

Doctrines

AND

Discipline

OF

Carrollton First

Methodist Church

Incorporated January 28, 2024

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path”
(Psalm 119:105)

Doctrines and Discipline of Carrollton First Methodist Church

Contents

<i>The name for Carrollton First Methodist Church may also appear as CFMC.</i>	4
INTRODUCTION	5
PREFACE	5
PRECEPTS	5
MISSION	5
PURPOSE	5
BELIEFS	6
PRACTICES	6
PART ONE – DOCTRINE	7
¶ 101. HERITAGE OF FAITH.....	7
¶ 102. HOLY SCRIPTURE.....	7
¶ 103. AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH.....	7
¶ 104. ARTICLES OF FAITH.....	7
Article I - The Godhead.....	7
Article II - The Trinity.....	7
Article III - God the Father.....	7
Article IV - God the Son	7
Article V - God the Holy Spirit	8
Article VI - The Resurrection.....	8
Article VII - The Holy Scriptures.....	8
Article VIII - The Catholic (Universal) Church	9
Article IX - The Communion of Saints	9
Article X - Sin	9
Article XI - Free Will.....	9
Article XII- Reconciliation.....	9
Article XIII - Salvation by Grace through Faith.....	10
Article XIV - The Grace.....	10
Article XV - Forgiveness	10
Article XVI - Baptism	10
Article XVII - Holy Communion	10
Article XVIII - Prayer	11
Article XIX - The Great Commission	11
Article XX - The Life Everlasting.....	11
¶ 105. RESTRICTIVE RULE.....	11
PART TWO - SOCIAL WITNESS	12
¶ 201. HERITAGE.....	12
¶ 202. BELIEFS.....	12
PART THREE - THE COMMUNITY OF GOD’S PEOPLE	14

SECTION I. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES	14
¶ 301. MISSION OF THE CHURCH.....	14
¶ 302. COVENANT IN CHRIST.....	14
¶ 303. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY.....	14
¶ 304. TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP.....	15
¶ 305. CALLED TO ALL-ENCOMPASSING.....	15
¶ 306. LEGAL DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH.....	15
SECTION II. THE CHURCH AND PASTORAL CHARGE.....	16
¶ 307. ROLE OF THE CHURCH.....	16
¶ 308. DEFINITION OF A PASTORAL CHARGE.....	16
SECTION III. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	16
¶ 309. ELIGIBILITY.....	16
¶ 310. DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP.....	17
¶ 311. PROFESSING MEMBERS.....	17
¶ 312. MEMBERSHIP VOWS.....	17
¶ 313. MEANING OF A SACRAMENT.....	17
¶ 314. MEANING OF BAPTISM.....	17
¶ 315. MODE AND PRACTICE OF BAPTISM.....	17
¶ 316. BAPTISMAL VOWS.....	18
¶ 317. MEANING OF HOLY COMMUNION.....	18
¶ 318. SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY.....	18
¶ 319. MEANING OF CONFIRMATION.....	18
¶ 320. GROWTH IN FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP.....	18
SECTION IV. CARE OF MEMBERS	19
¶ 321. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT.....	19
¶ 322. MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.....	19
SECTION V. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS	19
¶ 323. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS.....	19
SECTION VI. CHANGES IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.....	20
¶ 324. MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDIT.....	20
¶ 325. MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER TO ANOTHER CHURCH.....	20
¶ 326. RESTORATION OF PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP.....	20
SECTION VII. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION	20
¶ 327. PRIMARY TASKS.....	20
¶ 328. ORGANIZATION PLAN.....	20
¶ 329. CHURCH CONFERENCE.....	21
¶ 330. FISCAL YEAR.....	21
¶ 331. ELECTION OF LEADERS.....	21
¶ 332. REMOVAL OF LEADERS AND FILLING OF VACANCIES.....	21
¶ 333. DUTIES OF LEADERS.....	21
¶ 334. CHURCH COUNCIL.....	22
SECTION VIII. CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES	23
¶ 335. DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.....	23
¶ 336. STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE.....	24
¶ 337. BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....	26
¶ 338. FINANCE COMMITTEE.....	29
¶ 340. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM COMMITTEES.....	31
¶ 341. CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	31

PART FOUR - THE MINISTRY OF THE CALLED.....	32
¶ 401. <i>MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH.....</i>	32
¶ 402. <i>BASIC QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORDAINED.....</i>	32
¶ 403. <i>ENTRANCE INTO ORDAINED MINISTRY.....</i>	32
¶ 404. <i>EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION.....</i>	32
PART FIVE – PROPERTY	34
¶ 501. <i>THEOLOGY OF PROPERTY.....</i>	34
¶ 502. <i>STEWARDSHIP OF ASSETS.....</i>	34
¶ 503. <i>COMPLIANCE WITH LAW.....</i>	34
¶ 504. <i>TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS ARE SYNONYMOUS.....</i>	34
¶ 505. <i>CONFORMITY OF DEEDS AND CONVEYANCES WITH LOCAL LAW.....</i>	34
¶ 506. <i>INSTITUTING AND DEFENDING CIVIL ACTION.....</i>	35
¶ 507. <i>LIMITATION OF FINANCIAL OBLIGATION.....</i>	35
¶ 508. <i>AUDITS AND BONDING OF CHURCH OFFICERS.....</i>	35
¶ 509. <i>POWERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....</i>	35
APPENDIX A - AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH	39
THE APOSTLES' CREED, TRADITIONAL VERSION.....	39
THE NICENE CREED.....	39
ADDITIONAL AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH.....	39
APPENDIX B - MEMBERSHIP VOWS.....	40
APPENDIX C - BAPTISMAL VOWS.....	41
APPENDIX D – CHURCH COMMITTEES	42
APPENDIX E – EXAMPLES OF ORDER OF BUSINESS	43
APPENDIX F – CHURCH COMMITTEES.....	44
CHURCH CONFERENCE.....	44
SPRC COMMITTEE.....	44
CHURCH COUNCIL	44
BOARD OF TRUSTEES	44
APPENDIX G - EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION	45
END NOTES	46

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Doctrines and Discipline of Carrollton First Methodist Church

INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

Carrollton First Methodist Church is a fellowship steeped in the tradition of Christian faith following “the Way” (Acts 9:2) in the spirit of “the people called Methodists.” The Holy Bible provides the only guide to beliefs and practices. “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path*” (Psalm 119:105). This Book of Doctrines and Discipline is intended to serve as a resource for the members of Carrollton First Methodist Church and for all who desire to join our fellowship.

PRECEPTS

These precepts are a summation of the set of rules John Wesley first devised in 1738 as “The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies” in order to make explicit the expectations upon those who are members of the Methodist societies.

This design of the Church of Christ. It is a body of people compacted together, in order, first, to save their own individual souls; then to assist each other in working out their salvation; and, afterwards, as far as in them lies, to save all from present and future misery, to overturn the kingdom of Satan, and set up the kingdom of Christ. And this ought to be the continued care and endeavor of every member of His Church; otherwise they are not worthy to be called a member thereof, as they are not a living member of Christ.ⁱ

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that we should continue to evidence our desire of salvation with the following:

- (1) **By doing no harm**, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced
- (2) **By doing good**; by being in every kind merciful after our power; as we have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all
- (3) **Put our faith into practice**; By attending upon all the ordinances of God

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

MISSION

Make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love sacrificially and witness boldly.
Matthew 28 :19-20

PURPOSE

(1) **Worship** - Attest to the presence of God and celebrate the love God shows His people; (2) **Learning and Caring** - Provide learning and growth opportunities for believers through mutual support and caring; (3) **Service** - Be a good neighbor, especially to people in need, and challenge injustice; (4) **Evangelism** - Boldly proclaim the invitation to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

BELIEFS

(1) **The Godhead** - the one true God; (2) **The Trinity** - God is three persons in one: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; (3) **God the Father** - believe in Him who is the Father; (4) **Jesus Christ** - place faith in Him who is fully God and fully man; (5) **The Holy Spirit** - invite the Spirit of Truth to be your Counselor and Advocate; (6) **The Resurrection** - He is risen and is alive today; (7) **The Holy Scriptures** - present God's Truth, the written Word of God, not based on cultural bias or spin from one's mind; (8) **The catholic (universal) church** - the community of all believers where everyone is welcome; (9) **The communion of saints** - the fellowship of those united to Jesus Christ in baptism; (10) **Sin** - separation from God because of a rebellious attitude; (11) **Free Will** - each individual chooses an attitude of obedience or of disobedience; (12) **Reconciliation** - substitutionary atonement through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross; (13) **Salvation by Grace through Faith** - believers are saved not because of who we are or what we do, but because of our faith in the work of Jesus Christ; (14) **The Grace** - Prevenient grace; Convincing grace; Justifying grace; Sanctifying grace; (15) **Forgiveness** - God forgives us; we are to forgive others; (16) **Baptism** - represents "death" and "rising again" to a new life; (17) **Holy Communion** - receiving God's grace while remembering Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross; (18) **Prayer** - a spiritual communion with God; (19) **The Great Commission** - to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ; (20) **The Life Everlasting** - eternity in Heaven with God.

