



**THE DISCIPLINE  
OF  
THE WESLEYAN CHURCH**

**2022**

**THE DISCIPLINE**  
**of**  
**THE WESLEYAN CHURCH**  
**2022**

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**Editing Committee**

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Anthony R. Casey, chair  
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Jerry Lumston Jr  
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Matthew Pickering  
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\*Paragraphs 5010–5450 were relocated by the 2016 General Conference to the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.*). A copy of this publication may be obtained by request at [communications@wesleyan.org](mailto:communications@wesleyan.org).

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**PART 1**  
**BASIC PRINCIPLES**

**Chapter 1**

**HISTORY**

**A. The Origin of the Wesleyan Movement**

1. The Wesleyan Movement centers around the scriptural truth concerning the doctrine and experience of holiness, which declares that the atonement in Christ provides not only for the regeneration of sinners but for the entire sanctification of believers. A revival of these scriptural truths concerning Christian perfection and scriptural holiness took place under the leadership of John Wesley in the eighteenth century, and continues in various ways until the present.

2. Nurtured in a devout home, John Wesley committed himself to a search after God from earliest childhood. While at Oxford, together with his brother Charles and a few other serious-minded collegians, he methodically pursued holiness through systematic Bible study, prayer, good works, intensive examination, and reproof. The group earned the nicknames of the “Holy Club” and of “Methodists,” but Wesley did not earn the assurance of salvation. Having graduated from Oxford, and having been ordained as a clergyman in the state church, he intensified his search for peace through legalism and self-discipline. The turning point came at a prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, May 24, 1738, when he perceived the way of faith and found his heart “strangely warmed” in the new birth. As he went on to the experience of entire sanctification, he shared his testimony and teaching with others, and a spiritual awakening spread across the British Isles and to America.

3. It was not Wesley’s purpose to found a church, but the awakening brought about the spontaneous origin of the “societies” which grew into the Methodist Movement. Near the end of 1739, there came to Wesley, in London, eight or ten persons who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. A day was appointed when they might all come together, which from thence

forward they did every week; namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices which he judged most needful for them and they always concluded their meeting with prayer. The Guides and Helps to Holy Living found in this *Discipline* (260–268) represent in revised form the General Rules which Wesley gave to the members of the societies to enable them to test the sincerity of their purpose and to guide them in holy living.

4. The movement spread to America by the emigration of Methodists, who, beginning in 1766, began to organize the Methodist “classes” and “societies” in the colonies. In December 1784, the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The new church experienced a miraculous growth, especially on the frontier, and quickly became one of the major religious forces in the new nation.

### **B. The Organization of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection**

6. John Wesley and the early Methodist leaders in America had been uncompromising in their denunciation of human slavery. But with the invention of the cotton gin, the economic advantages of slavery involved many ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in slaveholding. When a group of ministers in the New England Conference, led by Orange Scott, began to agitate anew for the abolition of slavery, the bishops and others in the church sought to silence them lest the peace of the church be disturbed.

7. The inward compulsion of truth met by the outward compulsion of ecclesiastical authority led to a series of withdrawals of churches and ministers from the Methodist Episcopal Church. The earliest extensive withdrawal was in Michigan, and led on May 13, 1841, to the formation of the annual conference using the name, “The Wesleyan Methodist Church.” The withdrawal which had the most far-reaching consequences occurred in New England and New York late in 1842. In November 1842, Orange Scott, Jotham Horton, and LaRoy Sunderland withdrew, publishing their reasons in the first issue of *The True Wesleyan*, and they were joined in the following month by Luther Lee and Lucius C. Matlack. A call was issued to those interested in the ultimate formation of a new church, free from episcopacy and slavery, to meet at Andover, Massachusetts, February 1, 1843. At Andover, a call was issued for an organizing convention.

8. The organizing convention for the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America was held at Utica, New York, May 31 to June 8, 1843. The new

organization was a “Connection” of local churches organized in annual conferences. It avoided the episcopacy, and provided for equal ministerial and lay representation in all of its governing bodies. Moral and social reform were strongly emphasized, with slaveholding and all involvements with intoxicating liquors being prohibited.

