to employ and appoint its ministers or preachers to serve as home missionaries in any unoccupied portion of its district for the purposes of preaching the Gospel therein, and organizing churches with a view to the formation of new churches under the *Constitution* and *Discipline* of the Methodist Protestant Church. Whenever from pecuniary inability to support a pastor, or any other cause which the Annual Conference may deem sufficient, the conversion of a church into a mission is desired, the Annual Conference may make such change.

The Annual Conference shall have authority to prescribe the duties of its home missionaries to provide for their support, and, in case of deficiencies, to allow them a proportionate part of the funds of the Annual Conference raised for missionary purposes.

The Annual Conference shall have authority to change or continue the appointment of said missionaries at its annual sessions, and to require the missionaries to make regular reports at said sessions of the success and progress of their labors and any other objects connected with their missions; and to prescribe such rules and regulations for the government of said societies, in conformity with the *Constitution* and *Discipline* of the Methodist Protestant Church as the Conference shall deem best, until the Conference shall, in its judgment of their circumstances, decide to set them off and organize them into regular churches.

## **Section Five.**

### **Superannuates and Unstationed**

1. No minister shall be given a superannuated relation, except by vote of the Annual Conference. These ministers shall retain the right of suffrage in the Annual Conference of which they are a member.
2. Unstationed ministers are not amenable to the Annual Conference once granted such relation. When transferred to the Unstationed List, it shall be the responsibility of Unstationed ministers to join a local church. They will have the duty to preach at officially assigned appointments; and to render assistance to the pastor of the local church of which they are members, consistent with other duties, provided always, that every Unstationed minister shall have the privilege of stating explicitly the amount of service they can consistently perform.
3. Ministers in good health, shall not be left without regular ministerial work for more than two years in succession. At the end of that time, they shall resume itinerant labors or be transferred to the Unstationed List. When so transferred, a certificate of their standing with the Annual Conference shall be issued. Should the minister wish to return to active status, a letter of recommendation, from the Official Board of the local church of which they are a member, shall be presented to the Ministerial Education and Relations Committee of the Annual Conference. After a year of probation the Committee may, upon due examination, recommend to the Annual Conference that the minister's name be added to the active list, and by vote of the Conference, the minister shall become amenable to the Annual Conference again with full rights and privileges.

(Note: The term "unstationed" applies to those ministers and preachers who are not members of an Annual Conference. A minister is one who has been ordained; a preacher, one who has not been ordained.)

### **ARTICLE V. DEACONESSES**

A deaconess is a woman who has been led by the Holy Spirit to devote herself to Christlike service under the direction of the Church, and who, having met the requirements prescribed by the Conference Deaconess Board, has been duly licensed, consecrated, and set apart by the District Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church. This office entitles a woman to serve the Methodist Protestant Church through any of its agencies in any capacity not requiring full clergy rights.

A commissioned or licensed deaconess shall be a member of a local church within the District which authorizes her service, and shall serve under the direction of her pastor unless assigned to serve under some other district or general agency. She may serve as a lay speaker or supply pastor, but shall not administer the sacraments nor solemnize marriages. She shall be a non-voting member of the Annual Conference.

The Annual Conference shall receive an annual Service Report from each deaconess. If a commissioned deaconess fails to file her annual report for two succes-

sive years, she shall be notified by the Conference Deaconess Board and requested to report at the next session of the Annual Conference. If she then fails to report, she shall be declared withdrawn from the Annual Conference, and her name shall be so entered in the Minutes of the Conference.

A deaconess shall surrender her credentials when she is no longer available for deaconess work in the Methodist Protestant Church, but may be reinstalled as a deaconess upon recommendation of the Conference Deaconess Board and approval by the Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church.

The personal life of a deaconess shall reflect the Biblical standards of holiness, morality, and honesty. If a deaconess acts in a way to bring reproach upon the office of deaconess, she shall be brought before the Conference Deaconess Board for investigation of the charges brought against her.

A pin identifying her as a Methodist Protestant Deaconess shall be presented to her at her ordination service.

**SECTION ONE**  
**THE DEACONESS BOARD**  
**OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

1. The purpose of the Board shall be to create and maintain interest in the deaconess work.
2. The duties of the Board shall be: (a) To review, evaluate, and report annually to the Conferences the names, work, and standing of all deaconesses within the Conference District, (b) To study and act upon credential received from Official Board, (c) To arrange for the licensing and consecration services for those candidates who have completed the necessary requirements of the Deaconess Board, (d) To initiate and develop plans and pamphlets for the promotion of deaconess work, (e) To examine candidates pursuing the prescribed Course of study, (f) To consider complaints and charges against deaconesses; to act as a Trial Court in case of a trial; and to make recommendations to the Annual Conference in regard to this aspect of their duty, (g) and, To assist candidates in acquiring the necessary course of study books.

Candidates pursuing the prescribed Course of study, (f) To consider complaints and charges against deaconesses; to act as a Trial Court in case of a trial; and to make recommendations to the Annual Conference in regard to this aspect of their duty, (g) and, To assist candidates in acquiring the necessary course of study books.

3. To meet annually and elect its officers, including an Executive Committee to act, if needed, during the interim of the annual meeting.
4. The Board's Annual Report to the Conference shall be printed in the Conference Minutes.
5. In every Annual Conference within which deaconesses may be employed, a Conference Deaconess Board, consisting of not less than nine nor more than

fifteen members, one-third of the number to be ministers, one-third to be laymen, and one-third to be women, shall be chosen by the Conference to exercise a general control of the interest of this form of work. The term of the members of the Board shall be for three years. One-third of the members the Board shall be chosen annually.

## SECTION TWO DEACONESS COURSE OF STUDY

### First Year:

*Foundations of Doctrine*, Harry E. Jessop

*Life of Christ*, Dr. James Stalker

*All About the Bible*, Sidney Collett

*Exploring the Old Testament*, W. T. Purkiser

Study these books in conjunction with the Holy Scriptures

### Second Year:

*A Right Conception of Sin*, Richard Taylor

*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, John Wesley

The Methodist Protestant *Discipline*

*A Handbook for Personal Soul Winning*, Chester Wilkins

*Binney's Theological Compend*, Amos Binney and Daniel Steele

*Exploring the New Testament*, Earle, Blaney, and Hanson

Study these books in conjunction with the Holy Scriptures

## ARTICLE VI DELEGATES TO GENERAL CONFERENCE

1. The Annual Conference shall assemble on the last day of the Annual Conference session, and proceed to elect by ballot the number of ministerial and lay representatives to the General Conference to which the district may be entitled as the first item of business. There shall also be an equal number of ministerial and lay alternates elected to serve in the event of disability on the part of the original representative.
2. The President and Secretary of the Annual Conference shall forward to the Secretary of the General Conference a certified list of representatives and alternates so elected within 90 days after the election.
3. Should the seat of any representatives to the General Conference be contested, the contestant shall give notice thereof to the person or persons returned by the Annual Conference within twenty days after the Conference shall have adjourned, stating the grounds of contest.
4. There shall be a Nominating Committee established for the purpose of nomi-

nating officers to serve on the General Conference Boards and Standing Committees. The offices of President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected by secret ballot by those delegates duly elected to represent their respective Annual Conferences, and who are sitting in session during the Quadrennial Session of the General Conference. This Nominating Committee shall be charged with the duty of drawing up a slate of qualified nominees to be voted on by the General Conference to fill the positions on its Boards and Standing Committees. This Committee shall consist of one (1) minister and one (1) layman from each Annual Conference duly elected during the election for General Conference delegates held the last day of the Annual Conference, the third year prior to the meeting of the General Conference Quadrennial Session. The General Conference President shall also be a member and be chairman of this committee's session.

**CHAPTER III**  
**GENERAL CONFERENCE**

There shall be a General Conference of this Church on the third Wednesday in May, in the year of our Lord, 2004, and on the third Wednesday in May every fourth year thereafter, in such place as the Conference may determine.

**ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP**

1. The General Conference shall consist of not less than sixteen delegates. There shall be an equal number of ministers and laymen. The ratio of representation from each Annual Conference district shall be one (1) minister and one (1) layman for each 150 persons or major fraction thereof in full membership, provided that every Conference district have at least one (1) minister and one (1) lay representative, until a different ratio shall be fixed by the General Conference.
2. The representative to which each district may be entitled shall be elected as the first item of business on the last day of the Annual Conference Session, by the ministers and delegates belonging to said Annual Conference. The ministers and delegates shall vote as one body, and a majority of the whole vote shall constitute an election. If a majority of the ministers or a majority of the delegates demand it, the ministers and delegates shall vote separately, and the concurrence of a majority of both ministers and delegates shall be necessary to constitute an election.
3. Any Annual Conference which fails to make its assessment as directed by the General Conference, or to make an earnest effort to collect the amount so apportioned in full each year, shall forfeit its representation in the ensuing General Conference. The published minutes of the Annual Conference, showing assessments and receipts, shall be full and sufficient evidence in case action becomes necessary under this provision.

**ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS**

1. The General Conference shall meet at ten o'clock a.m. on the day designated in the Constitution, and the President shall open the session with suitable religious exercise; or in his/her absence, the President pro tempore chosen by the Conference, shall lead.
2. A committee on credentials shall be appointed at the first sitting of the Conference, to which shall be referred all certificated or other evidence of election. This committee shall also hear all contested cases, and its report shall be subject to decision of the Conference.
3. Should representatives from an Annual Conference whose election has not been certified as required by Chapter 3, Article VI, paragraph 2, present themselves with other evidence of election by said Conference, their right to a seat in the General Conference, with the evidence presented, shall be referred to a special committee appointed for the purpose, who shall report to the General Conference whether or not the said representatives are entitled to seats.

4. The Executive Committee shall have authority to select a place for the meeting of the General Conference if no place has been designated by the preceding General Conference.

### **ARTICLE III. OFFICERS**

The General Conference shall elect a President by ballot at each quadrennial session from among its members. They shall also elect by ballot a General Conference Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer, all of whom shall hold office until their successors are elected.

Nominating and seconding speeches shall be limited to three minutes.

June 1st shall be the time when the salaries of officers of the General Conference shall begin and end; and in the case of change in the official personnel, the time when the respective offices shall be transferred and the terms of offices, with necessary audits, shall begin and end.

New officers shall assume their duties at the close of the General Conference at which they are elected.

#### **Section One. President**

1. The President of the General Conference, by virtue of his/her office, shall be a member of each one of the Annual Conferences, and when present at the Annual Conference session he/she shall have the privilege of participating in any and all the discussions, but not the right to vote, except in his/her own Conference.
2. He/She shall be recognized as the connectional officer of the denomination; and he/she shall be ex officio Chairman of the Executive Committee, and a member of all the Boards elected by the General Conference. He/She shall preside when present at all joint meetings of the various boards, and be president of whatever committee or council may be chosen to direct the forward movements of the denomination during the quadrennium. He/She shall travel throughout the church, visiting Annual Conferences, advising with Annual Conference presidents as to the work in their several districts, and giving special attention and care to the smaller conferences.
3. He/She shall call together for consultation the secretaries of the various boards, and together they shall formulate plans with a view of raising the budget in full, and the President of the General Conference shall direct in the execution of the same. He/She shall also have the power to call together pastors and laymen of any section of the church when he feels that their coming together will be wise.
4. He/She shall keep in view during the quadrennium the entire program adopted by the General Conference and see to it that the agencies entrusted with any part of the program perform their duties. He/She shall also have the power to call to his/her assistance, any person or persons, as his/her judgment may direct, to assist in conducting a campaign, or campaigns to teach our people the fundamental principles of Christian Stewardship.

5. The President of the General Conference may receive ministers into the Methodist Protestant Church when properly recommended, and may organize or reorganize former Methodist Protestant Churches in any district, state or locality where the need may arise. When a sufficient number of churches are so located as to merit the organization of another Annual or Mission Conference, he/she may, with the help of two or more other ministers, organize and set apart a new Annual Conference District, according to the provision of the *Discipline* governing organization of Annual Conferences.

