



GLOBAL
METHODIST CHURCH

**THE TRANSITIONAL BOOK OF
DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE
THE GLOBAL METHODIST
CHURCH**

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PREFACE

Since its inception, God’s Spirit has enlivened the Methodist movement. In the 1720s John and Charles Wesley and friends at Oxford University met together to deepen their Christian faith through daily, practical spiritual disciplines. Derided by others as a “new sect of Methodists” for their “methodical” ways of practicing the faith and holding one another accountable to it, the small group embraced the insult and persevered in their fellowship. And so they and the millions who followed after them have ever since been known as “the people called Methodists.”

In that spirit, this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church is intended to serve as a resource for all who wish to join in a “methodical,” practical, and warm-hearted pursuit of loving God and serving others as Jesus’ disciples in the world. Beginning with confessions rooted in Scripture and shaped by the great teaching of the Church universal, what follows is the Global Methodist Church’s outline for a new expression of Methodism that will be legally launched at a future date. It will provide an essential structure for the new church until its convening General Conference. Respecting the Methodist Episcopal Church’s established convention in its original *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (1784), this book is arranged using the paragraph (§) system to allow for amendments and expansions as desired. It is offered with the prayer that it will help guide us in a new season of the church's life as we *make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly*.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work of a drafting team that assisted us in the development of this document: Rev. Thomas Lambrecht (*Wisconsin*), Rev. Dr. Chappell Temple (*Texas*), and Rev. Jay Therrell, Esq. (*Florida*).

This *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* will only be effective once the Global Methodist Church is legally formed and will provide governance until the time specified by the Global Methodist Church’s convening General Conference.

Transitional Leadership Council

February 1, 2021

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PART ONE DOCTRINE

OUR HISTORICAL HERITAGE

¶ **101. OUR HERITAGE OF FAITH.** 1. Through the unsurpassing grace of God, the Global Methodist Church professes the revelation of God through the call of Abraham and the Hebrew people, culminating in the confession of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, the resurrected Lord of heaven and earth. This confession, expressed by Simon Peter in Matthew 16:16 and Acts 2:36, is foundational. It declares Jesus is the unique incarnate Word of God, and He lives today, calling all to receive Him as savior, and as the one to whom all authority has been given.

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

3. In the sixteenth century, the Protestant reformers preserved this testimony, asserting the primacy of Scripture, the necessity of grace and faith, the importance of justification by faith, and the priesthood of all believers. The doctrinal summation that stands behind the Methodist faith is the historic Thirty-Nine *Articles of Religion* of the Church of England which John Wesley reduced to the Twenty-Four Articles for the American church and which was affirmed at the Christmas Conference in 1784.

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

5. Through the labors of many Methodists in the British isles, especially through the efforts of John and Charles Wesley, an organization and body of literature emerged, giving rise to a distinctly Methodist articulation of the Christian faith and life. To illustrate, Methodism placed particular emphasis on the universal work of grace, justification by faith, the new birth, and the fullness of salvation, otherwise known as entire sanctification or Christian perfection. Methodists created structures and communities alongside the established church to facilitate the mission "to reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."

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

7. This new church adopted John Wesley's revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Methodist General Rules, a liturgy in the form of a revision of the Prayer Book, and it ordained Methodist clergy. Two other sources of authority were identified: the four volumes of sermons, which given Wesley's own publication of this body of literature at the time, included fifty-three

sermons, as well as his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. When a constitution was adopted in 1808, the Restrictive Rules protected the Articles and General Rules from revocation or change.

8. Other Methodist expressions of “primitive Christianity” and “the scripture way of salvation” emerged. German-speaking Americans from pietistic Reformed, Anabaptist, and Lutheran traditions, created organizations with doctrine and discipline nearly identical to the English-speaking Methodist Episcopal Church. The work of Phillip William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, and Jacob Albright established the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. A number of African American Methodists, including Richard Allen, and James Varick, helped to establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to address racial discrimination and the injustices of slavery, while preserving doctrine and discipline. In the same century many Methodists participated in the Holiness Movement, an attempt to maintain Wesley’s emphasis on holiness of heart and life.

When the General Rules were officially adopted in 1789, a new rule was added in the American context that forbid participation in what John Wesley, himself, later referred to as “that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion,” namely, the institution of American slavery. However, due to the corrupting influences of American culture at the time, this rule was eventually ignored in those areas in which slavery was declared legal. By the time the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in 1844, American Methodism was already badly divided into pro and anti-slavery factions and a Plan of Separation was therefore adopted. Other tensions at the time included the respective powers of the episcopacy as well as those of the General Conference, due to the holding of slaves by clergy as well as by a prominent bishop. The following year, the Methodist Episcopal Church was rent asunder as delegates from the southern states met in Louisville, Kentucky, to organize the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. These two ecclesiastical bodies went their separate ways until the Uniting Conference of 1939 when they came together once more, along with the Methodist Protestant Church, which had organized earlier in 1830 along congregational lines. The uniting of these three bodies was simply known as The Methodist Church.

9. Through separations and mergers, Methodist Christians have preserved testimony to the risen and reigning Christ by holding themselves accountable to standards of doctrine and discipline. Consequently, Wesleyan doctrine spread to several countries in the Caribbean, Asia, Oceania, Africa, Latin America, and Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries primarily through the efforts of Methodist missionaries from the British Isles and North America. Powerful spiritual revivals often accompanied this expansion that further reinforced Wesleyan teachings on repentance, salvation by faith, the new birth, and holiness. When The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968, with the merger of The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren, both the Methodist *Articles of Religion* and the Evangelical United Brethren *Confession of Faith* were accepted as doctrinal standards and deemed “congruent” articulations of this faith. For fifty years, the growing voices from Africa, the Philippines, and Europe have joined in the engagement to maintain our doctrinal heritage, promoting fidelity to the doctrinal principles that launched our movement.

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

OUR DOCTRINAL HERITAGE

¶ **102. THE WESLEYAN WAY OF SALVATION.** 1. The Wesleyan tradition celebrates the universal love of God in affirming that Christ died for all people with the result that the gift of salvation is available to all persons through the ministrations of the Holy Spirit. Our Father in Heaven is not willing that any should be lost (Matthew 18:14), but that all may come to “the knowledge of truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). With the Apostle Paul, we affirm the proclamation found in Romans 10:9, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

2. God’s love toward fallen creation is made manifest in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ; his life, ministry, death, and bodily resurrection. This gift of salvation is available to all humanity by grace through faith. Grace includes the active, empowering presence of God, through the Holy Spirit, enabling believers to trust, love, and serve God. This undeserved gift works to liberate humanity from both the guilt and power of sin, and to live as children of God, freed for joyful obedience. In the classic Wesleyan expression, grace works in numerous ways throughout our lives, beginning with the general providence of God toward all.

3. God’s *prevenient or preventing grace* refers to “the first dawning of grace in the soul,” mitigating the effects of original sin, even before we are aware of our need for God. It prevents the full consequences of humanity’s alienation from God and awakens conscience, instills a basic knowledge of the moral law, gives an initial sense of God, and restores a measure of liberty to receive the further graces of God – all of this issuing in the first inclinations toward life. Received prior to our ability to respond, preventing grace enables genuine response to the continuing work of God’s grace.

4. God’s *convincing grace* leads us to what the Bible terms “repentance,” awakening in us a desire to “flee the wrath to come” and enabling us to begin to “fear God and work righteousness.” Clearly, repentance is at the heart of what Methodism has always been about: the calling of sinners to forsake their self-referential ways and to embrace the good news of Jesus Christ. Indeed, so important was repentance to John Wesley that he referred to it as one of the three main doctrines of Methodism, along with both faith and holiness. In fact, he even described repentance as “the porch of religion.”

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

6. God’s *sanctifying grace* begins with God’s work of regeneration, sometimes referred to as “being born again,” or “initial sanctification.” It is God’s work in us as we continually turn to Him and seek to be perfected in His love. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit increasingly cleanses the heart in Christlikeness and to put to death the carnal nature in an ever increasing abundance of the fruit of the Spirit. With John Wesley, we believe that a life of holiness and ultimately “entire sanctification” should be the goal of each person’s journey with God.

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

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

Our longing and hope are that our church may:

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

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

3. Lead all those who experience the new birth in Jesus to deepen in the faith and to grow in their relationship with Him, receiving the Holy Spirit as evidenced by both spiritual fruit and gifts that are manifested in their lives to the glory of God. We encourage all to participate in discipleship and accountability groups, such as Wesleyan class and band meetings, and to utilize all the other means of grace to achieve this end.

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

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

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

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

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

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

¶ **105. NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS FOR OUR DOCTRINAL STANDARDS.** The following summaries of the apostolic witness disclosed in Scripture have been affirmed by many Christian communities, and express orthodox Christian teaching. The word "normative" refers to the standards by which we judge true and false teaching. Normative teaching is binding and obligatory. It establishes the proper boundaries for preaching and teaching in our denomination. The Apostles' Creed has been employed by the church throughout her rich history for doctrinal clarity and for the lively confession of faith in preparation for the sacrament of baptism. The Nicene

Creed,¹ which expresses the belief of the catholic, universal church, is crucial for both catechesis and for the proper interpretation of Scripture. It is regularly professed within the context of worship globally.

1. THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic* church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

* universal

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

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from
true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things
were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven, was incarnate
of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

¹ The Nicene Creed (381) is a normative doctrinal standard for the Global Methodist Church. Churches in the East and West, however, have long disagreed over the addition of the word *filioque*, a Latin word that means “and the Son.” The original Creed (381) expressed the idea that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. Churches in the Latin West came to believe that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. Methodism is part of the Western tradition of Christian faith. Some churches, however, particularly in Eastern Europe, have adopted the Eastern version of the Creed. Therefore, the omission of “and the Son” is permissible within GMC congregations.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

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

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

* universal

ADDITIONAL DOUCMENTS FOR OUR DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

The following document, though important for proper teaching about Jesus Christ, does not enjoy the same broad acceptance as do both the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed. It is not employed, for example, by the Oriental Orthodox Churches comprising the Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and the Malankara Indian Churches. The Definition of Chalcedon, however, has been affirmed by Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and by several Protestant theological traditions.

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

Following the holy fathers, we teach with one voice that the Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same Person,
That He is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body consisting of one substance with the Father as regards His Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards His manhood, like us in all respects, apart from sin.

Begotten of His Father before the ages as regards His Godhead,
But in these last days born for us and for our salvation of the Virgin Mary, the God-bearer.

This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
must be confessed to be in two natures, without confusion, without changes, without division, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of Him,
And our Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us,
And the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

¶ **106. NORMATIVE STANDARDS FOR WESLEYAN WITNESS.** As is the case in many Christian communities, we recognize additional statements of faith that are consistent with the creedal tradition of the church universal, but which also express our church's particular emphases and concerns, as well as our theological heritage of faith. These constitutive, normative standards embody the "faith once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3) and serve as a bulwark against false teaching, providing the framework for the praise of God in our teaching (orthodoxy), the development of our collective theology, and the launching point for our living and service

(orthopraxis). Recognizing the complementary streams of the Methodist and the Evangelical United Brethren faith communities, both the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith define the doctrinal boundaries of our church, until such time as a combined Articles of Faith may be approved by the church.

1. THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH. Thirty-Nine Articles of of the Church of England were ratified in their final form in 1571 during the reign of Elizabeth I. They reflect both the concerns of the English Reformation and the comprehensive nature of the established church. As the United States emerged as an independent nation, Wesley revised the Articles in 1784 for the Methodist work in America. His twenty-four Articles reflect both his theological commitments and his desire for doctrinal clarity, shortening some articles and deleting others if they could be easily misread. The Methodist Episcopal Church added an additional article dealing with the duty of Christians to civil authority. The twenty-five Articles were officially adopted by the General Conference of 1808, when the first Restrictive Rule was also implemented, and revised by the Uniting Conference of 1939 when three Methodist communions within America became one. The Twenty-Five Articles are as follows:

Article I - Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

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

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

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

Article III - Of the Resurrection of Christ

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

Article IV - Of the Holy Ghost

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

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

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

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings,

The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve Prophets the Less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

Article VI - Of the Old Testament

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

Article VII - Of Original or Birth Sin

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

Article VIII - Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

Article IX - Of the Justification of Man

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

Article X - Of Good Works

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

Article XI - Of Works of Supererogation

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

Article XII - Of Sin After Justification

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

Article XIII - Of the Church

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

Article XIV - Of Purgatory

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

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

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

Article XVI - Of the Sacraments

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

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

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

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

Article XVII - Of Baptism

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

Article XVIII - Of the Lord's Supper

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

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

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

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

Article XIX - Of Both Kinds

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

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

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

Article XXI - Of the Marriage of Ministers

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

Article XXII - Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

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

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

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

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

Article XXIV - Of Christian Men's Goods

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

Article XXV - Of a Christian Man's Oath

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

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

Of Sanctification (*from the Methodist Protestant Discipline*)

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

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

Of the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority

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

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

in 1889, with thirteen articles, including an article on sanctification. In 1946, when the Evangelical United Brethren Church was formed, it retained both the Confession of Faith of the United Brethren in Christ and the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Church. In 1962, a new Confession of Faith was completed containing sixteen articles. This was adopted in the 1968 merger with the Methodist Church that resulted in the United Methodist Church. The sixteen articles are as follows:

Article I - God

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

Article II - Jesus Christ

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

Article III - The Holy Spirit

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

Article IV - The Holy Bible

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

Article V - The Church

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

Article VI - The Sacraments

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

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

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

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

Article VII - Sin and Free Will

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

Article VIII - Reconciliation Through Christ

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

Article IX - Justification and Regeneration

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

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

Article X - Good Works

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

Article XI - Sanctification and Christian Perfection

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

Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as one's self. Through faith in Jesus Christ this

gracious gift may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God.

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

Article XII - The Judgment and the Future State

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

Article XIII - Public Worship

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

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

Article XIV - The Lord's Day

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

Article XV - The Christian and Property

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

Article XVI - Civil Government

We believe civil government derives its just powers from the sovereign God. As Christians we recognize the governments under whose protection we reside and believe such governments should be based on, and be responsible for, the recognition of human rights under God. We believe war and bloodshed are contrary to the gospel and spirit of Christ. We believe it is the duty of Christian citizens to give moral strength and purpose to their respective governments through sober, righteous and godly living.

¶ 107. FOUNDATIONAL WESLEYAN STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN

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

1. **THE STANDARD SERMONS OF JOHN WESLEY** Intended to provide patterns of preaching and teaching for the people called Methodists, John Wesley published several editions of his sermons, beginning in 1746, to set down what he found as “the way to heaven, with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men.” The compilation of forty-four of those sermons were intended to provide a “model deed,” promulgated in 1763, for what was preached from a Methodist pulpit in the ongoing life of the church. These particular sermons were regarded by Wesley as being of distinct value, and intended to serve as “standards” for teaching Christian doctrine in the church:

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

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

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

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

2. **THE EXPLANATORY NOTES UPON THE NEW TESTAMENT.** First published in 1755, John Wesley's New Testament text is based upon the King James Version and Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. The notes were aimed at the average reader and provide historical context for and Wesleyan theological interpretation of the Scriptures, drawing upon work of four earlier commentaries.

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

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

"In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They

desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

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

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

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

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

First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

The taking of the name of God in vain.

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

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

Slaveholding: buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing;

the using many words in buying or selling.

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

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

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

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

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

The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.
The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.
Softness and needless self-indulgence.
Laying up treasure upon earth.
Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

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

Secondly: By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men: To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison. To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that ‘we are not to do good unless *our hearts be free to it.*’

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

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

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

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

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

The public worship of God.

The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.

The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures.

Fasting or abstinence.

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

¶ **109. THE RESTRICTIVE RULE.** In continuity with our Wesleyan heritage, the governing body of the Global Methodist Church shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith, or establish any new standards of rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

PART TWO SOCIAL WITNESS

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

2. It was in that spirit that the Methodist Episcopal Church became the first denomination in the world to adopt a formal Social Creed in 1908, spurred by the Social Gospel in response to the deplorable working conditions of millions. Though reflective of its own time, the statement is still remarkably relevant even today, calling for, among other things, “equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life, principles of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions, abolition of child labor, the suppression of the ‘sweating system,’ a reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practical point, a release from employment one day in seven, and for a living wage in every industry.” In turn, that prophetic witness was subsequently embraced by each of the other branches of Methodism and the Evangelical United Brethren Church and continues this day within the Global Methodist Church. As a global church, our Social Witness represents a consensus vision transcending cultures of what it means to be faithful disciples in a world that remains in rebellion against its Creator, wracked by violence and unfettered greed. It is a summons to prayerfully consider how to “do good” and “do no harm” to all as we put our faith into practice.

¶ **202. OUR WITNESS TO THE WORLD.**

1. We believe that all persons irrespective of their station or circumstances in life have been made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect. We denounce as sin racism, sexism, and other expressions that unjustly discriminate against any person (*Genesis 1-2, Deuteronomy 16:19-20, Luke 11:42, 19:9, Colossians 3:11*).

2. We believe that life is a holy gift of God whose beginnings and endings are set by God, and that it is the particular duty of believers to protect those who may be powerless to protect themselves, including the unborn, those with disabilities or serious illness, and the aged (*Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 19:32, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41-44*).

3. The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the wellbeing of the mother and the child are at stake. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (*Exodus 22:23-23, Psalm 139:13-16, James 1:27*).

4. We believe that all should have the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation and free of grinding toil or exploitation by others. We respect the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining to protect their welfare. We pray that all should be allowed to freely follow their vocations, especially those who work on the frontiers of truth and knowledge and those who may enrich the lives of others with beauty and joy. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God’s creative power (*Deuteronomy 5:12-14, Luke 10:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 5:18*).

5. We believe that God has called us to share His concern for the poor and to alleviate the conditions and policies which have produced vast disparities in wealth and resources, both among individuals and nations, giving rise to poverty. We are called to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all God's people as we share the good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed (*Leviticus 19:9-10, Matthew 25:37-40, Luke 6:20-25, James 2:1-5*).

6. We believe that all have been summoned to care for the earth as our common home, stewarding its resources, sharing in its bounty, and exercising responsible and sustainable consumption so that there is enough for all (*Genesis 2:15, Leviticus 26:34-35, Psalm 24:1*).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART THREE THE COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Section I. Foundational Principles

¶ **301. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.** The mission of the Global Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

Anchored in our belief in Jesus Christ, the Church is of God and will be preserved to the end of time to worship God in spirit and in truth, to faithfully preach God's Word and offer the holy sacraments, to edify all who believe and encourage them to grow in their lives of holiness and service to others, to minister to those who are in special need, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to present the world with a clear and compelling invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord. All those of every age and station stand in need of the grace that God has promised to extend to others through His Body, the Church. While it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to change the hearts of individuals, ours is the task of sharing the good news of God as we respond to the summons of Christ in Matthew 28: *"As you are going, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,"* even as Christ has promised to remain with us always, *"even to the end of the age."*

Following the example of early Methodists, we believe God has raised us up in order to "spread scriptural holiness across the land," embodying that "grand *depositum*" of the faith that John Wesley believed had been entrusted to "the people called Methodists," the continued striving for entire sanctification in our lives. As individual believers in Christ, and as those gathered together in local congregations, our calling is to connect with the communities and the world around us, extending both grace and mercy. Growing in our personal faith, and effectively discipling others, are both life-long expressions of loving the Lord with all of our hearts, all of our being, and all of our minds, as well as loving our neighbor as ourselves.

¶ **302. A GLOBAL CHURCH.** John Wesley famously declared in his journal on June 11, 1739, "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation." Since that time Methodists have recognized that at the core of our church's mission is ensuring that the Good News of Jesus Christ is shared around the globe. From Britain, to the Americas, to the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Methodists who came before us shared Jesus' message of salvation. Today our mission receives this rich inheritance and moves forward boldly into a new chapter. We recognize the world is the parish of the Global Methodist Church. We are active in advancing the cause of Christ on multiple continents, and our faith communities will continue to do so.

Ours is a global church that recognizes the gifts and contributions of each part of our communion in Christ, working together as partners in the gospel with equal voice and leadership. Learning from each other and sharing best practices across cultures, we follow the admonition of St. Paul that "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good," that together we are the Body of Christ, sharing in "an equal concern for one another" (1 Corinthians 12). Our vision of a global church is one marked by mutual love, concern, sharing, and accountability.

