

Articles of Federation and Faith

of the



METHODIST
COLLEGIATE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The Articles of Federation and Faith is intended as a framework for colleges to utilize in the development of their Book of Doctrine and Order. It includes the essential statements and documents that a Book of Doctrine and Order must include for a college to gain and maintain membership in the Methodist Collegiate Church.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE METHODIST COLLEGIATE CHURCH

The following doctrinal statements are to be included explicitly in each college's Book of Doctrine and Order:

The Articles of Faith

We accept and affirm the Twenty-Five Articles of Faith officially adopted by the Methodist General Conference of 1808, when the first Restrictive Rule was also implemented, and revised by the Uniting Conference of 1939.

The Creedal Affirmations of The Methodist Collegiate Church

The Apostles' Creed

The Nicene Creed (A.D. 381)

The Definition of Chalcedon (A.D. 451)

The Methodist Affirmations of the Methodist Collegiate Church

The Doctrinal Standards

The Doctrinal Standards of The Methodist Collegiate Church shall consist of *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley* and Wesley's *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*.

The General Rules

The General Rules as adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785

The Sacraments

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Holy Baptism may be performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The outward and visible sign of Holy Baptism is water. Candidates are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). The inward and spiritual grace is death to sin and new birth to righteousness by faith through union with Christ in His death and resurrection. Holy Baptism, as initiation into Christ's Holy Church, need occur but once in a person's life.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

In Holy Communion also known as the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist (from the Greek word for "thanksgiving"), we are invited into fellowship (*koinonia* in the Greek) with Christ Jesus who is spiritually present

in the whole of the Sacrament.. The Sacrament may be offered to all who repent of sin and desire to draw near to God and lead a life of obedience to Christ.

Holy Communion is normally celebrated in the midst of the congregation, physically gathered to remember and respond to God's mighty acts of salvation revealed in Holy Scripture. The Lord's Table is open to Christians of all denominations who love Christ, turn away from sin, and seek to live in peace with all. We have no tradition of refusing any who present themselves desiring to receive.

Our Social Witness

The section on Social Witness must include each of these statements:

Following both the example and teaching of Jesus, we believe that God calls us to love and serve others around the world in His name.

As Methodists, we affirm the work of God the Father and Creator, Christ the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit who sustains us. As worshipers of the Triune¹ God who seek to live deeply into the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission, we affirm our responsibilities to all of God's creation.

The beginning and ending of life are in the hands of God. The church is called to protect those who are weak and powerless, especially in matters of life and death. The sacredness of life compels us to resist abortion. We reject the use of abortion as a form of gender selection or birth control.

Scripture and historic Christian tradition lift marriage between one man and one woman as the proper relationship for human sexuality². We reject all forms of sexual exploitation, including pornography, promiscuity, adultery, and human or sex trafficking of any kind. Our clergy maintains a commitment to celibacy in singleness and fidelity in marriage.

All people are created in the image of God and deserve to be treated justly, with dignity and respect. The creation story in the first two chapters of Genesis describes God's perfect creation of humanity as male and female.³ We believe we have been created as God intended and confirms in his words to Jeremiah "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you..."⁴ We acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ to heal those who are hurting.⁵ We reject as sin behavior that unjustly discriminates against any person.

God's world is one world, ordered among the nations. As God's people, we are committed to make disciples in all nations and to love others as ourselves.

¹ As described in Article I of the Articles of Faith.

² Matthew 19:4-6

³ Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:21-23

⁴ Jeremiah 1:4-10 (NRSV)

⁵ John 9:1-7

THE ORDER OF THE METHODIST COLLEGIATE CHURCH

The following concepts are to be included in each college Book of Doctrine and Order.

The Ministry of All Christians

As described in First Corinthians, Christian people have a variety of gifts that all flow from the Holy Spirit. Christ provides many ways to serve Him and those around us. All Christian people are called to serve.

As Methodists, we are connected by sharing a common tradition of doctrine, order, and service. Our commitment to connectionalism pushes us away from hierarchical organizational structures toward concepts that emphasize cooperation within the Body of Christ.

Ordained and Licensed Ministry

Following the example of the disciples in Acts 6, called people can improve their fruitfulness by focusing their ministry in areas that match their God-given gifts and graces. Individuals discern God's call as they relate with God and their communities, and the Church guides and confirms those callings. Calls—and the discernment and confirmation of them—are gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Ordination, Licensing and the Role of Pastors

In the Methodist tradition, we recognize that certain people are called to ordained or licensed ministry to fulfill the duties of Word, Service, Sacrament, Order, Compassion and Justice. Those who are ordained make a life-long commitment to conscious living of the whole gospel and to the proclamation of that gospel to the end that the world may be saved. Those who are licensed make a similar commitment to living and proclaiming the Word for the period of their ministry, renewing their commitments annually. Together, ordained people and licensed people are known as clergy. Individually, ordained people and licensed people are known as “pastors” from the Latin word for shepherd.