### **Section Two. Secretary**

1. The Secretary of the General Conference shall be the custodian of all records belonging to that body. As soon as practicable before the date of the meeting of the General Conference he/she shall make out a roll of members of the General Conference from the certified lists forwarded to him/her by the President and Secretaries of the Annual Conferences, and upon the basis of that roll a prima facie evidence of membership the General Conference. The Secretary shall turn over to his/her successor all records in his/her hands and make a report of all his/her transactions to the General Conference. In the event of his/her absence from the first meeting of the General Conference a Secretary pro tempore shall be chosen.
2. The Assistant Secretary shall prepare and forward the approved report blanks to each Annual Conference to gather statistical information, and a tally sheet corresponding to the report blanks. The Executive Committee must approve any changes to the report form. These blanks and tally sheets shall be published by the Board of Publication and supplied to the Annual Conferences without charge. All Annual Conferences shall be required to use these blanks but not to the exclusion of any other blank they may care to use for their own records. A copy of the tally sheet shall be forwarded to the Assistant Secretary by September 1 annually, who shall as early as possible in January of each year compile and publish in the church papers the information thus obtained, together with such other statistical information as shall reflect the progress of the church.
3. The fiscal year as applied to statistics shall be from April 1st to March 31st. The report to the General Conference shall cover the four-year period ending March 31st preceding each quadrennial session.

### **Section Three. Treasurer**

1. The Treasurer of the General Conference shall be the custodian of all funds belonging to the Boards of Christian Education and of Missions. He/She shall also receive and disburse the funds appropriated to the use of the General Conference for administrative purposes. He/She shall give bond as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee and make a full report to the General Conference. He/She shall act under the direction of the Executive Committee, and in the event of a vacancy occurring in the office of Treasurer, the Executive Committee shall elect one to act until the meeting of the General Conference.

2. The fiscal year of the General Conference shall begin on April 1st and end on March 31st.
3. All reports shall carry in parallel columns by years a complete statement of receipts, disbursements, and balances or overdrafts.
4. The general benevolent program shall be designated “General Conference Interest.”
5. All funds collected in the churches for General Conference Interest shall be sent monthly to the Treasurer of the Annual Conference to which these churches belong. The Treasurers of the Annual Conferences shall remit to the Treasurer of the General Conference, not later than the 15th day of the month, all funds in hand for General Conference Budget at the end of the preceding month.
6. The budget system shall be used in apportioning, collecting, and distributing General Conference Funds; provided, first, the Boards through the Secretaries and other properly accredited representatives be permitted and encouraged to solicit personal contributions to be added to the funds of the respective Boards without becoming a charge against their percentage in the distribution of the budget; and, provided, second, that the Secretaries and other workers, whenever possible, shall visit churches and endeavor to stimulate them to pay in full their budget apportionment.

#### **Section Four. Executive Committee**

The General Conference shall elect at each quadrennial session four ministers and four laymen, one of whom shall be the President of the General Conference and Chairman *ex officio*, to constitute the Executive Committee of the Methodist Protestant Church.

1. The members of the Executive Committee may or may not be members of the General Conference then in session. Vacancies occurring in the membership of this Committee during the interim of the General Conference shall be filled by the Committee, and in the absence of the Chairman it shall designate one of its members to act as Chairman. The Secretary of the General Conference shall be an honorary member.
2. The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the President of the General Conference or at the written request of one-half of the Committee. The expenses of the meetings of the Executive Committee shall be paid out of the funds of the General Conference.
3. The Executive Committee shall have authority to select a place for the meeting of the General Conference if no place has been designated by the preceding General Conference.
4. The Executive Committee shall be vested with the authority of the General Conference during the interim of the General Conference, and shall have oversight of the general interest of the church represented by Boards elected by the General Conference.

The Executive Committee shall have the authority to fill any vacancies of officers, boards and committees not provided for otherwise.

5. The Executive Committee shall be vested with power to hear appeals from Official Boards or Annual Conferences for the purpose of interpreting and determining any question of law involved in its application to the matter at issue, when the case is properly transmitted by the President or Secretary of the Annual Conference; and the Committee may designate a time and place for hearing such appeals when argument or brief may be submitted by parties concerned, who shall be notified of the time and place of such hearing.

The Committee shall certify its opinion in proper form duly authenticated to the President of the Annual Conference and preserve a record of same.

6. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to interpret and construe the Constitution, Bylaws and Statutes of the Church in their relation and application to any question of interest and importance to any section or body of the Church, when the same is transmitted as in case of appeals.
7. The Executive Committee shall at each Annual Meeting prepare a schedule for the visitation of Annual Conferences by the editors, agents and secretaries of the church, so that at least one, and not more than two representatives shall be present during the entire session of each Annual Conference. The purpose of this visitation shall be to give information, suggest improved methods and inspire interest in all the general work of the Church; and each person so sent shall prepare himself to speak fully and impartially on all these interests. The expenses of these representatives shall be borne pro rata by all the interests. This arrangement shall not require the Executive Committee to send the agents of the Board of Publication to all the Conferences except by agreement with the Board of Publication.
8. The Executive Committee shall make a written report of all its work and actions to the General Conference. It shall also present in connection with this report a survey of the condition of the denomination, of its progress during the quadrennium, and its outlook. This report shall be presented after the opening exercises and the preliminary organization.
9. The Executive Committee shall appoint representatives to all denominational and interdenominational meetings of a representative character and transmit greetings thereto, as may be proper and in keeping with our character and progress; provided that this shall not be construed as giving the Executive Committee power to enter into any relations by representatives or delegates which have not been specifically sanctioned by the General Conference.

#### **Section Five. Other Officers**

The General Conference shall also elect at each quadrennial session the following:

1. Two Executive Secretaries of the Board of Missions, a man and a woman; and two Executive Secretaries of the Board of Christian Education.

**ARTICLE IV.**  
**BOARDS OF ADMINISTRATION**

The General Conference shall elect at each quadrennial session the following:

1. Five men and five women, four of whom shall be ministers, to constitute the Board of Missions of the Methodist Protestant Church.
2. Three ministers and three laymen, one of whom shall be the President of the General Conference, to constitute the Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Protestant Church.
3. Three laymen and three ministers, one of whom shall be President of the General Conference, to constitute the Board of Publication of the Methodist Protestant Church.
4. No one serving as a paid employee of any board shall be eligible to serve as a voting member of such board, except where membership is by virtue of office (such as General Conference President).

**Section One.**

**General Regulations**

**Duties Of Administrative Boards**

**And Their Officers**

1. It shall be the duty of the respective boards to see that the several editors, agents and secretaries perform their official duties creditably. Each board shall have power to remove any editor, agent or secretary under its supervision for incompetency or neglect of duty, and fill all vacancies created during the interim of the General Conference.
2. The editors, publishing agents, college agents and the secretaries of the Boards of Missions and of the Christian Education are hereby declared to be ex officio honorary members of the Annual Conferences which they may officially visit, so far as the General interests which they represent are concerned.
3. All officers of the Church shall be liable to removal from office for maladministration, and for neglect of official duties.
4. The salaries of all editors, agents, secretaries and others in the general work of the Church shall be fixed by the boards under whose direction they are employed.
5. The several boards shall present to the General Conference a complete financial statement, showing all monies received and disbursed during the quadrennium just closed, with an itemized estimate of their needs for the ensuing four years. The General Conference, after considering the estimates, the available resources of the Church, and the relative importance of the work of these boards, shall determine the amount to be assessed for these respective purposes, and shall apportion the amount required to the several Annual Conferences of the Church.

6. The distribution of money to the participating Boards and Interests shall be upon the basis of the actual amount of money received.

### **Section Two. Board of Publication**

1. The General Conference shall elect, at each quadrennial session, the Board of Publication of the Methodist Protestant Church, which shall consist of three laymen and three ministers, one of this number to be the President of the General Conference ex officio. The Editor and Publishing Agents shall be honorary members. This Board shall be incorporated under the title named, and shall be responsible to the General Conference.
2. Within thirty days after the adjournment of the General Conference, the Board of Publication shall meet and organize by the election of a President, Vice President and Secretary.
3. The Board shall also elect an Executive Committee of five members including the President of the Board and the President of the General Conference, which Committee shall have authority to act upon any matters requiring decision during the interim of the Board meetings.
4. The *Methodist Protestant Faith* shall be the official paper of the Methodist Protestant Church.
5. The Board of Publication shall decide, by a concurring majority vote of its members, what works shall bear the imprint of the denomination, and also fix the sale price of our copyrights and official paper, official organs, and Sunday School periodicals. The editing and production of all these publications shall be under the control of this Board, after consulting with the Curriculum Committee.
6. There shall be at least one meeting of the Board of Publication each year, the time to be fixed by the Board. Special meetings may be held on the call of the President, or a majority of the members of the Board.
7. The Board of Publication shall have the power to remove, for sufficient cause, any of its own officers and elect others in their stead, and to fill all vacancies in its own Board occasioned by death, resignation, or ceasing to be a member of the Methodist Protestant Church.
8. The Board of Publication shall determine what disposition shall be made of any surplus funds accruing from the business of the publishing houses.
9. The Board of Publication shall hire the editors of the official paper, the Sunday School periodicals, and agents. Any vacancies that may occur in these elective offices in the interim of the meeting of the General Conference shall be filled by the Board of Publication.
10. The Board of Publication shall submit a report to the General Conference, which shall cover the business of each year separately and for the full quadrennium, together with any other matters which its responsibility to the General Conference should require to be submitted.

11. The Board of Publication shall be authorized to purchase, build, repair, lease, sell, rent, mortgage or otherwise receive, procure, and/or dispose of property or other assets of said Board; provided, however, that the purchase or sale of real property be first authorized by a vote of the General Conference, and that proceeds of such sales be used for the benefit of the Methodist Protestant denomination.

### **Section Three.**

#### **Board of Missions Constitution**

##### **Article I**

The name of this organization shall be the “Board of Missions of the Methodist Protestant Church.”

##### **Article II**

This Board is the result of the action of the General Conference taken at its quadrennial session in May, 1928, to wit: “That this General Conference create a Board of Missions to which shall be entrusted the work now being done by the Union Board of Foreign Missionary Administration, the Board of Home Missions and the Woman’s Home Missionary Society.”

##### **Article III**

The purpose of this Board is the publication and extension of the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the continent of North America and in foreign lands, subject to the authority and direction of the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, and in accordance with the authorized standards and usages of said Methodist Protestant Church by the employment and support of ministers and missionaries, by the erection of church edifices, by the establishing and support of schools for secular and religious training and by other lawful and appropriate means.

##### **Article IV**

This Board shall meet as soon as practicable after the adjournment of the General Conference for the purpose of organization. Thereafter, it shall meet annually at the time and place designated by the Executive Committee of the General Conference. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Executive Committee of the Board of Missions. The expense of these meetings shall be paid by the Board of Missions upon the presentation of an itemized statement by the members. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

##### **Article V**

The membership of the Board of Missions shall be composed of five men and five women, four members to be ministers. They shall be elected by the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church and shall be amenable to that

body. The President of the General Conference and the President of the Missionary Convention shall be ex officio members of the board. The two Executive Secretaries hereinafter provided shall be honorary members.

## **Article VI**

### **Section 1**

The officers of the Board of Missions shall be President, Vice President and Recording Secretary. They shall be elected annually by the Board of Missions and shall hold office until their successors are elected.

### **Section 2**

There shall be two Executive Secretaries, a man and a woman, who shall be elected quadrennially by the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church.

## **Article VII**

The Board of Missions shall elect from among its members for a term of one year, two men and two women who, with the President of the General Conference and the President of the Missionary Convention, shall constitute an Executive Committee. The President and Recording Secretary of the Board shall be two of these members. The Committee shall meet quarterly or at the call of the President of the Board. The Executive Committee of the Board shall apportion the Budget for women's work to the Branches and perform all the functions of the Board of Missions in the interim of the Board meetings. Four members of this Committee shall constitute a quorum.

## **Article VIII**

The Board of Missions shall in furtherance of the purpose stated in its charter have authority to establish missions and direct their work; to build churches, schools, homes, orphanages and hospitals; to employ missionaries, pastors and workers, and supervise their labors; to fix the salaries of the Executive Secretaries and all other employees of the Board of Missions; to change and remove missionaries, ministers and workers as the interests of the Board may demand; to vacate the pulpits of any churches that are being supplied by the Board when, in the judgment of the Board, the security of the property is involved in the peace, happiness and success of such congregation. The Board shall make no further appropriations to churches which refuse to be governed by this law. The Board may loan money upon satisfactory security for building purposes, either with or without interest; make donations for building purposes and assist in the payment of debts incurred in securing property, provided that such loans and donations shall be made only when there is a probable surplus above expenses of the Board for the current year. The Board of Missions shall have authority to pension and support disabled ministers and missionaries and their dependent families who have served under this Board. This Board shall have power to buy, sell, hold in trust and administer all funds of the Board of Missions in accordance with the purpose of this organization.