### **C. The Revival of the Wesleyan Experience**

**11.** The Wesleyan Methodist Connection saw the crusade against slavery carried to a conclusion in the Civil War. Afterwards, many felt there was no reason for the Connection as such to continue, and returned to the larger Methodist bodies. Others felt, as was expressed by the 1867 General Conference, that the effects of slavery were not yet eradicated, and that the historic stand against intoxicating liquors, and the increasingly firm stand against lodges and secret societies, could only be maintained by the continued existence and activity of the Connection.

**12.** At its first General Conference in 1844, the Connection had adopted an article of religion on “Sanctification,” becoming the first denomination to do so. But the doctrine and experience suffered neglect and decline among all branches of Methodism in the mid-nineteenth century. To renew them, God raised up a revival of holiness promoted through literature, evangelistic meetings, and camp meetings that swept throughout Methodism and across denominational lines. The first national camp meeting, which developed into the National Holiness Association, was held in 1867. The revival led to the establishment of several new holiness denominations and to the renewing and redirecting of others.

**13.** This spiritual revival, promoted vigorously by a corps of itinerant evangelists, soon established holiness as the major tenet of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, which had formerly majored on social and political reform. In 1883, the General Conference adopted a resolution requiring the preaching of entire sanctification, and by 1893 new articles of religion on regeneration and entire sanctification had been adopted by the General Conference, the annual conferences, and local churches.

### **D. The Development of The Wesleyan Methodist Church**

**16.** The revival of holiness which swept the Wesleyan Methodist Connection introduced a new emphasis on evangelism. The need for organized efforts of church extension and the need to conserve converts led to the

gradual development of a more formal organization as a church rather than a connection. In 1891, the name was changed to the Wesleyan Methodist Connection (or Church) of America, and the denomination moved beyond a leadership largely confined to publications (editor and publisher) to elect a general missionary superintendent. Gradually other departmental executives were added. In 1947, the name was changed to The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, and a central supervisory authority was established with the General Conference president as the full-time leader of the denomination, and the Board of Administration as the central and coordinating board of control. In 1957, the denominational headquarters was moved from Syracuse, New York, where it had been for over a century, to Marion, Indiana. In 1959, the plan for a General Conference president was superseded by one calling for three General Superintendents.

**17.** Various ministers and local churches affiliated themselves with The Wesleyan Methodist Church at different times throughout its history. But its home base and missionary work were appreciably augmented by the affiliation of three organizations.

(1) The Hephzibah Faith Missionary Society was organized in 1893 and eventually established headquarters at Tabor, Iowa. Some of its ministers and churches in Nebraska, its Brainerd Indian School near Hot Springs, South Dakota, and its mission field in Haiti became part of The Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1948.

(2) The Missionary Bands of the World, organized in 1885 as the Pentecost Bands, an auxiliary of the Free Methodist Church, became a separate organization in 1895, changed names in 1925, and in 1958 merged its churches in Indiana and its mission fields in central India and Jamaica with The Wesleyan Methodist Church.

(3) The Alliance of the Reformed Baptist Church of Canada was organized in 1888 as the result of the sanctification of several Baptist ministers. In 1966, it merged its churches in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Maine, and its mission fields in Africa with The Wesleyan Methodist Church.

**18.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church became international with its spread to Canada and the establishment, development, and acquisition through merger of mission fields in Sierra Leone, India, Colombia, Japan, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Mexico, Taiwan, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Nepal, Rhodesia, and South Africa.

### **E. The Formation and Development of The Pilgrim Holiness Church**

**23.** The Pilgrim Holiness Church came into being as a result of the revival of scriptural holiness that swept across the various denominations in America in the last half of the nineteenth century, the same awakening that had rechanneled the energies of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection from social and political reform to holiness evangelism (12–13). The awakening crystallized in the establishment of many nondenominational and interdenominational holiness unions and associations and independent churches. Toward the close of the nineteenth century many of like precious faith began to draw together in the unity of the Spirit.