¶ **303. OUR COVENANT IN CHRIST.** We believe that God has called us to live together in a faithful covenant that expresses our commitments both to God and to each other. With John Wesley, we affirm that the scriptures know of no such thing as "solitary religion," but that we have been designed to grow in our discipleship in the company of others. As a church, we are committed

to a connectional organization that is meant to encourage such sharing and accountability, with the end goal of all being partners in the gospel and in our outreach to the world. This connection is founded in both our common doctrinal understandings, as well as in our core mission of sharing the gospel with the world. Towards that end, we celebrate our unity with one another at the table of the Lord that extends across the globe, crossing all boundaries of language, culture, customs, and social and economic distinctions.

¶ **304. THE MINISTRY OF THE LAITY.** God has entrusted His work in this world to the whole people of God. All Christians are called through their baptism to be in ministry to others, both as individuals and as a part of the church, using the gifts and graces with which they have been equipped by the Holy Spirit. Every layperson bears the responsibility for carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), but likewise each have been given the power by God to do so. For like the variety of spiritual gifts described in the scriptures, the diversity of our outreach efforts knows no limit either when we serve Christ with joy and thanksgiving. With other heirs of the Protestant Reformation, we embrace the notion of "the priesthood of all believers" and we call upon both laity and clergy to work together in a partnership of servanthood. As suggested in Ephesians 4:12-13, Christ has not given to pastors the task of doing the ministry by themselves, but of equipping those in the church for such works of service, so that "the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

We believe that it is only as each individual, whether lay or clergy, bears witness to God's grace that the world may come to know Christ and respond to His invitation to have life in abundance. Each member is therefore expected to be a witness for Christ in the world, a light and leaven in society, and a reconciler in a culture of conflict, identifying with the agony and suffering of the world and radiating and exemplifying the Christ of hope. As the people of God, we must either win the world to Christ, or abandon it to those forces that oppose Him. Beyond the diverse forms of ministry is this ultimate concern: that all persons will be brought into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and be renewed after the image of their creator (Colossians 3:10). This means that all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free. Toward that end, the full participation of all who believe is vital and cannot be evaded if the gospel is to be heard and received.

¶ **305. TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP.** In light of the mission of the Church and our covenant in Christ, the Global Methodist Church engages the commandment to make disciples of Jesus through an intentional process grounded in Scripture and in our Wesleyan heritage.

The Global Methodist Church defines a disciple as a person whose life reflects the character of Christ and extends the mission of Christ in holy love of God and neighbor. The disciple's character and practice are informed by the Scriptures, nurtured by the community of faith, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The disciple's mission is to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus through works of teaching, service, multiplication, mercy, and justice making more obedient disciples who will reflect the character and mission of Christ and expanding the boundaries of Christ's Kingdom further out into the world.

The goal of transformational discipleship ministry in the Global Methodist Church is to make, develop, and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ through small groups where each person is invited, challenged, supported, and held accountable in living sanctified lives that reflect the practices, character, and mission of Christ.

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

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

Section II. The Church and Pastoral Charge

¶ **308. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.** The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society, providing the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ’s own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God’s creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church. Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for

persons who choose it as their church. Such a society of believers, being within the denomination and subject to its discipline, is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

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

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

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

Section III. Church Membership

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

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

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

2. The professing membership of a local Global Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches and who profess the vows of membership in ¶319..

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

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

¶ 312. THE MEANING OF A SACRAMENT. A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The sacraments communicate in physical form the Gospel promise that all who come to Christ in repentance and faith receive new life in him. God gives us the sign as a means whereby we receive this grace and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion (also called the Lord's

Supper or the Eucharist). We receive the Sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ enables us to receive the grace of God through the Sacraments, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the Sacraments to bear fruit in our lives.

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

¶ **314. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM.** Through Holy Baptism we are united in Christ's death in repentance of our sins; raised to new life in Him through the power of the resurrection; incorporated into the Body of Christ; and empowered through the work of the Holy Spirit to go on to perfection. Holy Baptism is God's gracious gift to us, flowing from the once for all work of Christ Jesus, and our pledge to follow as His disciples.

The church is commanded to baptize disciples in Christ (Matt. 28:19), and the early church followed this practice (Acts 2:38). Entire households—which would have included infants—were baptized (Acts 10:24, 47-48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16). Including infants in the initiation ritual has a precedent in the covenant membership rite in the Old Testament, in which male infants were circumcised on the eighth day (Gen. 17:9-14). The connection between circumcision and baptism is made explicit in Col. 2:11-12.

Methodists historically have practiced infant baptism (Articles of Religion, XVII). As the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church states: "We believe children are under the atonement of Christ and as heirs of the Kingdom of God are acceptable subjects for Christian Baptism. Children of believing parents through Baptism become the special responsibility of the Church. They should be nurtured and led to personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their Baptism" (Article VI).

Parents will decide, in consultation with their pastor, when to baptize their children.

¶ **315. THE MODE AND PRACTICE OF BAPTISM.** Holy Baptism may be performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The outward and visible sign of Holy Baptism is water. Candidates are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). The inward and spiritual grace is death to sin and new birth to righteousness by faith through union with Christ in His death and resurrection.

Holy Baptism is administered among a gathered congregation. Those present vow on behalf of Christ's Holy Church to receive the baptized into the Church universal, to grow together in grace, and to remember the profession made and benefits received in Holy Baptism. Candidates for Holy Baptism, and those presenting candidates unable to answer for themselves, shall be instructed in the Christian faith and the meaning of Holy Baptism.

Holy Baptism, as initiation into Christ's Holy Church, occurs once in a person's life. Holy Communion serves as the regular and continual affirmation of baptismal vows within the church. Through a service of baptismal remembrance and reaffirmation of baptismal vows people can renew the covenant declared at baptism.

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

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

I renounce them.

Do you repent of your sin, turn to Jesus Christ, and confess Him as your Lord and Savior?

I do.

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

I do.

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

I do.

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

I will.

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

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

I (We) will.

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

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

We will.

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

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
[who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.]**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
[the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.]**

¶ 317. THE MEANING OF CONFIRMATION. Through the Rite of Confirmation, we personally renew the covenant declared at our baptism, witness to God’s work in our lives, affirm our commitment to Christ and His Holy Church, and receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands enabling our lifelong journey toward holiness. The Apostles prayed for and laid hands on those who had been baptized.

It is the duty of pastors to prepare confirmands, teaching them the basic tenets of the historic Christian faith, the history and theology of the Wesleyan revival movement, and the practical meaning of church membership in agreement with the *Transitional Book of Doctrines & Discipline* and approved catechism.

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

¶ 319. VOWS OF MEMBERSHIP. In addition to taking the vows of baptism (¶ 316) those wishing to become professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be asked the following questions before being received into the church:

*Do you believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit?
Do you confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put your whole trust in His grace, and promise to serve Him as your Lord?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- the taking/preparation of the bread and cup;

- a time for repentance and confession of sins, including a pronouncement of pardon for sins;
- thanksgiving for the gifts about to be received;
- the words of institution, which recall Jesus's words at the Last Supper;
- the prayer of invocation, in which the Holy Spirit is invited to make the gifts of bread and wine become for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ;
- the breaking of the bread; and
- the distribution of the elements to all who repent of sin and desire to draw near to God and lead a life of obedience to Christ.

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

Section IV. Care of Members

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

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

3. All members of the church are called into a loving accountability with one another. If a member neglects the membership vows, however, the congregation shall use every means of encouraging that member to return to an active faith and to lovingly restore them to the fellowship of the church (Matthew 18:15-17). Each local church shall establish a grace-filled process, approved by the presiding elder (district superintendent), to restore negligent members to full participation in the life of the church. Negligent members may be placed on an inactive roll by a two-thirds vote of the church council.

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

5. Upon the approval of the charge conference congregations may require that individuals' membership be intentionally renewed on a yearly basis. In such churches, congregants who do not choose to renew their commitment may be placed on the inactive roll of the church (§ 322.3-4) for up to two years, after which the charge conference may, with the recommendation of the pastor, remove their names from the membership roll by a two-thirds vote.

¶ 323. TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS. A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with the Global Methodist Church shall be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by notification of transfer from that person's former church or some certification of Christian baptism, and as a professing member upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith (see §§ 311, 318, 319). In valid Christian baptism water is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by an authorized person. The pastor will report to the sending church the date of reception of such a member. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, work, and polity of the Church be provided for all such persons. Persons received from churches that do not issue letters of transfer or recommendation shall be listed as "Received from Other Denominations."

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

¶ 325. CONSTITUENCY ROLL. A Constituency Roll shall be maintained in each congregation, comprising four categories of persons: (1) Unbaptized infants ("Cradle Roll"); (2) Individuals over the age of eighteen who have not indicated a desire to become professing members, including the spouses and adult children of professing members, but who are those for whom the local church has a pastoral responsibility; (3) Persons who have attended worship more than twice, or participated more than twice in the ministries of the church, during the previous twelve calendar months ("Potential Members"); (4) Persons who, though unlikely to join the church due to distance or other faith commitments, nevertheless come under the pastoral care of the congregation and are recognized as part of its wider community ("Friends of the Church"). The Constituency Roll shall be reviewed and audited annually.

¶ 326. NON-LOCAL CHURCH SETTINGS. Duly appointed clergy of the Global Methodist Church, while serving as a chaplain of any organization, institution, or military unit, as an extension minister, or as a campus minister, or while otherwise present where a local church is not available,

may receive a person into the membership of the Global Methodist Church under the conditions of ¶ 322. Where possible, before the sacrament of baptism or vows of profession of faith are administered, such appointed minister shall consult with the pastor of the local church (should one be nearby) on the choice of the person concerned. Upon agreement by the pastor, a statement verifying that such sacrament was administered or that such vows were made shall be issued. The baptized or professing member may use the statement to join a local church.

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

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

Section V. Membership Records and Reports

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

2. Inactive Membership Roll (¶ 322.3-4).

3. Constituency Roll (¶ 325).

4. Affiliate Membership Roll (¶ 324).

5. Associate Membership Roll (¶ 324).

6. In the case of a union or federated church with another denomination, the governing body of such a church may report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory, and such membership shall be published in the minutes of each church, with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union or federated church, and with an indication of the total actual membership.

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

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

¶ 331. ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBERS ATTENDING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. The pastor is encouraged to report annually the names and contact information

for professing and baptized members attending colleges and universities to the chaplain or campus minister of such institutions where the church's ministries exist.

Section VI. Changes in Church Membership or Local Church Membership

¶ **332. MEMBERS WHO MOVE.** If a member of a local church shall move to another community so far removed from the home church that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, this member shall be encouraged to transfer membership to a Global Methodist church in the community of the newly established residence. As soon as the pastor is reliably informed of this change of residence, actual or contemplated, it shall be the pastor's duty and obligation to assist the member to become established in the fellowship of a church in the community of the future home and to send to a Global Methodist pastor in such community, or to the presiding elder (district superintendent), a letter of notification, giving the latest known address of the person or persons concerned and requesting local pastoral oversight.

When a pastor discovers a member of the denomination residing in the community whose membership is in a church so far removed from the place of residence that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, it shall be the duty and obligation of the pastor to give pastoral oversight to such person, adding the name to the constituency roll (¶ 325) and to encourage transfer of membership to a Global Methodist church in the community where the member resides.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section VII. Organization and Administration

¶ **336. PRIMARY TASKS.** Each local church shall be organized so that it can pursue its primary task and mission in the context of its own community—reaching out and receiving with joy all who will respond to the invitation to follow Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives, encouraging people in developing their relationship with God, providing opportunities for them to strengthen and grow that relationship in spiritual formation, and supporting them to live lovingly and justly in the power of the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples.

In carrying out its mission, adequate provision should be made to evangelize and spread scriptural holiness by: (1) planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, and witness for persons and families within and without the congregation; (2) providing for effective pastoral and lay leadership; (3) providing for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of the church; (4) utilizing the appropriate relationships and resources of the district and annual conference; (5) providing for the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of documentary record material of the local church; and (6) seeking inclusiveness in all aspects of its life.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. *The Church Conference.* To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings. It shall be called at the discretion of the presiding elder (district superintendent) or following a written request to the district superintendent by one of the following: the pastor, the church council, or 10 percent of the professing members of the local church. In any case a copy of the request shall be given to the pastor. Additional regulations governing the call and conduct of the charge conference shall apply also to the church conference. A joint church conference for two or more churches may be held at the same time and place as the presiding elder (district superintendent) may determine. A church conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority with adequate provision being made for translation.

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

2. The charge conference, the presiding elder (district superintendent), and the pastor shall organize and administer the pastoral charge and churches according to the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. When the membership size, program scope, mission resources, or other circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the presiding elder (district superintendent), modify the organizational plans, provided that the provisions of ¶¶ 336-337 are observed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16. The charge conference shall promote awareness of and concurrence with the Doctrinal Standards and General Rules of the Global Methodist Church (§§ 101- 109), and with policies relative to the Social Witness of the church (§§ 201-202).

17. When authorized by the presiding elder (district superintendent) and other relevant annual conference agency, the charge conference may provide for the sponsoring of satellite congregations and the planting of new faith communities.

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

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

¶ 341. REMOVAL OF OFFICERS AND FILLING OF VACANCIES. If a leader or officer who has been elected by the charge conference is unable or unwilling to perform the duties reasonably expected of such a leader or officer, the presiding elder (district superintendent) may call a special session of the charge conference. The purpose of such special session shall be stated as “Consideration for the removal of person(s) from office and the election of person(s) to fill vacancy(ies).” The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or another group charged with that responsibility shall meet as soon as possible after the special session of the charge conference has been announced and shall propose person(s) who may be elected if vacancy(ies) occur at the charge conference. If the charge conference votes to remove a person or persons from office, the vacancy(ies) shall be filled in the manner prescribed for elections. When a local church trustee is under consideration for removal and the pastoral charge consists of two or more churches, a church local conference shall be called instead of a charge conference.

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

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

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

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

d) continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the Church’s reason for existence and the types of ministry that

will most effectively fulfill the Church's mission;

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

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

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

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

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

a) leading the council in fulfilling its responsibilities;

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

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

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

e) coordinating the various activities of the council;

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

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

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

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

¶ **343. THE CHURCH COUNCIL.** 1. The church council, or its equivalent governing body, shall provide for planning and implementing a ministry of evangelizing and spreading scriptural holiness through nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually

evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference.

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

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

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

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

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

3. Meetings

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

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

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

a) Review the membership of the local church;

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section VIII. Local Church Administrative Committees

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

a) The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee shall serve throughout the year to guide the church council on matters regarding the leadership (other than employed staff) of the congregation, so as to focus on mission and ministry as the context for service; guide the development and training of spiritual leaders; recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders; and assist the church council in assessing changing leadership needs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the presiding elder (district superintendent), the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor. The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee, except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. The committee may meet with the presiding elder (district superintendent) without the appointed clergy under consideration being present. However, the appointed clergy under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the presiding elder (district superintendent) and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. The committee shall meet in closed session and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Committees are encouraged to develop specific titles for associate pastors that reflect the job descriptions and expectations.

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

h. To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference lay ministers and persons for candidacy for ordained ministry and to enlist and refer to the appropriate agencies persons for candidacy for missionary service, recognizing that the Global

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

i. To confer with the pastor and/or other appointed members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and/or pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastor(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the presiding elder (district superintendent), and the bishop in securing clergy leadership. Its relationship to the presiding elder (district superintendent) and the bishop shall be advisory only. The committee shall not recommend to the presiding elder (district superintendent) or bishop a change of pastor(s) without first discussing its concerns with the pastor(s) involved.

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

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

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

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

¶ **346. BOARD OF TRUSTEES.** Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of a local church, within each congregation of the Global Methodist Church there shall be a Board of

Trustees, consisting of at least five professing members of the church representing the gender, race, and age of the congregation, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law. The pastor of the congregation(s) shall be a member with voice but without vote of the Board of Trustees and may not be counted for the purpose of achieving a quorum or calculating a majority.

1. *Election of Trustees.* Members of the Board of Trustees of each local congregation may be elected by the charge or church conference to a three-year term, equally divided into three classes, with one-third elected each year. A member of the Board of Trustees may be re-elected for no more than one additional term, and no member may serve longer than six consecutive years.

2. *Vacancies and Removal of Trustees.* Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the local church or be excluded therefrom, trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion. Should a trustee of a local church or a director of an incorporated local church be unable to carry out their responsibilities, or when he or she refuses to execute properly a legal instrument relating to any property of the church when directed to do so by the charge conference, and when all legal requirements have been satisfied in reference to such execution, the charge conference may by majority vote declare the trustee's or director's membership on the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors vacated. Vacancies occurring in the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the unexpired term. Such election shall be held in the same manner as for Trustees (§ 346.1). A vacancy other than the preceding that occurs ad interim may be filled until the next charge conference by the church council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of the church. Reflecting the historic understanding of Methodism, pews in the Global Methodist Church shall always be free.

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

c. Should the congregation possess a parsonage offered to the pastor for housing, the chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson or designee of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family's health and well-being. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family (§ 345.8m). The Board of Trustees are responsible to ensure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health and well-being of the pastor or pastor's family and shall provide that the parsonage be maintained in good condition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

j. An evaluation of all church properties, including the chancel areas, to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities, and when applicable, a plan and timeline for resolving barriers to accessibility (§ 346.5e).

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the local church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee shall make a full and complete report to the annual charge conference. A local church audit is defined as an independent evaluation of the financial reports and records and the internal controls of the local church by a qualified person or persons. The audit shall be conducted to reasonably verify the accuracy and reliability of financial reporting, determine whether assets are being safeguarded, and determine compliance with local law, local church policies and procedures, and the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. The audit may include: 1) a review of the cash and investment reconciliations; 2) interviews with the

treasurer, financial secretary, pastor(s), Finance Committee chair, business manager, those who count offerings, church secretary, etc., with inquiries regarding compliance with existing written financial policies and procedures; 3) a review of journal entries and authorized check signers for each checking and investment account; and 4) other procedures requested by the Finance Committee. The audit shall be performed by an audit committee composed of persons unrelated to the persons listed in 2 above or by an independent certified public accountant (CPA), accounting firm, or equivalent.

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

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

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

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

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

Section IX. Connectional Funding

¶ 349. LOCAL CHURCH CONNECTIONAL FUNDING. 1. Each local church of the Global Methodist Church contributes financially to the ministry of the Church beyond the local church through connectional funding. The local church treasurer or designee shall calculate the amount to be remitted in accordance with ¶¶ 349.3 and .4 by January 30 of each calendar year based on the prior year's local church operating income.

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

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

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

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

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

- a. For general church connectional funding, not more than 1.5% of local church operating income (see ¶ 349.3) as set by the Transitional Leadership Council or the Convening General Conference;
- b. For annual conference connectional funding, not more than 5% of local church operating income (see ¶ 349.3) as set by the Transitional Leadership Council or the respective annual conference.
5. The percentages in ¶ 349.4 shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the Transitional Leadership Council or of the convening General Conference.
6. Each month the local church shall remit one-twelfth of the annual sum of general church connectional funding and annual conference connectional funding to the Transitional Leadership Council or its designee.
7. The Transitional Leadership Council or its designee may designate a local church as a missional church and exempt such a church from paying general church or annual conference connectional funding for up to five years from the date of designation. Missional churches shall be church plants, church re-starts, or churches located in or serving economically disadvantaged communities.
8. The pastor(s) and leadership of the local church shall interpret connectional funding to the members of the local church so that connectional funding is embraced by such membership and regularly share information with the members of the local church to educate and interpret such connectional funding.
9. The failure of a local church to remit connectional funding in full as calculated annually may result in the Transitional Leadership Council or designee proceeding under ¶¶ 354 to involuntarily disaffiliate the local church from the Global Methodist Church.

Section X. The Method of Organizing a New Church

¶ 350. ORGANIZATION OF A NEW CHURCH. 1. A new local church may be planted by any lay person or clergy person of the Global Methodist Church with the consent of the bishop or presiding elder (district superintendent).

A sponsoring local church, or group of local churches, shall be the agent in charge of the project. In the absence of a sponsoring church, an Annual Conference, through its designated leadership, may assume the initiative.

2. Each annual conference shall determine the criteria required for the chartering of a new local church.

The president *pro tempore* shall designate the district to which the new church shall belong.

3. Upon the request of the organizing pastor, the presiding elder (district superintendent) shall call the interested people to meet at an appointed time for the purpose of organizing them into a chartered local church, or may by written authorization designate an elder in the district to call such a meeting.

Following a time of worship, opportunity shall be given to those in attendance to present themselves for membership, whether by transfer or profession of faith.