PRACTICES

(1) **Sacraments** - Baptism and Holy Communion; (2) **Worship** - Public, personal and private; (3) **Missions and Evangelism** - Striving to give aid to those in need and to share God's salvation. "*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*" (Micah 6:8).

PART ONE – DOCTRINE

¶ 101. HERITAGE OF FAITH.

Carrollton First Methodist Church professes the Christian faith, established by our confession of Jesus as the 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 all authority has been given to Him.

¶ 102. HOLY SCRIPTURE.

The canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service, against which all other authorities must be measured.

¶ 103. AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH.

See Appendix A - AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH

¶ 104. ARTICLES OF FAITH.

Article I - The Godhead

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). There is but one living and true God, everlasting, of infinite power, knowledge and wisdom; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. God alone is worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness. *“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24).

Article II - The Trinity

“As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he (John the Baptist) saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased’” (Mark 1:10-11). In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Article III - God the Father

“... I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth... No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Luke 10:21-22). *“... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father”* (John 14:9). God is “self-existing”. God is infinite. God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent knowing and understanding all.

Article IV - God the Son

“...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.’ ... ‘and they will call him Immanuel’ - which means, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:20-23). *“He is the image of the invisible God...”* (Colossians 1:15). Jesus said to His disciples, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's

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

Article V - God the Holy Spirit

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit is omnipotent (having all power) and omnipresent (everywhere at the same time) and omniscient (having all knowledge). We invite the Spirit of Truth to be our Counselor and Advocate.

Article VI - The Resurrection

“The angel said to the women... ‘He is not here; he has risen, just as he said’....Suddenly Jesus met them. ‘Greetings,’ he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him” (Matthew 28:5-6, 9). Christ did truly rise from the dead with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature^{iv}. All four Gospels record eyewitness accounts of His resurrection. He appeared to the women outside the tomb, to His disciples in the upper room, to two followers of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, to His disciples while they were fishing, and to over 500 people, plus His ascension into Heaven was witnessed by His disciples. He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Article VII - The Holy Scriptures

“All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Holy Scriptures, the Word of God, is a manifestation of the mind and will of Holy God. The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, knowledge, wisdom and understanding. So that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the church. The names of the canonical books are:

Of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi,

Of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Romans, Corinthians I, Corinthians II, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians I, Thessalonians II, Timothy I, Timothy II, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation

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

Article VIII - The Catholic (Universal) Church

“Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied... ‘on this rock I will build my church’...” (Matthew 16:15-18). “The word is near you...the word of faith...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” (Romans 10:8-9). All are welcome into the fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of the faithful in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered.

Article IX - The Communion of Saints

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...” (Hebrews 12:1). We seek to follow the example of those faithful to God (Hebrews 11), as well as all other faithful men and women who have gone before us.

Article X - 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.^{vi}

“... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” (Romans 3:23). Sin, separation from God, is the free will act of disobedience against God’s Word. Adam’s disobedience led to being driven from the Garden of Eden. Disobedience led to the great flood. Disobedience led to the Children of Israel being caught in a cycle of freedom and captivity depending on whether they followed God’s anointed leaders or not. This attitude of disobedience is still present in mankind today.

Article XI - 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 by a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every person^{vii} and working with us, when we have that good will.^{viii}

“So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27) 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 by the Holy Spirit is responsible in freedom to exercise his will for good. We choose an attitude of obedience or of disobedience - our choice leads to our soul’s eternal destination.

Article XII- Reconciliation

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things...” (Colossians 1:19-20). He will “... present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation” (Colossians 1:22). Jesus Christ died for our sins, in our place, so we would not

have to suffer the punishment we deserve: this is substitutionary atonement. Jesus Christ came as “... *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

Article XIII - Salvation by Grace through Faith

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:8-10). We have confidence in God’s character and assurance that He will do what He says. Therefore, our good works do not earn our salvation, but are a witness to the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Article XIV - The Grace

“In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding” (Ephesians 1:7-8). Prevenient grace - present before we have been saved and mitigates the effects of original sin; We see, when God opens our eyes, that we were before *atheoi en toi kosmoi* without God, or, rather, Atheists, in the world. We had, by nature, no knowledge of God, no acquaintance with him. Without preventing grace, we would have no knowledge of God and the things of God. Yet with preventing grace, regeneration of the soul by grace can begin.^{ix} Convincing grace - an element of Prevenient grace, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins which leads to repentance, sincere regret or remorse, a desire to turn to God and place our faith in the work of Jesus Christ; Justifying grace - our repentance leads to forgiveness by God. This repentance is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, guiltiness, and helplessness; and comes before we receive the kingdom of God.^x; Sanctifying grace - we are redeemed from our sins meaning that we are “born-again”, we experience the “second birth”. Glorification is our ultimate hope and promise in Christ meaning that our souls and bodies are perfectly restored through God’s grace upon entering Heaven.

Article XV - Forgiveness

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”* (Matthew 6:14-15). Because God forgives our sins, we should freely forgive others.

Article XVI - Baptism

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...” (Colossians 3:1). Baptism is a symbol of purification or regeneration signifying “death” to the old life of sin and selfishness, and “rising again” to a new life in service to Christ and His Church. 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.^{xi}

Article XVII - Holy Communion

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matthew 26:26-28). God dispenses grace to believers while the believers remember Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

Article XVIII - Prayer

“... Lord, teach us to pray...” (Luke 11:1). “*This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven’*” (Matthew 6:9-10). Prayer is a spiritual communion with God in a public or private, personal setting - taking the forms of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, submission and intercession.

Article XIX - The Great Commission

“*Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age’*” (Matthew 28:18-19). We are called to spread the message of the “Good News” of Jesus Christ as we practice “... *the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness*” (Matthew 23:23).

Article XX - The Life Everlasting

“*I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life (John 6:47). ‘I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand’ (John 10:28). ‘And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them... He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’*” (Revelation 21:3-4). We believe the promise of a New Heaven and a New Earth where Eden is restored (Revelation 21-22).

¶ 105. RESTRICTIVE RULE.

The process for amending this Book of Doctrines and Discipline of Carrollton First Methodist Church shall be as follows:

The Church Council shall create, discuss and approve a motion setting forth the desired amendment(s) in a motion to the Church Conference.

1. A date and time for a Church Conference shall be advertised two (2) weeks prior to the meeting along with information pertaining to the motion.
2. At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Church membership within 30 miles of Carrollton, Georgia shall be present to achieve a quorum. During the Church Conference there shall be a reading of the motion, followed by a discussion period. No changes or amendments to the motion for the change will be voted on during that meeting. Proposed amendments must be sent back to the proper committees for research and discussion, possibly to be addressed as a separate motion later. The Church Conference shall attend to other business on the meeting agenda as long as it is not related to the original agenda motion(s).
3. The Church members present shall then vote on the motion - the process for the vote shall be established by the Church Council.
4. A two-thirds (2/3) in the affirmative shall be necessary for the motion to be adopted.
5. Each amendment must contain the reference paragraph identification (i.e., ¶104.) pertaining to the section being amended, plus the additions, deletions, and the date of the Church Conference adoption. A reference to the appendix and the amendment number shall be made in the margin of the appropriate section in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PART TWO - SOCIAL WITNESS

¶ 201. HERITAGE.

1. Following both the example and teachings of Jesus, we believe that God calls us to love and serve others in His name. We believe that we are to care for those less fortunate, seeking to provide for people at their point of need and offering them Jesus. We are convinced that faith, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (James 2:17) and that, as Jesus reminded us, when we do not do what is needed to care for the least of our sisters and brothers, we likewise have not done so for Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:45).
2. With a distinctive Wesleyan emphasis, we believe that Grace pervades our understanding of Christian faith and life. By Grace we mean the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit. While the Grace of God is undivided, it precedes salvation as “prevenient grace,” continues in “justifying grace,” and is brought to fruition in “sanctifying grace.” Despite our brokenness, we remain creatures brought into being by a just and merciful God. The restoration of God’s image in our lives requires divine grace to renew our fallen nature (Ephesians 2:8-10).
2. Our Social Witness is evident in being faithful disciples to a world that remains in disobedience to its Creator. Because “... God so loved the world...” (John 3:16-21), we are to prayerfully consider how to “do good” and “do no harm” to all as we put our faith into practice.

¶ 202. BELIEFS.