**24.** A focal point for the beginning of The Pilgrim Holiness Church as an organization was the formation of the International Holiness Union and Prayer League in September 1897, at Cincinnati, Ohio, in the home of Martin Wells Knapp. Rev. Seth C. Rees was chosen President, and Rev. Martin Wells Knapp, Vice President. The Union was not thought of as a church, nor intended as such, but was an interdenominational fellowship, marked by simplicity and the absence of restrictions. The primary purpose of the Union was to unite holiness people in promoting worldwide holiness evangelism. A fourfold emphasis was declared concerning the regeneration of sinners, the entire sanctification of believers, the premillennial and imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the evangelization of the world. The Union met the need of many people for fellowship and cooperation in the spread of scriptural holiness and grew rapidly. Extensive revival work was carried on by members of the Union, resulting in the formation of many city missions, churches, rescue homes, and camp meetings.

**25.** In the annual meeting of the Union held in July 1900, the name was changed to International Apostolic Holiness Union in order to express more fully the aim of promoting a return to apostolic principles and practices. Also in 1900 the foreign missionary work began as members of the Union went out as faith missionaries to South Africa, India, Japan, the West Indies, and South America.

**26.** The Union gradually developed into a church organization in order to provide church homes for the converts and the conservation of the work. In 1905, the name was changed to International Apostolic Holiness Union and Churches. The interdenominational features also faded out, and in 1913, the name was altered to International Apostolic Holiness Church.

**27.** In 1919, the Indiana, Illinois-Missouri, and Kansas-Oklahoma Conferences of the Holiness Christian Church were received by the General

Assembly of the International Apostolic Holiness Church. The Holiness Christian Church had its beginning in a revival movement around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1882, and was organized at Linwood, Pennsylvania, in 1889 as the Holiness Christian Association. By 1919, it was known as the Holiness Christian Church and was composed of four conferences; it also sponsored a missionary work in Central America.

**28.** The Pentecostal Rescue Mission joined the International Holiness Church in March 1922, and became the New York District. It had originated at Binghamton, New York, in 1897, and had spread until it included missions, rescue work, camp meetings, orphanage activities, churches, and a missionary work in Alaska.

**29.** In October 1922, the General Assembly, in special session, received The Pilgrim Church of California and adopted the name, The Pilgrim Holiness Church. The Pilgrim Church was first organized on May 27, 1917, as the Pentecost-Pilgrim Church in Pasadena, California. By 1922, a school known as Pilgrim Bible School had been established and a periodical was being published at Pasadena, California, and missionaries had been sent out to Mexico.

**30.** In 1924, a group of several churches known as the Pentecostal Brethren in Christ united with and became a part of the Ohio District of The Pilgrim Holiness Church.

**31.** In 1925, The People's Mission Church, with headquarters at Colorado Springs, Colorado, became a part of The Pilgrim Holiness Church. It was the outgrowth of revival work that began in 1898 in Colorado Springs and spread through several surrounding states. A Bible school was operated, a periodical published, and a camp meeting maintained at Colorado Springs.

**32.** In 1946, The Holiness Church of California was received by the General Conference into The Pilgrim Holiness Church. This church, which began in a revival movement in 1880 and was first known as The Holiness Bands, maintained a Bible school at El Monte, California, and a growing missionary work in Peru and Palestine.

**33.** The Africa Evangelistic Mission, with headquarters at Boksburg, Transvaal, South Africa, was received by The Pilgrim Holiness Church in 1962. The Mission carried on work organized into three districts, two of which were located in the Orange Free State and Transvaal in the Republic of South Africa, and a third district comprising extensive work in Mozambique.