Upon organization, the new local church shall function under the provisions of the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

Section XI. Transfer of a Local Church

¶ 351. TRANSFER OF A LOCAL CHURCH. A local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another by a two-thirds vote of the professing members who are present and

voting in the church council and the church conference, and a simple majority vote by each of the two annual conferences involved. Upon announcement of the required majorities by the bishop or bishops involved, the transfer shall immediately be effective. The votes required may originate in the local church or either of the annual conferences involved and shall be effective regardless of the order in which taken. In each case an action shall remain effective unless and until rescinded prior to the completion of the transfer by a majority vote of those present and voting.

Section XII. Shared Ministry

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

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

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

¶ **353. ECUMENICAL CONGREGATIONS.** 1. *Definition.* Ecumenical congregations may be formed by a local Global Methodist church and one or more local congregations of other Christian traditions, provided that the doctrine and mission of the other denomination does not conflict with those of the Global Methodist Church. Such congregations are formed to enhance ministry, make wise stewardship of limited resources, and live out the ecumenical spirit in creative ways responsive to the needs of God's people, as well as to opportunities for expanded mission and ministry. Forms of ecumenical shared ministries include: (a) a federated church, in which one congregation is related to two or more denominations, with persons choosing to hold membership in one or the other of the denominations; (b) a union church, in which a congregation with one unified membership roll is related to two or more denominations; (c) a merged church, in which two or more congregations of different denominations form one congregation that relates to only one of the constituent denominations; (d) a yoked parish, in which congregations of different denominations share a pastor (see ¶ 353.3).

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

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

Section XIII – Congregational Fidelity

¶ 354. **CONGREGATIONAL FIDELITY.** Central to the integrity of both local congregations and the Global Methodist Church as a whole, the doctrines and discipline of the denomination as outlined in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall be voluntarily and joyfully embraced and practiced by all. Additionally, local congregations covenant to provide connectional funding as set forth in ¶ 349. Congregations that for reason of conscience find themselves unable to do so are accordingly encouraged to affiliate with another Christian denomination more in keeping with their beliefs or practices under the provisions of ¶ 903. Should a congregation consistently advance doctrines or engage in practices not in conformity with this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or fail to remit in full the connectional funding set forth in ¶ 349, the Transitional Leadership Council or its successor shall have the authority to effectuate such a change independently, provided that the following provisions are met:

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

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

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

4. If a resolution of the disagreement proves unattainable or the local church does not remit its connectional funding in full following the meeting with the presiding elder (district superintendent), the local church may be involuntarily disaffiliated from the Global Methodist Church by a two-thirds vote of the Transitional Leadership Council or its successor, by agreement of the bishop, and by an affirmative vote of the cabinet of the conference in which the local church is located.

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

Section XIV. Transitional Provisions

¶ 355. LOCAL CONGREGATIONS ALIGNING WITH THE GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH.

1. Local congregations formerly aligned with The United Methodist Church may align with the Global Methodist Church through an affirmative vote by the professing members of the congregation present and voting at a duly authorized church conference. The church council shall notify the Transitional Leadership Council of their decision. The affirmative vote must be to endorse the doctrinal standards and Social Witness (¶¶ 101-202) in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines* and express a desire to be connected and accountable to this church.

2. Other Christian congregations who desire to be connected and accountable to the Global Methodist Church may request to align upon an affirmative majority vote of a congregational meeting to endorse the doctrinal standards and Social Witness (¶¶ 101-202) in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines*. It is the responsibility of the Transitional Leadership Council to verify the legality of the process used by the local congregation and the congregation's viability prior to their request being approved.

3. The Transitional Leadership Council shall serve the local church by ensuring all congregations in the Global Methodist Church have: an annual conference and district to which they belong, appropriate supervision, pastoral appointments, and the opportunity to elect through its annual conference delegates to the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church. Congregations shall function in their annual conferences and districts under this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Beginning on the effective date of affiliation, local churches shall forward connectional funding to the Global Methodist Church under processes established by the Transitional Leadership Council.

4. Where both a local church and its pastor affiliate with the Global Methodist Church and both desire to continue the pastoral assignment, the Transitional Leadership Council and the bishop in charge will seek to maintain the current clergy appointment for the sake of stability and continuity in this time of transition.

5. The effective date of local churches under ¶ 355.1-3 shall be the date established by the Transitional Leadership Council.

PART FOUR THE MINISTRY OF THE CALLED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

d. National background check.

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

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

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

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

- b. Endorsement by majority vote of the charge conference annually.
- c. Written recommendation for renewal by the pastor.
- d. Completion of an additional national background check every three years
- e. Satisfactory completion of at least one additional advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Commission on Higher Education and Ministry, in the last three years.

4. Conditions of service.

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

b. Certification as a lay minister may be transferred to another annual conference if the person relocates. Subsequent renewal in that new annual conference is in accordance with ¶ 402.3.

c. Persons who held active certification in a predecessor denomination shall automatically be received as certified lay ministers in the Global Methodist Church, provided that they have met the requirements of ¶ 402.2b-c through coursework in the predecessor denomination, subscribe to the doctrinal standards and Social Witness of this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, and agree to abide by its discipline. Subsequent renewal is in accordance with ¶ 402.3. Those not meeting the requirements of ¶ 402.2b-c are not certified but may work toward certification and are not required to repeat coursework they have already completed.

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

Following the historic practice of Methodism, those who serve as clergy within the Global Methodist Church shall be both elected by their peers and ordained by the bishop on behalf of the whole church. Election is the action by which the clergy of an annual conference, after carefully examining the qualifications, abilities, and readiness of a candidate for ministry, incorporate individuals into the membership of the covenant fellowship of those called to serve the church. Election carries with it the right to vote and participate in the business of an annual conference provided the person is under appointment or senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 418. During the period prior to the convening General Conference, under the provisions of ¶ 419.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be clergy under this paragraph and have the right to vote and participate in the business of an annual conference. During the period prior to the convening General Conference, those persons licensed as transitional local pastors under ¶ 419.2b shall also be clergy under this paragraph and have the right to vote and participate in the business of an annual conference, except as limited by ¶419.2b. Ordination is the action by which the church sets apart those who have been so elected to a particular order of ministry for the good of the whole church. Ordination is conferred by the laying on of hands by a bishop and others among the people of God in conference. There are two orders of clergy:

1. *Order of Deacons.* Within the people of God, some persons are called to the ministry of deacon, which is a ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. The words deacon, deaconess, and diaconate all spring from a common Greek root—*diakonos*, or “servant,” and *diakonia*, or “service.” This ministry exemplifies and leads the Church in the servanthood every Christian is called to live both in the church and in the world. Deacons are to witness to the Word in their words and actions, and to embody and lead the community’s service in the world for the sake of enacting God’s compassion and justice. Within and beyond a local church, deacons may, among other ministries, lead in worship, preach and teach, conduct marriages, bury the dead, care for the sick and needy, and interpret the needs of the world to the church. Deacons may also consecrate or assist with the Sacraments in accordance with ¶ 313. Deacons may serve in a variety of offices within and beyond a local church, including, but not limited to, serving as pastor of a local church. Deacons retain their responsibility to witness and service in the world. Ordination as a deacon is for life, whether a person is subsequently ordained an elder or not; persons may remain as deacons should they desire to do so.

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

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

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

2. *The Ministry of Oversight (Apostolic Ministry).* Elders who are called and appointed to oversee the work of others are a part of the ministry of oversight or the apostolic ministry of the Global Methodist Church. Upon their election to the office, elders may serve as a bishop of the church to defend the faith and to provide oversight and discipline to the churches and clergy that compose the annual conference. In turn, bishops may call and appoint other elders as presiding elders (district superintendents) to give guidance and direction to those serving as clergy within their district, organize new churches, and assist, discipline, and provide sacramental support to laity, deacons, and elders in located ministry.

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

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

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

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

4. Be able to effectively communicate the Christian faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¶ 407. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION. 1. In order better to prepare leaders, the Global Methodist Church requires candidates for ordination as deacons and elders to fulfill basic educational requirements as part of the ordination process. These educational requirements include the courses defined in ¶ 407.3.a, and .b below: Ten courses (thirty credit hours) for those pursuing deacons orders, and ten additional courses (thirty credit hours) for those seeking elders orders. Recognizing that educational opportunities vary based on geography and life circumstance, the Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any of the following degree programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued: an approved alternative educational pathway, a bachelor's degree

program in ministry (for persons residing other than in the United States and Western Europe), a joint Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Divinity program, a program for a Master of Arts or equivalent degree in the practice of ministry, or a Master of Divinity degree program.

2. *Recommended Educational Institutions.* A recommended list of schools for ministry education will be maintained by the Transitional Commission on Ministry. Candidates for ordination are strongly encouraged to choose from the list of recommended institutions to complete educational requirements for ordination; however, candidates may complete their educational requirements at any accredited educational institution, including institutions not on the Global Methodist Church's recommended list. The Transitional Commission on Ministry must approve courses to fulfill the educational requirement for Methodist Theology and Denominational History and Polity. The Transitional Commission on Ministry will recommend competencies and courses for ministerial training, as well as establish standards for and supervise approved alternative educational pathways in conjunction with the annual conference boards of ministry.

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

a. Courses in the following five areas are required for all persons seeking ordination as a deacon:

- Introduction to the Old Testament
- Introduction to the New Testament
- Christian Leadership/Conflict Resolution
- Methodist Theology
- Denominational History and Polity

In addition, those pastoring a church, or planning to pursue elder's orders shall be required to complete a course in

- Basics of Preaching.

b. Once a deacon has been ordained, a minimum of five further (four for those going on to ordination as an elder) courses will be required. Deacons may choose from courses in the following areas:

- Pastoral Care*
- Worship and Sacraments*
- Apologetics*
- Evangelism and Missions*
- The Gospel Vision for Justice
- Christian Education & Discipleship
- Ministering to Children
- Models of Youth Ministry
- Church Finance and Administration
- Ministry in Intercultural Contexts
- Additional courses in Bible or theology

* *required for deacons pastoring a local church/ planning to pursue elder's orders*

These courses will be determined in consultation with the presiding elder (district superintendent) in consideration of the deacon's ministry setting. Failure to complete these additional courses within seven years will result in the deacon being placed on inactive status until the courses are completed.

4. *Elders Educational Requirements.* For deacons who wish to pursue elder's orders, a minimum of ten additional courses (beyond the ten already taken for ordination as deacon) will be required.

a. In addition to all courses required for the office of deacon, courses in the following six courses will be required prior to ordination as an elder.

- History of Christianity through the Reformation
- History of Christianity, Reformation to the present
- Church Finance and Administration (if not already taken)
- Systematic Theology
- One elective course in Old Testament
- One elective course in New Testament

b. Following ordination as an elder, courses in additional four areas will be required to complete the educational requirements. These courses may be chosen from among the following areas:

- A Theology Elective
- Mission and Church Renewal
- Media and Modern Applications
- Advanced Preaching
- Spiritual Formation
- Philosophy of Religion

c. Failure to complete these additional courses within seven years will result in the elder being placed on inactive status until the courses are completed.

5. The Transitional Commission on Higher Education and Ministry will determine whether courses at a given institution meet the requirements listed in this paragraph. Each annual conference board of ministry shall certify that the courses taken by a person correspond sufficiently to these areas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1) Have you faith in Christ?

(2) Are you going on to perfection?

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

- (4) *Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love?*
- (5) *Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to God's work?*
- (6) *Do you know the General Rules of our Church?*
- (7) *Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?*
- (8) *Have you studied the doctrines of the Global Methodist Church?*
- (9) *After full examination do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?*
- (10) *Will you preach and maintain them?*
- (11) *Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity?*
- (12) *Do you approve our church government and polity?*
- (13) *Will you support and maintain them?*
- (14) *Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?*
- (15) *Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?*
- (16) *Will you visit from house to house?*
- (17) *Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?*
- (18) *Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?*
- (19) *Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?*
- (20) *Will you observe the following directions?*
 - (a) *Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.*
 - (b) *Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.*

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

1. *Ordination Questions.* Upon completion of the educational requirements of ¶ 406.2b and ¶407.3a, and passing a deacon's level knowledge examination in doctrine, history, discipline, and Bible, a candidate for ordination as deacon shall be interviewed by the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. During such interview, the candidate shall be asked the following questions:

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

In evaluating candidates who attend an educational institution not on the Global Methodist Church's recommended list, the annual conference board of ministry will evaluate whether the candidate's courses and preparation meets the standards of the Global Methodist Church.

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

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

3. Deacons are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters except the ordination and conference relation of elders. Deacons not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall have no voting rights in the annual conference, except as provided for in ¶ 418.

4. Deacons may be appointed to serve as part of a ministry team in a local church (including as a pastor) or another ministry setting by the bishop, or they may secure their own position with the approval and appointment of the bishop. Deacons may continue to serve as a deacon indefinitely under appointment by the bishop and are encouraged to continue their education in regard to whatever ministry specialty they are called to pursue.

5. Deacons shall meet minimum educational requirements at the time of ordination as determined by this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (¶ 406.2b, c). Following ordination, deacons must fulfill the additional educational requirements established for deacons in ¶ 407.3b within seven (7) years. Deacons who do not complete all educational requirements within the allotted time shall be classified as inactive until such educational requirements are completed.

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

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

- a. Prove themselves faithful, mature, and effective over a period of a minimum of two years' service as a deacon;
- b. Complete the educational requirements for ordination as an elder specified in ¶ 407.4a.
- c. Pass an advanced level examination in doctrine, history, discipline and Bible;
- d. Be interviewed and recommended by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent for ordination as an elder. In evaluating candidates who attend an educational institution not on the Global Methodist Church's recommended list, the annual conference board of ministry will evaluate whether the candidate's courses and preparation meets the standards of the Global Methodist Church. The annual conference board of ministry shall evaluate whether the candidate evidences a sufficient foundation in and commitment to the doctrine, ethical principles, and discipline of the Global Methodist Church; and
- e. Be approved by two-thirds vote by the elders of the annual conference in executive session and be approved by the bishop.

2. The additional educational requirements specified in ¶ 407.4b must be completed within seven (7) years of ordination as elder. Persons who do not complete such requirements in a timely

manner shall be ineligible thereafter to serve in the office of pastor of a local church but may continue to serve in other capacities as a deacon.

3. Elders are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters. An elder not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall not have voting rights in the annual conference, except as provided for in ¶ 418. Elders may be appointed by the bishop as a presiding elder (district superintendent), to local ministry as pastor in charge, to the staff of a local church, as a chaplain, as an evangelist, or to other ministry settings. Elders are eligible to be elected to the office of bishop.

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

¶ 412. SUPPLY PASTOR. Upon recommendation of the board of ministry and affirmation by the clergy session of the annual conference, a bishop may appoint a person to serve as a supply pastor under the immediate supervision of an elder who can provide mentoring to the supply pastor and preside at the sacramental ministry of the congregation. Supply pastors are clergy members of the annual conference with full voice, but not vote, on all matters. Supply pastors not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall not have voice in the annual conference. A supply pastor must be a candidate for ordained ministry and must be ordained as deacon within three years of being appointed to serve as a supply pastor. Persons serving as pastors in a predecessor denomination who do not yet qualify for ordination as deacon shall have three years from the time of their transfer into the Global Methodist Church to be ordained while continuing to serve as a supply pastor.

¶ 413. CHAPLAINCY AND OTHER ENDORSEMENTS. The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint a provisional ecclesiastical endorsing board that shall report to the TLC to fulfill the following ministry objectives and requirements: (1) evaluate applications and recommend persons to specialized ministries that require a denominational endorsement, (2) provide professional and pastoral support and accountability by those appointed to serve in chaplaincy/institutional ministry settings, (3) interpret and advocate for those serving such appointments to bishops, annual conferences and local congregations, (4) work to identify quality continuing education opportunities for those appointed to endorsed ministries, and (5) liaison with other faith groups, chaplaincy organizations, colleges, theological seminaries and conferences to share the vision and opportunities for boundary ministries in institutional and secular settings. In its discretion, the Transitional Leadership Council may select a Director of Endorsing Ministries to oversee ongoing completion of the objectives listed above. The Director shall work with the Transitional Leadership Council to establish necessary funding, implementing policies, and logistical support. The Director shall be ultimately accountable to the Transitional Leadership Council and shall work in close collaboration with the ecclesiastical endorsing board on all matters relevant to the effective discharge of responsibilities.

¶ 414. EVANGELISTS. The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint a provisional endorsing board to encourage the work of evangelists in the Global Methodist Church that shall report to the TLC to fulfill the following ministry objectives and requirements: (1) evaluate applications and recommend persons to the ministry and office of evangelist, (2) provide professional and pastoral

support and accountability by those appointed to serve in evangelistic ministry settings, (3) interpret and advocate for those serving such appointments to bishops, annual conferences, and local congregations, (4) work to identify quality continuing education opportunities for those appointed as evangelists, and (5) liaison with other faith groups, evangelistic organizations, colleges, theological seminaries and conferences to share the vision and opportunities for evangelists.

¶ 415. TRANSFER OF CLERGY CREDENTIALS. Clergy applying to transfer to the Global Methodist Church from another Christian denomination (except for those specified in ¶ 419) must provide the following: (1) A formal resume with references; (2) Proof of ordination from a denomination with a formalized vetting process. Ordinations by congregations, networks, or associations do not meet this requirement; (3) Official transcripts of all post high school education; and (4) a copy of all personnel files maintained by his or her former denomination to be sent to the board of ministry at the written request of the clergy person. The applicant must also: (1) Submit to a background and credit check, and psychological examination, (2) Interview with a presiding elder (district superintendent), (3) pass denominational exams on doctrine, history, polity, and Bible for their level of ordination, and (4) Interview with the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. Upon the completion of these requirements, transfers must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry, a two-thirds vote of the clergy session of the annual conference to which the applicant is seeking admittance, and by, the receiving bishop.

¶ 416. APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

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

- a. Complete an application prepared by the Board of Ordained Ministry, including the following:
 - i) Testimony to their Christian faith and call to ministry.
 - ii) Permission and Release of any required psychological tests, a criminal background and credit check, reports of sexual misconduct or child abuse.
 - iii) Either a notarized statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse, OR a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse.
- b. A statement agreeing to teach, support and maintain Global Methodist Church doctrine.
- c. Give evidence through an interview with the board of ministry that they have read the *Transitional Book of Doctrine and Discipline* and will support and maintain Global Methodist Church discipline and polity.
- d. Present suitable credentials as an ordained clergyperson from another Christian denomination,
- e. Present evidence of completion of education equivalent to that required for deacons in the Global Methodist Church. Clergypersons holding ordination from another denomination or congregation, but not meeting the required educational standards of the Global Methodist Church may be appointed provisionally, with full educational requirements for deacon to be completed within three years of the start of the appointment. Progress toward completion of educational requirements shall be shown annually.

2. Clergy affirmed as Valid Deacons or Valid Elders may be accorded the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: a) constitutional amendments; b) election of delegates to General, regional, or annual conferences; and c) all matters of ordination character, and conference relations of ministers. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may serve on any board, commission or committee of the annual conference, except the board of ministry and the board of trustees. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may not be elected as delegates to General, regional or annual conferences.

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

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

1. *Voluntary Leave Process.* Clergy may request in writing a voluntary temporary leave of absence of up to one year from their ministerial duties due to medical needs, family circumstances, or other personal issues. Transitional leaves may similarly be granted for clergy in good standing who are temporarily between appointments. Such a change in conference status may be granted or terminated by majority vote of the clergy members of the annual conference upon recommendation by two-thirds of the annual conference board of ministry. Between sessions of annual conference, a voluntary leave of absence may be granted or terminated by a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry, with the recommendation of the bishop and a two-thirds majority of the presiding elders (district superintendents). Renewal of voluntary leave may be made annually by the majority vote of the clergy session, for a period of up to five years. After that time, the clergy person must choose either honorable location status (¶ 417.7) or senior status (¶ 418), with the approval of a majority of the clergy session. Either status discontinues the person's eligibility for appointment and does not require annual renewal of status.

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

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

4. *Involuntary Leave Process.* Involuntary leaves may be requested by the bishop, two-thirds of the presiding elders (district superintendents), and a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry., The board shall also determine what if any disciplinary action or other conditions are

required (e.g., therapy, remedial education, etc.). Placing a person on involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session. The fair process for administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary leave procedure (§ 814). When an end to the involuntary leave of absence is initiated by the bishop and a two-thirds majority of the presiding elders (district superintendents), the annual conference board of ministry shall review the circumstances surrounding the granting of the status to determine if the conditions of the leave have been met. If the board determines that such is not the case, it may continue involuntary leave of absence. Involuntary leave may continue for up to five years from when it was first granted, at which time the board must pursue administrative location (§ 417.7). Termination of involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry and a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session.