Those who serve as clergy within the Methodist Collegiate Church shall be elected by the College's Commission on Ministry, approved by the local church and ordained or licensed by the Dean of the College on behalf of the whole Church. Each member of clergy must commit to strive, with the help of God, to live in a manner that serves an example to other people. They must commit to upholding a high moral standard in their financial affairs and their personal lives, both public and private. This includes a commitment to celibacy in singleness and fidelity in marriage.

The Roles of the Ordained and Licensed

The Roles of the Ordained: Ordained pastors make a life-long commitment to provide the church with leadership, teaching, direction and encouragement. The scope of the ordained person is worldwide, ministering to everyone in every place in the name of Jesus Christ. Each college may choose to designate clergy orders such as elder or deacon for the ordained people in its college.

The Office of Canon: Each college will appoint an ordained pastor as Canon, who will be entrusted with the oversight and discipline of cathedral church and may be called upon to serve in the absence of a Dean of the College.

The Office of Dean of the College: Each college will appoint an ordained pastor as Dean, who will be entrusted with the oversight and discipline of a College. The Dean of the College is responsible for ordaining and licensing approved Candidates in their College, and for supporting and contributing to the work of the clergy of the Colleges.. The Dean of the College will serve for a 4 year term, and will be elected by the Assembly of the College⁶.

The Office of Presiding Dean : The Office of Presiding Dean of the Collegium is entrusted with the oversight and discipline of the Collegium. The Presiding Dean is elected by the Deans of the Colleges by a majority vote. The Presiding Dean exercises oversight and support of the Collegium. The Presiding Dean acts to support and contribute to the work of the Deans of the Colleges. The Presiding Dean may ordain and license any approved candidates in their College. Those seeking the Office of Presiding Dean must be ordained, currently or previously hold the office of Dean of the College. The Presiding Dean will serve for a 4 year term, and will be elected by a majority vote of the Assembly of the Collegium.

The Role of the Licensed – A licensed pastor is charged with the duties of Word, Service, Sacrament, Order, Compassion and Justice just as an ordained person is, but the their commitment to ministry is recognized annually through the granting of a Ministry License. The Dean of the College may limit the Ministry License to particular congregations or contexts. Two categories of clergy will be licensed; people in the process of being ordained and people who chose to become Licensed Pastors as their pastoral vocation. Each college may choose to designate clergy orders such as deacon or licensed local pastor for the licensed people in its college.

The Role of Lay Leaders – A Lay Leader is an individual who commits to lead individual ministries of the Church. Lay Leaders act as volunteers who choose to bring their specific talents and skills into the life of the church. Lay leaders commit to to conducting themselves in a manner that reflects the love of Jesus Christ.

The Process and Qualifications for Ordination and Licensing

Educational Requirements

People seeking ordination must complete these courses at a graduate level, while people seeking licensing may complete them at an undergraduate or graduate level, or through a Course of Study program. These foundational theological courses, which all candidates must complete, include survey courses in Old Testament, New Testament, theology, church history, mission of the church in the world, evangelism, worship /liturgy, and Methodist doctrine, polity and history. All academic coursework must be completed at an accredited⁷ college or university.

In order to become fully ordained, candidates must complete either a Master of Divinity degree or a master's degree which includes the foundational graduate theological studies and a certification or master's degree in an area of specialized ministry. This educational requirement is intended to stipulate an approximately equivalent academic preparation while providing flexibility to the candidate to receive specialized training that will enhance their ministry.

People seeking licensing as a vocational choice must have been an active member of a Methodist Collegiate Church (or a predecessor church) for at least one year. They must hold a high school diploma or the equivalent. Candidates must enter an approved Course of Study program to be completed over no more than five years or

⁶ See “Functions of the Assembly of the College”, Page 15

actively pursue a bachelor's or master's degree that includes the foundational theological studies. In order to maintain their status as a Deacon, candidates must complete the Course of Study or earn a college degree that includes the basic graduate theological studies.

The Commission on Ministry of a college, with the concurrence of the Dean of the college, may amend academic requirements for an individual and adjust or assign particular course work to be completed.

The Ordination & Licensing Process

The Commission on Ministry for each college will develop a process for the preparation, training and evaluation of candidates for ordained or licensed ministry.

Pastoral Appointments, Dismissals & Discipline:

Pastoral appointments shall be made only upon the request of a local church/ministry and/or clergyperson. The consultative process for appointment-making shall be interpreted to mean the College will serve as a “clearing house” for interested persons to make application for pastoral openings. With prayer and in consultation with the local church and the College Commission on Ministry, the Dean of the College shall make the appointment as requested by the church. In the Methodist Collegiate Church, clergypersons shall not have the right to a guaranteed appointment. Clergypersons will not be required to itinerate.