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 (Genesis 1:27, 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 (Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 19:32, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41-44).
3. We believe that all life is precious in the sight of God (Exodus 20:13, Psalm 139:13-16).
4. We believe that all should have the right to work. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life, and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God’s creative power (Deuteronomy 5:12-14, Luke 10:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 5:18).
5. We believe that God has called us to share His concern for the poor. We are called to care for God’s people as we share the “Good News” of Jesus Christ to the poor and seek freedom for the oppressed (Leviticus 19:9-10, Matthew 25:37-40, Luke 6:20-25, James 2:1-5).
6. We believe that we are called 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, sanctioned by God, between one man and one woman, in a single, conventional union, as delineated by Scripture; therefore, the Pastor shall not perform, nor shall any ceremonies on Church properties be performed or sanctioned of any same-sex or trans-gender marriage under any circumstances. Whenever there is a conflict between the church’s position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church’s statement of faith,

doctrines and biblical positions will govern. (Genesis 2:24, Exodus 20:14, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:6-9, 1 Cor 7:1-9, Ephesians 5:22-33).

8. We are saddened by all expressions of immoral sexual behavior 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. We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, unchangeable genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and the rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within a person. 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 lives (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Lev 18:1-30, Rom 1:26-29, 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9-20, 1 Thess 4:1-8, Heb 13:4).

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 (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 (Genesis 12:1, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 2:19-10).

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

13. We believe that each person should have the right to exercise his/her 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 (Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:35).

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

PART THREE - THE COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Section I. Foundational Principles

¶ 301. MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

The mission of the Carrollton First Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love sacrificially and witness boldly. The Church is to worship God in spirit and in truth, to faithfully preach God's Word and to offer the holy Sacraments, to edify all who believe and encourage them to grow in holiness and service to others, to minister to those in need, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to present a clear and compelling invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord. All those of every age and station stand in need of the grace that God has promised to extend to others through His Body, the Church. While it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to change the hearts of individuals, ours is the task of sharing the "Good News" of Jesus Christ, extending His mercy and grace to all we meet.

We believe God has raised us to be faithful to the Word of God, striving for complete sanctification in our lives. As individual believers in Christ, and as those gathered in fellowship, our calling is to connect with the communities around us, extending both grace and mercy. As we grow in our personal faith, and effectively disciple others, we are called to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*" And also "*Love your neighbor as yourself*" (Mark 12:30-31).

¶ 302. COVENANT IN CHRIST.

We believe that God has called us to live together in a faithful covenant that expresses our commitments both to God and to each other. With John Wesley, we affirm that the Scriptures know of no such thing as "solitary religion"^{xii}, " but that we have been designed to grow in our discipleship in the company of others. As the Church, we are committed to encourage such sharing and accountability, with the end goal of all being partners in the gospel and in our outreach. This is founded in both our common doctrinal understandings, as well as in our core mission of sharing the gospel. Towards that end, we celebrate our unity with one another at the table of the Lord.

¶ 303. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY.

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

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

¶ 304. TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP.

In light of the mission of the Church and our covenant in Christ, the Carrollton First Methodist Church engages the commandment to make disciples of Jesus through an intentional process grounded in Scripture and in our Wesleyan heritage.

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

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

¶ 305. CALLED TO ALL-ENCOMPASSING.

We recognize that God made all creation and saw that it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and examples of God's grace to the unity of the Church and to society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons. All-encompassing means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the spiritual life of the Church and its service to the community and the world. Therefore, all-encompassing denies every semblance of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or sex. The services of worship of the Carrollton First Methodist Church shall be open to all persons and Church activities wherever possible and should take place in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Similarly, all-encompassing means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who agree to, meet and adhere to all the requirements of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline in the membership and leadership of the Church at any level and in every place.

¶ 306. LEGAL DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH.

Affirming the spiritual dimensions of Christianity, it is recognized that this ministry exists in the secular world and that civil authorities may seek legal definition predicated on the nature of the Carrollton First Methodist Church in seeking fulfillment of this ministry. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the meaning of Carrollton First Methodist Church should be consonant with the

traditional self-understanding of Methodists. Carrollton First Methodist Church possesses legal capacities and attributes to property and all other legal capacities.

Section II. The Church and Pastoral Charge

¶ 307. ROLE OF THE CHURCH.

The Church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. The Carrollton First Methodist Church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society, providing the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the Sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world. The function of the Carrollton First Methodist Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives consistent with their relationship with God. Therefore, the Carrollton First Methodist Church is to minister to persons in our community, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry in our Church, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the mission of our Church, as minimal expectations of an authentic Church. Our Church shall have a definite evangelistic nature, and witness responsibility for our members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the community.

¶ 308. DEFINITION OF A PASTORAL CHARGE.

1. A pastoral charge shall consist of doing the work of ministry as a pastor as approved to serve by the members of Carrollton First Methodist Church.
2. When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the members of Carrollton First Methodist Church may approve a qualified and trained Lay-Person to do the work of ministry. The Lay-Person is accountable to the members of Carrollton First Methodist Church. If the assignment is to continue longer than one year and the Lay-Person desires to remain, then they will begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry. The Lay Person assigned is also accountable to this Doctrines and Discipline of Carrollton First Methodist Church.

Section III. Church Membership

¶ 309. ELIGIBILITY.

The Carrollton First Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. In our Church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the Sacraments and, upon taking the Membership Vows, become members. In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from assuming the vows, their legal guardian[s] may assume the appropriate vows on their behalf. In the case of the Pastor joining the Church, the Lay-Leader shall administer the membership vows.

¶ 310. DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP.

The membership of the Carrollton First Methodist Church shall include all people who have been baptized and all people who have professed their faith, including confirmands.

1. The baptized membership of the Carrollton First Methodist Church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism.
2. The professing membership of the Carrollton First Methodist Church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual.
3. For statistical purposes, Church membership is equated to the number of people listed on the roll of professing members.
4. All baptized or professing members of the Carrollton First Methodist Church are members of the Church universal.

¶ 311. PROFESSING MEMBERS.

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

¶ 312. MEMBERSHIP VOWS.

Appendix B - MEMBERSHIP VOWS

¶ 313. MEANING OF A SACRAMENT.

A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. God gives us the sign as a means whereby we receive this grace and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion (also called the Lord’s Supper or the Eucharist). We receive the Sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ enables us to receive the grace of God through the Sacraments, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the Sacraments to bear fruit in our lives.

¶ 314. MEANING OF BAPTISM.

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

¶ 315. MODE AND PRACTICE OF BAPTISM.

Holy Baptism may be performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The outward and visible sign of Holy Baptism is water. Candidates are baptized “*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Matthew 28:19). The inward and spiritual grace is death to sin and new birth to righteousness by faith through union with Christ in His death and resurrection. Holy Baptism is administered among a gathered congregation. Those present vow on behalf of Christ’s Holy Church to receive the baptized into the Church universal, to grow together in grace, and to remember the profession made and benefits received in Holy Baptism. Candidates for Holy Baptism, and those presenting candidates unable to answer for themselves, shall be instructed in the Christian faith and the meaning of Holy Baptism. Holy Baptism, as initiation into Christ’s Holy Church, occurs once in a person’s life. Holy Communion serves as the regular and continual affirmation of baptismal vows within the Church. Through a service of baptismal remembrance and reaffirmation of baptismal vows people can renew the covenant declared at baptism.

¶ 316. BAPTISMAL VOWS.

See Appendix C - BAPTISMAL VOWS

¶ 317. MEANING 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) with Christ Jesus who is spiritually present in the whole of the Sacrament; we participate in the communion of saints with the Church universal; and we are given a foretaste of God’s eternal banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb. The Sacrament may be offered to all who repent of sin and desire to draw near to God and lead a life of obedience to Christ.

Holy Communion is normally celebrated in the midst of the congregation, physically gathered to remember and respond to God’s mighty acts of salvation revealed in Holy Scripture. The congregation is urged to ensure regular opportunities for the congregation to commune. The elements of Holy Communion may be taken to those whose condition prevents them from being physically present.

¶ 318. SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY.

The approved Pastor has the full authority to preside at celebrations of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

¶ 319. MEANING OF CONFIRMATION.

Through the Rite of Confirmation, we personally renew the covenant declared at our baptism, witness to God’s work in our lives, affirm our commitment to Christ and His Holy Church, and receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands enabling our lifelong journey toward holiness. The Apostles prayed for and laid hands on those who had been baptized. It is the duty of the Pastor to prepare confirmands, teaching them the basic tenets of the Christian faith, the history and theology of the Wesleyan revival movement, and the practical meaning of Church membership in agreement with this Doctrines and Discipline and approved articles of religion.

¶ 320. GROWTH IN FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP.

Faithful membership in the Carrollton First Methodist Church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As members involve themselves in

private and public prayer, worship, the Sacraments, study, Christian action, systematic giving, and holy discipline, they grow in their appreciation of Christ, understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and an understanding of themselves. Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love, always ready to confront conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Section IV. Care of Members

¶ 321. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT.

1. Each member is called to fulfill his/her baptism vows and membership, being faithful by participating in the spiritual formation, worship, stewardship, witness and service opportunities the Church provides.
2. The Pastor is responsible for ensuring that members are cared for by implementing a discipleship process focused on helping members to “go on to perfection” by loving God with all of their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and by loving their neighbor as themselves. The Pastor is charged with equipping all the members of a congregation to be in ministry by meeting people at their point of need and offering them Jesus (Ephesians 4:11-13).
3. All members of the Church are called into a loving accountability with one another.