**34.** The growth of The Pilgrim Holiness Church continued through revival work and evangelism in greater measure than by the uniting of other bodies. An important turning point in the organizational structure was reached in 1930 when the General Assembly unified the administration of the denomination by

providing for one General Superintendent, one General Board, and a general headquarters at Indianapolis, Indiana. In 1958, a plan for three General Superintendents was inaugurated. In 1962, the General Conference, known until 1942 as the General Assembly, was designated as The International Conference in recognition of the growth and development of the overseas work.

35. The original purpose of the founders of The Pilgrim Holiness Church to promote worldwide holiness evangelism remained an indelible characteristic. Missionary work was carried out in many lands, and The Pilgrim Holiness Church extended beyond the United States and Canada to the following places: South Africa, including Natal, Transvaal, Cape Province, and Orange Free State; Swaziland; Mozambique; Zambia; the Caribbean area, including Grand Cayman, Jamaica, St. Croix, St. Thomas, Saba, St. Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, Barbuda, Barbados, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, and Curaçao; Guyana; Suriname; Brazil; Peru; Mexico; Philippine Islands; and England.

### **F. The Formation of The Wesleyan Church**

50. Merger between The Pilgrim Holiness Church and The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America was proposed at various times, and was voted upon by the General Conferences of the two bodies in 1958 and 1959, failing to pass in the Wesleyan Methodist General Conference by a margin of a single vote. In 1962, the General Conference of The Pilgrim Holiness Church took action expressing renewed interest in union with The Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1963, the General Conference of The Wesleyan Methodist Church took like action, instructing its Committee on Church Union to pursue its work with all due diligence. On June 15, 1966, the Thirty-Second General Conference of The Wesleyan Methodist Church adopted The Basis for Merger and Constitution, and subsequently the annual conferences and local churches ratified the action. On June 16, 1966, the Twenty-Fifth International Conference of The Pilgrim Holiness Church also adopted The Basis for Merger and Constitution. Thus the formation of The Wesleyan Church was authorized. The General Board of The Pilgrim Holiness Church and the General Board of Administration of The Wesleyan Methodist Church cooperated in planning the uniting General Conference, and in preparing the new book of *Discipline* for its consideration. On June 26, 1968, The Pilgrim Holiness Church and The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America were united to form The Wesleyan Church.



### G. The Development of the World Organization

**60.** The merging General Conference provided tentatively for the development of the overseas churches into national or regional General Conferences, as they matured and qualified for such status. As a result, the General Board of Administration appointed a World Organization Planning Committee. Its work led to a meeting of mission coordinators and national representatives from around the world in the World Organization Planning Conference, June 6–9, 1972, prior to the Second General Conference. The Planning Conference recommended setting apart those portions of the Constitution which contained the name, doctrines, and standards of conduct plus some new organizational articles, as the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church, which would be binding upon all General Conferences of The Wesleyan Church. It recommended the formation of a Wesleyan World Fellowship governed by a Charter, functioning through a General Council, with eventually an International Board of Review assisting in maintaining faithfulness to the Essentials. The entire plan was approved by the 1972 General Conference, and subsequently the members of the World Organization Planning Conference effected the organization of the General Council.

**65.** During the following quadrennium two provisional General Conferences (one step short of full status) were formed. The Caribbean Provisional General Conference was organized April 3, 1974, and the Provisional General Conference of the Philippines was organized April 22–23, 1975. The 1984 General Conference incorporated the Essentials in the Charter as a historic statement of faith with which all *Disciplines* must agree. On June 20, 1988, the General Conference approved the elevation of The Wesleyan Church of the Philippines to full standing equivalent to that of the North American General Conference, providing for the formation of the International Board of Review. On June 21, 2004, the North American General Conference approved the elevation of The Wesleyan Holiness Church of the Caribbean to full General Conference standing. This coincided with the restructuring of The Wesleyan World Fellowship as The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church.

**70.** The first International Conference was held in June 2008 in Orlando, Florida. The 2012 International Conference approved the formation of The South Pacific Established Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church, consisting of The Wesleyan Methodist Churches of Australia and New Zealand together with the mission units of the Solomon Islands and Bougainville. The 2015 International Conference approved the formation of The Wesleyan Church

of Canada as an established national conference, which was ratified by the 2016 North American General Conference. The 2016 North American General Conference also approved the formation of the Ibero-America Established Regional Conference, consisting of nineteen nations in Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa. This action was forwarded to the 2019 International Conference for approval.

