

Table of Contents

Doctrines of Saint George Methodist Church

Preface	3
Our Doctrines, Our Beliefs and Our History	4
Wesleyan Way of Salvation	5
Principles of Our Life Together	6
Foundational Documents for Our Doctrinal Standards	7
The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church	8
The Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church	13
Our Witness to the World	17

Bylaws of Saint George Methodist Church

Statement of Faith	20
Membership	21
Church Conference	23
Duties and Powers of Officers	25
Church Council	25
Church Secretary	27
Board of Trustees	28
Finance Committee	30
Staff/Parish Relations Committee	33
Lay Leader	35
Nominations Committee	35

Church Conference Meetings and Meetings of Church Council

Annual Church Conference Meeting	36
Meetings of Church Council	37
Educational Ministries	38
Committees	39
Designated Contributions	39
Conflict of Interest Policy	40
Tax-Exemption Provisions	41
Amendments	42

Addendums

Committee Duties	
Use of Parler Hall	
Wedding Policy Saint George Methodist Church	
Office Safe Policy	
Parsonage Guidelines	

Rooted in Grace, Growing in Faith, Sharing Christ's Love

Preface

Since its inception, God's Spirit has enlivened the Methodist movement. In the 1720's 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 preaching the faith and holding one another accountable to it, the small group embraced the result 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 Book of Doctrines and Bylaws of the Saint George 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.

Herein this booklet, you will find the history of the Methodist movement from John and Charles Wesley's times until the present where Saint George Methodist Church has evolved over the years. The information has come from foundational writings from the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Brethren Church, and the United Methodist Church Book of Discipline.

The Saint George Methodist Church founded in July 1, 2024 presents their Book of Doctrines and Bylaws that will be effective until such time as it is changed by substitutions and /or amendments by the church council and the annual church conference.

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Our Doctrines, Our Beliefs and Our History

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

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

In the sixteenth century, the Protestant reformers preserved this testimony, asserting the primacy of Scripture, the necessity of grace and faith, and the priesthood of all believers. In the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, Pietists in all traditions sought to emphasize the experiential nature of this faith, as direct encounter with the risen Lord. They worked to develop the fruit of this faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in individual and communal life. These pietistic movements influenced many in the reformation traditions, including two Anglican brothers, John and Charles Wesley.

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

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

The new church adopted John Wesley's revision of the Anglican Articles of Religion, the Methodist General Rules, a liturgy, and ordained the first Methodist clergy. When a constitution was adopted in 1808, the Restrictive Rules protected the Articles and General Rules from revocation or change.

Other Methodist expressions of “primitive Christianity” and “the scripture way of salvation” emerged. German-speaking Americans from pietistic Reformed, Anabaptist, and Lutheran traditions created organizations with doctrine and discipline nearly identical to the English-speaking Methodist Episcopal Church. The work of Phillip William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, and Jacob Albright established the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. A number of African American Methodists, including Richard Allen, Jarena Lee, and James Varick, helped establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion to address racial discrimination and the injustices of slavery while preserving doctrine and discipline.

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

The Wesleyan Way of Salvation

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

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

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

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."

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

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

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

Principles of Our Life Together

Wesley said, "there is no holiness but social." By referring to "social holiness," Wesley meant that the road to holiness was one that we could not travel by ourselves, but rather involved the community of faith at every step along the way.

Our longing and hope are that our church may:

1. Remain rooted and grounded in the scriptures and in the historic teachings of the Christian church as defined in our Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith, and understood through the Wesleyan lens of faith.
2. Aspire to introduce all people, without exception, to Jesus Christ, recognizing that the mission in which we are engaged has eternal consequences. We are committed to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 to go into all the world to make disciples of Christ, teaching and baptizing in His name.
3. Lead all those who experience new birth in Jesus to deepen and grow in their relationship with Him, inviting the Holy Spirit to produce spiritual fruit within their lives as they similarly manifest the gifts of that Spirit. We encourage all to participate in discipleship and accountability groups, such as Sunday School and Bible studies, 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.

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.

Foundational Documents for Our Doctrinal Standards

The following summaries of the apostolic witness disclosed in Scripture have been affirmed by many Christian communities, and express orthodox Christian teaching.

1. The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the God the Father Almighty; and from thence he shall come to judge the quick 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.

2. The Nicene Creed (AD 381)

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

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

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

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

The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church

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

Article I—Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and good; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are 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 should be believed as an article of faith, or be though 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 they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly: When you have done all that is commanded you say, we are unprofitable servants.

Article XII—Of Sin After Justification

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

Article XIII—Of the Church

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

Article XIV—Of Purgatory

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

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

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

Article XVI—Of the Sacraments

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

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

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

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

Article XVII—Of Baptism

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

Article XVIII—Of the Lord's Supper

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

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

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

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

Article XIX—Of Both Kinds

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

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

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in 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 Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church

In 1809, the Evangelical Association adopted a German translation of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Articles of Religion, adding an article on the last judgment from the Augsburg Confession. These were reduced to twenty-one in 1816, omitting polemical articles against Roman Catholics and Anabaptists, and later condensed to nineteen. In 1815, the United Brethren in Christ adopted a Confession of Faith based on an 1814 Confession and 1789 *Lehre* by Philip William Otterbein. A more comprehensive Confession was composed in 1889, including an article on sanctification reflecting the influence of the Heidelberg Catechism. The 1946 conference that formed the Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted both the Confession of Faith of the United Brethren in Christ's and the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Church. In 1962, a new Confession of Faith was completed, including articles on Sanctification and Christian

Perfection “(Article XI) and “The Judgement and Future State” (Article XII). This was adopted in the 1968 merger with the Methodist Church that produced the United Methodist Church.

Article I—God

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

Article II—Jesus Christ

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

Article III—The Holy Spirit

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

Article IV—The Holy Bible

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

Article V—The Church

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

Article VI—The Sacraments

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

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

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

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

Article VII— Sin and Free Will

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

Article VIII—Reconciliation Through Christ

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

Article IX—Justification and Regeneration

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

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

Article X—Good Works

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

Article XI—Sanctification and Christian Perfection

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

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

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

Article XII—The Judgment and the Future State

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

Article XIII—Public Worship

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

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

Article XIV—The Lord's Day

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

Article XV—The Christian and Property

We believe God is the owner of all things and that the individual holding of property is lawful and is 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.

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 1:7, 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, 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, I 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 2:19-20).

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).

Bylaws

SAINT GEORGE METHODIST CHURCH

Article 1

Name and Purpose

A. Name: This congregation of believers shall be known as **Saint George Methodist Church**. The church is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of South Carolina.

B. Purpose: This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, for such purposes including but not limited to, proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture; and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world.