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

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

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

¶ 418. SENIOR STATUS. Following the scriptural pattern, there is no retirement for clergy or laity from the work of God's Kingdom. However, clergy persons serving in appointments may choose senior status within the annual conference, with the approval of a majority of the board of ministry and a majority of the clergy session. There is no mandatory age for such status. Senior status releases clergy members from any obligation to accept an appointment to ministry from the bishop, though clergy in senior status may voluntarily accept an appointment from the bishop to any ministry setting for which they qualify. Senior clergy, including bishop emeriti, retain their active status and right to both voice and vote at annual conference if they fulfill either of the following conditions: a) they are within seven years of the effective date of their aligning with the Global Methodist Church or the

end of their last appointment, whichever is later, provided that they notify the conference secretary at least ninety days prior to the annual conference session of their intention to participate as a voting member, or b) they are under appointment by the bishop for at least one-quarter time (no notification necessary). Senior clergy not qualifying under the preceding sentence retain voice, but not vote, at annual conference. Those in senior status, whether active or inactive, may be elected as a delegate to General or Regional Conference and serve on district or annual conference commissions, committees, or boards.

¶ 419. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS.

1. Clergy who are current or former ordained members of The United Methodist Church may apply to the Transitional Leadership Council (¶ 703.2h) or a body that it designates to be received as clergy members of the Global Methodist Church and to have their ordained status recognized. The application shall be accompanied by a copy of the applicant's ordination certificate(s) and shall include an explicit affirmation of the doctrines and Social Witness set forth in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and an agreement to abide by its discipline. The applicant shall consent to a background check. The Transitional Leadership Council or the body it designates, shall review the application and vote on each application received. An affirmative vote on each application shall result in the applicant being admitted to clergy membership in the Global Methodist Church and recognition of the applicant's ordained status in the Global Methodist Church.

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

a. Persons who are current or former associate members or licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church may apply for clergy membership in the Global Methodist Church and to be ordained as a deacon or elder. Each application shall be evaluated by the Transitional Leadership Council body(ies) designated for that purpose. The application must include a copy of the certificate or license from the person's service in The United Methodist Church, a transcript of courses completed to meet the requirements of ¶ 407, and a declaration that the applicant affirms the doctrines and Social Witness set forth in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, agrees to abide by its discipline. Those meeting the qualifications for ordination as deacons or elders set forth in this chapter shall, with the approval of the Transitional Leadership Council or the body(ies) designated by it be ordained at a service convened for that purpose. If an associate member or a licensed local pastor meets the educational requirements to be ordained as an elder and has served in The United Methodist Church for at least two years, the two-year period of minimum service as a deacon in ¶ 410.1.a shall not be applicable and the person shall immediately be ordained as a deacon and then as an elder at the same annual conference session following approval by its clergy session.

b. Those current or former licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church not meeting the qualifications for ordination as a deacon or elder in the Global Methodist Church may be granted a license by action of the Transitional Leadership Council as a local pastor for a one-year term, renewable for two additional years by the board of ministry of the annual conference in which they are appointed, while they work toward meeting the qualifications for ordination as a deacon in the Global Methodist Church, provided that they are appointed to pastor a local church. After the second renewal of the license, if the person has not met the qualifications for ordination as a deacon, their authority to pastor a local church shall cease. The license shall terminate if the person ceases to be appointed as pastor of a local church. The clergy status as a local pastor under this paragraph is limited to the circumstances described here, is transitional in nature, and shall cease to exist following the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church. A pastor operating under a license granted under this provision shall be a clergy member of the Global Methodist

Church while licensed, shall have sacramental authority in their appointment, and shall have full voice and vote on all matters except the ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders. Such a person shall be under the supervision of the board of ministry of the annual conference in which they are appointed, and a supervising elder appointed by a president elder, a president pro tem, or a bishop.

3. Clergy will be placed in the annual conference in which their appointment is located or may transfer to a different annual conference in the connection. The clergy person will be subject to the bishop of that annual conference for appointment. Prior to the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church, it is expected that the appointments of clergy serving congregations in which both transition into the Global Methodist Church will be retained, unless a change is needed because of illness, family situation, death, the election of senior status, clergy misconduct, or the financial exigencies of the congregation.

4. Persons in the candidacy process in The United Methodist Church who desire to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church prior to its convening conference shall be received by the annual conference board of ministry or the Transitional Leadership Council designated body handling candidates. The candidate shall comply with the provisions of ¶ 406 and their membership in a congregation of The United Methodist Church for at least one year shall satisfy the membership requirement of ¶ 406. The candidate shall request that a copy of all candidacy files held by their former district or annual conference be forwarded to the body credentialing candidates. Candidates shall continue at the point in the process where they are in The United Methodist Church. Candidates will not need to repeat steps or requirements they have already completed. Candidates will continue in their candidacy process according to the requirements listed in this chapter. Candidates eligible to be ordained under the qualifications of this chapter may move toward ordination at the next annual conference session under the processes laid out in this chapter.

5. The Transitional Leadership Council or its designee may in its sole discretion grant exceptions to the requirements upon petition of a person seeking certification as a candidate or conference membership and ordination during the period preceding the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church.

PART FIVE THE SUPERINTENDENCY

¶ **501. THE NATURE OF SUPERINTENDENCY.** From apostolic times, certain ordained persons have been set apart and entrusted with the task of defending the Apostolic faith and overseeing and leading the church in its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to spread scriptural holiness across the world (¶ 301). While shared by the whole people of God, this apostolic task is most clearly expressed in the historic office of the *episkopos* (meaning overseer) or bishop. The Global Methodist Church is led, equipped, and supervised by an episcopacy modeled after that of the early centuries of Christianity and stemming from the historic line of Methodist bishops.

We share John Wesley's conviction that bishops and elders are part of the same New Testament order. Therefore, bishops in the Global Methodist Church represent a specialized ministry rather than a separate order and are consecrated rather than ordained to their office. The role of bishop is a sacred trust held for a time as the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of our church allows. It is not a lifelong office.

Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, the first Methodist bishops in America, exemplified an evangelistic and missionary spirit that we trust will be shared by every bishop in the Global Methodist Church. The episcopal office is to keep us relentlessly focused outward toward our mission field. Our bishops must not lean on the trappings of ecclesial office but lead us from an authentic, humble, and evangelistic love for God and neighbor.

The bishop's primary place of servant leadership shall be to an annual conference or conferences of our church. When convened together, the bishops of the Global Methodist Church comprise a general superintendency that leads our church in spiritual and temporal matters. In addition to residing in the office of bishop, the task of superintending in the Global Methodist Church extends to the presiding elder (district superintendent), with each possessing distinct and collegial responsibilities.

Section I. The Office of Bishop

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

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

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

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

3. Defend, communicate, uphold and enforce the order, doctrines and disciplines of the church as provided for in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines*.

4. Preside in the General, regional, and annual conferences as assigned.

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

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

7. Provide liaison and leadership in the quest for Christian unity in ministry and mission and in the search for strengthened relationships with other living faith communities.

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

9. Travel through the connection at large to implement the missional strategy of the Global Methodist Church and to foster relationships with other areas of the connection.

¶ 504. SPECIFIC RESIDENTIAL DUTIES. Within the life of the annual conference to which they are assigned, bishops are entrusted with the following responsibilities:

1. Work with annual conference leaders to set vision and build a clear and articulated missional strategy for the conference. This strategy should include action plans and benchmarks aimed at advancing the Kingdom of Christ through initiatives related to establishing new faith communities, growing vital congregations, making mature disciples of Jesus Christ, and serving in ministries of justice and mercy.

2. Encourage, inspire and motivate the clergy, laity, and churches of the annual conference to embrace and implement the vision and missional strategy of the annual conference, as well as the vision and mission of the Global Methodist Church.

3. Strengthen the local churches, giving spiritual leadership to both laity and clergy, and to build relationships with people of local congregations of the episcopal area.

4. Provide general oversight for the fiscal and program operations of the annual conference(s). This oversight may include special inquiry into the work of annual conference committees and agencies to ensure that the provisions of the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and annual conference and general church policies and procedures are followed.

5. Ensure fair process for clergy and laity in all involuntary administrative and judicial proceedings through monitoring the performance of annual conference officials, boards, and committees charged with implementing such procedures (see Part Nine).

6. Form the districts after consultation with the presiding elders (district superintendents) and after a vote of the annual conference has determined the number of districts.

7. Appoint the presiding elders (district superintendents). To convene together and supervise the presiding elders (district superintendents) and conference officers, which shall constitute the cabinet of the annual conference (¶ 507).

8. Make and fix the appointments in the annual conferences as the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* directs (¶ 508-513).

9. Divide or to unite a circuit(s), station(s), or mission(s) as judged necessary for missional strategy and then to make appropriate appointments.

10. Transfer, upon the request of the receiving bishop, clergy member(s) of one annual conference to another, provided said member(s) agrees to said transfer; and to send immediately to

the secretaries of both conferences involved, to the conference Boards of Ministry, and to Transitional Leadership Council or its designee, written notices of the transfer of members.

11. Ensure that an appropriate personnel and supervisory record is kept and maintained on all clergy members as required by the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or action of the annual conference or bishop. There shall be only one file maintained for each member, containing both personnel and supervisory information. Clergy shall have access to the entirety of their file and shall have the right to add a response to any information contained therein.

12. Discharge such other duties as the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* may direct.

¶ 505. COMPENSATION AND SALARY UNIT. 1. The responsibility for providing appropriate compensation, health insurance, pension contributions, and travel and office expenses for bishops serving within the United States shall lie with the annual conference(s) to which he or she has been assigned. Bishops will be considered as employees of their respective annual conference(s). The Transitional Leadership Council will establish compensation amounts, adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living and the average salary of pastors in the episcopal area.

2. The responsibility for providing appropriate compensation, health insurance, pension contributions, and travel and office expenses for bishops serving in an episcopal area outside of the United States shall be borne by the general church through partnerships with U.S. annual conferences, though such bishops shall be considered employees of some entity within their episcopal area. The Transitional Leadership Council will establish compensation amounts, adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living, the average salary of pastors in the episcopal area, and the currency exchange rate.

3. Each episcopal area within the United States shall partner with one or more episcopal areas elsewhere in the world to provide the necessary funds for the episcopal office within those areas. Such funds will be raised in the U.S. and passed through the general church, designated for that episcopal area. The Transitional Leadership Council shall arrange such partnerships based on the financial resources any given U.S. conference can reasonably provide. Where partnerships do not provide adequate resources to cover the episcopal office costs, general church connectional funding may be used to fund episcopal costs as needed.

4. Costs for episcopal travel outside the episcopal area on behalf of the general church, (e.g., Council of Bishops meetings) shall be paid out of general church funds, not conference partnership funds.

Section II. The Office of Presiding Elders (District Superintendents)

¶ 506. SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT. 1. Presiding elders (district superintendents) are elders in full connection appointed by the bishop to the cabinet as an extension of the superintending role of the bishop within the annual conference. They serve at the bishop's pleasure and for a specific term of years to be determined by the convening conference. In instances where a new provisional annual conference is formed, the bishop shall consult with clergy and lay leaders of the provisional conference for the purpose of selecting presiding elders (district superintendents).

2. In the selection of presiding elders (district superintendents), bishops shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of the Global Methodist Church (¶ 306).

¶ 507. RESPONSIBILITIES. 1. As an extension of the office of bishop, the presiding elder (district superintendent) shall oversee the total ministry of the clergy and churches in the communities of the district in their missions of witness and service in the world. The presiding elder (district superintendent) is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral

vacancy may develop, or where no pastor is appointed. As such, the presiding elder (district superintendent) has the following specific responsibilities:

2. Be the chief missional strategist of the district and be committed to living out the values of the Church, including a mandate of inclusiveness; model, teach, and promote generous Christian giving; cooperate in developing Christian unity, and ecumenical, multicultural, multiracial, and cooperative ministries; and work with persons across the Church to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into the world.

3. Along with the bishop, guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition from a Wesleyan perspective, communicating and defending the doctrines and discipline of the church as provided for in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

4. Work with the bishop and cabinet in the process of appointment and assignment for ordained clergy, or assignment of qualified and trained lay ministers.

5. Work to develop an effective and functioning system for recruitment of candidates for ordained ministry.

6. Establish working relationships with pastor-parish relations committees, clergy, district lay leaders, and other lay leadership, to develop faithful and effective systems of ministry within the district.

7. Serve as an example of spiritual leadership by living a balanced and faithful life, and by encouraging both laity and clergy to continue to grow in spiritual formation.

8. Offer support, care, and counsel to clergy concerning matters affecting their effective ministry.

9. Encourage the building of covenant groups and communities among both the clergy and clergy families, and the laity on the district.

10. Maintain regular contact with the clergy on the district for counsel and supervision, and receive written or electronic reports of each clergy person's continuing education, spiritual practices, current ministry work, and goals for future ministry.

11. Maintain the appropriate records of all clergy appointed to or related to the charges on the district (including clergy in extension ministry and ministry beyond the local church), as well as records dealing with property, endowments, and other tangible assets of the Global Methodist Church within the district.

12. In consultation with the bishop and cabinet, work to develop the best strategic deployment of clergy possible in the district, including realignment of pastoral charges when needed, and the exploration of larger parishes, cooperative parishes, multiple staff configurations, new faith communities, and ecumenical shared ministries.

13. Interpret and decide all questions of Church law and discipline raised by the churches in the district, subject to review by the resident bishop of the annual conference.

14. Serve at the pleasure of the bishop and assume other leadership responsibilities as the bishop determines for the health and effectiveness of the local churches in the district and annual conference.

¶ 508. THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE CABINET. 1. Presiding elders (district superintendents), although assigned to districts, also have conference-wide responsibilities. As all ordained ministers are first elected into membership of an annual conference and subsequently appointed to pastoral charges, so presiding elders (district superintendents) become through their selection members first of a cabinet before they are subsequently assigned by the bishop to service in districts.

2. The cabinet under the leadership of the bishop is the expression of superintending leadership in and through the annual conference. It is expected to speak to the conference and for the conference to the spiritual and temporal issues that exist within the region encompassed by the conference.

3. The cabinet is to consult and plan with the conference in order to make a thorough analysis of the needs of the conference for clergy, implementing this planning with a positive and conscious effort to fill these needs.

4. When the cabinet considers matters relating to coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, and other matters as the cabinet may determine, the conference lay leader and other conference staff as appropriate shall be invited to be present.

Section III. Appointment-Making

¶ 509. CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS. 1. Prior to the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church, it is expected that the appointments of clergy serving congregations in which both transition into the Global Methodist Church will be retained, unless a change is needed because of illness, family situation, death, the election of senior status, clergy misconduct, or the financial exigencies of the congregation.

2. To strengthen and empower the local church to effectively carry out its mission for Christ in the world, clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part.

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

4. Appointment-making across conference lines shall be encouraged as a way of creating mobility and open itinerancy. Bishops and cabinets should share information on supply and demand across the church.

5. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are made as a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the church and in its leadership. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations in which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. Annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments through adequate training.

6. Fixing of Appointments.

a. Appointments in Provisional Annual Conferences. In provisional annual conferences the role of presidents pro tempore and presiding elders are critical to the work of deploying clergy leadership. The knowledge and discernment local leaders bring to this work is essential. Following ¶¶ 509-513, presidents pro tempore and presiding elders shall carry out the work of pastoral appointments. Presidents pro tempore shall support and equip presiding elders in this work in partnership and consultation with the bishop assigned primary oversight of the conference. Before finalizing a pastoral appointment, presidents pro tem shall communicate the intended appointment to the bishop. An appointment is finalized only when the bishop has fixed the appointment. The president pro tempore shall complete and submit the pastoral appointment form to the general Church staff within 3 days of the pastoral appointment being fixed.

b. Appointments in Provisional Districts. Where there is not a provisional annual conference, but one or more provisional districts, the bishop assigned primary oversight of the

district(s) will support and equip the presiding elder(s) for the work of pastoral appointments, following the guidelines of ¶¶ 509-513. Presiding elders and bishops will collaborate in the appointment process. An appointment is finalized only when the bishop has fixed the appointment. The presiding elder shall complete and submit the pastoral appointment form to the general Church staff within 3 days of the pastoral appointment being fixed.

c. Appointments in Areas Served by a Transitional Conference Advisory Team (TCAT). As TCATs work toward the formation of provisional annual conferences, pastoral appointment needs will emerge. In areas where there is not yet a provisional annual conference or provisional district(s), the bishop assigned to that area will collaborate with the TCAT leader in the work of pastoral appointments, following the guidelines of ¶¶ 509-513. An appointment is finalized only when the bishop has fixed the appointment. The TCAT leader shall complete and submit the pastoral appointment form to the general Church staff within 3 days of the pastoral appointment being fixed.

d. Appointments to Churches in Areas Served by a Transitional District Advisory Team (TDAT) or Not Yet Organized. As we continue to build the structure of the Global Methodist Church there will be congregations who join the Church in areas where there is not yet a TCAT, provisional district(s) or a provisional annual conference. In these areas, bishops will consult and collaborate with leaders of the local church, area leaders, general Church staff, along with presidents *pro tempore* and presiding elders in other areas to care for the pastoral appointment needs following the guidelines of ¶¶ 509-513. An appointment is finalized only when the bishop has fixed the appointment. The bishop shall complete and submit the pastoral appointment form to the general Church staff within 3 days of the pastoral appointment being fixed.

7. Simultaneous with the announcement of any appointment or group of appointments, the bishop or president *pro tempore* shall deliver a report to the annual conference committee on episcopacy addressing the specific steps that were taken to ensure that persons were considered for each appointment who were of diverse race, tribal or ethnic origin, gender, disability, marital status, and age. Such report shall enumerate the cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments that were made and the extent to which cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments were considered where such appointments were not made. The annual conference committee on episcopacy shall be responsible for working with the bishop and the cabinet to ensure compliance with our commitment to open itinerancy and to the equitable and fair consideration of clergy of diverse race, tribal or ethnic origin, gender, disability, marital status, and age during the appointment process. The annual conference committee on episcopacy shall annually report to the General Committee on Episcopacy the progress of the annual conference in fulfilling our commitment to open itinerancy, and the General Committee on Episcopacy shall annually provide direction to annual conference committees on episcopacy to enhance fulfillment of open itinerancy in each annual conference.

¶ 510. CONSULTATION AND APPOINTMENT-MAKING. Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and/or presiding elder (district superintendent) confers with the pastor and pastor-parish relations committee, taking into consideration the criteria of ¶ 511, clergy performance evaluation, needs of the appointment under consideration, and mission of the Church. Consultation is not merely notification. Consultation is not committee selection or call of a pastor. The role of the pastor-parish relations committee is advisory, working in partnership with the bishop and cabinet on behalf of the whole church (Philippians 1:4-6). The committee must be given the opportunity to give input on the suitability of a proposed appointment and to raise any concerns it might have. When a committee raises substantive and missional concerns about the suitability of an appointment, such concerns must be addressed by the bishop and cabinet in considering whether to make the appointment. The bishop and cabinet must provide a rationale for their decision to the committee if

they make the appointment. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of change in appointment. The process of consultation is mandatory in every annual conference. The Council of Bishops shall hold its members accountable for the implementation of the process of consultation in appointment-making in their respective areas.

¶ 511. CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENTS. Appointments during the period preceding the convening conference must take into account the unique needs of a charge, the community context, and also the gifts and evidence of God's grace of a particular pastor. To assist bishops, cabinets, pastors, and congregations to achieve an effective match of charges and pastors, criteria must be developed and analyzed in each instance and then shared with pastors and congregations.

1. *Congregations*—The presiding elder (district superintendent) shall develop with the pastor and the pastor-parish relations committee of each church a profile that reflects the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for mission of the congregation consistent with the Global Methodist Church's mission statement. These profiles shall be reviewed and updated prior to an appointment being made.

2. *Pastors*—The presiding elder (district superintendent) shall develop with the pastor a profile reflecting the pastor's gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and expectations, and also the needs and concerns of the pastor's spouse and family. These profiles shall be reviewed and updated prior to an appointment being made.

3. *Missional Setting*—The presiding elder (district superintendent) should develop community profiles with the pastor and the pastor-parish relations committee. Sources of information for these profiles could include: neighborhood surveys; local, state, and national census data; information from the annual conference; and research data. Profiles should be reviewed and updated prior to an appointment being made.