## H. Unit Names

**80.** The following is a representative list of the various units of The Wesleyan Church. Security issues prohibit a full list. Unit names, not representative of legal names, are printed for information only. Included are those whose adaptation of the name have been approved in keeping with the provisions of 205 and 340:2. These are printed for information only. Changes may be authorized when necessary by the General Board (340:2; 1655:32).

- Australia: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia
- Bougainville: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bougainville
- Brazil: Igreja Evangelica Wesleyana
- British Isles: The Wesleyan Holiness Church
- Caribbean: (2565) The Wesleyan Holiness Church of the Caribbean
- Chile: Ministerio Evangelistico y Misionero "Cristo es la Unica Respuesta"
- Colombia: La Iglesia Wesleyana de Colombia
- Costa Rica: Iglesia Wesleyana Internacional de Costa Rica
- Democratic Republic of the Congo: Eglise Wesleyenne du Congo
- Egypt: The Standard Wesleyan Church
- Ghana: Wesleyan Church Ghana
- Guyana: The Wesleyan Church
- Haiti: L'Eglise Wesleyenne d'Haiti
- Honduras: Mision Methodista Sion
- India, Central: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Central India
- India, East: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of East India
- India, West: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of West India
- Indonesia: Yayasan Gereja Wesleyan Indonesia
- Liberia: The Wesleyan Church of Liberia
- Mexico: Iglesia Evangélica de los Peregrinos
- Mozambique: Igreja Emmanuel Evangelica Wesleyana
- Myanmar: The Wesleyan Methodist Church
- New Zealand: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Aotearoa-New Zealand
- Nicaragua: Asociación Mundial de Iglesias Wesleyanas de Nicaragua

Pakistan: The Wesleyan Church—Pakistan  
Peru: Iglesia Wesleyana Peregrina  
Philippines (2560): The Wesleyan Church of the Philippines  
Puerto Rico: Iglesia Evangélica Wesleyana  
Sierra Leone: The Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone  
Solomon Islands: The Wesleyan Church of Solomon Islands  
South Africa: The Wesleyan Church of Southern Africa  
South Korea: Jesus Korea Wesleyan Church  
South Pacific: The South Pacific Conference of The Wesleyan  
Methodist Church  
Suriname: De Wesleyaanse Gemeente  
Swaziland: Emmanuel Wesleyan Church of Swaziland  
United States and Canada: The Wesleyan Church  
Venezuela: Iglesia Evangélica Wesleyana  
Zambia: The Pilgrim Wesleyan Church of Zambia  
Zimbabwe: The Wesleyan Church

## Chapter 2

### MISSION OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

**100.** The Wesleyan Church has grown out of a revival movement which has historically given itself to one mission—the spreading of scriptural holiness throughout every land. The message which ignited the Wesleyan revival was the announcement that God through Christ can forgive men and women of their sins, transform them, free them from inbred sin, enable them to live a holy life, and bear witness to their hearts that they are indeed children of God. The message was based on the Scriptures, was verified in personal experience, and came not only in word but in the power of the Spirit. It was dynamic and contagious, and was communicated from heart to heart and from land to land. It adapted itself and gave new vitality and purpose to various kinds of church organizations.

**105.** The Wesleyan Church believes that to spread scriptural holiness throughout every land involves joining the entire church of Christ in a full-orbed mission to the world, including the following:

(1) Sharing the divine revelation of full salvation through Christ as recorded in the Holy Scriptures so as to evangelize the lost and to minister redemptively to human society and its institutions.

(2) Relating new converts to local churches and providing Spirit-filled and well-trained pastors and leaders for the same.

(3) Developing in the converts patterns of worship to God and of fellowship with other believers.