Article 2

Statement of Faith

Statement of Faith and Our Mission

Rooted in our rich Wesleyan heritage, Saint George Methodist Church stands as a living expression of the Christian faith. Grounded in the confession of Jesus Christ as Messiah, Son of God, and risen Lord, we embrace our calling to proclaim His name, share His love, and embody His grace.

We believe in the power of Scripture as the foundation of our faith and practice, upheld by the historic creeds and teachings of the Church, and illuminated through the Wesleyan lens of grace, faith, and holiness. With hearts transformed by God's prevenient, justifying and sanctifying grace, we seek to deepen our relationship with Christ and invite all to join in the journey of spiritual growth and renewal.

As a community of believers, we are dedicated to:

1. **Proclaiming the Gospel:** Engaging in the Great commission to make disciples of all nations, introducing everyone to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.
2. **Growing in Holiness:** Encouraging spiritual growth through worship,

- discipleship, accountability, studying His word and the means of grace, striving toward the fullness of salvation in Christ.
3. **Loving God and Neighbor:** Living out the Great Commandment by loving God with all our being and extending His love to our neighbors in acts of service, mercy, and compassion.
 4. **Empowering Leadership:** Affirming and equipping both laity and clergy to use their gifts in ministry, fostering a Spirit-led community of diverse backgrounds and experiences, grounded in Scripture and dedicated to serving God.
 5. **Fostering Unity:** Partnering with the universal Church in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation to advance God's Kingdom on earth.

Through worship, witness, and service, Saint George Methodist Church seeks to be a beacon of hope and holiness, reflecting God's love to a broken world. With unwavering faith, we press onward in our mission to spread scriptural holiness across the land, transforming lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"To God be the glory, now and forevermore!"

Article 3

Membership

- A. **Qualifications for Membership.** Members of the church are those members who were previously members of the St. George United Methodist Church. Those seeking new membership must:

1. Through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence of a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
2. Be interviewed by the pastor(s) to ensure they fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders.
3. Membership will be granted upon the recommendation of the pastor and upon compliance with any one of the the following conditions:
 - a. By baptism at this or another church.
 - b. By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized; or
 - c. By testimony of faith, having been baptized in another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice and acceptance by the congregation.

B. Privileges of Membership

1. Only members of at least sixteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church may only exercise voting privileges in those areas that are defined and limited by these bylaws. Members may not vote to initiate any church action; rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor and the church council.

2. This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under-shepherd with the counsel of the church council. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor and church council shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The church council shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him.

3. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor or individual designated by the church council has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor or person designated by the church council, be treated as a trespasser.

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

C. Automatic Termination of Membership

1. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if:

- a. The member unites in membership with another church.
- b. The member dies.

D. Transfer or Resignation of Membership: Members may request a letter of transfer to be sent to another church. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of

transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor.

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

F. If a member becomes aware of an offense by another member of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of an individual in the local church or body as a whole, it should be brought to the attention of the pastor and counseling offered.

Article 4

Church Conference

A. Designation of Church Conference Officers: The pastor shall serve as president of the church conference, the chair of the church council shall serve as vice president of the church conference, the church council recording secretary shall serve as the secretary of the church conference and the church treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the church conference.

B. The Church Officers are the church conference officers.

C. Election of Church Conference Officers: The annual election of officers, other than the pastor by the church conference membership shall occur during the month of November at the annual church conference. Officers must be elected by a majority of the eligible membership present at a regular or special church conference meeting. The pastor or church council, from time to time as they deem appropriate, may fill other vacant church officers in consultation with the nominations committee and church council.

D. Terms of Service for Officers

1. The relationship between the senior pastor and the church shall be determined by the contract signed at the time of employment.

2. The term of service for all other officers and positions in the church, except the pastor and other church staff, shall be one year, at the expiration of which the officers may be re-elected or reappointed.

3. A vacancy occurring in church conference officers except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church conference by a majority vote of eligible members present.

4. A vacancy occurring in any office or on the church council, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church council meeting after consultation with the Nominations Committee and by a majority vote of eligible members present.

5. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.

E. Eligibility For Church Office: Church officers and officials must be a member and in good standing with the church.

F. Calling a Pastor: Upon the resignation, death, or dismissal of the pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the statement of faith and bylaw provisions of the church and whose life aligns with the qualifications of a pastor as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The church shall abide by the following guidelines for calling a pastor:

1. The church council shall select a pulpit committee and they shall be elected by a majority vote of the church council. The pulpit committee shall interview potential candidates and will only consider those who completely subscribe to the statement of faith and who have read these bylaws.

2. The interview process for selecting a pastoral candidate shall include at minimum, the following: a background check, a credit check, a reference check, and the filling out of a detailed application that explains the potential candidate's philosophy of ministry.

3. Upon a majority vote of the pulpit committee, the committee will formally announce to the church that the candidate will preach at least one regularly scheduled church service and be available for a church wide question/answer time prior to being referred to the staff parish relations committee and the church council.

4. Notice from the pulpit must be given 2 consecutive Sundays prior to a formal candidate preaching service as determined by the SPRC and pulpit committee.

Article 5

Duties and Powers of Officers

The Pastor

1. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God. He or she shall administer the ordinances of the church; act as moderator, or appoint a moderator, at all church meetings for the transaction of the church matters; supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. The Pastor will mediate in all conflicts regarding interpretation of the scripture.
2. The pastor and church council, on behalf of the church, shall establish committees and appoint the members of the various committees upon the recommendation of the nominations committee at the annual church conference or, in the case of a vacancy or newly created committee, at any duly called special meeting. The pastor shall inform all newly elected officers of the functions and responsibilities of their respective offices. He or she shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and shall perform such other duties as generally appertain to the position of pastor.
3. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place, and the use of the property belonging to the church for any other purposes, are under the control of the pastor and the trustees and with the advice and counsel of the church council, shall be able to determine the appropriateness of all property use, as well as persons permitted to use the church property.
4. The pastor shall be responsible to fill the pulpit for each regularly scheduled church service as well as any special services. In the event of his/her absence, he or she will be responsible to invite speakers from within the membership or outside the church to preach in a manner consistent with the beliefs articulated in the statement of faith. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the pastor or if he or she is temporarily unable to perform his/her duties, the lay leader shall be responsible for inviting speakers from within the membership or outside the church to preach in a manner consistent with the statement of faith.

The Church Council

1. The church council shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the church services, and in performing all other work of the

church. The church council shall consider benevolence needs, disburse the benevolence fund in cooperation with the pastor, and assist the pastor in all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The church council shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries. Upon the death, resignation or dismissal of the pastor, the church council may appoint a pulpit committee. The church council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings.