¶ 322. MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

A member of any Christian denomination shall be received and may attend worship services, participate in programs, receive the Sacraments and, upon taking the Membership Vows, become members of Carrollton First Methodist Church.

Section V. Membership Records

¶ 323. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS.

The SPR Committee is to assign a person to fulfill the task of keeping a permanent membership record for each baptized or professing member which will include:

1. the person’s name, date of birth, address, place of birth, date of baptism, officiating pastor, and sponsors;
2. date of confirmation or profession of faith, officiating pastor, and sponsors;
3. if transferred to another Church, date of transfer, receiving Church, and address of receiving Church;
4. date of removal or withdrawal and reason;
5. date of restoration of professing membership and officiating pastor;
6. date of death, date and place of funeral/memorial, place of burial or disposal of body and officiating pastor;
7. these records shall be kept in the Church office or records storage room. Copies may be made for Church committee use, but the originals must remain at the Church. Periodically an electronic copy of these records shall be stored in the Safe Deposit box with other key documents.

Section VI. Changes in Church Membership

¶ 324. MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDIT.

The Pastor or designated person shall report annually the names of persons received into the membership of the Church and the names of persons removed.

¶ 325. MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER TO ANOTHER CHURCH.

The Pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a Church or upon receiving such request from a pastor or duly authorized official, shall (with the approval of the member) issue notification of transfer and, upon receiving confirmation of the member's reception into another congregation, shall properly record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the Church.

¶ 326. RESTORATION OF PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP.

A person who has withdrawn membership may return to the Church and, upon reaffirmation of the Membership Vows, become a professing member.

Section VII. Organization and Administration

¶ 327. PRIMARY TASKS.

Carrollton First Methodist Church shall be organized so that it can pursue its primary task and mission in the context of our community - reaching out and receiving with joy all who will respond to the invitation to follow Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives, encouraging people in developing their relationship with God, providing opportunities for them to strengthen and grow that relationship in spiritual formation, and supporting them to live lovingly and justly in the power of the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples. In carrying out its mission, adequate provision should be made to evangelize and spread Scriptural holiness by:

1. planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, and witness for persons and families within the congregation and the community;
2. providing for acting and effective committees;
3. providing for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of the Church.

¶ 328. ORGANIZATION PLAN.

1. The basic organizational plan for Carrollton First Methodist Church shall be ordered in such a manner that it provides for a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach and witness to all.
2. Members of committees shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the Church, are morally disciplined, and are competent to administer its affairs. All persons must be members of the Church in order to vote. The Pastor shall be an administrative officer of the Church and, as such, shall be a non-voting member of all committees, unless otherwise allowed by this Book of Doctrines and Discipline.
3. The parliamentary authority shall be the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

¶ 329. CHURCH CONFERENCE.

A regular or special called meeting of the professing membership of the Church is defined as a Church Conference. The Church Conference encourages broader participation by members of the Church, extending the vote to all professing members of the Church present at such meetings. It shall be called at the discretion of the Pastor, the Board of Trustees, the Church Council, or ten percent of the professing members of the Church. The Lay-Leader will officiate the meetings of the Church Conference. All boards and committees ultimately report to the Church Conference.

¶ 330. FISCAL YEAR.

The fiscal year shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December of each year.

¶ 331. ELECTION OF LEADERS.

The Church Conference shall approve, by simple majority vote, a slate of leaders put forth annually by the nominations (Discipleship and Leadership) committee to fulfill the mission of the Church.

¶ 332. REMOVAL OF LEADERS AND FILLING OF VACANCIES.

The nominations committee, upon recommendation of the Church Council/SPR Committee, shall remove leaders as needed by two-thirds majority vote and then vote to fill vacancies to fulfill the mission of the Church.

¶ 333. DUTIES OF LEADERS.

1. Out of the professing membership of the Church, there shall be elected by the Church Conference a Lay-Leader who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity and shall have the following responsibilities:
 - a. fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, and community;
 - b. meeting regularly with the Pastor to discuss the state of the Church and the needs for ministry;
 - c. serving as a member of the Church Council, the Finance Committee, and the SPR Committee
 - d. continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the Church's reason for existence and the types of ministries that will most effectively fulfill the Church's mission;
 - e. assisting in advising the Church Council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the Church through its laity in the community;
 - f. call the first meeting of the Discipleship and Leadership Committee and run the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair;
2. The Church Council Chair shall be elected by the Church Conference annually and shall have the following responsibilities:
 - a. leading the Church Council in fulfilling its responsibilities;
 - b. preparing and communicating the date, time, location, and agenda of the Church Council meetings in consultation with the Pastor, Lay-Leader, and other appropriate persons;
 - c. reviewing and assigning responsibility for the implementation of actions taken by the Church Council;
 - d. communicating with members of the Church Council and others as appropriate to permit informed action at Church Council meetings;
 - e. coordinating the various activities of the Church Council;

- f. providing initiative and leadership for the Church Council as it engages in planning, establishing of objectives and goals, and evaluating ministry;
- g. the Church Council Chair shall be a voting member of all committees of the Church unless specifically limited by this Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

¶ 334. CHURCH COUNCIL.

Members of the Church Council shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the Church, are morally disciplined, are loyal to the ethical standards of the Carrollton First Methodist Church and are competent to administer its affairs. It should include confirmed youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All voting members must be members of the Church. The Pastor shall be a non-voting member of all conferences, councils, commissions, committees, and boards unless otherwise allowed by this Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

The Church Council shall provide for planning and implementing a ministry of evangelizing and spreading Scriptural holiness through nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the Church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the Church. The Church Council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the Church Conference.

1. Mission and Ministry: nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

- a. the nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages;
- b. the outreach ministries of the Church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy;
- c. the witness ministries of the Church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ;
- d. the Discipleship and Leadership Committee shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of laity for the ministry of the Church.

2. Meetings:

- a. the Church Council shall meet at least quarterly. The Church Council Chair, SPR Chair, Finance Chair, Trustee Chair, or the Pastor may originate a special called meeting;
- b. it is recommended that the Church Council make decisions by trying to achieve a consensus driven by the Holy Spirit. If, in the opinion of the Church Council Chair, a consensus cannot be achieved, then the Church Council may make a decision by voting with a simple majority as the standard.

3. Other Responsibilities: It will also be the responsibility of the Church Council to:

- a. review the membership of the Church;
- b. establish the budget on recommendation of the Finance Committee for the approval of the Church Conference that ensures adequate provision for the financial needs of the Church;
- c. ensure that Incorporation fees and forms, Non-Profit fees, and forms, and other fees and forms required by law are paid and submitted in a timely manner;
- d. review the recommendation of the SPR Committee regarding provision of adequate housing allowance for the Pastor, and benefit plans;
- e. review and approve/disapprove any policy recommendation(s) of financial or ministries nature.
- f. review and keep on file all policies/procedures for each Church committee.

- g. the secretary or designee will record and maintain minutes of each Church Council meeting
- 4. Membership: The Church Conference will determine the size of the Church Council. The voting membership shall include the following:
 - a. the Chair, Vice- Chair, and Secretary of the Church Council;
 - b. the Lay-Leader(s)
 - c. the Chair of the SPR Committee or designee;
 - d. the Chair of the Finance Committee or designee;
 - e. the Chair of the Board of Trustees or designee;
 - f. the Church Treasurer; and assistant treasurer (if applicable)
 - g. the Chair of Missions;
 - h. the Chair of Long Range Planning;
 - i. the Worship Chair
 (a through i make up executive committee)
 - j. youth PAC leader (senior and junior)
 - k. youth representative
 - l. children’s ministry Glow leader
 - m. ministries and worship leaders;
 - n. chairman of all committees (see Appendix D)
 - o. two at large members

Quorum: twenty-five percent (25%) of the Church Council. In an emergency situation where a vote is necessary to address a serious safety issue that can present legal problems ten-percent (10%) will represent a quorum.

Section VIII. Church Administrative Committees

All committees shall meet regularly as to be determined by the Chair. All committee meetings, except the SPR Committee, are open to any Church member, however only members of the committee have a vote unless otherwise restricted. All Church members have a vote at any Church Conference meeting. The parliamentary procedure for all committees and Church Conference meetings should be governed by the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order.

See Appendix D - LIST OF COMMITTEES

See Appendix E - EXAMPLES OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

See Appendix F - COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITY OVERVIEW

¶ 335. DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

The Church Conference shall annually elect a Discipleship and Leadership Committee that is composed of professing members of the Church. The responsibility of this committee is to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian spiritual discipleship and 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.