¶ 512. CLERGY EFFECTIVENESS AND APPOINTMENT ASSURANCE. Clergy are one of the vital resources the Global Methodist Church has to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the land. To carry out our God-given mission, clergy must be effective in their leadership and ministry. Accordingly, within the Global Methodist Church, neither elders nor deacons shall have the right to a guaranteed appointment. If a bishop chooses not to appoint a clergy person, the bishop must provide a written rationale for that decision to the individual involved. Clergy are free to seek an appointment in an annual conference other than their own. Deacons and elders who are not under a current appointment shall be considered inactive (¶¶ 409.3, 410.3 respectively.)

¶ 513. FREQUENCY OF APPOINTMENTS. While the bishop shall report all pastoral appointments to each regular session of an annual conference, appointments to charges may be made at any time deemed advisable by the bishop and cabinet. Appointments are made with the expectation that the length of pastorates shall respond to the long-term pastoral needs of charges, communities, and pastors. The bishop and cabinet should work toward multi-year (rather than annual) local church appointments to facilitate a more effective ministry.

¶ 514. APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY TO MINISTRIES OUTSIDE THE LOCAL CHURCH. 1. Bishops may appoint deacons and elders to ministry settings outside the local church. Such appointments are to be made in consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of the clergy person, needs of the community and receiving organization. The appointment should reflect the nature of ordained ministry as a faithful response of the mission of the church meeting the emerging needs in the world (¶ 403). It may be initiated by the individual clergy person, the

agency seeking their service, the bishop, or the presiding elder (district superintendent). A similar process of consultation (§511) shall be available to persons in appointments beyond the local church, as needed and appropriate.

2. Bishops may appoint deacons and elders to attend any recognized school, college, or theological seminary, or to participate in an accredited program of clinical pastoral education. Such appointments are a separate category from appointments to ministries outside the local church.

Section IV. Assignment and Removal of Bishops

¶ 515. PROVISIONS FOR EPISCOPAL AREAS. The Transitional Leadership Council shall determine the number of interim bishops based on missional potential, with consideration given to the following criteria:

1. The number of charge conferences and the number of active clergy in episcopal areas;
2. The geographic size of episcopal areas, measured by the square miles/square kilometers, and the numbers of time zones and nations;
3. The structure of episcopal areas, measured by the number of annual conferences, and the overall church membership in all annual, provisional annual, missionary conferences, and missions in episcopal areas.
4. The existing pattern of superintendency.
5. The number of bishops transferring into the Global Methodist Church who are available for assignment.

¶ 516. INTERIM BISHOPS. 1. *Transferring Bishops.* A bishop of The United Methodist Church or other autonomous Methodist church may join the Global Methodist Church by clergy transfer. Application to transfer shall include an explicit written affirmation of the doctrines and Social Witness set forth in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (§§ 101-202) and an agreement to abide by its discipline. Transferring bishops shall also agree to uphold the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. The bishop's transfer is subject to the approval of the Transitional Leadership Council. Bishops transferring to the Global Methodist Church shall be available for interim assignment during the period prior to the convening conference to an existing or newly formed episcopal area by the Transitional Leadership Council. The Transitional Leadership Council may assign a retired United Methodist bishop who has joined the Global Methodist Church to serve as an interim bishop of an episcopal area during the period prior to the convening conference.

2. The convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church may establish the process for electing and assigning bishops. Those assigned as interim bishops under this paragraph shall serve in that capacity until their successor is assigned under the process to be determined. The convening General Conference may provide for interim bishops to continue serving as active bishops, provided they meet the qualifications. Bishops transferring into the Global Methodist Church will be subject to the term limits set by the convening General Conference.

3. A retired bishop joining the Global Methodist Church shall become a senior elder and may bear the title of bishop emeritus. A bishop emeritus shall be a clergy member of the annual conference of their choice and may serve in any capacity allowed for senior clergy (§ 418). A senior elder serving as an interim bishop prior to the convening General Conference under ¶ 516.1 will not be considered a bishop emeritus but shall have all the privileges and responsibilities of an active bishop.

¶ 517. VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF BISHOP. A vacancy in the office of bishop may occur due to death, transition to senior status, resignation, administrative or judicial procedure, leave of

absence, or medical leave. In case the assignment of a bishop to residential supervision of an episcopal area is terminated by any of the above causes or no bishop is assigned to provide residential supervision, the vacancy shall be filled by the Transitional Leadership Council from among active bishops, bishops emeriti, or by the appointment of a president pro tempore. A president *pro tempore* is an elder given responsibility for residential oversight for that area. A president pro tempore assigned to provide residential oversight for an area must reside in that area, unless the Transitional Leadership Council grants an exception for missional purposes. If such an exception is granted, the missional purpose must be clearly stated and the exception shall be limited in time, but renewable by further action of the Transitional Leadership Council.

¶ 518. STATUS OF SENIOR BISHOPS. 1. Bishops may choose senior status (¶ 418) upon approval of a majority of the Transitional Leadership Council. Elders who formerly served as bishops but are not now serving as interim bishops may use the title of “bishop emeritus,” but they will not retain their episcopal responsibilities or membership on the Council of Bishops unless they have been assigned by the Transitional Leadership Council to serve in an interim capacity due to a vacancy within an episcopal area for at least three months (¶ 516.1, .3).

2. A bishop emeritus shall be a clergy member of the annual conference of their choice and may serve in any capacity allowed for senior clergy (¶ 418).

¶ 519. LEAVES. 1. *Leave of Absence*—A bishop may be granted a leave of absence for a justifiable reason for not more than six months by the Transitional Leadership Council. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and another bishop chosen by the Transitional Leadership Council shall preside in the episcopal area.

2. *Medical Leave*—Bishops who by reason of impaired health are temporarily unable to perform full work may be granted a leave of absence for a justifiable reason for not more than six months by the Transitional Leadership Council. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and another bishop chosen by the Transitional Leadership Council shall preside in the episcopal area. If, after the six-month time period is over, the bishop is still unable to perform full work due to impaired health, the bishop should apply for disability benefits through the benefit program.

¶ 520. COMPLAINTS AGAINST BISHOPS. 1. Episcopal leadership in the Global Methodist Church shares with all other ordained persons in the sacred trust of their ordination. The ministry of bishops as set forth in the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* also flows from the Scriptures. Whenever a bishop violates this trust or is unable to fulfill appropriate responsibilities, continuation in the episcopal office shall be subject to review. This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God’s work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized.

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

3. The complaint shall be administered according to the provisions of Part Eight: Judicial Administration. Any involuntary status change of a bishop must be recommended by a three-fourths vote of the investigative committee and approved by the Transitional Leadership Council by a two-thirds vote (*Judicial Practice and Procedure* 3).

Section V. Expressions of Collective Superintendency

¶ 521. **COUNCIL OF BISHOPS** 1. Bishops, although assigned to serve an episcopal area, are general superintendents of the whole Church. As all ordained ministers are first elected into membership of an annual conference and subsequently appointed to pastoral charges, so bishops become through their election members first of the Council of Bishops before they are subsequently assigned to areas of service. By virtue of their election and consecration, bishops are members of the Council of Bishops and are bound in special covenant with all other bishops. In keeping with this covenant, bishops fulfill their servant leadership and express their mutual accountability. The Council of Bishops is a faith community of mutual trust and concern responsible for the faith development and continuing well-being of its members. Prior to the convening General Conference of the Global Methodist Church, interim bishops may begin to meet digitally or in person as an interim Council of Bishops to provide mutual support and to share best practices, but the Council shall have no other responsibilities.

2. The Council of Bishops is thus the collegial expression of episcopal leadership in and to the Church and through the Church into the world. The Church expects the Council of Bishops to speak to the Church and from the Church to the world.

3. The Council of Bishops is composed of all active bishops and any senior elders who are assigned to serve as interim bishops for a minimum of three months. There shall be no funds allocated for any Council staff. Bishops emeriti who are not appointed to serve as interim bishops shall not attend meetings of the Council of Bishops or participate in its deliberations.

Section VI. Ecumenical Relationships

¶ 522. **CHRISTIAN UNITY**. 1. The Global Methodist Church recognizes that the global Christian community transcends denominational barriers, consisting of “all true believers under the Lordship of Jesus Christ,” and may be found wherever the “pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered.” Jesus’ prayer in John 17 that all his disciples “may be one” compels us to seek closer communion with brothers and sisters of different communions. Locally and globally, Christian communions which are committed to the “faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3) will find in the Global Methodist Church a willing partner in worship, evangelism, disciple-making, and works of mercy.

2. *Transitional Wesleyan Unity Commission.*

a. The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint a Transitional Wesleyan Unity Commission that shall be chaired by a bishop of the Global Methodist Church and consist of eight additional persons.

b. The Transitional Wesleyan Unity Commission shall bring recommendations to the Transitional Leadership Council with respect to full organic union with other Wesleyan denominations or associations of churches either before or at the convening General Conference. The Transitional Wesleyan Unity Commission shall recommend to the Transitional Leadership Council whether such denominations or associations shall have representation at the convening General Conference with voice, and with or without vote. Within discussions about greater union with other denominations or associations, particular care shall be taken to uphold the doctrine and moral principles and polity of the Global Methodist Church. The Transitional Leadership Council shall have the option of approving a plan of union to be effective immediately or to recommend such a plan of union to be approved at the convening General Conference.

c. The Transitional Wesleyan Unity Committee shall bring recommendations for covenant

relationships with Affiliated Covenant Churches under ¶ 523.4 to be approved at the convening General Conference.

¶ 523. OTHER WESLEYAN DENOMINATIONS. 1. In addition to wider ecumenical and interchurch cooperation, the Global Methodist Church has a particular interest in fostering greater unity with other Wesleyan and Methodist groups which share a common heritage of theology, history, and polity. Unity among the spiritual heirs of John Wesley is a profound hope and desire of the Global Methodist Church, rooted in our heritage as a “connectional” movement, linking congregations and conferences in cooperative ministry and mutual encouragement. Closer relationships with other Wesleyan groups provide increased opportunities for global mission and evangelism, enrichment in our understanding and practice of ministry, and the sharing of resources and expertise.

2. *World Methodist Council.* Founded in the 19th century by predecessor denominations of the Global Methodist Church, the World Methodist Council has been an effective forum for the development of trans-Methodist fellowship and cooperative ministry. Following its legal formation, the Global Methodist Church will apply for formal membership in the World Methodist Conference.

3. *Other Trans-Methodist bodies.* The Transitional Wesleyan Unity Commission (see ¶ 522.2) is charged with exploring the advisability of membership of the Global Methodist Church in other trans-Methodist organizations, such as the Asian Methodist Council, European Methodist Council, Global Wesleyan Alliance, or Pan-Methodist Commission.

4. *Affiliated Covenant Relationships with Other Christian Denominations or Associations of Churches.* The Global Methodist Church welcomes covenant relationships with other Christian denominations or association of churches which do not involve organic union with the Global Methodist Church. We celebrate that some may wish to explore a closer, formalized relationship, but not unite organically with the Global Methodist Church. The purpose of establishing such covenant relationships is to enhance our mutual Christian witness and effectiveness, and/or to allow for increased reach into regions or nations where one or the other has little or no presence. Conversations toward formalized relationships as Affiliated Covenant Churches may be held by the Transitional Wesleyan Unity Commission prior to the convening General Conference as set forth in ¶ 522.2 with such recommendations being presented to the convening General Conference for approval. These covenant relationships may include mutual recognition of baptism and ordained ministry, eucharistic fellowship, shared representation at governing assemblies, and/or plans for shared ministry and resources.

5. *Union with the Global Methodist Church.* We rejoice that some Wesleyan bodies may wish to explore full organic union with the Global Methodist Church. The Transitional Wesleyan Unity Commission (¶ 522.2), or its designated representatives, shall represent the Global Methodist Church in conversations related to full union. Prior to the convening General Conference, such plans of union may be approved by the Transitional Leadership Conference or may be recommended for approval to the convening General Conference. Such plans of union shall include: (1) A statement of vision on a preferred future; (2) a statement on doctrinal and theological alignment; and (3) a plan for integration of ministries including evidence of consultation with all regional conferences directly affected by the plan of union.

a. Plans which do not require alterations to the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church shall be ratified by a simple majority vote of the Transitional Leadership Council prior to the convening General Conference and become immediately effective. The other Wesleyan body shall have voted to dissolve its own governance structure to become effective upon ratification of the plan of union by the Transitional Leadership Council.

b. Plans which require alterations to the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church shall require a three-fourths majority vote by the convening General Conference for ratification.

PART SIX CONFERENCES

¶601. **THE CONFERENCE SYSTEM.** Beginning in 1744 when John Wesley first met with his brother Charles and a few other clergymen to consider "how we should proceed to save our own souls and those that heard us," the principal expression of connectionalism within Methodism has historically been within its conference system.

The agenda for the first conference was a simple one: "1. What to teach, 2. How to teach, and 3. What to do, that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice," and the agenda for that and subsequent meetings was generally expressed in a question and answer format.

Organized at multiple levels -- charge conferences, district conferences, annual conferences, regional conferences, and a general conference -- the conference system is at the spiritual center of Methodism and refers not simply to a meeting and the decisions that may be made in such a setting, but both to the act of gathering together in holy conferencing, and to the persons themselves who do so. The conference system provides for collective discernment and collective decision-making as the governing principle of our church polity (Proverbs 15:22, Acts 15:1-35).

Section 1. The Convening General Conference

¶ 602. INTENTIONALLY OMITTED.

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

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

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

1. Adopt a constitution for the Global Methodist Church.
2. Ensure the mission of the church is kept foremost by all of the ministries, agencies, clergy, laity, and officers of the Global Methodist Church. In doing so, the convening General Conference shall remember that disciples of Jesus are made at the level of the local church. The convening General Conference shall endeavor to keep as many resources at the local church level as possible, so that the mission of the Global Methodist Church can be achieved.
3. Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of those who serve as deacons, elders, supply pastors, and other leaders within the Global Methodist Church.
4. Establish the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of church membership, which shall be open to all who believe, irrespective of race, color, ethnic or tribal identity, gender, or disability.
5. Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of the episcopacy and provide for their selection, continuance, and discontinuance. All bishops shall be accountable to the general church through the provisions of Part Eight (Judicial Administration) of this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines*.
6. Determine the powers of regional, annual, district, and church/charge conferences and other connectional associations within the Global Methodist Church, providing as appropriate for each such body to adapt structures that may best maximize their mission.

7. Determine the boundaries of regional conferences, and where there are no regional conferences, to determine the boundaries of annual conferences.

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

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

10. Fix the ratio of representation to the General and any regional conferences, based upon the number of professing members in each annual conference and region, and other factors determined by the General Conference.

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

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

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

14. Adopt or revise a statement of Our Social Witness, provided that such adoption or revision shall require a three-quarters vote of the convening General Conference.

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

16. In the absence of a regional conference, provide for the oversight and/or governance of institutions related to the church such as hospitals, schools, or other such entities.

17. To enact other legislation it determines would be helpful to the mission of the Global Methodist Church.

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

2. The convening General Conference shall elect a secretary upon nomination by the Transitional Leadership Council. The secretary shall oversee the publication and translation of proposals made to the convening General Conference and the actions taken by it, including publishing a transcript of the daily proceedings. The secretary shall be responsible for the corrected copy of the permanent record of the convening General Conference. The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint an interim secretary of the convening General Conference who will serve until his or her successor is elected.

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

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

3. *Virtual Sessions*-- Where necessary due to international or local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of delegates, the Transitional Leadership Council may, with a two-thirds vote, authorize the conducting of the conference via electronic or other digital means.

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

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

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

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

4. Petitions must be received by the Transitional Leadership Council or its designee no later than 120 days prior to the opening session of the convening General Conference.

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

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

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

Section II. The Regional Conferences

¶ 609. **REGIONAL CONFERENCES.** The Transitional Leadership Council or the convening General Conference may establish regional conferences for the purposes of coordinating and conducting the mission of the Church around the world. The Transitional Leadership Council or the convening General Conference shall determine the powers, authority, and boundaries of the regional conference. The regional conferences shall be composed of clergy and lay delegates in equal number elected from the annual conferences within each regional conference. General Conference delegates shall also serve as delegates to the regional conference. Where necessary due to conditions that prevent the physical assembling of delegates, the Transitional Leadership Council or the regional college of bishops may, with a two-thirds vote, authorize the conducting of the conference via electronic or other digital means.

Section III. The Annual Conference

¶ 610. **ORGANIZATION.** 1. *Composition.* Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability across a geographical region. A special annual conference or district that is not geographically bound and overlaps the boundaries of other annual conferences or districts can be formed by the decision of Transitional Leadership Council at the request of a group of churches. The voting membership of an annual conference shall be composed of those elders, deacons, and transitional local pastors under appointment (except as limited by ¶ 419.2b) and senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 418, as well as at least an equal number of lay members elected by each charge or by the district or annual conference. Each charge shall be entitled to as many lay members as it has appointed clergy. The annual conference may add lay members of the annual conference who are serving in conference leadership positions. The annual conference shall determine the method of electing additional lay members to equalize the number of clergy members. Only laity shall vote in the election of equaling laity. Such members may be elected by a charge conference, district conference, or the annual conference, but they must be elected and not appointed.

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

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

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

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

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

7. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the presiding elders (district superintendents). A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call, unless the annual conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

8. The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or, in case of inability, shall arrange for another bishop to preside. In the absence of a bishop, the conference shall by ballot,

without debate, elect a president *pro tempore* from among the ordained elders. The president thus elected shall discharge all the duties of a bishop except ordination.

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

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

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

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

3. Encourage and facilitate the planting of new churches, including the authorization of sponsorship by existing congregations, and to charter such new congregations (¶¶ 339.17, 349).

4. Establish the number of districts, upon recommendation from the bishop, cabinet, and conference leadership (¶ 504.6).

5. Form such boards, commissions and agencies as may be required to further its mission, specifying the composition of each body and electing the members thereof (¶ 612).

6. Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula determined by the General Conference. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. During the period prior to the convening General Conference, under the provisions of ¶ 419.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be members in full connection and may be clergy delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church, or its predecessors, for at least two years. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a minimum of fifty percent of votes cast plus one, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

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

8. The ordained clergy meeting in executive session are to approve the ordination of clergy as recommended by the annual conference board of ministry (¶¶ 409.2-3, 410.1), and to approve clergy status changes as recommended by the board of ministry (¶¶ 415-16).

9. Establish minimum standards for parsonages and other ministry housing, if desired (¶¶ 343.4e, 345.8m).

10. Approve by simple majority vote the transfer of a congregation into or out of the annual conference to or from another annual conference (¶ 351) and to approve by simple majority vote the departure of a local church from the Global Methodist Church (¶ 903).

11. Maintain the records of the annual conference, including the records of closed churches (¶ 328.7) and annual statistical reports from all local churches (¶¶ 330, 339.10).

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

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

1. *The Board of Ministry.* The Board of Ministry shall be responsible for overseeing the recruiting and credentialing of clergy for the furtherance of the mission of the Global Methodist Church. (§§406-410, 418) The Board shall also be responsible for overseeing all clergy changes in conference relations. (§§415-418)

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

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

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

d. The Board of Ministry may establish subcommittees and teams to assist it in its work.

2. *Episcopacy Committee.* The Committee on Episcopacy shall be responsible to support the bishop in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Global Methodist Church, with special reference to the area where the bishop has residential responsibility.

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

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

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

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

e. The committee shall be available to the bishop for counsel including advising the bishop concerning conditions within the episcopal area as they affect relationships between the bishop and the people of the Annual Conference.

f. Keeping in mind the roles, responsibilities, and duties laid in §§502-504, the Committee shall engage in an annual evaluation of the Bishop in consultation with the Transitional Leadership Council.

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

a. Members shall be nominated by the Conference Leadership Committee and elected by the annual conference. The committee shall include equal numbers of clergy and laity. The annual conference shall set the number of members of the committee. Members shall serve six years and

may succeed themselves once. The bishop, one presiding elder (district superintendent) chosen by the bishop, and the conference treasurer shall serve on the committee with voice but not vote.

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

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

d. The committee shall coordinate its work with the Transitional Leadership Council or its designee of the Global Methodist Church.