All matters relating to clergy dismissals and discipline shall, likewise, be resolved by the Dean of the College in consultation with the College Commission on Ministry and local church. The Dean of the College, with the approval of a majority of the College Commission on Ministry, may suspend or revoke the clergy status of ordained or licensed people in the event of serious transgressions and/or failure to adhere to the Book of Doctrine and Order.

Concordant Relationships & Recognition of Orders

The Commission on Ministry for each college will develop a policy on recognition of orders from other Christian denominations and for the maintenance of concordant relationships.

The Organization of Local Churches & Faith Communities

Organization of the Local Church

It is the expectation that all Methodist Collegiate Churches will be organized in such a way to foster, develop, and grow the ministries of the church. As a voluntary cooperative of local churches and ministries, each church will have flexibility in its own organizational structure. It is expected, though, that each local church/ministry setting – at the discretion of the Canons, clergy, and lay leadership – make such arrangements as necessary to ensure that the functions of oversight, counsel, and strategic planning are accounted for.

The Articles of Federation and Faith refer to an Administrative Council or Board for the administrative functions and Church Board or designated Committee for managing the relationships with clergy and lay leadership, but the local church may organize in any way it sees fit as long as the listed functions are addressed.

Each local church may maintain by-laws or other organizational standards as long as they are consistent with the Articles of Federation and Faith of the Methodist Collegiate Church and the Book of Doctrine and Order of their College, as determined by the Collegium and College respectively. The Administrative or Governing Board of the local church shall advise the Dean of the College in writing of any additions or deletions of their

by-laws or other organizational standards and certify that they are in compliance with the Book of Doctrine and Order.

The Organization of the College

The Role of the College

Believing in the incredible potential of the historic Methodist understanding of connectionalism, the collegiate model of polity strives to unite like-minded, common-hearted regional churches in voluntary missional associations. These “coalitions of the willing” are intended to allow independent Wesleyan churches/ministries to connect with one another, to learn from one another, and to journey alongside one another to make more deeply committed followers of the way of Jesus Christ in their specific missional contexts. At the same time, these partnerships are intended to provide a mode of accountability, support, and intentional oversight to independent local Wesleyan congregations.

Each College shall adopt a Book of Doctrine and Order based on the MCC model which must be approved by the Collegium in order for a College to enter the MCC. Each local church must consent to the Articles of Federation and Faith of the Methodist Collegiate Church as well as the Book of Doctrine and Order of their College.

The Structure of the College

Groups of autonomous Methodist churches will join to form a “college”. Each college will be anchored by a large, thriving congregation that will serve a cathedral function, providing encouragement, resources, administrative support and critical mass to each of the individual churches in the college. Each church within the college is expected to add its own strengths and spiritual gifts to the college so that the whole is stronger than simply the sum of its parts. Each college will maintain a Commission on Ministry to administer the ordination and licensing processes of the College in cooperation with the local Church Board, Pastor-Parish Relations or other designated committee. The churches within each college will have the opportunity to work together on service and mission, share educational and spiritual formation programs, partner in discipleship endeavors and cooperate to innovate and engage the world in new ways.

Membership Process for a College

Authority to admit churches into connection with the MCC lies provisionally with the Dean of the College and is granted by a majority vote of the Assembly of the College. Prior to admission, the Dean of the College or a designee of the Dean of the College must have a detailed membership discussion with the Pastor and Administrative Board of the candidate church which covers the following topics:

1. Discussion of the Book of Doctrine and Order of their College.
2. Discussion of the Articles of Federation and Faith of the Methodist Collegiate Church including any proposed changes or additions to local church by-laws or articles of faith.
3. Discussion of the roles of the local church, the cathedral church, the college and the collegium, including expectations regarding communication and participation.
4. Discussion of the ordination and licensing processes.
5. Discussion of the online tools available to pastors, Sunday schools and candidates for ordination or licensing.
6. Discussion of the financial status of the candidate church, including balance sheet and income statement issues, emphasizing the financial independence of each church.
7. Discussion the need for annual certification by the Administrative Board that their by-laws and operating standards are consistent with the Book of Doctrine and Order.

8. Discussion of the process for recognition of orders of the candidate church's clergy.
9. Review of the MCC and/or College's Affiliation Agreement(s).
10. Submission of the by-laws, theological positions and ordination standards, if applicable, of the candidate church for review and approval prior to admittance into the College.

The Dean of the College may bring the candidate church into connection with the MCC upon the completion of the following:

- Satisfactory completion of the membership discussion.
- Execution the Affiliation Agreement(s) required by the MCC and/or the College.
- Certification that the church by-laws and operating standards are consistent with the Book of Doctrine and Order of their College and the Articles of Federation and Faith of the Methodist Collegiate Church
- Completion of the clergy recognition of orders.
- Majority vote of the Assembly of the College.