2. The pastor and the church council shall constitute the church conference officers. In addition to the various powers specifically granted to the church council under these bylaws, the church council has authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the eligible members at a duly called church conference meeting:

a. To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.

b. To sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of and to mortgage, pledge or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.

c. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.

d. To maintain the duties of loyalty to the church, confidentiality of church information, and fiduciary care regarding church finances, and a spiritual duty to pray for and support the church with their time, talents, and treasures.

e. All recommendations from all church committees must have church council approval.

3. All powers of the church council shall be compatible with the laws of the State of South Carolina.

4. Each church council member shall review the bylaws annually and shall bring suggested changes to a meeting of the church council for review and discussion.

5. The church council chairperson shall be elected by the church conference annually and shall have the following responsibilities:

a. Lead the council in fulfilling its responsibilities.

- b. Prepare and communicate the agenda of the council meetings in consultation with the pastor, lay leader and other committee chairpersons.
 - c. Review and assign responsibility for the implementation of actions taken by the council.
 - d. Communicate with members of the council and others as appropriate to permit informed action at council meetings.
 - e. Coordinate the various activities of the council.
 - f. Provide initiative and leadership for the council as it engages in planning, establishing of objectives and goals and evaluating ministry.
 - g. Participate in leadership training programs when and where available.
 - h. The church council chairperson shall be entitled to attend meetings of all boards and committees of the church unless specifically limited by the bylaws of the church.
6. The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.
 7. The council will establish the budget on recommendation of the finance committee or its equivalent body and ensure adequate provision of the financial needs of the church.
 8. Recommend the salary and other remuneration of the pastor and staff members after receiving recommendations from the staff parish relations committee (SPRC).
 9. The church council 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 shall include but not be limited to the chairs of the committees responsible for the staff-parish relations committee, the finances of the church, the trustees, the lay leader and the pastor. The numbers of members may be as many as deemed appropriate.
 10. The church council recording secretary will keep the minutes of all meetings of the church council and give a copy to the church secretary for the permanent records of the meetings.

The Church jSecretary

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

1. Certify and keep at the office of the church the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws; minutes of meetings, the membership roll,

baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the church, and shall deliver such documents to his or her successor upon leaving office.

2. Maintain and file minutes of all church business, committees and church council meetings, including the time and place of holding, the notice given, the names of those present unless a church-wide meeting, and an accurate record of all church business approved at each meeting. A copy of these minutes shall be kept as a permanent record of the church and shall be made available at all reasonable times to proper person on terms provided by law and pursuant to these bylaws. The committee chairperson will be responsible for seeing the minutes are taken and given to the church secretary for permanent filing.

3. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.

The Trustees

Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of the 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 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. Members of the trustees of the church shall be elected by the 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. Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the church or be excluded therefrom, trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion. Should a trustee of the 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 church council, and when all legal requirements have been satisfied in reference to such execution, the church council may by majority vote declare the trustee's membership on the Board of Trustees vacated. Vacancies occurring on the trustee board shall be filled by the vote of church council after recommendation by the Nominations Committee to complete the unexpired term of person who vacated the position.

3. Within thirty days after the beginning of the calendar year, 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 the board for the ensuing year and transacting any other business properly brought before it. The board shall elect from its members,

to hold office for term of one year or until their successors shall be elected, a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and if needed a treasurer, provided that the chairperson and vice chairperson shall not be members of the same class. The position of secretary and treasurer (if needed) may be held by the same person.

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.

4. Oversight and care of all real property owned by the church and all property and equipment acquired directly by the church or by any group, board, class, commission, or similar organization connected with shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The board shall not violate the rights of any church organization elsewhere granted in the bylaws of the church, 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 Saint George Methodist church shall always be free.

The use of the 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 Saint George Methodist Church.

5. The chairperson of the Staff-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.

6. Subject to the direction of the church council, the trustees shall receive and administer all bequests made to the church, shall receive and administer all trusts, and shall invest all trust funds of the church in conformity with laws of the country, state, or political unit in which the church is located. Nevertheless, upon notice to the Board of Trustees, the church 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 church foundation.

7. 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.

8. The board shall annually make a written report to the church 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 church.

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

d. The amount of income received from any income-producing property owned by the church.

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 church where they are kept.

i. A detailed list of all trusts in which the 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.

The Finance Committee

The Finance Committee Chairperson, The Treasurer and the Bookkeeper

The committee on finance shall be elected annually by the church conference upon recommendation of the committee on nominations and approval by the church council or from the floor. It will be composed of the chairperson; the pastor; the chairperson of the church council; the chairperson or representative of the SPRC, the treasurer, the lay leader, the bookkeeper, and other members to be added as the church conference may determine. It is recommended that the chairperson of the committee on finance

shall be a member of the church council. The bookkeeper if a paid employee shall be a member without a vote.

The positions of treasurer and bookkeeper should 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 employed clergy may serve as treasurer, finance committee chair, bookkeeper, counter or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the Finance Committee.

The committee shall carry out the church council's directions in guiding the treasurer and bookkeeper.

1. There shall be a designated team of counters to assist in counting the offering. The counters will work under the direction of the bookkeeper and be approved by the Finance Committee. The selected counters rotate weekly with a backup counter available in case of illness or absence for counting. Should a vacancy occur with the counters, the Finance Committee will appoint a replacement. A record of all funds received shall be given to the bookkeeper and treasurer after the count has been completed. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in accordance with the procedures established by the committee on finance. The bookkeeper shall keep records of the contributions and payments. A copy of all checks, envelopes with money and deposit slips will be made and kept by the bookkeeper for a period of seven years. Counters are bonded under the church insurance policy. The opening of the locked offering box will be by two persons counting the money. The offerings are taken to the bank immediately after the counting has concluded by the bookkeeper and the counter. The counter and the bookkeeper both sign the church deposit record forms to verify the amount deposited.

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. The Finance Committee shall establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the church. The committee chair will be responsible for preparing the policies and keep them available for future persons on the committee and persons serving on the committee. The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the committee on finance and submitted as a report to the church conference annually.

4. The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee shall make a full and complete report to the annual church conference. A church audit is defined as an independent evaluation of the financial reports and records and the internal controls of the church by a qualified person or persons. The audit shall be conducted to reasonably verify the accuracy and reliability of financial reporting, determine compliance with local law, church policies and procedures and the church book of

bylaws. The audit may include: 1) a review of the cash and investment reconciliations, 2) interviews with the treasurer, bookkeeper, pastor, Finance Committee chair, 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 from the church membership (unrelated to the persons listed in above statement number 1 regarding persons who can count money and preferably with an accounting background), every year and/or by an independent certified public accountant or accounting firm every 3 years.