4. *Leadership Committee.* The Leadership Committee shall be responsible for nominating clergy and laity to serve on annual conference committees and boards.

a. Members shall be nominated by the bishop and elected by the Annual Conference. The committee shall include equal numbers of clergy and laity. The annual conference shall set the number of members of the committee. Members shall serve six years and may not succeed themselves. The bishop and presiding elders (district superintendents) shall also serve on the committee with voice and vote in addition to the clergy and laity elected by the annual conference.

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

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

5. *Committee on Investigation.* The committee on investigation shall be responsible for considering judicial complaints against clergy as set out in Part Eight Judicial Administration of this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and specifically ¶809.2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. *Administrative Review Committee.* The administrative review committee (¶ 805.2) shall be responsible for ensuring that the disciplinary procedures for resolving a substantiated administrative

complaint are properly followed as required by *Judicial Practices and Procedures* 5.2 and fair process (§804).

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

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

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

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

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

f. If an annual conference has not yet elected an administrative review committee, the bishop or president *pro tempore* shall appoint the members of the committee in consultation with the cabinet.

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

¶ 613. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS.

1. The annual conference should establish a funding percentage for its local churches to support the work of the conference, including providing for the costs of the bishop (§§ 611.2, 505). Efforts should be made to minimize conference funding in order to allow maximum resources to remain in local churches. Support for ministries within and beyond the annual conference should not be included in such funding percentage but be raised as mission giving from individuals and local churches. The conference should take into consideration any guidelines offered by the Transitional Leadership Council on the setting of the funding percentage. The general church funding percentage shall be set by the Transitional Leadership Council without adjustment by the annual conference.

2. In order to allocate delegates to the convening General Conference, the Transitional Leadership Council shall establish a deadline by which time the annual conference must submit a list of those churches aligning with the Global Methodist Church and the number of full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments in the annual conference. Delegates for the convening General Conference shall be allocated based on the number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments an annual conference or other divisions of the church not part of an annual conference has as compared to the total number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments of the Global Methodist Church as of the deadline. (Alignment decisions may be made by local churches after that deadline, according to any provisions adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, but such decisions would not be taken into account for allocating delegates to the convening General Conference.) The Transitional Leadership Council may allocate delegates to annual conferences or other divisions of the church not part of an annual conference that are formed or in formation after the deadline established by the Transitional Leadership Council.

3. As local churches are formed into new annual conferences by the Transitional Leadership Council, the new annual conferences shall begin organizing themselves according to the provisions

of ¶¶ 611-612, under the guidance and supervision of the Transitional Leadership Council and any transitional bodies at the general church level created by the Transitional Leadership Council.

PART SEVEN CONNECTIONAL ORGANIZATION

¶ **701. CONNECTIONAL LIFE.** Reflecting the shared mission of each of our congregations, connectional entities may be formed at the general, regional, and annual conference levels to effectively support the task of making disciples and spreading scriptural holiness. These organizations shall prioritize resourcing the work of local churches, functioning where possible in and through partnerships with existing ministries, congregations, annual conferences, and other bodies, rather than creating new structures. They may set standards and share best practices in adapting to fit the context and changing circumstances across the church and globe. While providing secure and reliable funding channels where appropriate, connectional entities shall nonetheless be frugal, with minimal structures and staff, so as not to burden local congregations with extra financial demands, embodying the call of Jesus not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28).

Section I. Transitional Leadership Council

¶ **702. PURPOSE AND COMPOSITION.** 1. During the period of transition between the legal formation of the Global Methodist Church and the effective date of actions taken by the convening General Conference, the Transitional Leadership Council shall serve as the primary leadership body of the church. As the most representative body other than the General Conference, it is charged with making all necessary decisions related to the forming of the Global Methodist Church. Its decisions are subject to approval, modification, or revocation by the convening General Conference and shall be in effect only until the effective date of permanent policies and procedures adopted by the convening General Conference that would replace them. Following the convening General Conference, the work of the Transitional Leadership Council shall be transitioned into the connectional entities established and formed by that body.

2. The Transitional Leadership Council was formed out of a meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 2-4, 2020. Its 17 members consisted of three retired bishops (one from Africa) and 14 clergy and laity representing some traditional renewal groups, as well as non-aligned traditionalists. Non-episcopal members included one person each from Africa, Europe/Eurasia, and the Philippines. Its members also represent racial diversity, with African-American, Hispanic-Latino, and Asian-American members. This group is empowered to act as the governing body for the establishment of the Global Methodist Church.

3. Any bishop (active or senior) who transfers to the church under the provisions of ¶ 516 shall be added to the membership of the Transitional Leadership Council. Bishops who serve on the Transitional Leadership Council are expected to take an active role in helping to govern the church, including oversight responsibilities in annual conferences, as needed during the transition. For each bishop added to the Transitional Leadership Council, the Transitional Leadership Council shall also elect by majority vote two additional clergy or lay members, broadening the diversity and representation of the body.

4. The members of the Transitional Leadership Council shall serve until that body is disbanded under the provisions of the convening General Conference.

¶ **703. RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY.** 1. The Transitional Leadership Council is empowered to make all necessary decisions related to the forming and initial operating of the Global Methodist Church until the effective date of legislation adopted by the convening General Conference. The Transitional Leadership Council may form transitional bodies and assign to those

bodies authority and responsibility for aspects of the church's work and the transitional process. Such transitional bodies remain amenable to the Transitional Leadership Council and their decisions are reviewable by the Transitional Leadership Council.

2. *Specific Responsibilities.* The responsibilities of the Transitional Leadership Council include, but are not limited to:

a. Promote knowledge of and allegiance to Wesleyan doctrine and moral teaching as reflected in the doctrinal and social witness statements in Parts One and Two of this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

b. Act as the legal incorporating body and establish the transitional polity of the Global Methodist Church.

c. Oversee the receiving of local congregations into the Global Methodist Church under the provisions of ¶ 355.1-2.

d. Form groups of such local churches into districts and annual conferences under the provisions of ¶ 355.3.

e. Approve the reception of bishops (active and retired) into the Global Methodist Church (¶ 516).

f. Form episcopal areas and determine their boundaries. Determine the number of interim bishops and assign them to episcopal areas (¶ 515).

g. Oversee the receiving of clergy transferring into the Global Methodist Church under the provisions of ¶ 419. Serve as the appellate body for contested decisions.

h. Assign regional or annual conference bodies the responsibility for evaluating the status of licensed local pastors and candidates for ordained ministry to determine their status in the Global Methodist Church (¶ 419). Serve as the appellate body for contested decisions.

j. Appoint a provisional ecclesiastical endorsing board to provide denominational endorsement to persons in specialized ministries that require such (e.g., military or hospital chaplaincy) (¶ 413).

k. Establish a connectional fund for ministerial education and oversee its collection and distribution (¶ 411).

l. Oversee the appointment process of clergy through its bishops (¶¶ 355.4, 509 ff).

m. Facilitate a process for the transfer of clergy from one annual conference to another, as well as for moving clergy to parts of the nation or world where they are most needed (¶ 504.10).

n. Determine the compensation of bishops (¶ 505).

o. Establish the time and place of meeting for the convening General Conference. Appoint the necessary committees to organize the logistics of the event (¶ 604).

p. Determine the number of delegates for the convening General Conference and the formula for their allocation to the various annual conferences (¶ 604).

q. Appoint an interim secretary of the convening General Conference to administer the petition process and other non-logistical matters related to the convening conference. Nominate a convening General Conference secretary for approval by the convening conference (¶¶ 605, 607).

r. Establish guidelines for the publication and the online availability of both proposals and petitions to the convening General Conference and completed actions of the conference (¶ 607).

s. Form such interim commissions and other general church entities as it judges necessary to begin implementing the polity and mission of the Global Methodist Church.

t. Hire necessary staff to accomplish the work of the general church, including the work of any interim commissions or other transitional general church entities.

u. Establish connectional funding for the general church during the transition, create a system for receiving and disbursing funds given, and ensure fiscal accountability and integrity in all handling of church funds.

u. Implement the accountability processes required in *Part Eight* and the *Judicial Practice and Procedure Rules (JPP)*. Approve any involuntary status change of a bishop by a two-thirds vote (§ 520.3).

Section II. Transitional Connectional Commissions

¶ 704. **PURPOSE AND COMPOSITION.** 1. *Purpose.* During the period of transition between the adoption of this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* by the Transitional Leadership Council and the effective date of actions taken by the convening General Conference, the Transitional Leadership Council may appoint transitional connectional commissions to begin the work of organizing and administering the connectional ministries of the denomination. The Transitional Leadership Council shall define the scope of work for any commission so formed and shall have the right of final approval of any policies or actions recommended by a commission. These decisions are subject to approval, modification, or revocation by the convening General Conference and shall be in effect only until the convening General Conference establishes permanent policies and procedures that would replace them. Following the convening General Conference, the work of the transitional connectional commissions shall be transitioned into the connectional commissions established and formed by that body.

2. *Membership.* The Transitional Leadership Council shall determine the number of members for any transitional commission it establishes. The Transitional Leadership Council shall elect members for each commission by majority vote, based on the expertise and gifts they bring to the tasks of a commission. Care shall be taken to include persons from a broad range of racial, ethnic, tribal, gender, economic, and age characteristics. All potential geographical regions of the denomination should be represented. No person may serve simultaneously on more than one transitional commission. Commission members, including the officers, shall serve without remuneration. Travel and meeting expenses shall be paid for commission members by the Transitional Leadership Council out of general church funds.

3. *Leadership.* The Transitional Leadership Council shall name the chair of each transitional commission. The commission shall elect a secretary and may elect other officers to facilitate its work. No bishop may serve as the chair of a commission while serving in the episcopal office. Each transitional commission may have one bishop, selected by the Transitional Leadership Council, serving with voice and vote to help maintain communication and coordination with the bishops and to provide spiritual leadership to the commission.

4. *Staff.* The Transitional Leadership Council may approve the hiring of staff persons to resource the work of the transitional commissions, paid for out of general church funds. The chair of the Transitional Leadership Council shall make all hiring decisions and recommend compensation levels to the Transitional Leadership Council for approval.

5. *Nondiscrimination.* The Global Methodist Church is committed to open and fair processes in its commissions and institutions, including in the hiring, retention, compensation, promotion, and retirement of staff. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of gender, race, color, national origin, disability, current or potential pregnancy, or chronic or potentially terminal illnesses, provided that the individual is able to adequately discharge the duties assigned to her or him. As a part of our witness, individuals employed by the church shall subscribe to the doctrinal and moral standards of the Global Methodist Church and give evidence of the same in their life and ministry, including faithfulness in marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman, or chastity in singleness.

¶ 705. POTENTIAL TRANSITIONAL CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS. The Transitional Leadership Council may form transitional commissions dealing with any or all of these tasks or areas of ministry:

1. Evangelism, Missions, and Church Planting – including, but not limited to, fostering cross-cultural and international partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences; vetting, approving, and maintaining accountability for mission projects and their funding; providing for disaster relief and refugee ministry; identifying and providing resources for church planting in various cultural contexts; and consulting with bishops, annual conference leaders, and local churches to plan and strategize for planting churches.

2. Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry – including, but not limited to, encouraging growth in discipleship through small groups; proposing liturgies and orders of worship for use by both local congregations and the general church for General Conference approval; resourcing understanding of our doctrines; and resourcing local churches in engaging with the church’s social witness and social issues from a variety of political perspectives and from a biblical foundation.

3. Ministry – including, but not limited to, implementing the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry; developing curricula for ministry training courses, including Course of Study; resourcing annual conference boards of ministry; ensuring adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates; establishing and refining criteria and qualifications for various forms of non-parish ministry; evaluating and approving training programs that meet the criteria and qualifications; examining and credentialing persons for various forms of non-parish ministry; and supporting persons engaging in non-parish ministry.

4. Communications – including, but not limited to, resourcing local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in communication strategy and implementation; creating print and digital resources that communicate the work of the church; publishing the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines*; translating communications and resources into the languages of the church; and growing the digital communication capability of the church.

5. Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits – including, but not limited to, overseeing the financial and fiduciary life of the general church to insure both its integrity and efficiency; reporting publicly the detailed expenses and income; conducting an annual independent audit; collecting and distributing all income received by the general church; managing the legal work of the general church; giving oversight to the pension and benefits (i.e., health insurance, disability, etc.) programs for clergy and lay employees of the church worldwide; and encouraging conferences worldwide to provide adequate pension funding and medical care for those who serve in the church’s ministry (active and retired).

6. Transitional commissions may also be formed in other areas not named above and assigned responsibility to develop policies and programs related to those other areas.

¶ 706. THE TRANSITIONAL CONNECTIONAL OPERATING OFFICER. The transitional connectional operating officer shall bear primary responsibility for the fruitful and accountable functioning of the general church and serve as its chief executive and administrative officer. The transitional connectional operating officer shall be directly amenable to the Transitional Leadership Council. The transitional connectional operating officer shall assign staff to support and resource any general commission and provide oversight to all general church staff.

1. *Selection.* The transitional connectional operating officer may be either a clergy or lay person and shall be selected by the Transitional Leadership Council by majority vote of the Council.

2. *Term.* The transitional connectional operating officer serves at the pleasure of the Transitional Leadership Council or until the convening General Conference adjourns and leadership for the season immediately after the convening General Conference is selected.

3. *Responsibilities and Duties.* The responsibilities of the transitional connectional operating officer shall include the following:

a. Serve as the general church's chief executive and administrative officer and oversee all connectional commissions and enterprises.

b. Oversee planning and research to advance and implement the mission and strategic plan of the church.

c. Serve as the staff person for the Transitional Leadership Council in assisting the Council in all its work, but especially to provide a unified sense of vision and mission for all the work of the denomination.

d. Along with the Transitional Leadership Council, coordinate the ministries of the general church to fulfill the mandates of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and to implement the actions of the General Conference.

e. Review and evaluate the missional effectiveness of the transitional general commissions of the church, making recommendations to the Council.

f. In consultation with the Transitional Commission on Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits, prepare the proposed connectional budget for the Transitional Leadership Council approval and, once approved, oversee its implementation, including, but not limited to, overseeing connectional finances and the maintenance of financial records.

g. Oversee yearly audits of connectional financial records.

h. Direct the development of policies and procedures to implement the provisions of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, including but not limited to personnel matters.

i. Direct and/or oversee connectional communications, public relations, and marketing.

j. Serve as the chief spokesperson for the denomination to the extent authorized by the Transitional Leadership Council.

k. With appropriate consultation, manage the process for and make the final decision on hiring, assigning, and retaining all general church staff, supervise and direct all general church staff, including performance reviews in consultation with the relevant commission(s), recommend compensation levels for all program staff for Transitional Leadership Council approval, and set compensation levels for all support staff. All processes shall comply with the policies and procedures adopted by the Transitional Leadership Council.

l. Negotiate and/or oversee negotiation of contracts for services including, but not limited to, facilities, connectional pension, insurance, and other benefit programs, with the approval of the relevant commission.

m. Recommend to General Conference through the Connectional Council changes to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and implementing legislation.

n. Carry out other responsibilities and duties assigned by the General Conference or the Connectional Council.

PART EIGHT JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

¶ **801. ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CHURCH.** Founded in the gospel call to faithfulness, and as set forth in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, ordination in the Global Methodist Church and membership in an annual conference is a sacred trust. As such, individual clergy, whether in active ministry, honorable or administrative location, or in senior status, are accountable to the whole church for their behavior and actions as long as they hold orders within the denomination. Similarly, numerous passages within the New Testament remind us of the sacred call given to all those in the church to watch over one another in love, stirring each to faithfulness and sanctification. Individuals accused of violating the canons of this covenant shall thus be subject to a review aimed at a just resolution of such complaints, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ. The provisions that follow shall govern this accountability process during the time between the forming of the Global Methodist Church and the effective date of any legislation passed by the convening General Conference designed to replace them.

¶ **802. JUDICIAL PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES.** The Transitional Leadership Council shall approve the *Judicial Practices and Procedures (JPP)* that govern the complaint, supervisory, administrative, and judicial processes. Such JPP shall have the force of church law, but not be included in the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. In the event of a conflict between the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the JPP, the *Transitional Book Doctrines and Discipline* shall govern.

Section I – Complaints

¶ **803. COMPLAINTS.** The process of accountability is initiated when a formal complaint is filed. A complaint is a written and signed statement alleging misconduct as defined in ¶ 808.1-2 (a judicial complaint) or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties (an administrative complaint, ¶¶ 806-807). If the complaint is against a bishop, the complaint shall be submitted to the chair of the Transitional Leadership Council. If the complaint is against a pastor, the complaint shall be submitted to that pastor's presiding elder (district superintendent) and bishop (or to a president *pro tempore* in the absence of an assigned bishop). If the complaint is against a local church member, the complaint shall be submitted to the presiding elder (district superintendent) over that local church. The person authorized to receive the complaint or their designee shall handle the complaint throughout its process. Upon receiving a complaint, the duly authorized recipient shall describe the complaint process in writing both to the person making the complaint ("complainant") and the person against whom the complaint is made ("respondent"). As the complaint process progresses, the duly authorized recipient of the complaint shall continue to describe in writing to the complainant and recipient new parts of the process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended only once for 30 days upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

¶ **804. JUST RESOLUTION.** Complaints may be resolved during the supervisory response stage by a just resolution. A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability, making things right in so far as possible, and bringing healing to all the parties. With the agreement of all parties to the complaint, the assistance of a trained, impartial third-party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) may be utilized to seek a just resolution satisfactory to all parties. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic

and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. A resolution of the complaint at the supervisory response level shall involve a written statement of the allegations, a list of all parties to the complaint, determination of facts, elucidation of context, and plan of action or agreed penalty to address the allegations, including follow-up accountability. Any just resolution that involves an allegation of disobedience to a provision of the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall include a commitment by the respondent to abide by all applicable disciplinary requirements, including those alleged to have been violated. Such a resolution shall not be imposed, but must be voluntarily agreed to and signed by all parties to the complaint, including as a minimum the complainant, the respondent, and the person authorized to receive the complaint (§ 803). Such a resolution shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

¶ 805. PRINCIPLES OF FAIR PROCESS. As a part of the holy covenant that exists within the membership and organization of the Global Methodist Church, the following procedures protect the rights of individuals and the church in administrative and judicial processes. The principles set forth in this paragraph shall be followed whenever there is an administrative or judicial complaint. Special attention shall be given to the timely disposition of all matters and to ensuring racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the committees dealing with complaints.

1. *Right to Be Heard.* The person authorized to receive the complaint or their designee, the complainant, and the respondent shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken at any stage in the process.

2. *Right to Notice.* The respondent and complainant have the right to notice of any hearing with sufficient detail to allow the respondent to prepare a response. Notice shall be given not less than twenty (20) days prior to the hearing.

3. *Right to Presence and Accompaniment.* The respondent and the complainant shall have a right to be present at all hearings and the right to be accompanied to any hearing by a support person with the right to voice. The support person shall be a member of the Global Methodist Church. Under no circumstances shall the church award compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's or complainant's use of an attorney.

4. *Access to Records.* The respondent shall have access, at least ten (10) days prior to any hearing, to all records to be relied upon in the determination of the outcome of the process, including the written texts of the complaints themselves.

5. *Ex Parte Communication.* Under no circumstances shall one party, in the absence of the other party, discuss substantive issues with members of the body hearing the pending matter, or with each other, with the exception of ¶ 805.6. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer of the hearing body, with the answers shared with all parties.

6. *Failure to Respond.* In the event that a respondent fails to appear for supervisory interviews, refuses mail, refuses to communicate personally with the person handling the complaint or their designee, or otherwise fails to respond to supervisory requests or requests from official committees, such actions or inactions shall not be used as an excuse to avoid or delay any church processes, and such processes may continue without the participation of such individual.

7. *Healing.* As a part of the accountability process, the bishop and cabinet, in consultation with the presiding officer of the hearing, trial, or appellate body hearing the pending matter, shall provide resources for healing if there has been significant disruption to the congregation, the annual conference, or the context of ministry by the matter. Resources for healing shall include communication about the complaint and the process and the release of as much information as possible, without compromising the process.

8. *Double Jeopardy*. No person shall be subject to double jeopardy. This means, barring new compelling information or facts, no complaint shall be accepted for the same alleged offenses based on the same set of facts, when a similar complaint has already been adjudicated via just resolution or final action by an administrative or judicial body. For this paragraph, “new compelling information or facts” means information or facts not introduced in the original judicial or administrative process that more likely than not would affect the findings of the hearing body. This does not preclude filing a new complaint for new instances of the same offense.