In conducting its work, the committee shall engage in biblical, doctrinal, and theological reflection on the mission of the Church, the primary task, and ministries of the Church. Assist the pastor in

creating a system to help members establish and grow in the essentials of obedient discipleship of loving God, loving others and making disciples. It shall provide a means of engaging and identifying the spiritual gifts and abilities of the Church's members in producing Fruit for His Kingdom. 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 Discipleship and Leadership Committee shall serve throughout the year to guide the Church on matters regarding the leadership (other than employed staff) of the congregation, so as to focus on mission and ministry as the context for service; guide the development and training of spiritual leaders; recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders; and assist the Church Council in assessing changing leadership needs.

2. The Discipleship and Leadership Committee shall recommend to the Church Council the names of people to serve as officers and leaders of designated ministries of the Church committees required for the work of the Church and as this Book of Doctrines and Discipline requires.

3. The Lay-Leader shall call the first meeting where the committee will select the Chair and Vice-Chair. They will make sure that meetings occur in a timely manner where nominations are in place for the yearly Church Conference meeting. The Pastor and Lay-Leader are eligible, as well as any other committee member, to be selected as Chair or Vice-Chair.

4. The Discipleship and Leadership Committee membership shall consist as follows:

a. three (3) classes, one class elected each year for a three-year term;

b. retiring members may continue if requested by the Discipleship and Leadership Committee;

c. only one person from an immediate family (parent(s), spouse or children) shall serve on the Discipleship and Leadership Committee;

d. when vacancies occur during the year, successors shall be elected by the Church Conference as nominated by the Discipleship and Leadership Committee;

e. the three (3) open Lay-Leadership positions will be nominated from the floor and shall be elected by the Church Conference;

f. there shall be a set time, determined by the Discipleship and Leadership Committee, for nominations to be due and a yearly window date set for the Church Conference to approve the next year's budget and slate of Church leadership;

g. sixty (60) days before the end of the calendar year, successors shall be elected by the Church as nominated by the Discipleship and Leadership Committee.

h. Pastoral Mentors is an appointed group of 6 mentors/elders (3 year rolling terms in class of twos) to assist and encourage the Pastor in doctrinal message preparation and delivery, counsel on effectiveness of ministry and staff engagement and management, maximizing gifts and relationships, and working with Church Council on ministry plans and direction. Providing feedback and guidance and health and well being. Praying with and for the Pastor in support. Issues and concerns will be brought to SPR and subsequently Church Council as necessary;

i. Support the Pastor and staff in leading, organizing and directing the class meeting, small group, discipleship or other accountability groups to make it a key part of church membership.

¶ 336. STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

The Church Conference shall annually elect a Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC).

1. The SPRC shall be composed of professing members of the Church. People serving on the SPRC 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 (parent(s), spouse and children) of a pastor or paid staff member may serve on the committee. The Lay-Leader is automatically a member of the committee unless he/she is a family member of a paid staff member.

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

4. The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the Pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, the Lay-Leader, or the Chair of the committee. The committee may request the Pastor or any other staff member to attend any meeting. The committee shall meet in a closed session and personnel information shared in the committee shall be confidential. Personnel policies and job descriptions are not confidential and are subject to Church Conference oversight and member review.

5. The committee is responsible for the oversight and maintenance of membership records (reference ¶ 323. #7).

6. The committee shall annually submit detailed reports to the Church Conference that describe the following:

- a. year-to-date (Jan. 1 - Sept. 30) list of all new members, transfers of membership, baptisms, professions of faith, confirmations, and deaths;
- b. year-end (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31) list of all new members, transfers of membership, baptisms, professions of faith, confirmations, and deaths;
- c. the salaries and benefits that each employee received during the year;
- d. any changes to job descriptions;
- e. any updates or changes to the Safe Sanctuary Policy. This is also to include an assessment to ensure that the Church has enough volunteers who have cleared a background check;
- f. any SPR Committee Policy changes;
- g. any recommended salary or benefit changes recommended and cleared by the Finance Committee and Church Council;
- h. an annual celebration of each employee's contribution to the success of the Church.

7. The committee shall develop and implement an approved written Personnel Policy to include the following:

- a. encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the Pastor and staff and their families;
- b. promote unity in the Church;
- c. require that the Pastor, all staff members, and invited speakers to the pulpit are persons of genuine Christian character in harmony with the Holy Scriptures;
- d. provide job descriptions for the Pastor and all other staff positions to be submitted to the Church Conference;
- e. require a background check for all persons seeking employment;
- f. provide a procedure for recommending salary, benefit package, and any other compensation of staff members to the Finance Committee for budgetary concern. The Finance Committee will evaluate the recommendation and submit its evaluation to the Church Council;
- g. provide the process for considering and recommending a pastor candidate, including the salary/benefit package, to the Church Conference;

- h. provide the process for approving the Pastor and all staff employment by the Church Conference;
- i. provide a procedure for the Church to ordain the Pastor, if necessary;
- j. provide a procedure for considering and/or recommending the dismissal of the Pastor or a staff member due to moral indiscretion(s) or ineffectiveness. This process must include an independent review by a church member, selected by the Church Council Chair, who has management or Human Resource experience. If or when the dismissal process reaches the Church Conference, the confidential details of the matter will not be discussed during the conference;
- k. may create a sub-committee of its choosing to help in searching for candidates and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses when filling an open staff position, including the Pastor. At least one SPR Committee member will be on the sub-committee and be the reporting voice;
- l. annually assign an SPR liaison to each staff member to confer with and counsel 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 staff;
- n. 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
- p. communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry
- q. arrange with the Church Conference 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 certification in their fields of specialization;
- r. develop and implement an approved written Safe Sanctuary Policy, to ensure that the policy is being adhered to by every staff member and ministry of the Church, and to deal with violations of the policy in a confidential manner.

¶ 337. BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least nine (9) professing members of the Church, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law. The Pastor shall be a member with voice but without vote of the Board of Trustees and may not be counted for the purpose of achieving a quorum or calculating a majority.

1. Election of Trustees: Members of the Board of Trustees are to be elected by the Church Conference to a three-year term, equally divided into three classes, with one-third elected each year. Understanding that from time-to-time issues, including legal, or projects come up that would necessitate keeping certain members on the Board, it is strongly recommended that after a member of the Board of Trustees has served one full term, that he/she only be re-elected to serve one additional term not to exceed six consecutive years.

2. Vacancies and Removal of Trustees: Should a trustee withdraw from the membership; trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion. Should a trustee be unable to carry out his/her 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 Conference, and when all legal requirements have been satisfied in reference to such execution, the Church Conference may, by a two-thirds vote, declare the trustee's or director's membership on the Board of Trustees vacated. Vacancies occurring in the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the unexpired term. Such election shall be held in the same manner as for Trustees. A vacancy other than

the preceding that occurs ad interim may be filled until the next Church Conference by the Church Council.

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

a. within thirty days after the beginning of the calendar year, the Board of Trustees shall convene at a time and place designated by the Chair or the Vice-Chair for the purpose of electing officers of the Board for the ensuing year and transacting any other business properly brought before it;

b. the Board shall elect from its members, to hold office for a term of one year or until their successors shall be elected, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and, if need requires, a treasurer; provided, however, that the Chair and Vice-Chair shall not be members of the same class; and provided further, that the offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same person;

c. as a corporation, the Trustees as corporation directors, in addition to electing officers as provided above, shall ratify and confirm by appropriate action and, if required by law, elect as officers of the corporation the Treasurer elected by the Church Conference in accordance with the provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline. If more than one account is maintained in the name of the corporation in any financial institution(s), each such account and the Treasurer thereof shall be appropriately designated. The Trustees shall ensure that all corporation fees are paid promptly each year.

4. Meetings: The Board shall meet at the call of the Pastor or of its Chair 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. The Finance Chair and Treasurer will be invited to meetings for their input and provide reports on Trustee managed funds.

5. Responsibilities, Powers and Limitations: The Board shall have the following responsibilities, powers and limitations:

a. oversight, and care of all real property owned by the Church and of all property and equipment acquired directly by the Church or by any group, Board, class, commission, or similar organization connected with it. The Board shall not, however, violate the rights of any Church organization elsewhere granted in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline, nor prevent or interfere with the Pastor in the use of any of the said property for religious services or other proper meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of the Church;

b. the use of 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;

c. should the congregation possess a parsonage offered to the Pastor for housing, the Chair of the SPR Committee, the Chair 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. The Board of Trustees is responsible to ensure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health and well-being of the Pastor or Pastor's family and shall provide that the parsonage be maintained in good condition;

d. subject to the direction of the Church Conference, the Board of 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 county, 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, the Church Finance Committee or Church Council;
- e. the Board shall conduct an annual accessibility audit of their buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any existing physical, architectural, or communication barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers;
- f. the Board shall store all legal documents in the Church's Safe Deposit box. Documents may be copied but the originals must remain secured unless required for legal purposes;
- g. the Board shall manage and maintain an adequate commercial insurance policy on all Church owned property including vehicles owned by the Church. This insurance policy must cover property replacement. It must also contain liability coverage for the property, the Church staff, the Church officers, and special professional church activities. An excess liability policy is also to be in place;
- h. as required by law, The Board shall maintain automotive insurance on all Church owned vehicles that should also include liability coverage for the Church for use of private cars to transport people for Church business or ministries. The limits of coverage, especially liability, should be appropriate for the protection of the Church. This policy should also be referenced on the excess liability policy;
- i. the Board shall ensure that each Church vehicle has an annual safety inspection, a list of qualified drivers, current tag, up to date trip log book, trip inspection check list, and a process for any driver to report any issue to the Board. Records of each of these will be kept and audited yearly;
- j. the Board shall review the bus usage policy, amend it as necessary, and deal with anyone who is not in compliance. If it involves a paid staff member, the issue is forwarded to the SPR Committee. Under no circumstances shall any Church owned vehicle be used to transport more than its rated capacity (number of people).