Termination of College Membership

Following a season of intentional discernment of not less than 30 days, a local church's affiliation with the College and the MCC may be terminated unilaterally by the Local Church. In the event that a local church fails to adhere to either the Book of Doctrine and Order of their College or the Articles of Federation and Faith of the Methodist Collegiate Church, the Dean of the College may cancel the local church's affiliation with the College upon the concurrence of a majority of the Assembly of the College. If a cathedral church withdraws or has its affiliation terminated by the Dean of the College with the concurrence of the Assembly of the College, the Assembly of the College will select another member church to serve as the cathedral church. In the event that the Dean of the College is a pastor of the cathedral church that fails to adhere to the Book of Doctrine and Order, the Dean of the Collegium may cancel the cathedral church's affiliation with the concurrence of a majority of the Assembly of the Collegium.

Financial Structure of the College

Each College of the Methodist Collegiate Church is an association of independent Methodist Churches. As such, each individual church owns its assets and is responsible for its liabilities. There is no "trust clause" or any other legal mechanism connecting the individual churches financially to the college or vice versa. The College is expressly forbidden from taking an ownership interest in the assets of any member church and from co-signing or guaranteeing any liability of an individual church.

Each church is responsible for its own revenues and expenses, including maintaining appropriate insurance to adequately address the risks of its operations.

Functions of the Assembly of the College

The Assembly of the College will be comprised of the clergy of the member churches together with an equal number of lay people on a church-by-church basis. Each church will elect its lay participants as it sees fit. The Assembly of the College will be responsible for reviewing and approving changes to their Book of Doctrines and Order prior to final approval by the Assembly of the Collegium. The Assembly of the Collegium will be responsible for reviewing and approving changes to the MCC Articles of Federation and Faith. The Assembly of the College will meet either in person or virtually when called by the Dean of the College or by a petition of 20% of its members.

The Organization of the Collegium

Over time, multiple colleges will form. Each college will join with the other colleges to form the Collegium. The Collegium will act as a decision-making entity for the group and as the home for centrally managed administrative functions that will provide economies of scale for the member churches. It is envisioned that the Collegium will maintain a Commission on Ministry, a Commission on Education and will be the organizing entity for the MCC Articles of Federation and Faith. The Collegium will be led by a Presiding Elder elected by the colleges. Each of the member churches will appoint delegates to the Collegium. The church delegations shall be equally composed of ordained people and lay people.

Membership Process for the Collegium

If a church is to become a cathedral church, bringing about the creation of a new college, the Presiding Elder must have a discussion with the Canons or Elder(s) and Administrative Board of the cathedral candidate church which covers the following topics:

1. Discussion of the MCC Articles of Federation and Faith.
2. Discussion of the responsibilities of the cathedral church.
3. Process for the election of the Dean of the College of the new college.
4. Discussion of the financial responsibilities of the cathedral church.
5. Discussion of the College's Book of Doctrine and Order.

Upon completion of a satisfactory interview in the judgment of the Presiding Elder, a majority of the Assembly of the Collegium must vote in favor of establishing the new college, accepting the college's Book of Doctrine and Order, and appointing the candidate church as a cathedral church.

Termination of Collegium Membership

If an entire College fails to adhere to the MCC Articles of Federation and Faith or the College's own Book of Doctrine and Order, the Presiding Elder may cancel the College's affiliation with the MCC Collegium upon the concurrence of a majority of the Assembly of the Collegium. Entire Colleges may not unilaterally withdraw from the Collegium.

Financial Structure of the Collegium

Because the Methodist Collegiate Church is an association of independent Methodist Churches, the Collegium acts as an institution for collaboration. As such, the Collegium shall strive to minimize personnel costs and to severely limit the accumulation of assets, relying instead on the personnel and assets of the member churches as they may be made available by those churches. The Collegium is expressly forbidden from taking an ownership interest in the assets of any member church and from co-signing or guaranteeing any liability of an individual church.

Functions of the Assembly of the Collegium

The Assembly of the Collegium will be comprised of the Presiding Elder, the Deans of each college, and the College Delegates. The College Delegates will be selected by each Assembly of the College and will include one clergy member and one lay person for each 1,000 professing members (rounded up to the next thousand members) of the College. Each Assembly of the College will select its clergy and lay delegates as it sees fit. The Assembly of the Collegium will be responsible for changes to and interpretations of the Articles of Federation and Faith and has authority for final approval of a College's Book of Doctrines and Order. The Assembly of the Collegium will meet either in person or virtually when called by the Presiding Elder or by a petition of 20% of its members.