5. All financial requests to be included in the annual budget of the church shall be submitted to the Finance Committee by September 1 of the budgeting year. The Finance Committee shall compile annually a complete budget for the church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. The Finance Committee shall be charged with responsibility of developing and implementing plans along with the Stewardship Chairman 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 and bookkeeper.

6. The church treasurer shall disburse all money contributed to causes represented in the church budget and such other funds and contributions as the church council may determine. The church treasurer shall make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to Finance Committee and the church council. The treasurer shall be adequately bonded. The treasurer will oversee the financial concerns of the church and will work with the bookkeeper to reconcile bank statements and advise bookkeeper with concerns that need to be addressed. The treasurer will have access to the church financial records. The treasurer will be the back up person for writing checks upon the absence of the bookkeeper. The bookkeeper will provide the necessary reports that the treasurer will need to give accurate financial reports to the church council at the monthly meetings.

7. The committee shall recommend to the church council proper depositories (banks) for the church's funds. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in the name of the church.

8. 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. If the purpose for funds has been satisfied or money is needed in other areas, upon recommendation from the finance committee and voted on by council the money may be used in other areas.

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

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

Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

1. As the church council determines, there will be elected annually by the church council a Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). 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 church and on the role and work of the pastor 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 class shall be elected each year for a three-year term. The chairman of the SPRC will be elected annually by church council upon recommendation of the Nominations Committee and approval by the church conference. The lay leader is exempt from the three-year term on this committee. When vacancies occur during the year the church council shall elect successors upon recommendation of the Nominations Committee.

4. The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the council, 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 will meet in January, April, July, and October of each year on the 1st Thursday of the month meeting at 6:30 PM unless changed by the committee chair or pastor due to conflicts and agreeable by the committee members.

5. The committee shall meet in a closed session and information shared in the committee shall be confidential. The SPRC should keep its own minutes confidential.

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

a. To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor and staff and their families.

- b. To promote unity in the church.
- c. To confer with and counsel the pastor 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 and staff.
- d. To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor and staff to enhance their effective ministry and to identify continuing educational needs and plans.
- e. To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for all staff.
- f. 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.
- g. To confer with the pastor and/or other members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the church and/or pastor will be served by a change of pastors.
- h. After consultation with the pastor, to communicate with the Nominations 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 or staff proves an inappropriate stewardship of time.
- i. Members of the SPRC shall keep themselves informed of personnel matters related to the 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.
- j. 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), continuing education, and other practical matters affecting the work and families of the pastor and staff. The committee will 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 SPRC, 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.

k. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by council chair.

The Lay Leader

Out of the professing membership of the church, there shall be elected by the church conference upon recommendation from the Nominations Committee and approved by the church council a lay leader. The Lay leader shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in the church and shall have the following responsibilities:

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

b. Meet regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry.

c. Serve as a member of the church conference and the church council, the Finance Committee, the Nominations Committee, and the SPRC, where along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the church conference.

d. Continue to study and train 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. Assist 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. Inform the laity of training opportunities provided by various resources.

g. The lay leader may also serve as the chairperson of the church council or other governing body.

The Nominations Committee

As the church council determines, there may be elected annually a Nominations Committee composed of professing members of the church. The responsibility of the committee is to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian spiritual leadership for the 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. The committee shall work with the church council to determine the diverse ministry tasks of the congregation and the skills needed for leadership.

1. The Nominations Committee shall serve throughout the year to guide the church council on matters regarding the leadership of the church (other than employed staff) 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.
2. The committee shall recommend to the church council 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 bylaws of the church requires or as the church conference deems necessary to its work.
3. The pastor shall be the chairperson. A layperson elected by the committee shall serve as the vice chairperson of the committee.
4. To secure experience and stability, the membership may be divided into three classes, one class 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 upon recommendation of the the Nominations committee.

Duties of All Officers and Committee Chairpersons

All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church conference meeting and shall surrender all records in their possession to the church secretary at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church.

Article 6

Church Conference Meetings and Meetings of Church Council

A. Annual Church Conference Meeting

1. The annual church conference meeting for the election of officers and the transaction of other business, shall be held in November. A quorum shall consist of the eligible members present. Public notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

2. The pastor or other church officer chosen by a majority of the church council shall serve as moderator of church conference meetings. In the event of a conflict of interest, the church council may substitute a moderator.

3. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter.

4. Church business meetings, including the annual church conference meeting and special meetings, may be held by electronic video means for the transaction of any business normally conducted during in-person church business meetings. A quorum shall be those eligible voting members attending the virtual meeting, and voting shall be conducted by any means deemed acceptable by the church council. Notice of business meetings and other notice required by these bylaws shall be provided by email, the church website, social media site, text message, and/or other methods deemed by the church council to be most likely to reach church members at least two weeks before the meeting. Such notice satisfies "notice from the pulpit" when that method of notice is otherwise required by these bylaws.

5. The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

B. Church Special Conference Meetings: The pastor or the church council may call a special church conference meeting by giving notice from the pulpit to the church of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or for the discipline or removal of the pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Article 4 Section F.

C. Voting: Voting at any church business meeting is limited to eligible members in good standing with the church who are physically present at the meeting; an exception to this in-person vote requirement exists if the church is meeting electronically as permitted by Article 6, Section A 4 of these bylaws. Absentee voting is not permitted. A majority vote of those eligible members attending the meeting, whether in person or electronically, will constitute the requisite number of votes for passage of amendments and motions, whether by the church council voting at a church council meeting or by the members voting at a church conference meeting.

D. Meetings of the Church Council:

1. Regular Meetings: Regular meetings of the church council shall be held at such time and place as the church council determines.

2. Special Meetings: The pastor or any church council member may request a special meeting of the church council at any time, and nothing contained in this article shall be construed as limiting, fixing, or affecting the time or date when a meeting called by action of the church council may be held.

3. Notice of Meetings:

a. Requirement of Notice: Notice shall not be required for regularly scheduled meetings of the church council unless there has been a change to the time, date, or location of such regularly scheduled meetings, in which case notice shall be given in accordance with this section of the bylaws. Notice shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section for all special meetings of the church council.

b. Method of Notice: Notice shall be sent to each church council member for special meetings by means of the secretary's chosen method of communication, whether by postal mail, phone, or email at each church council member's address or phone number as it appears in the records of the church or as supplied by the church council member to the secretary for the purpose of notice. Notice shall be given by or at the direction of the chair or the pastor.

c. Content of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

4. Time of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall be delivered by the person charged with giving notice, not less than two days before the date of the meeting.

5. Quorum: A quorum for meetings shall consist of a majority of the church council. If a quorum is not attained, then those present shall adjourn the meeting to a new date properly noticed to all church council members for not more than ten days thereafter. At the later-noticed meeting a quorum shall consist of those church council members then present.