(4) Discipling new believers in turn to be witnesses for their Lord.

(5) Guiding believers to experience entire sanctification so they are enabled to live whole and holy lives.

(6) Providing for developing Christians lifelong nurture and instruction, encouraging each to grow toward spiritual maturity in Christ Jesus.

(7) Helping maturing Christians to develop a Christian interpretation of life and the universe, training them to be good stewards of the talents, time, opportunities, and resources with which Christ has entrusted them.

(8) Equipping believers for lives of dynamic service toward God and humanity, so that the full potential God has designed for each of them may be realized.

## Chapter 3

### CLASSIFICATION OF CHURCH LAW

#### A. Constitutional Law

**125.** Relationship to Essentials. The Essentials of The Wesleyan Church consist of a historic statement of faith and practice and are set forth in the Charter of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church (see Appendix A). Each General Conference of The International Conference must subscribe to the Essentials' pronouncements and must not contravene any of its provisions in its constitutions, articles of religion, or discipline. The North American General Conference does so subscribe. The Articles of Religion and other statements of faith and practice which are a part of the Constitution of the North American General Conference are in accord with the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church and are not intended to contravene or contradict them at any point (6765:1).

**135.** Identification. The Constitution of the North American General Conference of The Wesleyan Church consists of Articles 1 through 12, paragraphs 200 through 385, including the Preamble, Name, Articles of Religion, Guides and Helps to Holy Living, Elementary Principles, Observance of Sacraments, Membership, The Ministry, Organization and Government, Powers and Restrictions of the General Conference, Coordination of Local, District, and General Discipline, The Supreme Judiciary, and Amendments to the Constitution. The Constitution may be amended as set forth in paragraph 385.

**145.** Function. The Constitution is that body of laws (135) that sets forth fundamental doctrines and practices, the basic laws, principles, and restrictions by which the Church is governed, and guarantees certain rights to its members and ministers. The Constitution takes precedence over statutory law, ritual, and all other laws and official actions of the governing bodies and officers within its jurisdiction (185). It is the law to which all statutory law, ritual, and any other legislative or official actions must conform.

#### B. Statutory Law

**155.** Statutory law consists of legislation passed by the General Conference by a majority vote in fulfillment of its duties as set forth in the Constitution and in keeping with its provisions and restrictions and printed by order of the

General Conference in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*. Such statutory law is the authority for all of the North American General Conference of The Wesleyan Church, including its members, ministers, churches, districts, institutions, auxiliary organizations, corporations, general divisions and offices, agencies, and any other official bodies (185). Statutory law remains in effect until amended, rescinded, or declared unconstitutional.

**165.** All changes in or additions to the statutory laws take effect when *The Discipline* is published following the adjournment of the General Conference unless an earlier time is ordered by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference.

### C. Ritual

**175.** The ritual of The Wesleyan Church consists of those rites and ceremonies contained in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* (5500–5999), officially approved by the General Conference by a majority of those present and voting. The “Reception of Members,” “Covenant Questions,” and “Declaration of Purpose,” in the ritual for the “Reception of Members” (5565–5567); the “Examination of Candidates” (5772) in the rituals for the “Ordination of Ministers” (5782); and the “Commissioning of Ministers” (5825) have the authority of statutory law and must be followed as prescribed. In the remainder of the ritual, a measure of flexibility is permitted as long as nothing contradicts the Articles of Religion or any other part of the Constitution.

### D. Current Authority

**185.** The current issue of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* is the only valid authority for the North American General Conference and its subordinate units, with the exception of those units under the Global Partners Division which have been authorized to have their own disciplines by the General Board (340:2; 2500:4–5; 2610:8).

### E. Scripture References and Explanatory Notes

**190.** Listings of Scripture references and explanatory notes have been appended in support of the Articles of Religion and Guides and Helps to Holy Living. These have the status of statutory law (155).