Any driver violating this policy shall be prohibited by the Board from future driving. Any private vehicles used to transport persons for Church business or ministries must have adequate insurance and a seat belt for each person in the vehicle;

6. Acquisition, Sale, Transfer, and Mortgage of Church Property:

- a. real estate: to buy, sell, transfer, or mortgage any real estate owned or being bought by the Church requires both the Board of Trustees and Church Conference approval with input from the Finance Committee and the Church Council. Proceeds from sales must go into a designated fund for new building or maintenance;
- b. the Board of Trustees shall evaluate the real estate being offered to the Church as a bequest or a gift for any liabilities (such as asbestos, etc.) before signing any legal documents accepting the property;
- c. other Church property: The Board of Trustees may purchase other Church property provided the funds have been allocated or budgeted;
- d. sale of non-real estate Church property: The Board of Trustees may sell Church property when appropriate. Proceeds must go into the proper Church accounts;
- e. a full accounting of property acquisitions, sales transfers and mortgages must be included in the annual Trustees report to the Church Conference.

7. Annual Report: The Board shall annually make a written report to the Church Conference, in which shall be included the following:

- a. a list containing the Carroll County assessment 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 or monetary bequest to the Church during that year. If a grantor wishes to be anonymous, his/her wishes shall be respected;

- c. an inventory and the reasonable valuation of all personal property owned by the Church as valued on the insurance policy;
- d. the amount of income received from any income-producing property and a detailed list of expenditures in connection therewith;
- e. the amount the Board received, outside of monies from the Church budget, during the year for building, rebuilding, remodeling, and improving real estate, and an itemized statement of expenditures of those funds;
- 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. a detailed statement of insurance carried on each Church owned vehicle;
- i. a detailed statement of any excess liability insurance carried by the Church;
- j. the name of the custodian of all legal papers of the Church, and where they are kept;
- k. a detailed list of all Trustee managed trusts in which the Church is the beneficiary, specifying where and how the funds are invested;
- l. 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;

¶ 338. FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The Church Conference shall annually elect a Finance Committee.

1. The Finance Committee is to be composed of the committee Chair, the Pastor, a lay- member, the Chair of the Church Council, the Chair or designee of the SPRC, a representative of the Board of Trustees to be selected by the Board, the Lay-Leader, the Treasurer, and other members to be added as the Church Conference may determine. The Finance Committee may on occasion assign certain tasks (i.e., funds investment) to another group that reports back to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee Chair shall be a member of the Church Council. The Treasurer, if a paid employee, shall be a member without a vote. No immediate family members of the Pastor may serve as Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair, counter, or any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the Finance Committee.
2. Although the Pastor and other paid staff members may be on the Finance Committee, they must leave the meeting during discussions of any salary or benefit that would affect them. The Finance Committee Chair is responsible for insuring compliance with this.
3. 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.
4. All financial requests to be included in the annual budget of the Church shall be submitted to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall compile annually a complete budget for the Church and submit it to the Church Council for review and approval; after which it will be submitted to the Church Conference for adoption. The Finance Committee shall be charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the Church Council. It shall administer the funds received according to instructions from the Church Council. The Finance Committee shall carry out the Church Council's directions in guiding the Treasurer.
5. The Finance Committee shall develop a pool of names from which to designate at least two persons, not of one immediate family residing in the same household, to count the offering. Paid

Staff and their immediate family members are not to be counters. These groups shall rotate on a regular basis. They shall work under the supervision of the person designated by the Finance Committee. A record of all funds received shall be given to the Treasurer. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in accordance with the procedures established by the Finance Committee. The person designated (i.e., Church Secretary) by the committee shall keep records of the contributions and payments and oversee the preparation of the yearly giving statements as required by the IRS.

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, detailed reports on funds received and expended to the Finance Committee and the Church Council. The Chair shall report a summary of financial standing to the Church Council on a quarterly basis and the Church Conference on an annual basis. The Church Council shall determine if, and to what extent, the Church Treasurer needs to be bonded.

7. The Finance Committee shall establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the Church. The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the Finance Committee and submitted as a report to the Church Conference.

8. The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the Church and all its organizations and accounts. 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 whether assets are being safeguarded, and determine compliance with local law, Church policies and procedures, and this Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The audit may include:

- a. a review of the cash and investment reconciliations
- b. interviews with the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Pastor, Finance Committee Chair, those who count offerings, Church Secretary, etc., with inquiries regarding compliance with existing written financial policies and procedures;
- c. a review of journal entries and authorized check signers for each checking and investment account;
- d. other procedures requested by the Finance Committee. The audit shall be performed by an audit committee composed of persons unrelated to the persons listed in 8 b. above or by an independent certified public accountant (CPA), accounting firm, or equivalent.
- e. a copy of the audit is to be submitted to the Church Council and Church Conference.

9. The committee shall recommend to the Church Council proper depositories for the Church's funds. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in the name of the Church.

10. 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.

11. After the budget of the Church has been approved, additional appropriations or changes in the budget must be approved by the Church Council.

12. The committee shall prepare at least annually a report to the Church Council of all designated funds that are separate from the current expense budget.

13. Legal signatures are to be defined as follows:

- a. Non-personnel contracts and legal documents: Trustee Chair or person appointed by the Trustee Board;
- b. Personnel contracts: SPR Chair (or other person appointed by the SPR Committee) and Church Council Chair (or another person appointed by the Church Council)
- c. Banking accounts: Treasurer, Finance Chair, Financial Secretary and others appointed by the Church Council
- d. Checks: All checks shall require two signatures from a list determined by the Church Council

e. Electronic bill-pay: The Finance Committee, with the approval of the Church Council, may allow the Treasurer to electronically pay certain bills, such as payroll and normal-rate utilities, by electronic transfer. If an abnormally high utility bill is received, the Trustees and Finance Chair are to be notified and consulted for guidance. Auto-pay should be avoided for utilities.

14. The Church Treasurer will have the following qualifications: be of Christian faith, integrity, trustworthy, good character, knowledge of bookkeeping and auditing, basic accounting and financial skills, good organizational skills and memory, willingness and ability to work with people, ability to work under close supervision, good research skills to find and recommend other means of revenue or investments for the Church, familiarity relevant to Church finances, taxes, and investments, have computer skills, and be willing to use QuickBooks type programs.

15. The Finance Committee shall annually submit two detailed financial reports to the Church Conference: (1) year-to-date (Jan. 1 - Sept. 30) to be made available to the appropriate committees for budgetary purposes and (2) year-end (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31). These are to include:

- a. all income to include income from tithes, offerings, gifts, fundraisers, designated contributions, and any other income for the year;
- b. all expenditures, in budget subgroups form, for the year;
- c. an analysis of the year's budget comparing the income projected and the expenses incurred to the budgeted amounts;
- d. all investments including an analysis of the growth or decay of all invested funds and a report of the monies spent from the funds;
- e. a list of offering counters for the year;
- f. a report of possible upcoming challenges for the next year;
- g. a celebration of financial challenges overcome during the year;
- h. a comparison of the year's budget compared to the submitted budget for the next year.

¶ 340. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM COMMITTEES.

The Discipleship and Leadership Committee shall nominate members for the following and additional committees as established by the Church Council: Worship, Outreach and Hospitality, Discipleship and Education, and Stewardship (see Appendix D for list). The number of members for each committee shall be determined by the Discipleship and Leadership Committee in coordination with the Church Council. The Church Council may establish short term committees to handle special projects/tasks.

¶ 341. CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

Conflict of Interest - The Board of Trustees shall annually review the Conflict-of-Interest Policy for the Carrollton First Methodist Church. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the Church and its personnel are properly protected against risks of violating non-profit laws.

PART FOUR - THE MINISTRY OF THE CALLED

¶ 401. MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH.

The Church's ministry is derived from the ministry of Christ. After receiving salvation, we are called to follow Him as disciples in the way of love. This call is for the whole people of God, or Laity who are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God," charged to "declare the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). Baptism initiates this call to ministry, empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are to be the "hands and feet" of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit works in and through a call to ministry and the subsequent discernment and affirmation of that call by the Church.