The Board shall have supervisory authority over the Women's Missionary Branches and Auxiliaries. It shall receive and act upon the report of the Corresponding Secretaries of the Branches and arrange with them work to be undertaken. As far as practicable it shall follow the recommendations of the Woman's Missionary Convention.

The Board shall promote religious education, missionary information and encourage a benevolent spirit in the churches. It shall arrange for the publication of the Missionary periodicals and the annual and quadrennial reports of the Board. The Easter and Children's Day services shall be published annually in the interest of this Board.

At each Annual Meeting the following Committees shall be elected: Executive Committee, six members; Candidates Committee, four members; Investment Committee, five members; Safe Deposit Box Committee, two members; and such other agencies shall be established as the work may require.

The Board of Missions shall have power to enact such bylaws as may be necessary in regulating the duties of its officers, the Executive Secretaries, or other matters not in violation of its constitution.

#### **Article IX**

The Headquarters of the Board of Missions shall be located at 722 Hwy 84 West, Collins, Mississippi, 39428.

#### **Article X**

There shall be an Annual Missionary Convention of the Women of the Methodist Protestant Church which shall be held during the week preceding the Annual Meeting of the Board of Missions.

#### **Article XI**

This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board by a vote of two-thirds of its members present, subject to approval of the General Conference or its Executive Committee, provided such amendments shall have first been recommended by the Executive Committee of the Board or presented in writing at the preceding annual meeting.

#### **Article XII**

The Board of Missions shall be authorized to purchase, build, repair, lease, sell, rent, mortgage or otherwise receive, procure, and/or dispose of property or other assets of said Board; provided, however, that the purchase or sale of real property be first authorized by a vote of the General Conference, that proceeds of such sales be used for the benefit of the Methodist Protestant denomination.

The Board of Missions may act through its appointed agent to handle the purchase and sale of property on the various mission fields.

### **BYLAWS OF THE BOARD OF MISSIONS**

#### **I. Duties of Officers**

## **Section 1**

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board and the Executive Committee. He/She shall sign all vouchers with two Executive Secretaries and other legal papers with the Recording Secretary of the Board of Missions. He/She shall call all special meetings of the Executive Committee and perform such other duties as usually pertain to the office of President.

## **Section 2**

The Vice President, acting in the absence of President, shall have full power to exercise all functions pertaining to the office of President.

## **Section 3**

The Recording Secretary shall keep complete minutes of all meetings of the Board and the Executive Committee, and when possible shall present the minutes for approval before the adjournment of each meeting.

## **Section 4**

The Man Executive Secretary shall act under the direction of the Board of Missions and the Executive Committee. He shall send out notices of all meetings of the Board of Missions and the Executive Committee and prepare agenda for the same. He shall carry on all the work of the Board not otherwise provided for, and perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the Board of Missions or the Executive Committee.

## **Section 5**

The Woman Executive Secretary shall act under the direction of the Board of Missions and the Executive Committee. She shall conduct promotional work among the women and girls of the church; organize new branches and auxiliaries; keep in touch with branches through their officers and committees; provide the secretaries of the various departments with literature, suggested programs, thank offering boxes, membership certificates and information concerning missionary work at home and abroad. She shall advise as to the disposition of funds for scholarships and native workers; credit the interest on all perpetual memberships to the Branches and Auxiliaries from which these memberships are received, notifying them annually of the amount. She shall present a complete report of her own work and that of the Branches at the annual meeting of the Board of Missions. She shall edit the Missionary periodicals and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board of Missions or the Executive Committee.

## **Section 6**

The treasurer of the General Conference shall be the treasurer of this Board. He/She shall receive all monies belonging to the Board and shall receipt for the same. He/She shall keep an accurate account of all financial transactions making a monthly report to the Executive committee and an annual report to the Board of Missions. He/She shall provide the Executive Secretaries a monthly statement of all monies received and their destination. The Treasurer shall honor all orders of

the Board of Missions or Executive committee upon the treasury, and when called upon shall exhibit the books, vouchers and securities to the members of the Executive Committee, and to the Board at its annual meeting. He/She shall pay all bills, salaries and miscellaneous expenses upon vouchers signed by the President and the two Executive Secretaries. He/She shall disburse other funds as directed by the Board of Missions at its annual meeting or in the interim by the Executive Committee. He/She shall keep all monies of the Board for investments on deposit in such bank or banks as shall be approved by the Executive Committee and in the name of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Protestant Church to be withdrawn only upon vouchers signed by the President and the two Executive Secretaries. The Treasurer shall have custody of all securities and properties belonging to the Board. These securities shall be placed in a Safe Deposit box. The Treasurer shall also have authority to buy or sell upon approval of the Board of Missions or the Executive Committee. The account of the Treasurer shall be audited by a certified public accountant approved by the Executive Committee.

All annuity money shall be invested in interest-bearing securities until the death of the annuitant, or annuitants. The Treasurer and the Executive Secretaries shall be bonded in such amount as the Board of Missions shall deem necessary; the premium on said bond shall be paid by the Board of Missions.

## **II. Committees**

The Executive Committee shall call all special meetings of the Board of Missions, and shall perform all the functions of said Board in the interim of the Board meetings.

The Candidate Committee shall examine all applicants for work in the foreign field as directed by the Board of Missions and arrange for their medical examination.

The Investment Committee shall have power to make all investments subject to the approval or direction of the Board of Missions.

The Safe Deposit Committee shall accompany the Treasurer when he/she is given access to the Safe Deposit Box.

## **III. Annual Missionary Convention**

### **Section 1**

The purpose of the Annual Missionary Convention shall be to consider the work of the women in the missionary program of the church, to review the needs and opportunities in all mission fields, to conduct a school of methods for missionary workers and to engage in any other activity that will advance the Woman's Missionary work of the Methodist Protestant Church.

### **Section 2**

The membership of the Convention shall consist of the women members of the Board of Missions, the woman Executive Secretary, the officers of the Convention, the Committee on Program and Findings, the Committee on

Education, Secretaries of Departments, women members of the board of Christian Education, women members of the Executive Committee of the General Conference, the President and Corresponding Secretary and two elected delegates from each of the Conference Branches or alternates duly elected by the respective Branches, one of whom should be from the Young People's group.

### **Section 3**

The expenses of the women members of the Board of Missions, the Associate Executive Secretary, the officers of the Convention, and the chairman of the Committee on Education shall be met by the Board of Missions. The expenses of the Branch representatives shall be met by their respective Branches.

### **Section 4**

The Annual Convention shall elect a President, Vice President, Assistant Secretary, Departmental Secretaries, and two Standing Committees which shall be known as a Committee on Education and a Committee on Program and Findings, and they shall not serve for a period longer than four consecutive years. The Woman Executive Secretary shall be the Secretary of the Missionary Convention.

### **Section 5**

At each annual convention, the Committee on Education, consisting of five members, shall through addresses, round-table discussions, question boxes and exhibits give to the representatives of Branches suggestive programs, methods of raising money, ways of interesting women in the work and other information which will assist them in the activities of the Branches and Auxiliaries.

### **Section 6**

The Committee on Program and Findings shall consist of five members, three of whom shall be the officers of the Annual Convention. The Committee shall arrange the program of the Annual Convention with the purpose of presenting the entire work of the church both educational and missionary. It shall include in its program a department of methods which shall be under the direction of the Committee on Education. It shall review the whole missionary program of the denomination, its needs and opportunities, and present its findings in a report to the Annual Convention which, when adopted, shall be presented to the Board of Missions for review and adoption as far as may be practicable in the interest of the work.

### **Section 7**

The duties of the officers shall be such as usually belongs to their offices.

## **IV. Branches**

The women of any Conference district may form a Branch by adopting the Constitution and Bylaws provided by the Board of Missions, and electing the officers which it requires. All such organizations shall act under the direction of

the Board of Missions, through which they shall be amenable to the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church.

## **V. Auxiliaries**

An auxiliary may be formed by any number of women who shall adopt the Constitution and Bylaws provided by the Board of Missions, and elect the officers which it requires. All such organizations shall be represented in the Branch where they are located, and shall work in harmony with the Board of Missions, through which they shall be amenable to the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church.

## **VI. Amendments**

An amendment to these Bylaws may be made at any regular meeting of the Board of Missions, provided the amendment has been recommended by the Executive Committee or presented in writing at a previous annual meeting.

### **Section Four.**

## **Board of Christian Education Constitution**

### **Article I**

The General Conference shall elect at each quadrennial session a Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Protestant Church, continuing the Board of Ministerial Education, the Board of Education and the Board of Young People's Work. This Board shall be composed of three ministers and three laymen, one of this number to be the President of the General Conference ex officio. No person employed by or officially connected with any of our educational institutions shall be eligible to serve on this Board.

### **Article II**

The General Conference shall elect at each quadrennial session two Executive Secretaries of the Board, one in charge of the work of a Department of Educational institutions, and the other in charge of the work of a Department of Religious Education. Both Executive Secretaries shall be under the direction of the Board, and each shall be directly responsible to the Board for the conduct of the work in his/her Department. The Board in conjunction with the Executive Secretaries shall correlate the work of the two Departments wherever possible to promote efficiency and economy of administration. The Executive Secretaries shall be honorary members of the Board.

### **Article III**

The Board of Christian Education shall meet within thirty days after the close of the General Conference and organize by electing a President, a recording Secretary, and two other members who shall constitute the Executive Committee. This committee shall perform all functions of the Board in the interim of Board

meetings, making a record of its actions and reporting the same to the annual meeting of the Board.

The annual meeting of the Board shall be held at such time and place as the denominational Executive Committee shall designate. Special meetings shall be held at the call of the President or upon the written request of two members.

#### **Article IV**

The Board shall determine the amount of salary paid the Executive Secretaries and any other individuals it may be necessary to employ, and shall pay all administrative and traveling expenses.

#### **Article V**

The Board shall have power to remove the Executive Secretaries from office for just cause. If for any cause, either of the offices become vacant, it shall have power to fill it until the succeeding General Conference. It can also fill any vacancies occurring in the membership of the Board.

#### **Article VI**

The Executive Secretaries shall each be required to render to the Board a report of the activities of his/her Department, to submit an itemized statement of receipts and disbursements, and to present to the General Conference a review of the activities of his/her Department during the preceding quadrennium.

#### **Article VII**

The Board of Christian Education shall devote itself to the promotion and advancement of the entire cause of Christian Education in the denomination and shall have the oversight of the denominational program of Christian Education as carried forward by the various educational organizations and institutions of the Methodist Protestant Church. It shall cooperate with recognized interdenominational education agencies as far as possible.

#### **Article VIII**

The Board shall have power to enact all necessary bylaws regulating the duties of officers, and to make regulations concerning the beneficiaries under its care.

#### **Article IX**

The Board of Christian Education shall be authorized to purchase, build, repair, lease, sell, rent, mortgage or otherwise receive, procure, and/or dispose of property or other assets of said Board; provided, however, that the purchase or sale of real property be first authorized by a vote of the General Conference, and that proceeds of such sales be used for the benefit of the Methodist Protestant denomination.