9. *Immunity From Prosecution* – To preserve the integrity of the church’s process and ensure full participation at all times, the chair of the Transitional Leadership Council, the bishop, president *pro tempore*, cabinet, Board of Ministry, witnesses, support persons, counsel, administrative review committee, clergy voting in executive session, and all others who participate in the church’s process shall have immunity from prosecution of complaints brought against them related to their role in a particular process, unless they have committed a chargeable offense in conscious and knowing bad faith. The complainant/plaintiff in any proceeding against any such person related to their role in a particular judicial process shall have the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence, that such person’s actions constituted a chargeable offense committed knowingly in bad faith. The immunity set forth in this provision shall extend to civil court proceedings, to the fullest extent permissible by the civil laws.

10. *Counsel for the Church* – No person who was a member of the Transitional Leadership Council, cabinet, conference staff, Board of Ministry, or committee on investigation on or after the date of the alleged offense shall be appointed counsel for the Church or serve as counsel for the respondent or any of the persons bringing complaints in a case. By agreeing to serve, the counsel for the Church signifies his or her willingness to uphold the requirements of Church law and the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Counsel for the Church shall represent the interests of the Church in pressing the claims of the person making the complaint.

¶ 806. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING CLERGY. An administrative complaint involves allegations of the unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties through incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform such duties. Allegations of professional or personal misconduct shall not be handled through an administrative complaint but through the provisions of ¶ 808.1-2. Administrative complaints may be filed by laypersons who are within the scope of a respondent’s ministry, other clergy familiar with the respondent’s ministry, the presiding elder (district superintendent), or the bishop. The complaint shall contain specific examples of unsatisfactory performance, including at least approximate dates and times (if appropriate).

1. Processing of an administrative complaint shall be governed by the *JPP* 2 and 3, and shall include an administrative supervisory response, which shall be followed, if warranted, by an investigative response, an administrative review, and an appeal.

2. There shall be an administrative review committee in every annual conference composed of three ordained clergy and two alternates who are not members of the cabinet, the Board of Ministry, or immediate family members of the above. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character. The committee shall be nominated by the bishop and elected by the clergy session of the annual conference. Its only purpose shall be to ensure that the disciplinary procedures for resolving a substantiated administrative complaint are properly followed as per the requirements of the *JPP* 2 and 3, and fair process (¶ 805).

3. *Expenses*. All expenses for the administrative process for clergy shall be borne by the annual conference, except for travel and other expenses of the respondent and their support person.

¶ 807. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING BISHOPS. An administrative complaint involves allegations of the unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties through incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform such duties. Allegations of professional or personal misconduct shall not be handled through an administrative complaint but through the provisions of ¶ 808.1-2. Administrative complaints may be filed by laypersons, clergy, and presiding elders in the annual conference in which the bishop is serving, the conference committee on episcopacy, or another bishop. The complaint shall contain specific examples of unsatisfactory performance, including at least approximate dates and times (if appropriate). The supervisory process shall be administered by the chair of the Transitional Leadership Council or their designee. All expenses for the administrative process for complaints involving bishops shall be borne by the general church. The process for an administrative complaint against a bishop shall be governed by JPP 3.

¶ 808. JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS. A judicial complaint involves allegations of misconduct as enumerated in the chargeable offenses below. Such complaints may be filed by any layperson or clergy person, a presiding elder (district superintendent), or a bishop. The complaint shall contain specific allegations of misconduct, including at least approximate dates and times (if appropriate).

1. *Chargeable Offenses* – A bishop or clergy member of an annual conference, including senior clergy and clergy on honorable or administrative location, may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with one or more of the following offenses:

- a. Conviction or admission of guilt in criminal activities, including but not limited to child or elder abuse, theft, or assault;
- b. Fiscal malfeasance or gross financial mismanagement;
- c. Racial, gender, or sexual discrimination or harassment;
- d. Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices, or conducting ceremonies or services, that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church;
- e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;
- f. Relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor;
- g. Engaging in sexual activities outside the bonds of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman, including but not limited to sexual abuse or misconduct, the use or possession of pornography, or infidelity.

2. A professing member of a local church may be charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with the following offenses:

- h. Conviction or admission of guilt in criminal activities, including but not limited to child or elder abuse, theft, or assault;
- i. Fiscal malfeasance or gross financial mismanagement;
- j. Racial, gender, or sexual discrimination or harassment;
- k. Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church;
- l. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;
- m. Relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of a pastor;

3. *Statute of Limitations* – No judicial complaint or charge shall be considered for any alleged occurrence that shall not have been committed within six years immediately preceding the filing of the original complaint. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of allegations of sexual or child abuse or crime involving allegations of sexual or child abuse, there shall be no statute of limitation. Time spent on leave of absence shall not be considered as part of the six years.

4. *Time of Offense* – A person shall not be charged with an offense that was not a chargeable offense at the time it is alleged to have been committed. Any charge filed shall be in the language of

the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect at the time the offense is alleged to have occurred, except in the case of sexual or child abuse or crime involving sexual or child abuse. Then it shall be in the language of the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect at the time the charge was filed. Any charge must relate to an action listed as a chargeable offense in the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

5. *If the respondent is a bishop*, the chair of the Transitional Leadership Council shall make the conference episcopacy committee where the bishop presides (if any) and all active bishops aware of the complaint and keep them apprised of its progress.

¶ 809. JUDICIAL SUPERVISORY RESPONSE. 1. The purpose of the judicial supervisory response is to, so far as possible, establish facts, consider circumstances and explanations, determine if there is an issue that merits action, and arrive at a resolution of the complaint that restores compliance and redresses any harms resulting from a violation. Processing of a judicial complaint shall be governed by JPP 4. If the respondent is a bishop, the supervisory process shall be administered by the chair of the Transitional Leadership Council or their designee (¶ 811.1). The supervisory response shall result in one of three possible outcomes, including the dismissal or resolution of the complaint or a referral to the committee on investigation (JPP 4.4).

2. *Suspension.* To avoid harm to the church or ministry setting or to the respondent, the chair of the Transitional Leadership Council with the affirmative vote of a majority of the Transitional Leadership Council (if the respondent is a bishop) or the bishop with the affirmative vote of a majority of the cabinet (if the respondent is clergy) may suspend the respondent from all ministry responsibilities during the supervisory and investigative process for a judicial complaint. The respondent retains all rights and privileges, including continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, while suspended from ministerial duties, provided, however, that they shall not interfere with an interim bishop or pastor appointed to carry out their duties while they are suspended. If the judicial complaint does not proceed to trial, the respondent's suspension must be lifted at that time.

Section II – Investigative Response

¶ 810. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION.

1. *When respondent is a bishop*—The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint a global committee on investigation as provided in JPP 5.

2. *When the respondent is a clergy person* -- Each annual conference shall elect a committee on investigation to consider judicial complaints against clergy members of the annual conference in accordance with ¶ 612.5.

3. *When respondent is a layperson*—In all cases, the pastor or presiding elder should take pastoral steps to resolve any complaints (JPP 4). If such pastoral response does not result in resolution and a written complaint is made against a professing member for any of the offenses in ¶ 808.2, the presiding elder (district superintendent) and the district lay leader (if any), shall appoint a committee on investigation consisting of four professing members and three clergy in full connection to serve only for this complaint. Both clergy and professing members must come from other congregations, exclusive of the churches of the respondent or the complainant. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. Five members shall constitute a quorum.

¶ 811. REFERRAL OF A COMPLAINT TO A COUNSEL FOR THE CHURCH.

1. *When the respondent is a bishop*

a. The chair of the Transitional Leadership Council or their designee shall handle the supervisory response as per the JPP 4.2. If a just resolution is not agreed to and the complaint is not dismissed, the chair or their designee shall notify all active bishops and the relevant conference episcopacy committee (if any) of the existence and nature of the complaint and appoint counsel under JPP 6.1.

b. If six or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the Transitional Leadership Council may suspend the respondent, with continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, from all episcopal duties and responsibilities pending the conclusion of the trial process

2. *When the respondent is a clergy person*

a. If a just resolution is not agreed to and the complaint is not dismissed, the bishop shall notify the pastor-parish relations committee of the existence and nature of the complaint. Within thirty (30) days, the bishop shall appoint an elder within the annual conference in which the alleged violation took place who shall serve as counsel for the Church under JPP 6.2.

b. If five or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the bishop may suspend the respondent, with continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, from all duties and responsibilities relating to their appointment pending the conclusion of the trial process. The respondent retains all rights and privileges as a member of the annual conference while suspended from pastoral duties, provided, however, they shall not interfere with an interim pastor appointed to carry out their duties while they are suspended.

3. *When the respondent is a layperson*

a. If a just resolution is not agreed to and the complaint is not dismissed, the presiding elder (district superintendent), shall within thirty (30) days appoint a Global Methodist Church clergy or layperson to serve as counsel for the church under JPP 6.3.

b. If five or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the pastor or presiding elder (district superintendent) may suspend the respondent from exercising any church office pending the conclusion of the trial process.

¶ 812. COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES.

1. *Introduction* – The role of the committee on investigation is to conduct an investigation into the allegations made in the judicial complaint and to determine if reasonable grounds exist to bring a bill of charges and specifications to trial. Reasonable grounds is defined as sufficient reason based on the known facts to believe that a chargeable offense has been committed. If so, it shall prepare, sign, and certify a bill of charges and specifications. The committee’s duty is only to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to support the charges. It is not the committee’s duty to determine guilt or innocence.

2. The investigation process shall be administered according to the provisions of the JPP 7.

Section III – Trials

¶ 813. GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND PRE-TRIAL PROCEDURES.

1. *Fundamental Principles for Trials* – Church trials are to be regarded as an expedient of last resort. Only after every reasonable effort has been made to correct any wrong and adjust any existing difficulty should steps be taken to institute a trial. No such trial as herein provided shall be construed to deprive the respondent or the Church of legal civil rights, except to the extent that

immunity is provided as in ¶ 805.9. All trials shall be conducted according to the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in a consistent Christian manner by a properly constituted court after due investigation. Trials shall be administered under the provisions of the JPP 8-13.

¶ 814. CONVENING OF A TRIAL COURT.

1. In the trial of a bishop, the chair of the Transitional Leadership Council shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of the JPP 9 and 11.

2. In the trial of a clergy member, the bishop of the respondent shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of the JPP 9 and 12.

3. In a trial of a lay member, the presiding elder (district superintendent) of the respondent shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of the JPP 9 and 13.

¶ 815. POWER OF THE TRIAL COURT.

1. *Instruction, Disqualification, Voting, and Verdicts* – The trial court shall have full power to try the respondent. The trial court shall be a continuing body until the final disposition of the charge. If any regular or alternate member of the trial court fails to attend any part of any session at which evidence is received or oral argument is made to the trial court by counsel, that person shall not thereafter be a member of the trial court, but the rest of the trial court may proceed to judgment.

2. *Votes* – A vote of at least nine members of the trial court is required to sustain the charge(s) and nine votes also shall be required for conviction, unless the number of the trial court falls below thirteen. (In that case, a two-thirds vote shall be required.) Fewer than nine votes for conviction shall be considered an acquittal. In order to be sustained, the church must establish each specification and the charge by clear and convincing evidence. In order for evidence to be clear and convincing, the evidence provided to the trial court must demonstrate that the specification is highly and substantially more likely to be true than untrue. The trial court shall present to the presiding officer a decision on each charge and each individual specification under each charge. Its findings shall be final, subject to appeal to the committee on appeals.

3. *Penalties – If the Trial Results in Conviction* – Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. (If the number of the trial court falls below thirteen, a majority vote shall be required.) The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership, and revoke the credentials of conference membership, ordination, or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office (with or without pay, if applicable) for a defined period of time, or fix a lesser penalty. The trial court shall determine whether a bishop or clergy person suspended from office as a penalty for a defined period of time shall have any continuation of housing, salary, and benefits during such suspension. The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate by the general church if a bishop and by the annual conference if clergy, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

Section IV – Appeals

¶ 816. APPEAL PROCEDURES -- GENERAL.

1. In all cases of appeal, the appellant shall give written notice of appeal within thirty (30) days of the verdict and announcement of penalty by the trial court or the issuance of a written decision of an appellate body other than the Connectional Council on Appeals. At the same time the appellant shall furnish to the officer receiving such notice (JPP 14.2) and to the counsel for the opposing party a written statement of the grounds of the appeal. The hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.

2. When any appellate body shall reverse in whole or in part the findings of a committee on investigation or trial court, or remand the case for a new hearing or trial, or change the penalty imposed by the trial court, it shall return to the convening officer a statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be copied to the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church.

3. An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel at the investigation and the trial. Appeals shall be heard by the proper appellate body unless it shall appear to the said body that the appellant has forfeited the right to appeal by misconduct, such as refusal to abide by the findings of the trial court; or by withdrawal from the Church; or by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal; or, prior to the final decision on appeal from conviction, by resorting to suit in the civil courts against the complainant or any of the parties connected with the ecclesiastical court in which the appellant was tried.

4. The right of appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate body.

5. The right to prosecute an appeal shall not be affected by the death of the person entitled to such right. Heirs or legal representatives may prosecute such appeal as the appellant would be entitled to do if living.

6. The records and documents of the trial, including the evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.

7. The appellate body shall determine two questions only:

a. Were the charge(s) sustained by clear and convincing evidence?

b. Were there such errors of Church law as to vitiate the verdict and/or the penalty?

These questions shall be determined from the records of the trial. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses, but shall receive and/or hear argument of the counsel for the Church and respondent. It may have legal counsel present, who shall not be the conference chancellor for the conference from which the appeal is taken, for the sole purpose of providing advice to the appellate body.

8. In all cases where an appeal is made and admitted by the appellate committee, after the charges, findings, and evidence have been read and the arguments concluded, the parties shall withdraw, and the appellate committee shall consider and decide the case. It may reverse in whole or in part the findings of the committee on investigation or the trial court, or it may remand the case for a new trial to determine verdict and/or penalty. It may determine what penalty, not higher than that affixed at the hearing or trial, may be imposed. If it neither reverses in whole or in part the judgment of the trial court, nor remands the case for a new trial, nor modifies the penalty, that judgment shall stand, subject to possible appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor remand the case for a new hearing or trial on account of errors plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.

9. In all cases, the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the case has been heard once on its merits in the trial court, but questions of Church law may be carried on appeal, step by step, to the Connectional Council on Appeals (§ 824.8-9).

10. The Church shall have no right of appeal from findings of fact of the trial court. The Church shall have a right of appeal to the committee on appeals and then to the Connectional Council on Appeals from findings of the committee on investigation or trial court based on egregious errors of Church law or administration that could reasonably have affected its findings. In this paragraph, “egregious errors of Church law or administration” refers to the misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation (whether knowing or not) of Church law or judicial process as required by the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, with such errors more likely than not (in the judgment of the appellate body) affecting the findings of the trial court or committee on investigation. The committee on investigation’s decision not to certify a bill of charges does not alone constitute an egregious error of Church law or administration. When the committee on appeals shall find egregious errors of Church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new hearing or trial on verdict and/or penalty, in which event it shall return to the chair of the committee on investigation or presiding officer of the trial court a statement of the grounds of its action. This action is not to be considered double jeopardy.

11. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer or secretary of the appellate body, with the answers shared with all parties. Under no circumstances shall one party in the absence of the other party discuss substantive matters with members of any appellate body while the case is pending (§ 805.5, 805.6).

12. The appeal of a bishop or clergy member shall be administered according to the provisions of the JPP 14.

13. The appeal of a lay member shall be administered according to the provisions of the JPP 15.

¶ 817. APPEAL OF QUESTIONS OF LAW.

1. The order of appeals on questions of law shall be as follows:

a. From the decision of the presiding elder (district superintendent) presiding in the charge or district conference to the bishop presiding in the annual conference and then to the Connectional Council on Appeals;

b. From the decision of the bishop presiding in the annual conference to the Connectional Council on Appeals;

c. From the bishop presiding in a regional conference to the Connectional Council on Appeals; and

d. From the bishop presiding in the General Conference to the Connectional Council on Appeals.

2. When a question of law is raised in writing during a session of a conference. It shall be the secretary’s duty to see that an exact statement of the question submitted and the ruling of the chair thereon shall be entered on the journal and minutes of the conference. The secretary shall then make and certify a copy of the question and ruling and transmit the same to the person or body to which an appeal is taken.

¶ 818. APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS (see ¶ 806).

1. The order of appeals on procedures in an administrative process shall be as follows:

a. From the decision of the Board of Ministry investigative committee to the annual conference administrative review committee;

- b. From the administrative review committee to the full Board of Ministry; and
 - c. From the full Board of Ministry to the clergy session.
 - d. Questions of law arising from an administrative process should be raised in the clergy session for ruling by the bishop and review by the Connectional Council on Appeals.
2. In all cases of such an appeal, the appellant shall within thirty (30) days give written notice of appeal and at the same time furnish to the officer receiving such notice a written statement of the grounds of appeal, and the hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.
 3. The appellate body shall return to the convening officer of the administrative hearing and to the appellant a written statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be placed in the appellant's personnel file.
 4. An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel during the administrative hearing. Appeals shall be heard by the proper appellate body unless it shall appear to the said body that the appellant has forfeited the right to appeal by misconduct; by withdrawal from the Church; by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal; or, prior to the final decision on appeal by resorting to suit in the civil courts against any of the parties connected with the ecclesiastical administrative process.
 5. The right to appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate body.
 6. The right to prosecute an appeal shall not be affected by the death of the person entitled to such right. Heirs of legal representatives may prosecute such appeal as the appellant would be entitled to do if living.
 7. The records and documents of the administrative process, including any evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.
 8. The appellate body shall determine one question only: Were there such errors of Church law or procedure as to vitiate the recommendation and/or action of the administrative body? The records of the administrative process and the arguments of the official representatives of all parties shall determine this question. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses. It may have legal counsel present for the sole purpose of providing advice to the appellate body.
 9. If the appellate body determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error, decide the error is harmless, or take other action. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor remand the case for a new hearing on account of error plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.
 10. In all cases, the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the case has been heard once on its merits in the proper administrative hearing body, but the decision of the administrative hearing body may be appealed as outlined in ¶ 819.1. Questions on Church law may be raised in the clergy session and carried on appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals (¶ 819.1d).
 11. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer or secretary of the appellate body, with the answers shared with all parties. Under no circumstances shall one party in the absence of the other party discuss substantive matters with members of any appellate body while the case is pending.

Section V – Summary and Other Provisions

¶ 819. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

1. Any clergy members residing beyond the bounds of the conference in which membership is held shall be subject to the procedures of ¶¶ 801-819 and the JPP exercised by the appropriate officers of the conference in which the alleged violation took place, unless the presiding bishops of the two annual conferences and the clergy member subject to the procedures agree that fairness will be better served by having the procedures carried out by the appropriate officers of the annual conference in which he or she is a member, or if the clergy person has elected senior status, where they are currently residing.

2. When a bishop or clergy member is the respondent to a complaint under ¶¶ 806-807 and desires to withdraw from the Global Methodist Church at any point in the process, the bishop or clergy member shall surrender his or her credentials and his or her name shall be removed from conference membership; in which case the record shall be “Withdrawn under complaint” or “Withdrawn under charges,” whichever is appropriate. If the person desires their credentials to be restored, they would first have to resolve the complaint, with the complaint process picking up at the point at which it ended when they withdrew. Time spent as “withdrawn under complaint or charges” does not count toward the statute of limitations (¶ 808.3).

3. When a professing member of the Global Methodist Church is charged with an offense and desires to withdraw from the Global Methodist Church at any point in the process, the charge conference may permit such member to withdraw his or her name from the roll of professing members, in which case the record shall be “Withdrawn under complaint.” If formal charges have been referred by a committee on investigation, such member may be permitted to withdraw, in which case the record shall be “Withdrawn under charges.” If the person desires to be restored as a professing member (or become a professing member in another local congregation of the Global Methodist Church), they would first have to resolve the complaint, with the complaint process picking up at the point at which it ended when they withdrew.

4. For procedural purposes, the judicial process shall be governed by the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the JPP in effect on the date a complaint is forwarded to the counsel for the Church.

Section VI – Connectional Council on Appeals.

¶ 820. **MEMBERSHIP.** 1. The Connectional Council on Appeals is the highest judicial body in the Global Methodist Church. The Council shall be composed of seven members. When the initial Council is elected by the convening General Conference, four members shall be clergy and three members shall be laity. A member’s term of office shall be six years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive six-year terms. The number of clergy and laity shall alternate every six years so that the clergy have the four members during one six-year term and the laity have the four members during the next six-year term. Members shall either be elders or laity who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church. Bishops shall be ineligible for election to the Council.