¶ 402. BASIC QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORDAINED.

Those to be ordained must meet the following qualifications:

1. Have a personal faith in Jesus Christ and be committed to Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness, including responsible self-control by exhibiting personal habits that are conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all relationships, fidelity in a Christian marriage between one man and one woman, chastity in singleness, social responsibility, and the knowledge and love of God.
3. Have a call by God and the people of God to devote himself/herself to the work of ministry.
4. Be able to effectively communicate the Christian faith.
5. Give evidence of God's gifts for ordained ministry and promise of future usefulness in the mission of the Church.
6. Accept the authority of Scripture; be competent in the disciplines of Scripture, theology, Church history and polity; possess the skills essential for the practice of ministry, and lead in making disciples of Jesus Christ.
7. Be accountable to the Church, accept its doctrinal standards, discipline, and authority.
8. Provide references when requested.

¶ 403. ENTRANCE INTO ORDAINED MINISTRY.

Persons who hear a call to ordained ministry should meet with the Pastor to inquire about candidacy. They must have held membership for at least one year and shall complete a background and credit check. Upon the recommendation by two-thirds secret ballot of the SPR Committee and recommendation of the Pastor, the Church Conference shall by simple majority vote whether to approve and certify them for candidacy.

¶ 404. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION.

1. In order better to prepare leaders, the Church requires candidates for ordination to fulfill basic educational requirements prior to ordination. Recognizing that educational opportunities vary based on geography and life circumstance, the Church will accept courses from any of the following: a Course of Study (COS) program, a bachelor's degree program in ministry, a joint Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Divinity program, a program for a Master of Arts or equivalent degree in the practice of ministry, or a Master of Divinity degree program.
2. SPR Committee shall approve the educational instrumentations from the courses he/she has received.

3. Educational Requirements. See Appendix G

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PART FIVE – PROPERTY

¶ 501. THEOLOGY OF PROPERTY.

God owns all of creation (Psalm 50:9-12); we are but stewards of it for a period of time. Property (real, personal, tangible, and intangible) deeded or titled in the name of the Carrollton First Methodist Church is to be used for the glory of God and to carry out the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and to spread Scriptural holiness across the land.

¶ 502. STEWARDSHIP OF ASSETS.

Carrollton First Methodist Church shall designate in its corporate records how its property shall be disposed of in the event of the entity’s dissolution.

¶ 503. COMPLIANCE WITH LAW.

1. Conformity with local law.

All provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline relating to property, both real and personal, and relating to the formation and operation of any corporation, and relating to mergers are conditioned upon their being in conformity with local laws, and in the event of conflict with local law, local law shall prevail; provided, however, that this requirement shall not be construed to give the consent of the Carrollton First Methodist Church to deprivation of its property without due process of law or to the regulation of its affairs by state statute where such regulation violates any constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and separation of church and state or violates the right of the Church to maintain any connectional structure. Local laws shall be construed to mean the laws of the United States of America; State of Georgia; Carroll County, Georgia; and City of Carrollton, Georgia.

2. Incorporation Requirements.

Carrollton First Methodist Church, shall include in its Articles of Incorporation and its By-Laws the following:

- a. recognition that its corporate powers are subject to this Book of Doctrines and Discipline;
- b. recognition that the corporation’s powers cannot exceed those given by this Book of Doctrines and Discipline language consistent with the taxation and non-profit codes of the United States of America; State of Georgia; Carroll County, Georgia; and City of Carrollton, Georgia in which the corporation operates to protect its tax-exempt and non-profit status;
- c. designation of the recipient(s) of corporate property in the event the corporation is abandoned, discontinued, or ceases to exist as a legal entity.

¶ 504. TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS ARE SYNONYMOUS.

The terms “trustee(s)” and “Board of Trustees” used in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline may be construed to be synonymous with “director(s)” “Board of Directors” and “Board of Trustees” applied to Carrollton First Methodist Church.

¶ 505 CONFORMITY OF DEEDS AND CONVEYANCES WITH LOCAL LAW.

To secure the right of property for Carrollton First Methodist Church, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in due conformity to the laws of the State of Georgia; Carroll County, Georgia; and City of Carrollton, Georgia in which the property is situated and also in

conformity with these Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Deeds shall be registered or recorded directly upon their execution and stored in the Safe Deposit box.

¶ 506. INSTITUTING AND DEFENDING CIVIL ACTION.

Because of the nature of the Carrollton First Methodist Church, no individual or affiliated Church body or unit, nor any official thereof, may commence or participate in any suit or proceeding in the name of, or on behalf of, the Carrollton First Methodist Church.

¶ 507. LIMITATION OF FINANCIAL OBLIGATION.

No entity can financially obligate the Carrollton First Methodist Church or, without prior specific written consent, any other organizational unit thereof.

¶ 508. AUDITS AND BONDING OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

The Church Council shall determine if, and to what extent, persons holding trust funds, securities, or moneys of any kind belonging to a unit of the Carrollton First Methodist Church need to be bonded. The accounts of such units shall be audited at least annually by a person or entity selected by the Church Council. Any report to the Church Conference containing a financial statement that this Book of Doctrines and Discipline requires to be audited shall not be approved until the audit is completed and the financial statement is shown to be correct. Other parts of the report may be approved pending such audit.

¶ 509. POWERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

The Carrollton First Methodist Church shall be incorporated and all property will be held in the name of the corporation. The Board of Trustees as set forth within this Book of Doctrines and Discipline shall have the following authority with respect to their properties:

1. Donations and bequests: The Carrollton First Methodist Church shall receive, collect, and hold in trust for the benefit of the recipient any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind of character, real or personal, tangible or intangible, that may be given, devised, bequeathed, or conveyed to the said board for any benevolent, charitable, or religious purpose, and shall administer the same and the income therefrom in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, settlor, or testator and in the interest of the Church, society, institution, or agency contemplated by such donor, trustor, settlor, or testator, under the direction of the corporation. When the use to be made of any such donation, bequest, or devise is not otherwise designated, the same shall be used as directed by the Carrollton First Methodist Church.
2. Property in Trust: When so directed by the Board of Trustees, the Carrollton First Methodist Church may receive and hold in trust for and on behalf of the respective unit of the Carrollton First Methodist Church any real or personal property previously acquired to be used in carrying out their mission, ministry, and program. When such property is in the form of investable assets, the Board of Trustees may consider placing the assets for investment in the care of a responsible investing firm subject to the laws of the jurisdiction in which the unit is located. A conscious effort shall be made to invest in a manner consistent with the Social Witness (Part Two) of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline.
3. Power to convey assets: Unless otherwise restricted by this Book of Doctrines and Discipline, the Board of Trustees shall have the power to invest, reinvest, buy, sell, lease, transfer, and convey any and all assets, subject always to the terms of the legacy, devise, or donation. Before the Board of

Trustees conveys property, it must seek the approval of the Church Conference. Approval requires a simple majority vote.

4. Authority to execute board decisions: Any contract, deed, lease, bill of sale, mortgage, or other necessary written instrument needed to implement any resolution authorizing proposed action regarding property or assets owned by the Carrollton First Methodist Church may be executed by and on behalf of the Board of Trustees by any two of its officers, who thereupon shall be duly authorized to carry out the direction of the Carrollton First Methodist Church; and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as to the action of the Carrollton First Methodist Church.

5. Protection of assets: The Board of Trustees may intervene and take all necessary legal steps to safeguard and protect the interests and rights of the Carrollton First Methodist Church anywhere and in all matters relating to property and rights to property whether arising by gift, devise, or otherwise, or where held in trust or established for the benefit of the Carrollton First Methodist Church or its membership.

6. Gifts acceptance policy: It shall be the duty of the Pastor of such gift, bequest, or devise to give prompt notice to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall take such steps as are necessary and proper to conserve, protect, and administer the gift; provided, however, that the Board of Trustees may decline to receive or administer any such gift, devise, or bequest for any reason satisfactory to the Board.

7. Insurance: The Board of Trustees shall annually review the insurance coverages for the unit of the Carrollton First Methodist Church. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the Church, its properties, and its personnel are properly protected against risks.

8. Disclosure of board actions: The Board of Trustees shall annually inform the Carrollton First Methodist Church with a faithful report of its doings, of all funds, monies, securities, and property held by it, and of its receipts and disbursements during the year. The beneficiary of a fund held by the Corporation shall also be entitled to a report at least annually on the condition of such fund and on the transactions affecting it.