**BYLAWS OF  
THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**I. Ministerial Education**

- A. It shall be the duty of the Executive Secretary and those associated with him/her in the work of the Board to present the claims of the Christian ministry as extensively as possible. Special attention shall be given to the group of Methodist Protestant students in our colleges and seminaries.
- B. The Board shall make loans to our ministerial students, when necessary, out of the fund provided for that purpose, said fund being known as the Ministerial Education Fund, and subject to the conditions specified herein.
- a) The Ministerial Education Fund shall consist of all monies and other property placed in the hands of the Board for the purpose of training Methodist Protestant young people, in the schools of the denomination for the Gospel ministry of the church. Such money or property shall be invested in approved securities and kept inviolate. The income from the investments shall be placed in the Distributive Fund which, with return payments from beneficiaries, shall be used as loans to our ministerial candidates.
- b) All assistance rendered young people preparing for the gospel ministry shall be in the form of loans without interest, to be returned to the Board after they have entered upon the work of the ministry. In case any person thus aided fails within one year to enter upon, and continue in the ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church, the entire amount of money loaned by the Board shall be due with interest at five per cent (5%) per annum from the time the several amounts were received. If any beneficiary of the Board shall purpose to leave the Methodist Protestant Church before having repaid the loan made by the Board, papers shall be withheld by the President of the Annual Conference of which such beneficiary is a member until such debt shall have been paid. No Annual Conference President shall give a letter of standing to any minister or preacher in his/her Conference until he/she knows that such minister or preacher is not indebted to the Board of Christian Education. Interest on these loans, at the rate of 5 percent, shall begin on the first day of July or next after the borrower leaves school, either permanently or temporarily. No interest will be charged the borrower during the years spent in the active ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church, provided the loans received from the Board of Christian Education are paid in full within ten years.
- c) All ministerial beneficiaries indebted to the Board for either their college or seminary training shall be entitled to a cancellation of fifty per cent (50%) of their loans, provided, they have spent five years in the ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church, and provided further, that they have paid fifty per cent (50%) of their loan within that period.
- d) A ministerial student shall not receive assistance from the Board except upon the recommendation of the Official Board of the Church to which he/

she belongs, or from the Annual Conference of which he/she is a member, and until the application provided by the Board is properly filled out and accepted.

- e) It shall be the duty of the Executive Secretary to advise annually the Presidents of the several Annual Conferences of all ministers or preachers employed by them who are in debt to the Board.

## **II. Student Loan Fund**

- A. The Student Loan Fund shall consist of all money or property placed in the hands of the Board for the purpose of assisting Methodist Protestant young people. The same shall be invested with approved security and kept inviolate. The income from the investments shall be placed in the Distributive Fund, which, with return payments from beneficiaries, shall be loaned to students approved by the Board.
- B. Student Loan beneficiaries shall not receive loans in excess of one hundred and fifty dollars, (\$150) a year. Upon leaving school, either temporarily or permanently, the loan shall become due and interest shall be charged at the rate of 4 per cent per annum, refunds to be made at the rate of \$25.00 per year.

## **III. General Education Fund**

The General Education Fund shall consist of all money and other property coming to the Board from any source, unless otherwise designated, and intended for the support of the Board's work. This fund shall be invested with approved security and kept inviolate. The income from the investments shall be used at the discretion of the Board to promote the educational interests of the denomination.

## **IV. Colleges and Seminary**

- A. The Board of Christian Education shall see that the affairs of our college and seminary are carefully and economically administered; that they are conducted in keeping with the Christian ideals of the Methodist Protestant Church and the educational standards established by the states in which they are located or by other recognized standardizing agencies; and shall make appropriations to them from available funds according to their needs.
- B. The Board shall have power to determine where schools are to be located, and, until it shall have been approved by the Board, no school, of any grade, shall receive aid or bear the name of the denomination.
- C. If at any time, the Board shall decide, by a two-thirds vote of its members, that the educational interest of the denomination will be best conserved by so doing, it shall have the authority of the denomination to merge any of the educational institutions under the authority of the denomination, or make such other disposition of them as will, in every case, advance the work of Christian education within the denomination. In the exercise of this authority the advice of the Executive Committee of the General Conference shall be obtained. The proceeds of such mergers, sales or transactions, if any, shall be placed in the General Education Fund of the Board, and the income thereof used to promote

the work as directed or determined by the Board.

- D. All money, securities, and other property hereafter given or bequeathed to or for the use of any educational institution under the authority of the denomination, shall be placed in the hands of the Board of Christian Education for investment, and shall be kept separate and distinct and designated by the name of the institution for whose use the same was given or bequeathed, and shall be invested in securities approved by the Board, and the interest accruing therefrom shall be paid as received to the institution for whose use the fund was given or bequeathed, except when in the discretion of the Board, it may be administered by the institution concerned.

### **V. Religious Education**

- A. The Board of Religious Education shall have oversight of the denominational program of religious education, (as carried forward by the Sunday Schools, Methodist Protestant Young People's Societies, Vacation and Weekday Church Schools, Methodist Protestant Bible Training Schools, Young People's Conferences and similar agencies.)
- B. The Board shall have the power to organize Annual Conference Councils of Religious Education in the various Annual Conference districts which shall be organized on the basis of the following Constitution:

#### **NAME**

The name of this organization shall be \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference Council of Religious Education of the Methodist Protestant Church.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Council shall be to promote the denominational program of Religious Education as proposed and endorsed by the Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Protestant Church, to coordinate more closely that program with the activities of the local churches within this Annual Conference, and to seek through education and training the extension of the Christian religion.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

- 1. The membership of this Council shall consist of the Officers and Members of the Executive Committee, the Pastors of the churches within the Annual Conference, and other representatives of the churches elected in the manner provided for in Section 2.
- 2. The "Committee on Religious Education" of each local church in the Annual Conference shall have the right to elect one or more representatives as members of this Council on the basis of one representative for each two hundred, or major fraction thereof, enrolled in the membership of the church school, as reported to the last preceding Annual Conference session, provided that every Methodist Protestant Church shall have the right to at least one, and not more than three, representatives. In churches which have no such organization, representatives may be elected by the Official Board.

The “Committee on Religious Education” as used in this section is interpreted as meaning that organization in each local church which is responsible to the church for the conduct of its total program of Religious Education as carried forward by the Sunday School, Christian Endeavor Societies, Vacation and Week-day Church Schools, and other similar agencies.

3. The Secretary of the Council shall be notified in writing of the election of the representatives provided for in Section 2.

### **OFFICERS**

1. The Officers of the Council shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, who shall be elected annually in the Annual Meeting of the Council, and shall hold office until their successors are elected. These officers may or may not be members of the Council at the time of their election.
2. These officers shall perform the duties usually pertaining to their respective office.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Officers of the Council, the President of the Annual Conference and two other members to be elected by the Annual Conference.
2. The Annual Conference may elect two members of the Executive Committee, one of whom shall serve for one year from the time of election and the other for two years, after which the Annual Conference may elect annually one member who shall serve for a term of two years. If the Annual Conference fails to so elect its complement of membership, additional members shall be elected in the Annual Meeting of the Council.
3. If and when this Council or the Annual Conference shall employ a Field Secretary or Director of Religious Education, such employed worker shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Committee.
4. The Executive Committee shall meet at least annually, preceding the Annual Meeting of the Council, and at other times upon the call of the President or upon the written request of two members of the Committee.
5. The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill vacancies and to perform all functions of the Council in the interim of Annual Meetings.
6. The Executive Committee shall report to the Annual Business Meeting of the Council and shall present a report on behalf of the Council to the Annual Conference.

### **MEETINGS**

1. The Council shall hold an Annual Meeting in connection with the sessions of the Annual Conference, or the Conference of Methodist Protestant Young People’s Societies, or at some other time and place as may be determined by the Executive Committee. Notice of the time and place of the Annual Meeting

shall be given to the members of the Council at least a month in advance of the proposed meeting.

2. The Council may hold such other meetings as it may consider desirable and necessary.

### **DEPARTMENTS**

1. The Executive Committee shall set up the following Departments of Work and shall appoint annually a Director for each department: Children's Work, Young People's Work, Adult's Work, Methodist Protestant Bible Training Schools, Vacation and Weekday Church Schools, Missionary Education and Stewardship, Educational Institutions and Student Life, and such other departments as may be deemed necessary from time to time, provided that two or more departments may be combined if and when this may seem desirable.
2. The Directors of these Departments shall work in close cooperation with similar Departments in the Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Protestant Church and shall assist in relating the program of this Board to the activities of the local churches in this Annual Conference. The Directors shall report annually to the Executive Committee of the Council.

### **METHODIST PROTESTANT BIBLE SCHOOLS**

1. The Department of Methodist Protestant Bible Schools shall conduct annually a Conference Methodist Protestant Bible Training School at a time and place to be determined by the Executive Committee.
2. The Conference Bible Training School shall be under the joint direction of the Director of Bible Training School and a Dean who shall be elected by the Executive Committee of the Council. The Director of Bible Training School shall have charge of business matters and of the organization and promotion of the school. The Dean shall have supervision of the curriculum, faculty, class work, daily program, etc. The Dean must be accredited by the Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Protestant Church and is responsible to this Board for the educational standards of the school and for the records of the school unless otherwise provided.
3. The Department of Bible Training School shall promote and encourage local leadership training classes and schools throughout the Annual Conference in conformity with the standards of the Board of Christian Education.
4. The Department of Bible Training Schools in cooperation with the Department of Young People's Work, shall have general oversight of the Young People's Conferences, Boys' and Girls' Camps, and similar leadership enterprises held within the Annual Conference territory and shall assist in maintaining the denominational standards in such activities.

### **FINANCES**

1. Upon the recommendation of the Council, it shall be the duty of the Annual Conference to make provision for financing the work of the Council, but if

such provision shall be found inadequate, the Council may levy a special assessment upon the educational agencies of the local churches constituent to the Council, or it may call for special offerings.

2. All funds of the Council shall be held in trust by the Treasurer of the Council and shall be paid out only upon the authority of the Executive Committee or upon the written order of the President and Secretary.
3. The accounts of the Treasurer shall be audited annually by a committee appointed for this purpose by the Executive Committee.

## **AMENDMENTS**

The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present in any Annual Meeting of the Council, provided notice of the proposed amendment shall have been submitted in writing to the Executive Committee prior to the date of the Annual Meeting, and provided further that such amendment shall be approved by the Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Protestant Church before becoming effective.

### **Section Five.**

#### **Board of Administration**

1. The name of this Board shall be the Board of Administration of the Methodist Protestant Church.
2. The following shall constitute the membership of the Board: the members of the Executive Committee; the members of the Board of Missions; the members of the Board of Christian Education; the members of the Board of Publication; the Secretary of the General Conference; the Laymen's Fellowship Officials; the President of the Woman's Missionary Convention; the Treasurer of the General Conference; the Presidents of Schools and Colleges; the Executive Secretary and the Associate Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions; the Executive Secretary and the Associate Executive Secretary of the Board of Christian Education; the editors of the Methodist Protestant Faith and of the Sunday School literature; and the presidents of the Annual Conferences.
3. The President of the General Conference shall be the presiding officer.
4. The Board shall meet annually, preferably in relation to the time of the annual meetings of the Board of Missions, the Board of Christian Education, and the Woman's Missionary Convention.
5. It shall be the duty of the Board of Administration to review the entire field of the Denomination in all its interests, in its broader needs and responsibilities, making such inquiry into the affairs of the various Boards, agencies and activities as may furnish it with informational data by means of which it may arrive at proper decisions. This Board shall fix an annual program not inconsistent with the purpose of the General Conference for the Denomination at large, outline a message to the entire Church and seek to correlate the affairs of the Church in its broader phases.

6. This Board shall have authority to review the operation of the General Conference budget; to hear appeals on the part of participating agencies concerning their share of the budget; to make such percentage revisions as may be found necessary to correct apparent inequities; and to withhold participation in the budget from any agency of the Denomination which may indulge in unauthorized solicitation or whose course of action may be adjudged out of harmony with the provisions of the budget.
7. The expenses of the members of this Board shall be borne by the agency each may represent on the Board.

### **Section Six.**

#### **Laymen's Fellowship**

1. The name of this organization shall be "The Laymen's Fellowship of the Methodist Protestant Church" and consist of all men of the church
2. The officers of the general denominational Laymen's Fellowship shall be a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary-Treasurer. These officers shall be elected by the General Conference.
3. The officers of the general denominational Laymen's Fellowship together with the President of the General Conference shall constitute the Board of Officers.
4. It shall be the duty of the Board of Officers to promote in each Annual Conference the organization of a Laymen's Fellowship and to prepare for such organizations, as occasion may demand, programs of activities.
5. The Annual Conference Laymen's Fellowship shall be composed of representatives, one from each charge in the Annual Conference.
6. The officers of the Annual Conference Laymen's Fellowship shall be a President and a Secretary-Treasurer.
7. It shall be the duty of the President to act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Officers of the general denominational organization and to promote the program of activities through sub-district and local organizations within his/her own Annual Conference district.
8. The Annual Conference district shall be divided into sub-districts. Each sub-district shall choose, at a sub-district meeting, a leader for the Fellowship activities within its bounds. In case a sub-district fails to make such choice, such leader may be elected by the Annual Conference Laymen's Fellowship.
9. A key-man shall be selected as the leader in each local church.