6. Roles: At every meeting of the church council, the chair (or in his/her absence the vice chair) shall conduct the meeting in an orderly manner. In the absence of the chair and vice chair another officer of the church council will be asked to lead the meeting and will assume the chair to conduct the meeting in an orderly manner. The secretary of the church council shall act as secretary of all meetings and shall take accurate minutes of church council meetings and promptly deliver such minutes to the church secretary. In the absence of the church council secretary, the chair may appoint another person to act as church council secretary of the meeting.

7. Participation in Meetings: Any one or more church council members may participate in a meeting of the church council by means of a conference telephone, web-based conference, or similar communications equipment or device, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participating by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting for purposes of determining if a quorum is present.

Article 7

Educational Ministries

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

B. Church Participation: All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be for the benefit of the members and non-members of the church.

C. Agreement with Statement of Faith: All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church and shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the statement of faith of the church and the inerrant Word of God. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or who expresses disagreement with the statement of faith or who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the statement of the faith, whether in or out of the classroom.

Article 8

Committees

A. Committees: The pastor and church council, on behalf of the church, may designate or form any committees and may appoint members and/or chairpersons of said committees as considered by the pastor and church council to be in the best interests of the church. These committees may be standing or temporary (special) committees.

B. Actions of Committees: Committees have no authority to act on behalf of the church. Their primary function is to research and recommend. Committees shall make available upon request all records and materials to the pastor and church council, who shall have the right to overrule any plans or decisions made by the committee. Each committee shall have a secretary who keeps and timely submits minutes of each meeting to the pastor and the church secretary to be filed with church records. If deemed appropriate by the pastor and church council, the committee secretary, in conjunction with the chair, will submit an annual report to the church of the decisions and plans of the committee.

Article 9

Designated Contributions

The church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. If the church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the church will attempt to honor the designation:

- A. However, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the church council. No fiduciary obligation shall be incurred.
- B. Gifts or donations (furniture, art, etc.) and the location of the gift or donation, must be approved by the pastor and the church council, before they are given. It will also be determined by the pastor and the church council when the lifetime of the item has outlasted its use. If possible, the gift shall be returned to the person/person's family that donated it.

Article 10

Conflict of Interest Policy

- A. **Purpose:** The purpose of this conflict-of-interest policy is to protect the church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations. The church council will determine procedures for determining a possible conflict of interest.

B. Procedures

1. **Duty to Disclose:** In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the church council.

2. **Determining whether a Conflict of Interest Exists.** After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, the church council shall decide, by a majority vote if a conflict of interest exists.

C. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

1. After exercising due diligence, the Church Council shall determine whether the church can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

2. If the church council has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

D. Records of Proceedings

1. The minutes of the church council shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the church council decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

2. The minutes of the church council also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article 11

Tax-Exemption Provisions

A. Private Inurement: No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure (be advantageous) to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 1 hereof.

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

C. Dissolution: Upon the dissolution of the church no part of the organization's earnings or assets may inure to the benefit of any of its members; and the church council shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the

church council shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax exempt organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.

D. Nondiscrimination Policy: The church shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of the church. This policy statement is not intended to waive the ministerial exception or any other exception or exemption to federal, state, or local anti-discrimination laws or regulations.

E. Limitation of Activities: Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article 1.

Article 12

Amendments

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

These initial bylaws were approved by the church council members and adopted by a majority vote of the church conference members at a called meeting of the church conference in which a quorum was present.

Date Approved by Church Conference:

November 9, 2025

Judy Byrd
Church Conference Secretary

Addendums to Bylaws

The following pages contain a description of the various committees within the church and also the rules/regulations of using the church property.

These addendums can be changed at any time after being approved by the Church Council or additional pages can be added by an approved committee of Church Council.

- 1. Duties of the Trustees**
- 2. Men's Mission Ministry**
- 3. Church Missions Committee (To be changed to Outreach in 2026)**
- 4. Preschool and Board of Trustees**
- 5. Youth Leader**
- 6. Saint George Methodist Women**
- 7. Duties of Staff/Parish Relations Committee**
- 8. Parler Hall/Application**
- 9. Wedding Policy/Application (Pending Update)**
- 10. Office Safe Policy (Adopted October 11, 2025)**
- 11. Parsonage Guidelines (Approved May 26, 2026)**
- 12. Protect My Ministry (to be added in 2026)**

Saint George Methodist Church Trustees

A trustee is a member of the congregation selected to oversee and manage the church's physical property, and legal affairs, ensuring the responsible stewardship of all church assets by maintaining the building, upholding legal compliance, all while acting in alignment with the church's mission and vision; they are essentially the legal custodians of the church property and finances, working closely with the pastor and other leadership to make informed decisions regarding the church's resources.

- **Property management:**

Overseeing maintenance, repairs, and improvements to the church building and grounds, including ensuring safety and security measures are in place.

- **Financial oversight:**

Reviewing and approving budgets, assisting in the management of church funds, monitoring investments, and ensuring proper financial reporting.

- **Legal compliance:**

Staying informed about relevant laws and regulations affecting non-profit organizations, ensuring the church operates within legal boundaries.

- **Insurance management:**

Maintaining adequate insurance coverage for church property and liabilities.

- **Contract review:**

Reviewing and approving contracts related to church operations, such as vendor agreements or construction projects.

- **Collaboration with leadership:**

Working closely with the pastor, church staff, and other church leaders to make informed decisions regarding church operations.

Saint George Methodist Men's Mission

The Saint George Methodist Men's Mission is and has been for a long time to support spiritual growth among men. The ministry at Saint George Methodist Church is defined as a core group of men partnering with the pastor to invite growth opportunities for all men of the church.

The group meets on the second Thursday of each month for an informal meeting and breakfast. The meetings begin at 7:30 AM in Parler Hall. The meetings consist of a speaker, a devotion, a report from the Secretary and the Treasurer and an opportunity to discuss new and old business of the organization. Officers of the organization are the Chairman, Treasurer and a Secretary.

The primary mission has been erecting handicap ramps for members of our church and others in a limited area regardless of what church they attend. Ramps are provided if one is available for use.

The group also supports church activities including Vacation Bible School and Salkehatchie.

Saint George Methodist Missions Coordinator Duties

The Missions of the Church Coordinator duties include:

- Responsible for coordinating the delivery of a Birthday Cake to St. George Nursing Home. This is usually a large, decorated sheet cake that is delivered the 3rd Thursday of each month. Currently Jane Bailey is baking and delivering the cakes. She is paid by the Missions Coordinator for providing the cake and its delivery to the nursing home. As of 2024 the cost of this is \$50.00 per month.
- The committee is responsible for organizing and directing the White Christmas program of the church. This program collects food, using various means, to deliver white boxes or bags of groceries to individuals in need within our community.
- The committee helps in emergency situations where/when needed.
- Some years (budget permitting) they have donated to UMCORE on a monthly basis but this was stopped in 2023 due to financial difficulties. The committee would like to see this donation or a donation to another organization be started again.