2. *Interim Council Appointment.* The Transitional Leadership Council shall appoint by majority vote the persons to serve on an interim Connectional Council on Appeals. Clergy and laity shall be appointed to serve as alternates in a number equal to the number to serve on the interim Connectional Council on Appeals. Alternates shall serve in their category at any session of the Council in the absence of a member of the Council in the order of their election. Members of the interim Council may be nominated to be elected by the convening General Conference. Any time

served on the interim Council shall not count against term limits set by the convening General Conference.

3. *Alternates.* Clergy and laity shall be elected to serve as alternates in a number equal to the number to serve on the Connectional Council on Appeals during the ensuing six-year term. Alternates shall serve in their category at any session of the Council in the absence of a member of the Council in the order of their election. In the event a member of the Council cannot serve the balance of a term, the next elected alternate in the category impacted shall serve the balance of the term and such service shall not count against the maximum time of serving.

4. *Expiration of Term.* The term of office of the members of the Connectional Council on Appeals and of the alternates shall expire upon the adjournment of the General Conference at which their successors are elected.

5. *Ineligibility.* Members of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall be ineligible to serve as delegates to the General or any regional conferences, or to serve on any general, regional or annual conference board or commission.

6. *Nominations.* In advance of the convening General Conference, the Transitional Leadership Council shall nominate by majority vote a total of 21 persons representing the church's geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity in the appropriate lay and clergy categories. On the first day of the General Conference, nominations of clergy or laity may be made from the floor. Name, annual conference membership and biographical information not to exceed 100 words shall be published for review by delegates to the General Conference at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of election. Election shall occur without discussion or debate, by ballot and majority vote.

¶ **821. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE.** 1. *Connectional Council on Appeals Rules of Practice & Procedure and Officers* – The Connectional Council on Appeals shall provide its own rules of practice and procedure not in conflict with the provisions of the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, including the election of a President, Vice-President, and Secretary of the Council, who shall be elected by the members of the Council.

2. *Time & Place of Meeting* – The Connectional Council on Appeals shall meet at the time and place of the meeting of the General Conference and shall continue until the adjournment of that body, at least one other time in each calendar year, and at other times as the Council may deem appropriate, and at such places as it deems appropriate from time to time. Where necessary due to international or local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of the Council, it may, by a two-thirds vote, decide to meet via electronic or other digital means.

3. *Quorum* – Seven members or alternates duly seated shall constitute a quorum. One lay and one clergy alternate shall attend the meeting to be available in case of illness or recusal. An affirmative vote of at least five members or duly seated alternates shall be necessary to declare any act of the General Conference unconstitutional. On all other matters, a majority vote of the entire Connectional Council on Appeals shall be sufficient to arrive at a decision.

4. *Docket* – The secretary of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall publish a list of the matters which will be decided at any session at least thirty (30) days prior to the deadline for submission of briefs. The description of each matter pending shall be sufficient to enable persons who might file briefs to know the subject of the pending matter.

5. *Public Access* – Unless the Connectional Council on Appeals decides otherwise on a case-by-case basis, all materials filed with the Connectional Council on Appeals are matters of public record and are to be made available to clergy or members of the Global Methodist Church. The deliberations of the Council are private. The Council may schedule a hearing open to the public for the presentation of oral argument in any matter.

¶ 822. **JURISDICTION.** 1. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any act of the General Conference is in compliance with this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* upon an appeal of one-fifth of the members of the General Conference present and voting, or by a majority of the Council of Bishops.

2. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any proposed legislation is in conflict with this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* when such a declaratory decision is requested by one-fifth of the members of the General Conference presenting and voting, or by a majority of the Council of Bishops.

3. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any act of a regional or annual conference is in compliance with this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* upon an appeal by a majority of the bishops of that regional conference or upon appeal by one-fifth of the delegates present and voting to that regional or annual conference.

4. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine the legality of any action taken by any body created or authorized by the General Conference or by any body created or authorized by a regional or annual conference upon appeal by one-fifth of the delegates presenting and voting of such General, regional or annual conference, or one-third of the governing members of the created or authorized body present and voting, or a majority of the Council of Bishops or the bishops of the regional conference wherein the action was taken.

5. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to determine the legality of any action taken by a body or agency created or authorized by the General, regional, or annual conference upon petition for certiorari by one-fifth of the delegates present and voting of any regional or annual conference.

6. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to render a declaratory decision as to the meaning, application, or effect of the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or any portion thereof or the legality, meaning, application, or effect of any act or legislation of a regional, or annual conference. Petitions for certiorari may be filed by (a) the General Conference upon the vote of one-fifth of the delegates present and voting, (b) the Council of Bishops upon the vote of a majority of the bishops present and voting, (c) any body created or authorized by the General Conference or a regional or annual conference on matters relating to or affecting the work of such body upon the vote of a majority of the body's governing entity present and voting, and (d) a regional or annual conference upon the vote of one-fifth of its delegates present and voting, or (e) the regional college of bishops upon the majority vote of the bishops present and voting.

7. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall affirm, modify, or reverse the decisions of law made by bishops in annual, regional, or General Conference. No such episcopal decision of law shall be authoritative, except in the conference where it is made, until review by the Council has been completed.

8. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to review a decision of a committee of appeals of any regional or annual conference if it should appear that such decision may be at variance with the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, a prior decision of the Connectional Council on Appeals, or a decision of a committee on appeals of another regional or annual conference on a question of Church law.

9. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine all appeals from a regional appeals committee on a judicial matter (JPP 14.1 and 15.5).

10. During the period after the legal formation of the Global Methodist Church until the convening General Conference, the interim Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to render a declaratory decision as to the meaning, application, or effect of the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or any portion thereof or the legality, meaning, application, or effect of any act

of Transitional Leadership Council or of proposed legislation upon request by a majority vote of the Transitional Leadership Council.

11. During the period after the legal formation of the Global Methodist Church until the convening General Conference, the interim Connectional Council on Appeals shall have jurisdiction upon any of the items 1-9 above as requested by the appropriate body in each item, except that the majority vote of the Transitional Leadership Council shall substitute for the request of the General Conference in each relevant item.

¶ **823. CERTIORARI.** Certiorari is discretionary and is granted upon the affirmative vote of three members of the Connectional Council on Appeals.

¶ **824. DECISIONS.** All decisions of the Connectional Council on Appeals are final. Decisions shall immediately be delivered to the parties of interest in each matter and be published electronically for public review.

¶ **825. PRECEDENTIAL VALUE.** The decisions of predecessor Methodist bodies such as the Judicial Councils of The Methodist Church and of The United Methodist Church may be cited in arguments before the Connectional Council on Appeals but shall only have precedential value to the extent determined by the Connectional Council on Appeals.

PART NINE PROPERTY

¶ **901. THEOLOGY OF PROPERTY.** God owns all of creation (Psalm 50:9-10); we are but stewards of it for a period of time. Property (real, personal, tangible, and intangible) deeded or titled in the name of the Global Methodist Church and its entities (including its local churches) is to be used for the glory of God and to carry out the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and to spread scriptural holiness across the land.

¶ **902. STEWARDSHIP OF ASSETS.** There is no trust clause for property held by local churches, annual conferences, regional conferences, connectional commissions, the Transitional Leadership Council, or any of their entities. Each local church, annual conference, regional conference, or connectional commission shall designate in its corporate records how its property shall be disposed of in the event of the entity's dissolution.

¶ **903. PROCESS OF DISSAFILIATION.** After at least a 90-day period of discernment and prayer, a congregation of the Global Methodist Church may disaffiliate from the denomination by a majority vote of its church conference.

¶ **904. REGISTRATION OF THE NAME "GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH".** The words "Global Methodist Church" are not to be used as, or as a part of, a trade name or trademark or as a part of the name of any business firm or organization, except by local churches, conferences, corporations, or other business units created for the administration of work undertaken directly by the Global Methodist Church. The Transitional Leadership Council or its successor is charged with supervision and registration of "Global Methodist Church" and the denomination's logo.

¶ **905. COMPLIANCE WITH LAW.** 1. *Conformity with local law.* All provisions of this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* relating to property, both real and personal, and relating to the formation and operation of any corporation, and relating to mergers are conditioned upon their being in conformity with local laws, and in the event of conflict with local law, local law shall prevail; provided, however, that this requirement shall not be construed to give the consent of the Global Methodist Church to deprivation of its property without due process of law or to the regulation of its affairs by state statute where such regulation violates any constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and separation of church and state or violates the right of the church to maintain its connectional structure. Local laws shall be construed to mean the laws of the country, state, or other like political unit within the geographical bounds of which the church property is located.

2. *Incorporation Requirements.* Any corporation which is or has been formed or is affiliated with the Global Methodist Church, shall include in its articles of incorporation (or charter) and its bylaws the following:

- a. Recognition that its corporate powers are subject to this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*;
- b. Recognition that the corporation's powers cannot exceed those given by this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* Language consistent with the taxation codes of the country in which the corporation operates to protect its tax-exempt status (if applicable); and
- c. Designation of the recipient(s) of corporate property in the event the corporation is abandoned, discontinued, or ceases to exist as a legal entity.

¶ **906. TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS ARE SYNONYMOUS.** The terms “trustee(s)” and “Board of Trustees” used in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* may be construed to be synonymous with “director(s)” and “Board of Directors” applied to corporations. If a local church chooses an alternative structure, it shall designate which body shall act as the Board of Directors.

¶ **907. CONFORMITY OF DEEDS AND CONVEYANCES WITH LOCAL LAW.** To secure the right of property of entities within the Global Methodist Church, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in due conformity to the laws of the respective states, provinces, and countries in which the property is situated and also in conformity with these *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Deeds shall be registered or recorded directly upon their execution.

¶ **908. INSTITUTING AND DEFENDING CIVIL ACTION.** Because of the nature of the Global Methodist Church, no individual or affiliated church body or unit, nor any official thereof, may commence or participate in any suit or proceeding in the name of, or on behalf of, the Global Methodist Church, excepting, however, the following:

1. *Transitional Leadership Council or Its Successor* —The Transitional Leadership Council or its successor or any persons or church unit served with legal process in the name of the Global Methodist Church may appear for the purpose of presenting to the court the nonjural nature of the Global Methodist Church and to raise issues of lack of jurisdiction of the court, lack of capacity of such individual or unit to be served with process, and related constitutional issues in defense of denominational interests.

2. *Protecting Denominational Interests* – Any denominational unit authorized to hold title to property and to enforce trusts created by others for the benefit of the Global Methodist Church may bring suit in its own name to protect denominational interests.

¶ **909. LIMITATION OF FINANCIAL OBLIGATION.** No local church, district, annual conference, regional conference, connectional commission, or any other unit can financially obligate the Global Methodist Church or, without prior specific written consent, any other organizational unit thereof.

¶ **910. AUDITS AND BONDING OF CHURCH OFFICERS.** All persons holding trust funds, securities, or moneys of any kind belonging to a unit of the Global Methodist Church (not including a local church) shall be bonded by a reliable company in such good and sufficient sum as the Transitional Leadership Council or its designated agent or successor may direct. The accounts of such units shall be audited at least annually by a recognized public or certified public accountant. A report to a unit of the Global Methodist Church containing a financial statement that this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* requires to be audited shall not be approved until the audit is made and the financial statement is shown to be correct. Other parts of the report may be approved pending such audit.

¶ **911. GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH FOUNDATIONS.** A regional or annual conference or conferences may establish a Global Methodist Church Foundation for its conference. The purposes for establishing such a foundation may include:

1. The promotion of planned giving programs on behalf of local churches, conferences, and other bodies within the Global Methodist Church;

2. Furnishing counsel and guidance to local churches with regard to promotion and management of permanent funds;

3. Receiving funds on deposit, investing said funds, and loaning funds for construction and renovation of local churches; and
4. Other responsibilities as requested by the annual conference.

All foundations shall have an independent governing board as determined by the incorporating documents approved by the annual conference. The governing board will establish all policies and procedures upon which the foundation will operate. Due care will be exercised to maintain prudent organizational separation from beneficiary organizations while striving to maintain missional purpose and connection.

¶ **912. POWERS OF BOARDS OF DIRECTORS.** Each unit within the Global Methodist Church shall be incorporated unless local law prevents it. Each incorporated unit shall have a Board of Directors as set forth within this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. The Boards of Directors (or equivalent bodies) of each unit within the Global Methodist Church shall have the following authority with respect to their properties:

1. *Donations and bequests* — The said corporation shall receive, collect, and hold in trust for the benefit of the recipient any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind of character, real or personal, tangible or intangible, that may be given, devised, bequeathed, or conveyed to the said board for any benevolent, charitable, or religious purpose, and shall administer the same and the income therefrom in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, settlor, or testator and in the interest of the church, society, institution, or agency contemplated by such donor, trustor, settlor, or testator, under the direction of the corporation. When the use to be made of any such donation, bequest, or devise is not otherwise designated, the same shall be used as directed by the corporation.

2. *Holding property in trust* — When so directed by the Board of Directors, the corporation may receive and hold in trust for and on behalf of the respective unit of the Global Methodist Church any real or personal property previously acquired to be used in carrying out their mission, ministry, and program. When such property is in the form of investable assets, the Board of Directors may consider placing the assets for investment in the care of a responsible investing firm subject to the laws of the jurisdiction in which the unit is located. A conscious effort shall be made to invest in a manner consistent with the Social Witness (Part Two) of this *Doctrines and Discipline*.

3. *Power to convey assets* — Unless otherwise restricted by this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, the Board of Directors shall have the power to invest, reinvest, buy, sell, lease, transfer, and convey any and all assets that it may hold in trust, subject always to the terms of the legacy, devise, or donation.

- a. Before the Board of Directors (or equivalent body) of a local church conveys property, it must seek the approval of the charge conference. Approval requires a simple majority vote. Additionally, the appointed pastor must be fully aware and consulted on the conveyance.

- b. In the case of a multi-point charge, the Board of Directors (or equivalent body) of the individual church conveying property must seek the approval of the individual charge conference. Approval requires a simple majority vote. Additionally, the appointed pastor must be fully aware and consulted on the conveyance.

- c. Before the Board of Directors (or equivalent body) of a district, annual conference, or regional conference conveys property, it must seek the approval of the district, annual or regional conference. Additionally, in the case of a district conveying property, the presiding elder (district superintendent) must consent to the conveyance. In the event an annual conference conveying property, the bishop must consent to the conveyance. In the event of a regional conference

conveying property, the regional college of bishops must consent to the conveyance by majority vote.

4. *Authority to execute board decisions* – Any contract, deed, lease, bill of sale, mortgage, or other necessary written instrument needed to implement any resolution authorizing proposed action regarding property or assets owned by the corporation may be executed by and on behalf of the Board of Directors by any two of its officers, who thereupon shall be duly authorized to carry out the direction of the corporation; and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as to the action of the unit of the Global Methodist Church.

5. *Protection of assets* – The Board of Directors may intervene and take all necessary legal steps to safeguard and protect the interests and rights of the corporation anywhere and in all matters relating to property and rights to property whether arising by gift, devise, or otherwise, or where held in trust or established for the benefit of the individual unit of the Global Methodist Church or its membership.

6. *Gifts acceptance policy* – It shall be the duty of the pastor of a charge that receives any such gift, bequest, or devise to give prompt notice to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall take such steps as are necessary and proper to conserve, protect, and administer the gift; provided, however, that the Board of Directors may decline to receive or administer any such gift, devise, or bequest for any reason satisfactory to the Board.

7. *Insurance* – The Board of Directors shall annually compare the existence and adequacy of the insurance coverages for the unit of the Global Methodist Church that it governs. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the church, its properties, and its personnel are properly protected against risks.

8. *Disclosure of board actions* – The Board of Directors shall annually inform its corporation with a faithful report of its doings, of all funds, monies, securities, and property held in trust by it, and of its receipts and disbursements during the year. The beneficiary of a fund held in trust by the Board shall also be entitled to a report at least annually on the condition of such fund and on the transactions affecting it.

9. *Local church provision.* – The following provisions pertain to the Boards of Directors (or their equivalent bodies) of local churches in the Global Methodist Church:

a. *Local church usage* (§ 346.5a) – Subject to the direction of the charge conference, the Board of Directors (or its equivalent) shall have the supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by the local church and of all property and equipment acquired directly by the local church or by any society, board, class, commission, or similar organization connected to it, provided that the Board of Directors shall not permit the property to be used in a manner which is inconsistent with the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or violate the rights of any local church organization granted elsewhere in these *Doctrines and Discipline*. Further, the Board of Directors shall not prevent or interfere with the pastor in the use of any of the local church's property for religious services or other proper meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of the Global Methodist Church, or permit the use of said property for religious or other meetings without the consent of the pastor or, in the pastor's absence, the consent of the presiding elder (district superintendent). Additionally, the Board of Directors and pastor of the local church shall ensure that the pews in the Global Methodist Church shall always be free.

b. *Usage by outside groups* (§ 346.5b) – Upon the consent of the pastor, the use of a local congregation's facilities or properties by an outside organization may be granted by the Board of Directors after consideration of whether the purposes and programs of that organization are consistent with the mission and values of the congregation and the Global Methodist Church.

c. *Parsonage.* (§ 346.5c) – Should the congregation possess a parsonage offered to the pastor for housing, the chair of the Board of Directors or his or her designee, accompanied by a member

of the pastor parish relationship committee, shall make an annual review of the home to ensure that it is properly maintained. Parsonages shall be mutually respected as the property of the congregation and the home of the pastoral family.

d. *Accessible buildings* (§ 346.5e) – The Board of Directors shall conduct an annual accessibility audit of their buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any physical, architectural, or communication barriers that exist that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers.

e. *Annual Report* (§ 346.6) – The Board of Directors shall annually make a written report to the charge conference, in which shall be included the following:

- i. The legal description and the reasonable valuation of each parcel of real estate owned by the church;
- ii. The specific name of the grantee in each deed of conveyance of real estate to the local church;
- iii. An inventory and the reasonable valuation of all personal property owned by the local church;
- iv. The amount of income received from any income-producing property and a detailed list of expenditures in connection therewith;
- v. The amount received during the year for building, rebuilding, remodeling, and improving real estate, and an itemized statement of expenditures;
- vi. Outstanding capital debts and how contracted;
- vii. A detailed statement of the insurance carried on each parcel of real estate, indicating whether restricted by co-insurance or other limiting conditions and whether adequate insurance is carried;
- viii. The name of the custodian of all legal papers of the local church, and where they are kept;
- ix. A detailed list of all trusts of which the local church is the beneficiary, specifying where and how the funds are invested
- x. An evaluation of all church properties, including the chancel areas, to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities; and when applicable, a plan and timeline for the development of accessible church properties.

f. *Purchase, sale, lease, construction, and mortgage of property* – Notwithstanding the powers granted in §912.3 above, prior to the purchase, sale, lease, or mortgage by a local church of any real estate, or the construction or renovation of a building, a resolution authorizing such action shall be passed by the charge conference, with the members thereof acting in their capacity as members of the corporate body, by a majority vote of those present and voting at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose, provided that not less than ten days' notice of such meeting and the proposed action shall have been given from the pulpit and in the weekly bulletin, newsletter, or electronic notice of the local church or other means if required or permitted by local law, and provided further, that written consent to such action shall be given by the pastor. The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct and authorize the Board of Directors to take all necessary steps to carry out the action and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument. The Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required by the local laws. Any required contract, deed, lease, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument necessary to carry out the action so authorized shall be executed in the name of the corporation by any two of its officers, and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the corporation.

g. *Restrictions on proceeds of mortgage or sale* - No real property on which a church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged or sold to provide for the current budget or operating expense of a local church without the approval of sixty percent of the members and the full awareness of and consultation with the presiding elder (district superintendent).

h. *Local church permanent endowment committees* – Subject to the direction of the charge conference, the Board of Directors may establish a permanent endowment or local church foundation. The Board of Directors shall create a legal document guiding the direction of the permanent endowment and the charge conference shall designate or elect its leadership.

¶ 913. MERGER OF LOCAL GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCHES. Two or more local churches, to more effectively fulfill their ministry, may merge and become a single church by pursuing the following procedure:

1. The merger must be proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches by a resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger.
2. The plan of the merger as proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches shall be approved by each of the charge conferences by at least a simple majority vote for the merger to be affected.
3. The pastor of each of the merging churches along with the presiding elder (district superintendent) must give their consent to the merger.