## CHAPTER IV

### JUDICIAL PRINCIPLES

#### Article I. Trial of Unstationed Ministers, Preachers, and Members

Note. The term “unstationed” applies to those ministers and preachers who are not members of an Annual Conference, but amenable to the Official Board where they belong. A minister is one who has been ordained; a preacher, one who has not been ordained.

1. In all cases of personal offense between brethren, the direction of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17, shall be pursued:

“Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.”

In default of pursuing the above course here recommended, no charge shall lie against a minister or member.

2. Where there is a dispute between two or more members of our church concerning the payment of debts or other business matters, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the pastor shall recommend to the contending parties a committee of arbitration; one of whom is to be chosen by the plaintiff, another by the defendants, these two to choose a third, a majority of whom shall decide the case.
3. When a minister or member of our church fails in business and applies for the benefit of the insolvent or bankrupt laws, or makes an assignment or transfer of his/her property, and there is reason to believe that he/she has been guilty of dishonesty, or if he/she require an investigation, a committee shall be appointed as in other cases, and if there is evidence of intentional fraud, the said minister, preacher, or member shall be dealt with as in other cases of immorality. When it shall appear there is no proper ground of censure, the committee shall furnish a certificate of honorable acquittal.
4. When any member of the church is reported to the pastor as walking disorderly, he/she, in connection with the advisory committee, shall make inquiry respecting the truth of the report, and if they are satisfied that the person accused is by his/her conduct bringing reproach upon the church, the pastor, by the advice of the committee, shall admonish the offender to repent. If the person admonished brings forth fruits meet for repentance, no further notice shall be taken of the case; but if he/she persists in his/her sinful conduct, after repeated admonitions, the committee shall then prefer charges, and proceed according to the directions contained in the sections following.

5. When a charge of any offense recognized by the thirteenth article of the Constitution is preferred against an unstationed minister or preacher, the pastor, or in his/her absence, any other minister belonging to a Methodist Protestant Church whom he/she may select, after duly notifying the person accused shall appoint a committee of not less than three nor more than five ministers or preachers, before whom the accused shall appear at the time and place designated for the trial which shall be in the neighborhood in which the offense is alleged to have been committed, or as near thereto as may be convenient.

The accused, as well as the prosecutor, may object to any member of the committee on account of his/her having prejudiced the case, being prejudiced against the accused, or of being interested in the decision. The pastor, or presiding officer in the case, shall be confined to the limits of the district in his/her selection of ministers or preachers to serve on the committee. During any trial, the ministers, preachers and members of the church may attend.

6. Accused class leaders, stewards, trustees, exhorters and private members shall be tried by a committee appointed in the following manner, viz.: The pastor, who shall preside at the trial, or in his/her absence, any other Methodist Protestant minister or preacher the church may name (who shall report in due form the entire proceedings in the case to the pastor), shall appoint two persons in full membership and good standing, over the age of twenty-one years. The church of which the accused is a member shall select two more in like standing, and these four persons, when chosen shall select a fifth, which five shall constitute a competent court of trial. Where five cannot be obtained in any church, three members appointed on the principle above shall suffice. Where this number of members cannot be obtained in any church, the officiating minister or preacher, by consent of the church of which the accused is a member, may summon members from any adjoining Methodist Protestant church. The accused shall have the right to challenge any member, not exceeding that of the original committee. In all cases where written testimony is to be taken, due notice thereof shall be given to the opposite party of the time and place of taking such testimony in view of cross-examination. This shall likewise apply to ministers and preachers. The presiding officer in any trial shall be the judge of all questions of law that may arise in the case.
7. A secretary shall be appointed by the committee to take regular minutes of the evidence and proceedings of the trial; which, together with a copy of the decision, and all other documents belonging to the trial, shall be preserved by the pastor, who shall furnish each of the parties with a copy of the decision, if required.
8. If the accused be found guilty of the offense, the committee, or a majority thereof, shall, in their decision, name the penalty to which the accused shall be subjected; and the president or pastor shall carry it into effect. No higher penalty shall be inflicted for maladministration, or neglect of official duty, than removal from office. When this is done, the person so removed shall not fill the

same office again without the approval of the Official Board or Annual Conference having jurisdiction.

9. In every instance of condemnation the accused minister, preacher or member determining to appeal from the decision of the committee shall signify in writing to the presiding officer within twenty days after the close of the trial, his/her determination to appeal, and in default thereof his/her appeal shall not lie.
10. If an accused minister, preacher or member evade trial by absenting himself, after due notice shall have been given him, the investigation before the committee shall nevertheless, be instituted, and the testimony heard; and if a majority of the committee find him/her guilty of the charge or charges, the presiding officer shall carry the sentence into effect.

## **Article II. Trial Of Pastors And Other Itinerants**

1. Should the accused person be the pastor, or minister not answerable to an Official Board the official notifications, appointment of the committee and similar duties shall be performed by the president of the Annual Conference, or such minister as he/she may appoint for the purpose. Over all committees which the president may convene for the trial of a minister or preacher, he/she shall preside as chairman, if present, preserve order and regulate the proceedings according to the rules of *Discipline*. If absent, the minister whom he/she may appoint as his/her proxy shall preside. In case of the trial of charges against a preacher, the judgment of the Annual Conference can affect his/her relations to that body only, the Official Board of the church of which he/she is a member being the body to which he/she shall be amenable for his/her moral conduct.
2. Every minister who appeals to the Annual Conference from a decision of a Committee of Trial, shall be permitted to appear before the Conference, and state the reason of his/her appeal. When the Conference shall have decided that his/her appeal is valid, then all the documents belonging to the trial had before the committee shall be read, after which his/her accuser shall be permitted to support his/her charges in the presence of the appellant. The appellant may in turn make his/her reply, which shall close the proceedings on both sides, unless the Conference grant the accuser permission to speak the second time. The appellant and accuser shall then retire, and the Conference shall decide, and furnish the appellant with a copy of the decision. In all trials on appeals, the court shall not go beyond the record of the court below, but shall decide in view of the pleadings and evidence therein contained; unless the accused shall have given notice at the time he/she signified his/her intention to appeal, that he/she would request the upper court to open the whole merits of the case, when new testimony may be introduced, and the court shall give its own and final decision in the case. When the appeal is tried upon the record of the court below, the decision shall acquit the accused, or confirm the judgment rendered below, or order a new trial. These rules shall apply to appeals to Official Boards.
3. Should charges be preferred against the president of an Annual Conference, the committee shall call upon one of the elders of the Conference to make the offi-

cial notifications and to preside at the trial in accordance with the rule provided for the trial of ministers.

### **Article III. Trial Of Churches**

1. When any church shall, by an official act or declaration, evince a determination not to conform to the provisions of the *Constitution* and *Discipline*, it shall be the duty of the pastor, or if there be no pastor, any minister of the Annual Conference shall be appointed by the Annual Conference President, to make every reasonable and proper effort to induce said church to conform; but if these efforts prove unavailing, the pastor or minister appointed by the Annual Conference President, shall nominate a committee of five members, over the age of twenty one years, none of whom shall be a member of the accused church, but of some other church of the Annual Conference of which the accused is a component part, who shall meet at the place where said church holds its regular worship, and shall constitute a competent court of trial, and shall decide the case; provided, that said church, by its representative, shall have the right to challenge any number not exceeding that of the committee, and the right to appeal to the Annual Conference.

It shall be the duty of the pastor or minister to preside at the trial. The committee shall appoint a secretary, who shall take regular minutes thereof, and convey the same to the Annual Conference in case of an appeal. The accused church shall be furnished with a copy of the charges at least twenty days before the time of trial. If any church be found guilty of a departure from the *Constitution*, or the regulations of the *Discipline*, and will not agree to conform, it shall be declared extinct, and property be transferred to the Annual Conference in which boundary it lies. If the accused be a church, the president of the Annual Conference shall conduct the trial as above, and said church shall have the right of challenge, and of appeal to the ensuing Annual Conference.

**CHAPTER V**  
**FORMS OF**  
**OFFICIAL CHURCH PAPERS**

**1. Release from a Church**

\_\_\_\_\_, the bearer, is hereby released from any further obligation to continue his ministerial labors in \_\_\_\_\_ Church; and is also entitled to this testimony of his good moral standing in the Methodist Protestant Church.

\_\_\_\_\_, President.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**2. License to Exhort**

\_\_\_\_\_, a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Methodist Protestant Church, is hereby authorized to exercise himself, on all proper occasions, in exhortation, and calling sinners to repentance.

This license to be renewed annually.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the Official Board of

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**3. License to Preach**

\_\_\_\_\_, a member of the Methodist Protestant Church, being duly examined by this Official Board on gifts and acquirements, is hereby authorized to preach the Gospel of Christ.

This license to be renewed annually.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the Official Board of

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Renewed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman.

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

#### 4. License to Administer the Ordinances

\_\_\_\_\_, having been duly examined and approved by the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, is hereby given authority for one year to administer the Lord's Supper, to baptize and to celebrate matrimony.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the Annual Conference.

\_\_\_\_\_, President.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Elder's Credentials

To all whom it may concern, greeting:

Be it known, that \_\_\_\_\_, having been elected by the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference of Ministers and Delegates, was ordained for the office of Elder in the Methodist Protestant Church, and he/she is hereby authorized by said Conference, so long as his/her life and doctrine accord with the Holy Scriptures, to administer the Lord's Supper; to baptize; to celebrate matrimony, and to feed the flock of God, taking the oversight not as a lord over God's heritage, but being an example to the flock.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference.

\_\_\_\_\_, President.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Certificate of Church Membership

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_, the bearer hereof, is an acceptable member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Methodist Protestant Church in \_\_\_\_\_ and having requested a transfer of membership to the \_\_\_\_\_ Church in \_\_\_\_\_ is affectionately commended to the fellowship of said Church. When the Church receiving this certificate acknowledges receipt of the same, his (her) membership in this church shall cease. This certificate is not valid after six months.

\_\_\_\_\_ Charge

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_, Pastor.

Address to the person receiving a certificate:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_: As you are about to move from the vicinity of this church with

which you have been connected, it is most important that you should, as early as possible unite yourself to some church of your own denomination, and if there be none accessible, to seek such church relations as will promote your highest spiritual good. It is the most sincere desire of your pastor that you may constantly enjoy the favor of God; that your faith and diligence may increase, and that you may be kept by the power of God blameless into eternal life.

\_\_\_\_\_, Pastor.

**7. Certificate for an Unstationed Minister or Preacher Who Desires to Remove**

The bearer, \_\_\_\_\_, an unstationed minister of the Methodist Protestant Church, desiring to remove from this Charge, is entitled to receive from the undersigned this certificate of his/her good standing.

\_\_\_\_\_, Pastor.

\_\_\_\_\_, Charge. Date \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Certificate for a Stationed Minister or Preacher Who Desires to Remove to Another District**

The bearer, \_\_\_\_\_, having fully complied with his/her engagements to the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference, his/her moral character standing fair, and being desirous of removing to another district, is entitled to this certificate of his/her good standing.

\_\_\_\_\_ President of the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Transfer**

The bearer, \_\_\_\_\_, of the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference, having consented to be transferred to the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference, is hereby duly transferred.

\_\_\_\_\_ President of the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ President of the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Certificate of Election To Annual Conference**

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_, was duly elected a delegate to the Annual Conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District, to sit in session on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, by the Official Board of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman.

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

### To General Conference

\_\_\_\_\_, was duly elected by the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference, held on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_, a ministerial (or lay) representative to the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, to sit in the City of \_\_\_\_\_, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ President.

\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary.

### 11. Certificate of Admission to the Methodist Protestant Church

On the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ was admitted to membership in the Methodist Protestant Church.

Signed in behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, by \_\_\_\_\_, Pastor.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

You have been loved, redeemed and regenerated by God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. On profession of faith and consecration to the service of God, you have been honored by admission to membership in the Methodist Protestant Church. You should daily study your Bible, and make yourself acquainted with the little book which you now hold in your hand. Determine that you will be two things, in the order in which they are herein named.

1st. I will be an intelligent Christian.

2nd. I will be an intelligent member of the Methodist Protestant Church.