The Preschool and the Board of Trustees

The Preschool Director and/or Chairperson of the Preschool Advisory Board shall work closely with the church Board of Trustees regarding the use of building facilities.

The Director and/or Chairperson shall:

- Make the church trustees, or sexton if applicable, aware of maintenance issues
- Receive approval from the church trustees before making any changes regarding the areas of the buildings used by the Preschool.
- Work to ensure positive working relationships with those church members, staff and volunteers who share space with the Preschool, Sunday School teachers, nursery workers, and children's and youth leaders.

The Church Board of Trustees shall:

- Ensure that the church building remains functional, safe and secure.
- Ensure that basic building services are provided, including electricity, water, heating and air conditioning , and pest control.
- Ensure that adequate classroom, playground, office and storage space continue to be available to the preschool.
- Ensure that casualty insurance is in place that covers all church buildings.
- Maintain adequate program interruption insurance to protect preschool operation catastrophe.
- Maintain open lines of communication with the Preschool Board to address maintenance and space sharing concerns.

Saint George Methodist Women

The Saint George Methodist Women consists of three (3) circles: Joyful Hearts, Ennis Sandifer and Foundation of Faith. The purpose of the organization is to strive to honor God, spread His love through prayers, study, service and fellowship and to seek to provide encouragement to women, youth and children.

Officers of the organization are chosen by the joint circles. Each circle has its own leader and the joint group has its leadership officers which are elected at a joint meeting of the circles yearly.

The President of the Joint group is responsible for carrying out the purpose and vision of the Circles. Some of the duties the leader is charged with are:

- Make sound decisions;
- Problem solve efficiently;
- Delegate tasks;
- Handle difficult situations with tact and diplomacy;
- Communicate openly and regularly;
- Attend Church Council meetings once a month and any other meetings that are related to the position held.

Funeral meals policy:

The three circles have a policy of preparing meals for the family of a deceased member of the church. The new policy that was announced on June 5, 2025 for Funeral Meals is as follows:

- **For deceased members:** Saint George Methodist Church will provide the facility and prepare a meal for the immediate family, out of town guests and friends.
- **For an active Non-Member:** If the family is approved to have a service at the church, the family may also be provided a meal.
- **Non-members deceased:** If the non-member has an immediate family member (spouse, sibling, child, grandparent) that is a member of the church, then there would be no charge for the use of Parler Hall and a meal will be prepared for the family.

Duties of the Staff Pastor Relations Committee

Adopted February 4, 2025

The SPRC will meet quarterly for regular meetings but will be ready for any emergency problem. The SPRC should visit the parsonage at least annually to ensure our Pastor has no issues with his or her home. We strongly believe in an inventory list of the parsonage should be done and kept available for future use. This list would be kept in SPRC minutes by the Chairman. The Chair of the committee should make every attempt to attend trustee meetings for input and information regarding the parsonage and also attend regular Church Council meetings. The meetings of the SPRC are in a closed session except for those on the committee or someone invited to attend for a specific purpose usually regarding personnel. The minutes are kept by the Chair and passed down to the next Chair at the end of the term.

The SPRC is responsible for recommending the salaries of the staff and that includes the Pastor to the Finance Committee and then to the Church Council for approval. The SPRC will review job descriptions and duties and make changes when necessary. The review of the job descriptions and duties should be conducted annually by the SPRC.

The duties of the SPRC also include the following:

- To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support and respect the Pastor and Staff and their families;
- To confer with the Pastor and staff on their effectiveness in their gifts and abilities;
- To provide an annual evaluation of the Pastor and Staff;
- To confer with the Church Council and Finance Committee as needed.

Members of the SPRC shall keep themselves informed on personnel matters related to professional standards, liability issues and civil law. They should make themselves available to any staff employee when there appears to be an issue and be able to report to the committee about the issues.

The SPRC will be responsible for adequate housing for the Pastor and his/her family. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor and family as the property of the Saint George Methodist Church.

The Parsonage should have the following items for the Pastor's use:

- ◆ At least three bedrooms with ample closet space in each room;
- ◆ At least two full baths with showers;
- ◆ A family room or den;

- ◆ Adequate room in the kitchen for family meals;
- ◆ Adequate dining room;
- ◆ Kitchen cabinets with counter tops;
- ◆ A linen closet;
- ◆ Sufficient electrical receptacles with smoke and carbon monoxide detectors;
- ◆ Energy efficient central heat/air conditioning;
- ◆ Insulation in the attic floors;
- ◆ Storm windows or insulated windows and doors;
- ◆ Double garage.

The SPRC will make sure the following are provided in the parsonage:

- Refrigerator, Kitchen stove, dishwasher, washing machine, dryer, basic furniture for all the bedrooms, window treatments, carpeting or appropriate flooring.

The Pastor will provide:

- Linens, blankets, cooking and eating utensils.

**Saint George Methodist Church
Parler Hall
120 Parler Avenue
Saint George, SC 29477**

Policy, Rules and Regulations

Parler Hall is a vital part of ministry of Saint George Methodist Church. Its primary use is for church gatherings, church activities and church functions.

General Rules:

Individuals/Groups desiring the use of Parler Hall must pick up an application at the Saint George Methodist Church office or download from the website. This application will include name, address, telephone number, desired date of use and type of function to be held. All deposits/fees are due upon completion/submission of the application to the Church office.

- Individual/Groups completing application for use of Parler Hall are responsible for ensuring all Policy, Rules & Regulations governing Parler Hall are followed during their scheduled event.
- Individuals/Groups renting Parler Hall are responsible for any breakage or damage incurred to Parler Hall during their scheduled event.
- The use of alcoholic beverages or tobacco is prohibited in Parler Hall.
- Music & Noise levels should be in keeping with the religious theme of Parler Hall.
- Tables Chairs, Cooking Utensils, China or Silverware will not be removed from Parler Hall without the consent of Saint George Methodist church Trustees or Senior Church Staff.
- Any broken or damaged items or equipment must be reported to Saint George Methodist Church Office, Trustees or Senior Church Staff.
- Any spill or leakage resulting in damage to floors, carpet, etc. must be reported to Saint George Methodist Church Office, Trustees or Senior Church Staff.
- Groups/Organizations and individuals using parler Hall are responsible for securing all doors, cutting off all lights and ensuring the thermostat is set a posted recommended setting before leaving building.