9. Church provision: The following provisions pertain to the Board of Trustees:

- a. Subject to the direction of the Church Conference, the Board of Trustees shall have the supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by the Church and of all property and equipment acquired directly by the Church or by any society, board, class, commission, or similar organization connected to it, provided that the Board of Trustees shall not permit the property to be used in a manner which is inconsistent with this Book of Doctrines and Discipline or violate the rights of any Church organization granted elsewhere in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Further, the Board of Trustees shall not prevent or interfere with the Pastor in the use of any of the Church's property for religious services or other proper meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of the Carrollton First Methodist Church, or permit the use of said property for religious or other meetings without the consent of the Pastor and/or the consent of the Church Council. Additionally, the Board of Trustees and Pastor shall ensure that the pews in the Carrollton First Methodist Church shall always be free;
- b. Usage by outside groups: Upon the consent of the Pastor and/or the Church Council, 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 mission and values of the congregation and the Carrollton First Methodist Church;
- c. Parsonage: If a parsonage is offered to the Pastor for housing, the Chair of the Board of Trustees or his or her designee, accompanied by a member of the SPR Committee, shall make an annual review

of the home to ensure that it is properly maintained. The parsonage shall be mutually respected as the property of the congregation and the home of the Pastoral family;

d. Accessible buildings: The Board of Trustees shall conduct an annual accessibility audit of the buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any physical, architectural, or communication barriers that exist that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers;

e. Annual Report: The Board of Trustees shall annually make a written report to the Church Conference, in which shall be included the following:

i. the legal description and the reasonable valuation of each parcel of real estate owned by the Church;

i. the specific name of the grantee in each deed of conveyance of real estate to the Church;

ii. an inventory and the reasonable valuation of all personal property owned by the Church;

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

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

v. outstanding capital debts and how contracted;

vi. 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;

vii. the name of the custodian of all legal papers of the Church, and where they are kept;

vii. a detailed list of all trusts of which the Church is the beneficiary, specifying where and how the funds are invested;

ix. an evaluation of all Church properties, including the chancel areas, to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities; and when applicable, a plan and timeline for the development of accessible Church properties;

f. Purchase, sale, lease, construction, and mortgage of property: Notwithstanding the powers granted, prior to the purchase, sale, lease, or mortgage by the Church of any real estate, or the construction or renovation of a building, a resolution authorizing such action shall be passed by the Church Conference, with the members thereof acting in their capacity as members of the corporate body, by a majority vote of those present and voting at any regular or special called meeting called for that purpose, provided that not less than ten days' notice of such meeting and the proposed action shall have been given from the pulpit and in the weekly bulletin, newsletter, or electronic notice of the Church or other means if required or permitted by local law, and provided further, that written consent to such action shall be given by the Pastor and/or Church Council. The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct and authorize the Board of Trustees to take all necessary steps to carry out the action and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument. The Board of Trustees at any regular or special called meeting shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required by the local laws. Any required contract, deed, lease, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument necessary to carry out the action so authorized shall be executed in the name of the Carrollton First Methodist Church by any two of its officers, and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the corporation;

g. Restrictions on proceeds of mortgage or sale: No real property on which the Church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged or sold to provide for the current budget or operating expense of the Church without the approval of the Church Conference with two-thirds (2/3) in the affirmative;

- h. To borrow money: Subject to the direction of the Church Conference, the Board of Trustees may borrow money, incur indebtedness, and secure repayment by mortgage, pledge, deed of trust, or other hypothecation of property, both real and personal;
- i. Church permanent endowment committees: Subject to the direction of the Church Conference, the Board of Trustees may establish a permanent endowment or local Church foundation. The Board of Trustees shall create a legal document guiding the direction of the permanent endowment and the Church Conference shall designate or elect its leadership;
- j. Action by non-unanimous consent without meeting: Unless otherwise restricted by law, any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Board may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, or an electronic communication response, setting forth the action to be taken, is signed by a sufficient number of trustees or members of a committee of the Board as would be necessary to take that action at a meeting at which all of the trustees or members of a committee of the Board were present and voted

Appendix A - AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH

THE APOSTLES' CREED, TRADITIONAL VERSION

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; *

the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

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

*Traditional use of this creed includes these words: "He descended into hell."

** universal

THE NICENE CREED

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 the 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.

Additional AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH

are as follows:

The Apostles' Creed (Ecumenical); The Nicene Creed; A Statement of Faith of the Korean Methodist Church; A Modern Affirmation; The World Methodist Social Affirmation; Affirmation from Romans 8:35, 37-39; Affirmation from 1 Corinthians 15:1-6 and Colossians 1:15-20; Affirmation From 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1:15; 3:16. 43

Appendix B - MEMBERSHIP VOWS

In addition to taking the baptism vows those desiring to become professing members of the Carrollton First Methodist Church shall be asked the following questions before being received into the Church:

The minister, addressing those who are to be confirmed, shall ask,

Do you believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

I do.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put your whole trust in His grace, and promise to serve Him as your Lord?

I do.

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures?

I do.

Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life as a faithful member of Christ's holy Church?

I do.

Will you be loyal to Christ through the Carrollton First Methodist Church and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's representative in this world?

I do.

The minister may have those received face the congregation and address them, saying,

Brethren I commend to your love and care _____ whom we this day receive into the membership of this congregation. Will you do all in your power to increase (his/her/their) hope, and perfect _____ in love?

We will.

*Go forth in peace, and be of good courage; hold fast that which is good, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you forever. **Amen***

Appendix C - BAPTISMAL VOWS

In faithfulness with early Christian practice as well as the Wesleyan tradition, those wishing to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism shall first be asked the following questions:

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

I do.

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

I do.

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

I do.

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

I do.

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

I will.

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

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

I (We) will.

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

Will you who witness these vows encourage [this/these person(s)] in the faith and do all in your power to support [this/these person(s)] in [his/her/their] life in Christ?

We will.

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

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

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

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

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

Appendix D – CHURCH COMMITTEES

Committees shall include but not be limited to the following list:

- Church Council
- Personnel/SPRC
- Finance
- Trustees
- Discipleship and Leadership
- Worship
- Long Range Planning
- Hospitality & Fellowship
 - Methodist Men and Katie Downs, Prime Timers
- Christian Education & Discipleship
- Stewardship
- Missions
- Hispanic Ministry
- Ushers/Greeters
- Security/Emergency Response
- Scouting

Appendix E – EXAMPLES OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Examples of the order of business for a regular and special called meeting of committees are as follows:

Regular meeting order of business:

- a. Recognition of quorum present by Chair
- b. Call to Order by Chair
- c. Approval of agenda
- d. Approval of minutes from previous scheduled or called meeting
- e. Staff reports
- f. Committee reports
- g. Old business
- h. New business
- i. Additional comments
- j. Adjourn by Chair

A special called meeting should only deal with the business presented in the special called meeting announcement.

Special called meeting order of business:

- a. acknowledgement of a quorum by the Chair:
- b. call to order by Chair;
- c. announced business;
- d. additional comments;
- e. adjournment.

Appendix F – CHURCH COMMITTEES

Carrollton First Methodist Church Committee Responsibility Overview

Church Conference

The ultimate governing body of the Church bound by the By-Laws. Actions of and reports from the Church Council, the SPR Committee, and the Board of Trustees are subject to Church Conference oversight and approval. The Lay-Leader runs the Church Conference. Discipleship and Leadership Committee members are selected by the Church Conference.

SPRC Committee

Handles personnel issues. Benefits, financial and ministries matters are submitted to the Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Church Council. Reports to the Church Conference.

Church Council

Manages Financial and Ministries issues. Several sub-committees report to it. Serves as a communication vessel for Church business. Although, outside of finances and ministries, the SPR Committee and the Board of Trustees function independent from the Church Council, they submit a report at each meeting for communication purposes. Reports to the Church Conference.

Board of Trustees

Manages Church property. Buying, selling, maintaining, and carrying adequate insurance on all Church property are some of the Trustees responsibilities. When funds are needed the Trustees must submit a request to the Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Church Council. Reports to the Church Conference.

Appendix G - EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION

A total of ten courses (30 credit hours) are required for those ordained.

a. Courses in the following six areas are required for all persons seeking ordination.

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

b. Additional preferred classes are from courses in the following areas:

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

c. The Pastor's additional education is recommended in Educational Requirements. A minimum of ten additional courses or a Masters in Divinity will be required. Suggested courses are:

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

d. If a candidate has at least five years of service at an acceptable Church, the SPR Committee may ordain. If any recommended courses have not been completed, the newly ordained Pastor must complete the courses within a five-year window

End Notes

ⁱ [Modified for a contemporary reading. John Wesley Sermon Number Sermon 52, Sermon Title The Reformation of Manners, Sermon Footnote \(text of the 1872 edition\) Preached before the Society for Reformation of Manners on Sunday, January 30, 1763 at the Chapel in West-Street, Seven-Dials](#)

ⁱⁱ [The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church Article II — Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

^{iv} The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church Article III — Of the Resurrection of Christ

^v The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Article V — Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

^{vi} The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Article VII — Of Original or Birth Sin

^{vii} Predestination Calmly Considered by John Wesley

^{viii} The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Article VII Article VIII — Of Free Will

^{ix} Wesley, "Original Sin" (1872)

^x [Wesley, "The Repentance of Believers" \(1767\)](#)

^{xi} The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Article XVII — Of Baptism

^{xii} Wesley, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Fourth"