### Form Marriage Register, to be kept by the Local Church

Man's Name	Woman's Name	When Married	Where Married	Minister's Name
L____ S____	E____ R____	December 5, 1830	In the house of N____ M____	S____ W____

### Form of Register of Baptism, to be kept by the Local Church

Name	When Born	When Baptized	Parent's Name	Minister's Name
L____ S____	September 5, 1830	December 9, 1830	D____ E____	F____ A____

### PASTOR'S RECORD

No.	Names	Probation	Reception	
			Election	Certificate
1	J____ B____	January 1, 20__	January 1, 20__	—
2	S____ B____	January 1, 20__	—	January 1, 20__
3				
4				
5				
6				

1. When a name is received on probation, enter the date under the word "Probation."
2. When a Probationer is elected to full membership, enter the date under "Election."
3. When a name is received by Certificate, enter the date under "Certificate."
4. When a person dismissed by certificate returns, enter the word "Returned" under "Election" and the date under "Certificate."
5. When a person dismissed by removal returns without certificate, enter the date under "Probation and Election," and under certificate enter the word "Returned."
6. When a woman's name is changed by marriage, enter, after her maiden name, her name by marriage in brackets.
7. Let the numerals under "No." commence with the organization of the Church, and continue on with its history, so as to show the total number of names received.

## PASTOR'S RECORD

No.	Minister's Name	Discontinuance	
		Manner of	Date of
1	J ___ F ___	Deceased _____	December 2, 20___
2	(Apptd. March, 20___	Removed _____	January 1, 20___
3	(Apptd. March, 20___	Discontinued _____	July 1, 20___
2	(Apptd. March, 20___	By Certificate _____	December 1, 20___
1	J ___ Z ___	Expelled _____	September, 20___
2	(Apptd. March, 20___	Dropped	January 1, 20___
3	(Apptd. March, 20___		
4	(Apptd. March, 20___		
0	E ___ E ___		
0	(Apptd. March, 20___		
0	(Apptd. March, 20___		

1. Let the second "No." represent the number received by each minister.
2. The word "Removed" signifies informal removal.
3. The word "Discontinued" signifies not elected to full membership.
4. The word "Dropped" signifies neglect of duty and ceasing to claim membership.
5. The perpendicular spaces represent one-half of the room they should occupy in the Register.
6. The Blank under "Discontinuance" represents the number of members.

**CHAPTER VI**  
**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**BOUNDARIES**

**Conferences Entitled to Representation:**

The Alabama Conference District includes all of the State of Alabama.

The Mississippi Conference District includes all of the State of Mississippi.

The Louisiana Conference District includes all of the States of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Michigan.

The Belize Conference District includes all of the country of Belize.

**RITUAL  
OF THE  
METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH**

# RITUAL

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## THE ORDER OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

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1. Hymn.
2. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer.
3. Responsive Reading from the Psalms, concluding with the *Gloria Patri*.
4. Reading of the Scriptures.
5. Hymn.
6. The Offering.
7. The Sermon.
8. Prayer.
9. Hymn.
10. The *Doxology*.
11. The Benediction.

**ARTICLE I**  
**THE ORDER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF**  
**THE LORD'S SUPPER**

In order to secure a more uniform and respectful observance of the Lord's Supper, it is earnestly recommended that in all our churches there shall be suitable vessels for use in the administration of this ordinance, selected by the stewards or other officers, which shall be used for this purpose only.

The Lord's Supper should be administered as often as will give opportunity to all the members of partaking once a quarter.

On these solemn occasions let there be no hurry, no confusion. Let meditation, prayer and gratitude to God for the unspeakable gift of His Son, occupy every soul.

Let those who have scruples concerning receiving the Lord's Supper kneeling, be permitted to receive it either sitting or standing.

**HYMN**

**PRAYER**

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS** (in concert)

And God spake all these words, saying,

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- V. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
- VI. Thou shalt not kill.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

### LESSON FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT HYMN

On the day appointed for the celebration of the Lord's Supper an appropriate discourse may be delivered, after which a collection shall be taken up for the relief of the poor.

While the Stewards are making the collection, let the minister repeat one or more of the following passages:

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**

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. **2 Corinthians 9:6,7**

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? **1 John 3:17**

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. **Psalms 41:1**

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**

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be... ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. **1 Timothy 6:17-19**

The minister and the congregation shall then read responsively.

**Minister:** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

**Congregation:** For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

**Minister:** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

**Congregation:** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

**Minister:** But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

**Congregation:** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Minister:** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

**Congregation:** He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

**Minister:** And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

**Congregation:** Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. Isaiah 53:1-10.

Then shall be said the Apostle's Creed by the minister and the people standing:

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 Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. The third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on 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 Ghost, the holy \*catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, Amen.

\*universal

Then the officiating minister shall repair to the table, uncover the elements, and address the communicants in the following words:

Dearly beloved, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, and became the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world. In the same night He was betrayed He did institute this ordinance, and commanded His followers to continue the same in commemoration of His death until He come again. You, therefore, who are striving to walk in all His commandments blameless, will now accompany us in a petition to the throne of grace, that we may worthily commemorate the death and passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

Almighty and most merciful God, we do not presume to approach this thy table trusting in our own righteousness, but in the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not worthy, O Lord, to gather up the crumbs from under the table, for we have sinned and come short of thy glory! We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. Have mercy on us, O God, our heavenly Father; forgive our sins, and restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, through Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us by his own precious blood.

Grant unto us, O our heavenly Father, the assistance of the Holy Spirit while we partake of these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son, our Savior's holy institution, in grateful remembrance of his death and passion.

May our hearts be filled with love and gratitude for the unspeakable gift of thy Son, in the redemption and salvation of our souls.

May we be melted into tenderness on account of the great love wherewith Christ hath loved us and given himself for us.

May we ever remember his agony and bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane, his cruel mockings and scourgings in Pilate's Hall, and his ignominious death on the cross.

May we have redemption through his blood which was shed for the remission of our sins and, being justified by faith in him, be filled with love, have grace to keep all thy commandments, and show forth the Lord's death till He comes.

And finally, may we with all the Israel of God, be brought to inherit eternal life through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Response by the people. Amen.

### **MINISTER PARTAKES**

Here the minister may partake of the elements; then shall be said the Lord's Prayer.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. 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 following invitation shall be given.

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 in faith, and partake of this ordinance to your comfort.

The minister shall then distribute the bread to the communicants, saying:

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was broken 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.

While the minister is distributing the bread he/she may repeat one or more of the following passages:

God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. If God so loved us we ought also to love one another.

Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

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.

Blessed is He that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

The minister shall likewise take the wine, and give to each communicant, saying:

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.

While serving the wine, the minister may repeat one or more of the following passages: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, be glory and dominion forever. Amen.

The singing of an appropriate verse or two of a hymn by the congregation might be so timed as to serve for a signal to those who have communed to rise and retire to their places in the church, and give opportunity for the remaining communicants to repair to the table.

When all have partaken, the service shall be concluded with extempore prayer and the Apostolic benediction.

## ARTICLE II

### THE ORDER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM

Infant baptism should be administered monthly in all our churches and more often when necessary.

In infant baptism, let it be an invariable rule to require the attendance of the parents of the child, unless in any particular case the minister should deem such attendance impossible.

Let every adult person, and the parents of every child to be baptized, have the choice of sprinkling or pouring.

Baptism by the mode of immersion may be used whenever it is a matter of conscience of the candidate, but the preferred modes of the Methodist Protestant Church are baptism by sprinkling or pouring.

Parents, whose children have been baptized, should attend after service, and inform the minister of the age of the child or children baptized that he/she may enter their names on the church register.

This church disproves of rebaptism.

#### BAPTISM OF INFANTS

*When the child to be baptized is brought before the minister, he/she shall say to the parents:*

Dearly beloved, you are now about to dedicate your child to the service of the living and true God, who hath said: "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; and the promise of acceptance and salvation is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off". By this act you acknowledge the high claim of Almighty God to the life and services of your offspring, and your own obligations to the Most High, to your infant, and to the Church of Christ, to guide its feet into the paths of righteousness, and to raise it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

You will need all the wisdom and grace you can acquire to enable you to discharge this your imperative duty; we therefore exhort you to pray to God constantly so to enlighten your minds and influence your hearts that you may be enabled by precept and example to lead your children in the true and right way; and induce them to glorify God in their souls and bodies, which is their reasonable service.

Do you now solemnly promise that you will diligently endeavor to bring up this child (or these children) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and that you will earnestly pray to God for the assistance of His Holy Spirit, that you may effectually do the same

**Answer:** We do.

Let us pray.

Almighty and most merciful God, Father of our spirits, former of our bodies, Redeemer and Savior of our souls, we thank Thee that Thou hast made it our privilege to dedicate our children to Thy service, that they may be lively members of the Church and heirs of eternal life.

We beseech Thee, O our heavenly Father, to bestow upon the parents of this child grace whereby they may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and Godly fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives; that they may train their child in all Godly discipline and admonition that it may be a worthy member of the Church of Christ. Grant, O Lord, that this child may die unto sin, and live unto righteousness; and, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in love, may safely pass through this transitory life, and finally come to the haven of eternal repose, there to dwell with Thee, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, grant that whosoever is dedicated to Thee by our office and ministry may be endued with heavenly virtues, and ever remain in the number of Thy faithful children, and be made a partaker of eternal life through Thy mercy, O blessed God, who dost live and govern all things, world without end. Amen.

**The people shall then stand up, and the minister shall say:**

Hear the words of the Gospel as recorded by St. Mark: "They brought young children to Christ that He should touch them, and His disciples rebuked those who brought them: but when Jesus saw it He was much displeased, and said: 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, shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them."

The minister shall then take the child in his/her arms, and say to the parents of the child:

Name this child,

**Repeating the given name the minister shall say when baptizing:**

I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The Lord bless this child, and grant (him) eternal life.

**The minister shall then address the parents presenting the child as follows:**

Dearly beloved, your child has now, by consecration and the holy office of baptism, been solemnly set apart to the service of God. You have acknowledged your duty to rear it as a Christian, and you promised to perform that duty. It now remains for us to exhort you to be faithful, and to assure you that so long as you remember your vow, and keep the covenant you have made, you may claim the promise of Him who hath said: "I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.

## **BAPTISM OF SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS**

When the persons to be baptized present themselves, the minister shall say:

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as our Savior, Jesus Christ, did commission His disciples to go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that, of His bounteous goodness, He will grant to these persons, now to be baptized, grace whereby they may serve Him acceptably, be lively members of the Church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and heirs of eternal life.

The minister shall then demand of each of the persons to be baptized, severally:

2. Do you believe in the existence of God, and that He is a rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him?

**Answer:** I do.

2. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and Savior of the world?

**Answer:** I do.

3. The Holy Scriptures declare that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but these same Scriptures give assurance that, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; are you now determined by the aid of divine grace to forsake every evil way, to look to Christ as your only and all-sufficient Savior, and to walk in all the commandments of God?

**Answer:** I am.

4. It is made our duty to search the Holy Scriptures, and to attend on all the ordinances of the house of God; will you endeavor to be faithful in the discharge of these duties?

**Answer:** I will, by the assistance of God's Holy Spirit.

**Let us pray.**

Almighty, everlasting God, whose most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood, and gave commandment to His disciples that they should go teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; regard, we beseech Thee, the supplications of this congregation, and grant that the persons now to be baptized may receive the fullness of Thy grace, and ever remain in the number of Thy elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O merciful God, grant through the sanctification of Thy Spirit, and their belief of the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, that the carnal mind in them may be destroyed and that they may be created anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works, and have their fruit unto holiness, and obtain everlasting life.

Grant that they, being dedicated to Thee by our office and ministry, may receive grace whereby they may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and Godly fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives; and being endued with heavenly virtues and strengthened by Thy grace, may have victory, and be eventually rewarded, through Thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live and govern all things, world without end. Amen.

The minister shall then take each person to be baptized by the right hand; shall ask the given name, and then, repeating the name, baptize (him) saying:

I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The minister may then address the person baptized:

And now dear brother (or sister) the vows of the Lord are upon you. Of your own free will you have sought this significant and solemn Christian ordinance. It is an ordinance in which you have pledged allegiance to Christ. The typical water of divine appointment is upon you, and henceforth, even from this hallowed hour, you go forth a confessor of Christ before the world. In your baptism you have witnessed a good confession. Be steadfast in it. Be true to it. Let your baptism prove the sacramental seal of a lifelong covenant with God, whose blessed Son, Jesus Christ, hath said: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven."