- All Tablecloths belonging to Saint George Methodist Church must be signed for on the clipboard kept in the storage area where they are stored in Parler Hall and laundered before return.

Use of Parler Hall by Saint George Methodist Church Groups, Organizations and Church Members:

- Church members and Church Groups/Organizations will be given priority in scheduling the use of Parler Hall.
- No fee will be charged for the use of Parler Hall by a Saint George Methodist church Group or Organization.
- No fee will be charged for the use of Parler Hall by Saint George Methodist Church member or immediate family for funerals.
- A refundable deposit is \$150.00 for members plus \$50.00 for the use of Parler Hall. A member of the Trustee Committee will check Parler Hall to make sure it has been cleaned properly. If Parler Hall is not clean the deposit will be given to the Custodian.
- Tables, Chairs, Cooking Utensils, Glasses, China and Silverware may be used by Church Members, Groups and Organizations, but must be cleaned and returned otherwise their proper storage place.
- Tablecloths may be used and they are presently stored in Parler Hall. The tablecloths must be laundered before returning them to their proper storage place in Parler Hall (in the event Parler Hall is locked they may be returned to the Church Office).

Use of Parler Hall by Outside Groups/Organizations or Non-Members of Saint George Methodist Church

- Use of Parler Hall by Groups/Organizations not a part of Saint George Methodist Church is restricted to non-profit community organizations.
- Groups/Organizations or individuals not a part of Saint George Methodist Church may not request the use of Parler Hall more than (30) thirty days in advance of the event, except in case of Weddings (see Wedding Policy/Procedures).
- There is a refundable deposit fee of \$150.00 for non-members plus a \$150.00 fee for the use of Parler Hall. A member of the Trustees Committee will check Parler Hall to make sure it has been cleaned properly after the event. If Parler Hall is not clean the deposit will be given to the Custodian.

- A \$10.00 Key deposit will be required when the key to Parler Hall is picked up and will be reimbursed when the key is returned to the Church Office. The Key may be picked up at the Church office during normal office hours, three (3) days prior to the scheduled use of Parler Hall and should be returned within three (3) days after the event.
- Instructions for any special custodial preparation (set-up) must be provided at least one (1) week in advance of the scheduled use of Parler Hall.
- Tables, Chairs, China, Silverware, Glasses, Cooking utensils, etc. may be used but must be properly cleaned and returned to their storage place.

**Saint George Methodist Church
Application for the use of Parler Hall**

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

Desired Date of Use: _____

Type of Function to be held: _____

SGMC Members.....Date fee of \$50.00 received:_____

Non-Members of SGMC..Date Fee of \$150.00 received:_____

Date \$10.00 Key Deposit to Parler hall received:_____

The \$10.00 key deposit will be returned when the key is returned.

Special note to remember: Individuals/Groups renting Parler Hall are responsible for any breakage or damage incurred to Parler Hall during their scheduled event.

By signing this application, I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the use of Parler Hall at Saint George Methodist Church.

Sign:_____

Date: _____

Saint George Methodist Church Safe Policy Adopted 2025

In June 2019, the St. George United Methodist Church purchased and installed a “Cannon” office safe in the church’s secretarial office. This safe was passed down to the Saint George Methodist Church via the withdrawal from the United Methodist Church along with all other properties.

The original purchase price was \$4,300.00. It weighs in excess of 700 pounds and measures 59” high x 40” wide x 24” deep. The safe’s heat resistance is 1,200 degrees for 75 minutes. The Model number is TS-5940 and the serial number is MT1675570.

The purpose of this safe is to provide a secure, safe and sound location where Financial Records, Sensitive and Private Personal Information and Important Documents can be stored safely without threat of compromise.

The access to the safe combination will be given to the pastor, the church secretary, the financial secretary and the head of the trustees.

Documents and other information to be stored in the safe include:

- Blueprints for all buildings and Titles for all property owned by SGMC including real property and vehicles.
- All documentation containing sensitive or private information of SGMC members and employees such as names and addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers and financial transactions.
- Cash and checks that need to be secured until can be deposited in the bank.
- Other materials or papers that need to be protected such as Membership record book and associated papers.

Parsonage Guidelines

Saint George Methodist Church

According to the Doctrines and Bylaws of the Saint George Methodist Church, it is the responsibility of Saint George Methodist Church to provide adequate housing for the pastor. Adequate housing is interpreted as that which meets the following Parsonage Guidelines of the Saint George Methodist Church.

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 parsonage is primarily the home of the minister and his/her family and in deference to them, careful planning should go into the building and/or repairs of the parsonage.

The Church offers adequate housing for the family and offers furnishings as will assure comfort, safety and maintenance in keeping with the location of the parsonage in the community.

The Parsonage Should Have:

1. At least three bedrooms with ample closet space in each bedroom. In two story houses, one bedroom with a full bath should be on the ground floor to accommodate handicapped family members.
2. At least two full baths with shower facilities in each.
3. A family room or den.
4. May have a living room separate from the den.
5. Adequate room in the kitchen for family meals or a breakfast nook.
6. An adequate dining room.
7. Adequate kitchen cabinets with counter tops of standard heights.
8. Storage space for cleaning equipment.
9. Dry Storage space large enough for extra mattresses, furniture, trunks, books, out of season clothes, etc.
10. A separate closet for linens.
11. Sufficient electrical receptacles, fire extinguishers and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Should meet local building codes and requirements.
12. Modern energy-efficient central heat/air conditioning system with humidity control.
13. Insulation in ceilings, floors, exterior walls should meet current building codes.
14. Storm windows and doors or insulated windows and doors.
15. Double garage or carport.
16. Dead bolt locks on all outside doors.
17. Outside storage space.
18. Fenced play area.
19. Foundation shrubbery and shade trees.

The Church Should Provide:

Inside the house:

1. Frost free refrigerator with freezer compartment of adequate size.
2. Kitchen stove and dishwasher.
3. Standard water heater: 40 gallon minimum: quick recovery, energy efficient.
4. Double sink.
5. Washing machine and dryer.
6. In addition to basic furniture for each room, furnish two bedrooms. There should be chests, bedroom chairs, bookcases, lamps, mattresses and mattress pads (mattress and pads to be replaced in the event of a move, as needed.)
7. Window treatments (curtains, drapes, or blinds)
8. Carpeting or other appropriate durable floor covering for the entire house.

Outside of the House:

1. Power lawn mower (in safe working condition unless church assumes mowing)
2. Access to Cable TV or satellite dish. (Expenses for phones, cable, utilities, can come out of pastor's parsonage exclusion/utility allowance).
3. Porch and/or lawn furniture.
4. Adequate parking.