**The minister then may conclude with extempore prayer, or the benediction:**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.

### ARTICLE III

#### FORM FOR RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

The minister should in all cases of receiving members learn whether those presenting themselves have been baptized; and if any have not, their reception should be deferred until they shall have been baptized.

Reception of Probationers

If there are children among those presenting themselves, the minister may use the first address and question as a preliminary to the remainder of the service.

In pursuance of the gracious invitation of our Savior, you, his dear children, have come unto Him, and we forbid you not. Our Church offers you the privileges and blessings of membership, and we rejoice that your hearts have been inclined by the Holy Spirit to consecrate yourselves in your youth to a life of fellowship and service with the people of God.

Your parents, by solemn consecration and the holy office of baptism, having dedicated you to the service of Christ. Do you now ratify the baptismal act and covenant performed and made by them for you?

Answer: I do.

After which the minister shall say to all the candidates:

Dearly beloved in the Lord: You have taken this solemn step of presenting yourselves for membership in the Church of Christ, we doubt not, under the leading of God's Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, that none may be hastily admitted to this high privilege, it is proper that you should at this time make an open confession of your faith.

It is required of those seeking membership in the Church of Christ that they manifest a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with an avowed determination to walk in all the commandments of God blameless. Have you this desire and determination?

**Answer:** I trust I have.

Will you, by constant use of the Scriptures and prayer, endeavor to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ?

**Answer:** I will.

Will you, by Divine help, earnestly seek to guard your thoughts, words and actions so as to keep from sin and lead a holy life?

**Answer:** I will.

Will you covenant with this church to attend its services as far as possible, to cooperate with its pastor and members, and to contribute according to your ability to its enterprises?

**Answer:** I will.

The minister, taking each candidate by the hand, shall then say:

In the name of Christ, the Head, and of His Body, the Church, we give you the right hand of fellowship, welcoming you to our communion, and pledging you our prayers and sympathy and help for your furtherance and joy of faith.

(To the members of the Church.)

Brethren, do you thus receive and covenant with these brethren?

**Answer:** We do.

The minister shall then say:

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

### **Reception Into Full Membership**

On the day appointed the candidates appearing before the Church, the minister shall announce the names first of those who are to be received on confession of faith, and address them as follows:

Beloved in the Lord: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the presence of this congregation you are applying for the full rights and privileges of members of the Church of Christ. You are thus seeking because you have repented of your sins and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. I will ask you, therefore before receiving you, to witness your faith before the Church.

Do you acknowledge God as your Heavenly Father, confess Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and accept the Holy Spirit as your Comforter and Guide?

**Answer:** I do.

Will you deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world?

**Answer:** By God's help I will.

Will you devote yourself to God in the everlasting covenant of His grace, and consecrate your life to His service and glory?

**Answer:** I will.

Will you give diligent attention to His Word and Ordinances, and seek the honor and advancement of His Kingdom?

**Answer:** I will.

**The minister shall then announce the names of those who are to be received by certificate and address them as follows:**

Dear brethren, I welcome you cordially to a place among us. Satisfied with the testimonial of your Christian experience which you have presented to us, we ask you to join in the following covenant:

Do you promise to observe the rules of government of this church, so that you may walk with us in charity and faithfulness, in meekness and sobriety?

**Answer:** I do.

Will you contribute as God gives you ability to the support of the gospel ministry in this church, and to its work of Christian benevolence, remembering that you are but a steward of whatever wealth you may possess?

**Answer:** I will.

The minister shall then take each candidate by the hand and say:

In the name of the members of this church we receive you into our communion and fellowship, promising to walk with you in love, and to watch over you, instruct, counsel, admonish and cherish you with all longsuffering, gentleness and love.

(To the members of the Church standing.)

Brethren, do you thus covenant with these brethren before the Lord?

**Answer:** We do.

**The minister shall then say:**

Let us pray: O Lord, our Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, grant unto these Thy servants according to the riches of Thy glory, to be strengthened with might by Thy Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that they may be filled with all the fullness of God. 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. Amen.

(The minister shall cause the Church to provide sufficient copies of the Church *Discipline*, and shall present a copy to each person received.)

**ARTICLE IV**  
**FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF**  
**MATRIMONY**

Marriage should not be performed contrary to the Lord's instruction, as given in Matthew 5:31-32.

At the time appointed for the solemnization of matrimony, the persons to be married standing together, the man on the right hand and the woman on his left, the minister shall say:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony; which is commended of St. Paul to be honorable among all men; and therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons present come to be joined. If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

**The minister shall then address himself to the persons about to be married, and say:**

I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured, that if any persons are joined together otherwise than as God's Word doth allow, their marriage is not lawful.

**If no impediment be alleged, the minister shall say unto the man:**

Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

The man shall answer: I will.

**Then shall the minister say unto the woman:**

Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love, honor, and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

The woman shall answer: I will.

If the parties desire, the following additional pledges may be required. The minister shall say:

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

**The minister shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and to say after him:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ take thee \_\_\_\_\_ 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 do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

**Then shall they loose their hands; and the woman with her right hand taking the man by his right hand, shall likewise say after the minister:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ take thee \_\_\_\_\_ 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 us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

**Directions for using the Ring.**

If the parties desire the ceremony of the ring, this form shall be used:

The man shall give unto the woman a ring, and the minister, taking the ring, shall deliver it to the man to put it upon the fourth finger of the woman's left hand, and the man, holding the ring there and taught by the minister, shall say:

With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow; in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**The minister shall then say:**

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life. Send Thy blessing upon these Thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in Thy name; that they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant between them made and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to Thy laws, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister shall then say:

Please join your right hands.

Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

Forasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and have declared the same by joining hands, I pronounce that they are husband and wife; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**The minister shall then add this blessing:**

May God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, bless, preserve and keep you; the Lord mercifully with His favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that ye may so live together in this life that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

## ARTICLE V

### FORM FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Standing before the coffin, if the service is held in the residence, or preceding it from the entrance if the service is held in the Church, the minister shall say:

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.

I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

**Then the minister shall say:**

Let us pray.

O God, whose days are without end, even from everlasting to everlasting; so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom; and, knowing the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, may we live before thee in Godly fear all our days, and prepare to give account unto Thee for the deeds done in the body, through faith in the mediation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who art our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; speak to us, we beseech Thee, in this time of trouble according to Thine infinite compassion; and grant that by the aid of the Holy Spirit we may so hear Thy holy Word, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope; this we ask in the name of our High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then the minister shall read the following or other portions of Scripture:

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

**Job 14:12**

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them. **Psalm 103:12-18**

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. **Psalm 90:1-9**

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. **1 Corinthians 15:16-26**

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is Thy sting? O grave, where is Thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. **1 Corinthians 15:51-58**

If thought to be desirable, a sermon or address may be delivered here. The minister shall then offer prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer.

## At The Grave

**Having reached the place of burial, and the coffin being deposited in the grave, the minister shall say:**

In the midst of life we are in death; we come up and are cut down like a flower; we flee as a shadow, and never continue in one stay.

The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our deceased (Brother), we therefore commit (his) body to the ground - earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose second 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 made like unto his own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

Let us pray:

Almighty and most merciful God, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and before whose bar we shall stand and give an account of the deeds done in the body, we beseech Thee to grant unto us at all times a salutary conviction of the frailty of life, and our great responsibility to Thee, the judge of the quick and the dead.

We humbly confess, O righteous Father, that we have sinned and come short of Thy glory. We have been undutiful children, slothful servants and unfaithful stewards of the manifold mercies of God. Be merciful, Lord, to our unrighteousness, pardon our sins and raise us from a death of sin to a life of righteousness, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

We beseech Thee, Father of all mercies, and giver of every good and perfect gift, to grant us grace whereby we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear all our days; looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ to judge the world in righteousness.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, grant that this dispensation of Thy righteous providence may be sanctified to the good of all present. May we take due warning, and consider the shortness and uncertainty of human life, the solemnities of death, and the awful realities of eternity, and prepare to meet Thee in judgment.

May the bereaved be comforted in their affliction, and have grace to submit to Thy righteous will, and be fully prepared to say: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen.

## **The Benediction**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

The following selections from Scripture are added to be used at the discretion of the minister:

### **Scripture Relating to the Death of Young Children**

A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. **Jeremiah 31:15**

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. **Mark 10:13-14**

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 18:1-3**

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. **Matthew 18:14**

David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshiped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. **2 Samuel 12:16-23**

### **Scriptures Relating to Sudden Death**

For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. **James 4:14**

One dieth in his full strength,... being wholly at ease and quiet. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them. **Job 21:23,25-26**

There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. **Ecclesiastes 8:8**

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. **Mark 13:33-37**

### **Scriptures Relating to the Death of the Aged**

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. **Psalms 90:10**

The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. **Proverbs 16:31**

Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? **Zechariah 1:5**

Thou shalt come to Thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. **Job 5:26**

Remember now Thy Creator in the days of Thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. **Ecclesiastes 12:1-7,13,14**

## **Scriptures Which Set Forth the Design and Gracious Consolation of Affliction**

Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. **Job 5:6,7**

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes. The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. **Psalms 109:71,72**

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver Thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch Thee. **Job 5:17-19**

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. **Hebrews 12:5-11**

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

For a small moment have I forsaken Thee; but with great mercies will I gather Thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from Thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on Thee, saith the Lord Thy Redeemer. **Isaiah 54:7,8**

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **2 Corinthians 5:1**

## ARTICLE VI

### FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS

It is recommended to the Annual Conferences that the person ordained to the office of elder be presented with a copy of the Holy Scriptures at the time of his ordination, containing the inscription:

“Presented \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ Conference, on his ordination.”

If possible, an appropriate sermon shall be preached, after which the Secretary of the Annual Conference, if present and if not, an Elder selected by the President, shall announce the names of those to be ordained Elders, who shall, respectively, present themselves before the President and assisting Elders. Then the Secretary, or a substitute, shall say:

Mr. President: These brethren have been duly elected by the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference to the order of Elder in the church of God, and I present them to you for ordination.

#### **One of the Elders shall read the following passage of Holy Writ:**

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. **Matthew 28:18-20**

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: **Ephesians 4:7-13**

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation

of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. **1 Timothy 3:1-7**

**Another of the Elders shall say to the person(s) about to be ordained:**

Beloved brethren: Forasmuch as the Holy Scriptures command that we should not be hasty in laying on hands, and admitting persons to minister in the church of Christ, therefore, before we admit you to the office of Elder in the Methodist Protestant Church, we will examine you in the presence of this congregation, and receive your answers to the following questions:

Are you fully persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation?

And will you, out of the same Holy Scriptures instruct the people, and teach and maintain nothing as of necessity required for salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be proved by them?

Will you faithfully exercise yourself in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and call upon God, by prayer, for the true understanding of the same, so that you may be able to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince gainsayers?

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 a worthy example to the flock of Christ?

Will you diligently endeavor to teach and discipline your family according to the doctrine of the Gospel, and make it, as much as in you lieth, an example to others?

Will you strive to maintain quietness, peace and love among all Christian people, and especially among them who are committed to your care?

Will you diligently strive to promote an active interest in behalf of all the general and local interests of the Church among the people committed to your care?

Will you faithfully uphold the *Constitution* and *Discipline* of the Methodist Protestant Church and faithfully exercise your duty in seeing that these rules are obeyed and executed in all areas of your ministry?

**All shall now kneel before God, and the Elder shall say:**

Let us pray:

Almighty God, giver of every good and perfect gift, mercifully behold these Thy servants now set apart for the office and work of Elders in Thy church. Grant so to replenish them with the truth of Thy doctrine and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve the church in this office, to the glory of Thy name, and the edification of Thy people, through the merits of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Elders present shall then lay their hands severally upon the head of everyone that receiveth the order of Elder, the receivers remaining on their knees, for

the convenience of the ordainers, the President pronouncing aloud the following words:

The Lord pour upon Thee the Holy Spirit for the office and work of an Elder, committed unto Thee by the election of Thy brethren, and the imposition of our hands; and be thou faithful.

The President shall then deliver to each one of them the Bible in his hands saying:

We acknowledge Thy authority to preach this Word, and to administer the ordinances in the Church of Christ.

Feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof; not as a lord over God's heritage, but being an example to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, thou shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

**Then shall the President say:**

Let us pray.

Most merciful Father, we beseech Thee to grant unto these Thy servants, now set apart to the office of Elder, Thy heavenly blessing: and so endue them with Thy Holy Spirit, that they, preaching Thy Word may not only be earnest to reprove, beseech and exhort with all patience and longsuffering, but may be also to such as believe, wholesome examples in doctrine, in conversation, in love, in faith, in charity, in purity; that faithfully fulfilling their course, at the last day each one may receive a crown of righteousness laid up by the Lord, the righteous Judge, who liveth and reigneth one with God, the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end.

Assist us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continued 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.

**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 with you always. Amen.

**ADVICE TO THE ORDAINED**

(These advises, taken from the writings of Mr. John Wesley, are not a part of the ordination service, but intended for the private reading of the candidate.)

Keep your own soul alive to God by meditation, prayer and searching the Scriptures daily. Read the Old and New Testaments regularly through, if practicable, once every year, and avail yourself of all the helps within your reach to obtain a correct understanding of the Word of Life.

“Study to shew Thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

Neither be unemployed, nor engaged about trifles.

Do everything at the time appointed, and complete everything you commence.

Never disappoint a congregation, nor spend more time in a place than is strictly necessary.

Labor constantly to feel the high responsibilities of your office and ministry; take heed that the blood of souls be not found on your skirts.

Be an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; and avoid all affectation, effeminacy, and everything like austerity.

Be affable and courteous in your manner, and let your whole deportment be mild and inoffensive. “Learn of me,” said the blessed Jesus, “for I am meek and lowly in heart.”

In your dress, keep clear of the two extremes, antiquated singularity on the one hand, and fashionable foppishness on the other.

Abstain from the use of tobacco in all its forms, and use no spirituous liquor.

Remember, it is your imperative duty not to preach yourself, but Christ crucified, the great sacrifice for sin, and the only Savior of the world.

We “charge Thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the word; be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **FORM FOR THE SETTING APART OF DEACONESSES**

Hymn: “O Master, let me walk with Thee.”

The minister selected for this duty shall announce the names of the candidates, who as their names are called, shall present themselves, and he/she shall say:

These are they whom we purpose this day to consecrate Deaconesses in the Church of God. After inquiry and examination we discover that they have met the stated requirements of the Church and believe them to be worthy and proper persons for this office.

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 25:31-40.

A member of the ordination committee shall say:

Dearly beloved, we rejoice that in the providence of God a door of usefulness has been opened to you in the Church. You are to give yourself 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 the Savior, and in general to devote yourself to such forms of Christian ministry as may be suited to your abilities in serving the Methodist Protestant Church through any of its agencies, in any capacity, not requiring full clergy rights. Such service lays upon you solemn responsibility.

A member of the ordination committee shall say:

As you have expressed your desire to enter upon the work of a Deaconess, it is proper that you should give public response to the following questions:

Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

Do you sincerely receive and will you maintain the faith and practice of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

Do you approve of the government and *Discipline* of the Methodist Protestant Church?

Will you diligently strive to promote an active spiritual and general interest in behalf of the church among the people committed to your care?

Do you believe that you have been called into the work of a Deaconess, and do you promise faithfully to perform the duties pertaining thereto?

Will you cheerfully accept the direction of those whom the church may set over you in the prosecution of your work?

(Candidate shall kneel)

A member of the ordination committee shall say:

Let us pray.

O eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who called Phoebe and Dorcas into the service of the church: Look upon this Thy servant who is now to be set apart to the office of Deaconess. Give to her, we pray Thee, such understanding of Thy Holy Gospel, such firmness of Christian purpose, such diligence in service, and such beauty of life in Christ that she may be to all whom she teaches or serves a worthy revelation of the meaning and power of the Christian life. May she so order her time and nourish her mind and heart that she may constantly grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and may she steadily increase in power to lead others unto Him.

Grant that she may have strength of body, mind, and soul for the fulfillment of Thy Will in the holy task to which Thou has called her and grant her Thy Holy Spirit that she may worthily discharge the work committed to her to the blessing of mankind and to the praise of Christ our Savior. Amen.

**(Laying on of hands)**

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the Methodist Protestant Church, we recognize the divine call which you have heard, and we set you apart as one chosen of God for the office of Deaconess in His Church.

May Christ dwell in your heart by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. 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 Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

**ARTICLE VIII**  
**FORM FOR LAYING THE**  
**CORNERSTONE OF A CHURCH**

**The minister shall say:**

“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

“Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.”

The minister and people shall read the following Psalm responsively:

**Psalm 132**

1. Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions:
2. How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;
3. Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;
4. I will not give sleep unto mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids;
5. Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.
6. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.
7. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.
8. Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; thou, and the ark of Thy strength.
9. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let Thy saints shout for joy.
10. For Thy servant David’s sake, turn not away the face of Thine anointed.
11. The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of Thy body will I set upon Thy throne.
12. If Thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon Thy throne forevermore.
13. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.
14. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
15. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.
18. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

**The minister shall then read the following portion of the New Testament:**

**1 Corinthians 3:9-23**

9. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.
10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon.
11. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
12. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
13. Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.
14. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
15. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.
16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?
17. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.
18. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.
19. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.
20. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.
21. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;
22. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;
23. And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

The minister, addressing the people, shall say:

It is right and meet that we follow the holy example of the pious servants of God, who, in all ages, have had their chosen places set apart for his divine worship. And in accordance with this godly custom, we are now assembled to lay the cornerstone of this new temple for the dwelling of the Most High, where he may record his name, and come and bless his people. Trusting to his gracious approval of this pious undertaking, let us pour forth our thanksgiving and praise to his Holy name in one of the songs of Zion, and devoutly invoke his benediction upon our enterprise.

**Then a suitable hymn may be sung.**

The minister and people will now repeat the Lord's Prayer, after which the minister shall offer the following petition to the throne of Grace.

O Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, and whose glory is above the heavens; who covereth Thyself with light as with a garment, and stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who has said, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; but who doth condescend to dwell with the lowly and contrite in heart, and those that tremble at Thy word: Thou Holy and Glorious Lord God Almighty, who has manifested Thy mercy and goodness in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through whose blood and intercession we have access to Thy benign presence, we come this day to honor Thy institution of public worship by erecting a house to Thy glory. We thank Thee that thou hast put it into the hearts of Thy people here to build a Sanctuary to Thy name; and beseech Thee to inspire them with a becoming liberality that all may give as thou has prospered them, that there be no stint in providing for Thy holy worship. May the friends of this pious undertaking be multiplied to such an extent that the workmen need not stop, nor the hearts of those who have it in charge fail them. But wilt thou graciously incline the people to give of their substance until habitation of Thy house shall be complete and ready for consecration to Thy blessed name. May the counsels of those who have the oversight thereof be harmonious and brotherly, influenced by the one commendable desire to glorify Thee, and benefit the people. May the work be completed without accident or injury to any engaged therein. May the interest that many manifest in the erection of this house eventuate in the salvation of themselves and their families. And we beseech Thee, O Lord, so to imbue us with Thy Spirit that we may be always ready to every good work, using our bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost. May Thy pleasure prosper in our hands. And when the duties and enjoyments of Thy earthly service are ended, may we all meet in the Temple of Thy glory to share in the rest that remaineth to Thy people forever. Grant us, O Lord, these our humble supplications, and all other favors needful for us, for the sake and through the merits of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Then another hymn may be sung, to be followed by the sermon or an address, after which the contributions of the people shall be received.

The officiating minister shall now distribute among the attending ministers or officary of the church, the different articles to be deposited in the excavation, retaining a copy of the Holy Scriptures in his own hands. The workman shall move the stone to its appointed place, and each one having deposited the article committed to him, in the cavity, the minister shall place the cap upon the stone, and say:

For the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom upon the earth, for the glory of His name, and the propagation of His truth, we lay the cornerstone of this house of divine worship, invoking His blessing upon the work of our hands.

The service may conclude with the Doxology and the Benediction.

**ARTICLE IX**  
**FORM FOR DEDICATION OF A CHURCH**

**Invocation**

O Lord, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; we bow before Thy holy presence, to offer unto Thee the worship of our bodies and spirits which are Thine. Will it please Thee to graciously fill our minds and hearts with Thy ever blessed Spirit, that we may worship Thee with sincerity and acceptability, to the edification of our unworthy souls, and the glory of Thy exalted name: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister and people shall read responsively the following Psalm:

**Psalm 122**

1. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.
2. Our feet shall stand within Thy gates, O Jerusalem.
3. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.
4. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
5. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.
6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love Thee.
7. Peace be within Thy walls, and prosperity within Thy palaces.
8. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within Thee.
9. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek Thy good.

**Psalm 84**

1. How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
2. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.
3. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God.
4. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee. Selah.
5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.
6. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

7. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.
8. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.
9. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine anointed.
10. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11. For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.

Then a suitable hymn may be sung, after which the minister shall say:

Let us pray.

O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in the heaven, nor in the earth, who keepest covenant and showest mercy unto Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their hearts. (But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which we have built!)

O Lord our God, have respect to the prayer of Thy servants and to their supplications, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which Thy servants pray before Thee: that Thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put Thy name there; to hearken unto the prayers which Thy servants pray toward this place. Hear thou, therefore, from Thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

(Response of the people:) Amen

Now arise, O Lord God, unto Thy resting place, thou, and the ark of Thy strength; let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness.

(Response of the people:) Amen.

Whensoever Thy word is proclaimed in this house, may it be so accompanied with Thy Spirit that it shall not return unto Thee void, but be a savor of life unto life, and that it may be said, this and that man was born there.

(Response of the people:) Amen.

Grant, O Lord, that all who may be dedicated to Thee this house, by the holy ordinances of Thy Church, may prove faithful to their covenant obligations, ever remain in the number of Thy elect children, and by Thy mercy obtain everlasting life.

(Response of the People): Amen.

And may the prayers and praises of Thy people ascend from this house like holy incense, to be unto Thee a sweet smelling savor.

(Response of the people:) Amen.

Now, O Lord God Almighty, who dost live and govern all things, let, we beseech Thee, Thine eyes be open, and let Thine ears be attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Then the following Scripture shall be read:

**Acts 1:12-14**

12. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey.
13. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.
14. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

**Acts 2:1-8**

1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
5. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.
6. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.
7. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?
8. And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

**Hebrews 10:19-25**

19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
21. And having an high priest over the house of God;
22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
24. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Then another hymn may be sung, after which the sermon may be delivered and the contributions of the people received.

Then may be read responsively, or sung, the Te Deum.

### ***TE DEUM LAUDAMUS***

We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting.

To Thee all angels cry aloud; the Heavens and all the Powers therein.

To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabbath.

Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise Thee.

The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee.

The noble army of the martyrs praise Thee.

The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee:

The Father of an infinite Majesty.

Thine adorable, true and only Son;

Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst humble Thyself to be born of a Virgin.

When Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.

We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine heritage.

Govern them and lift them up forever.

Day by day we magnify Thee.

And we worship Thy name ever world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let Thy mercy be upon us, as our trust is in Thee.

O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

If the collection shall be sufficient to relieve the house from debt (there being no fitness in offering to God a house that belongs to earthly creditors), one of the Trustees or Building Committee, addressing the officiating minister, shall say:

Brother \_\_\_\_\_, in behalf of the church and congregation here assembled, I now present you this house to be dedicated to the worship of Almighty God.

The minister, addressing the audience, shall say:

Dearly Beloved: The Holy Scriptures teach us that God is well pleased with the erection of temples to his Holy Name; and that houses thus built for his holy worship should be especially set apart and dedicated to his service. Moses dedicated the tabernacle in the wilderness, and Solomon dedicated the temple upon Mount Zion. In like manner, devout men have been wont to consecrate houses to the worship and praise of God in all ages of the Christian Church; and for such a dedication we are now assembled.

The congregation shall rise, and the minister shall say:

Now, to Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, we, the ministers of his altar, and people of his fold, do most solemnly dedicate this house, as was intended, to be henceforth set apart and used for God's holy worship, in becoming ministrations of the Word and ordinances, and in sacred offices of prayer, thanksgiving and praise; and we devoutly pray that the Divine benediction may ever rest on all who shall assemble to worship here.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The service shall then be concluded with the Doxology and the Benediction.

This is the last page of the *2012 Methodist Protestant Discipline*.