Care and Maintenance

1. Trustees are responsible for care and maintenance of the parsonage as authorized by Church Council.
2. Parsonage family is responsible for routine care of the parsonage grounds such as cutting grass and/or raking yard unless the church assumes the responsibility. Fertilizer, straw, spray are the responsibility of the church.
3. Staff-Pastor Relations Committee reports to the Church Council. It is helpful if members of the committee have some expertise in home furnishings and repair and maintenance.
4. SPRC Chairman and Board of Trustees Chairman should meet at least once annually in the parsonage with pastor and spouse to discuss needs openly, set goals and priorities and make recommendations to the Church Council. The annual visit should include the completion of the annual inspection form for the church council.
5. Current inventory of furnishings should be kept by SPRC. Pastor and chairperson of SPRC should each have a copy. Gifts to the pastor and/or parsonage should be clearly designated. For Insurance purposes, a file should be kept in the church's safe of photos of each room's furnishings, purchase date and cost.

6. A book or file of pertinent information should be compiled by the SPRC chairperson and/or the Chairman of Trustees to be kept in the parsonage. It should include:
 1. Service and repair phone numbers,
 2. Appliance invoices, warranties, repair information, etc,
 3. Cleaning methods for carpets, draperies, walls, windows, and furniture,
 4. Heating, cooling and plumbing systems warranties, manuals, service and records.
 5. Yard equipment manuals, warranties, etc.
7. Insurance equal to 90% of the replacement value of the house and furnishings should be carried as a minimum to be paid by the church. Ministers are encouraged to provide for insurance on their personal property.
8. Annual pest control inspection, and treatment if necessary. Have written contract.
9. Annual church budget should include adequate funds for maintenance.
10. The parsonage should be kept well painted inside and outside. It is preferable the painting of the parsonage interior coincide with the beginning of a new pastorate.
11. The parsonage family is discouraged from keeping pets inside the parsonage because of potential damage, and because future parsonage families may have pet allergies. The parsonage family IS responsible for **any and all** damage done to the parsonage by their pets. The parsonage family shall also be responsible for environmental cleaning services which may include air filtration, painting, upholstery and/or drapery cleaning as determined by the Trustees and the Staff/Parish Relations Committee. If the family does keep pets in the parsonage, the pastor should sign a covenant agreement with the SPRC outlining expectations regarding cleaning and repair for any potential damages.
12. Parsonage families who permit smoking inside the parsonage shall be responsible for environmental cleaning services which may include air filtration, painting, upholstery and/or drapery cleaning as determined by the Trustees and SPRC.
13. Mold inspection of the parsonage shall be done every four years by a certified, bonded mold remediation company. This shall be reported on the parsonage annual inspection form and remitted at the Annual Church Conference.

CHANGE OF PASTORS:

When an impending move is evident, the chairperson of the SPRC should meet at the parsonage with the pastor and inspect the parsonage using the following guidelines:

1. Inspect each room for needed repairs, refurbishing, paint, etc.
2. Evaluate conditions of structure, inside and out, including furnishings, appliances and systems.
3. Pastor shall provide information about condition of appliances and systems that only the person living in the house would know.
4. Inspection of electrical, heating, cooling and plumbing systems.
5. SPRC should arrange for needed repairs, refurbishing, painting, etc. and make recommendations to Church Council for funding.
6. Pastor is to clean thoroughly the parsonage; and to cooperate by vacating at the church's expense, the parsonage a few days early if deemed necessary for major renovations.
7. SPRC shall plan, communicate and work toward making the move pleasant for both incoming and outgoing pastor's families.
8. Make sure the utilities are on for the incoming pastor. Utilities should be in the church's name with the parsonage address to negate termination of services.
9. Insure outgoing pastor has left a full tank of gas or oil, if applicable.
10. If the new pastor finds unacceptable conditions and the SPRC is not functioning, the church council chair needs to be consulted.

Covenants:

Pastor:

1. Inspect the parsonage jointly with the SPRC to determine that it is in good order and repair and submit report to Church Council.
2. Keep parsonage in a clean and sanitary condition including yard and attic.
3. Have repaired at his/her expense any damage due to negligence, children and/or pets.
4. Conform to guidelines for moving out as set forth herein.
5. Pay pro rate share of all utilities. Leave a full tank of oil or gas, if applicable.

Church Charge:

1. Inspect the parsonage jointly with the pastor to determine if it is in good order and repair and submit report to the church council.
2. Maintain the parsonage in good condition.

Guidelines For Leaving Parsonage

Responsibility of Staff Pastor Relations Committee for Parsonage

1. Provide new mattress pads and new mattresses, as needed for all beds.
2. Make sure all plumbing facilities are working properly and provide new plastic shower curtain liners.
3. Have drapes and carpets cleaned professionally, as needed.
4. Make sure all furniture is in good repair and all appliances, etc., in good working order.
5. Hire professional exterminator if needed.
6. Paint interior as necessary and repair any damage done to walls by pictures.
7. Check parsonage after family has moved and be sure things are clean and in order for incoming family.
8. Make sure provision is made for a welcoming meal for incoming family.

Responsibility of the Parsonage Family

It is strongly suggested that the pastoral family hire a professional cleaning service. If the pastor uses a cleaning service, the pastor is responsible for the cleaning bill, not the church.

1. Make sure all walls and floors are clean if they are not to be painted or refinished.
2. Wash windows and sills.
3. Clean attics and outside utility rooms and have trash hauled away.
4. Wash, iron and re-hang washable curtains.
5. Clean and disinfect bathroom fixtures and tile.
6. Leave stove and refrigerator thoroughly cleaned.
7. Vacuum and wipe out all cabinets, closet shelves, etc.
8. Repair any damage done by pets and remove evidence of their presence (Hair, fleas, etc).
9. Make arrangements for utility transfer. Have meters read rather than disconnecting service.
10. Leave light bulbs in fixtures and toilet paper in bathrooms.
11. Leave name of parsonage committee chairperson and leave all parsonage keys marked.
12. Generally leave your home clean, ready for the incoming family to unpack and feel comfortable. Realize that everyone has varying cleanliness standards; accept in love the parsonage you move into. If the parsonage is unacceptable, please notify the chairperson of the SPRC.

If there is Damage Caused by the Parsonage Family

The following procedures shall be followed in cases of parsonage damage:

1. Take photographs of damage.
2. Get professional estimates on damages.

3. Subtract normal wear costs.
4. Payment of balance by pastor involved shall be paid within 30 days.

The Bylaws and Doctrines Committee wrote and approved the above guidelines on March 9, 2026. These bylaws have been evaluated and approved by the SPRC/ TRUSTEES Committee of Saint George Methodist Church on April 15, 2026. They have been presented and approved by the Saint George Methodist Church Council on May 26, 2026.