## Chapter 4

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Preamble

**200.** In order that we may wisely preserve and pass on to posterity the heritage of doctrine and principles of Christian living transmitted to us as evangelicals in the Arminian-Wesleyan tradition, and to ensure church order by sound principles of ecclesiastical polity, and to prepare the way for more effective cooperation with other branches of the church of Christ in all that makes for the advancement of God's kingdom among all people, we, the ministers and lay members of The Wesleyan Church meeting in official assemblies, do hereby ordain, establish, and set forth as the fundamental law, or Constitution of The Wesleyan Church, the Articles of Religion, rules of Christian living, privileges and conditions of church membership, and articles of organization and government, here following:

### Article 1. Name

**205.** The name of this communion is *The Wesleyan Church*. Wherever the use of this name is impossible or impractical, adaptation may be made by the authorized body (340:2).

### Article 2. Articles of Religion

#### 1. Faith in the Holy Trinity

**210.** We believe in the one living and true God, both holy and loving, eternal, unlimited in power, wisdom, and goodness, the creator and preserver of all things. Within this unity there are three persons of one essential nature, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**Gen. 1:1; 17:1; Ex. 3:13–15; 33:20; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:2; Isa. 40:28–29; Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19; John 1:1–2; 4:24; 16:13; 17:3; Acts 5:3–4; 17:24–25; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; Eph. 2:18; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16–17; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20.**

## *2. The Father*

**212.** We believe the Father is the source of all that exists, whether of matter or spirit. With the Son and the Holy Spirit, He made man, male and female, in His image. By intention He relates to people as Father, thereby forever declaring His goodwill toward them. In love, He both seeks and receives penitent sinners.

**Ps. 68:5; Isa. 64:8; Matt. 7:11; John 3:17; Rom. 8:15;  
1 Peter 1:17.**

## *3. The Son of God*

**214.** We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, truly God and truly man. He died on the cross and was buried, to be a sacrifice both for original sin and for all human transgressions, and to reconcile us to God. Christ rose bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and there intercedes for us at the Father's right hand until He returns to judge all humanity at the last day.

**Ps. 16:8–10; Matt. 1:21, 23; 11:27; 16:28; 27:62–66;  
28:5–9, 16–17; Mark 10:45; 15; 16:6–7; Luke 1:27, 31,  
35; 24:4–8, 23; John 1:1, 14, 18; 3:16–17; 20:26–29;  
21; Acts 1:2–3; 2:24–31; 4:12; 10:40; Rom. 5:10, 18;  
8:34; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3–8, 14; 2 Cor. 5:18–19; Gal. 1:4;  
2:20; 4:4–5; Eph. 5:2; 1 Tim. 1:15; Heb 2:17; 7:27;  
9:14, 28; 10:12; 13:20; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 4:14.**

## *4. The Holy Spirit*

**216.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is of the same essential nature, majesty, and glory as the Father and the Son, truly and eternally God. He is the administrator of grace to all, and is particularly the effective agent in conviction for sin, in regeneration, in sanctification, and in glorification. He is ever present, assuring, preserving, guiding, and enabling the believer.

**Job 33:4; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16–17; 15:26;  
16:13–15; Acts 5:3–4; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:6.**



### *5. The Sufficiency and Full Authority of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation*

**218.** We believe that the books of the Old and New Testaments constitute the Holy Scriptures. They are the inspired and infallibly written Word of God, fully inerrant in their original manuscripts and superior to all human authority, and have been transmitted to the present without corruption of any essential doctrine. We believe that they contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man or woman that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. Both in the Old and New Testaments life is offered ultimately through Christ, who is the only mediator between God and humanity. The New Testament teaches Christians how to fulfill the moral principles of the Old Testament, calling for loving obedience to God made possible by the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit.

The canonical books of the Old Testament are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The canonical books of the New Testament are:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

**Ps. 19:7; Matt. 5:17–19; 22:37–40; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:45; 5:46; 17:17; Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 1:2; 15:4, 8; 16:26; 2 Cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:8; Eph. 2:15–16; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; Heb. 4:12; 10:1; 11:39; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:19–21; 1 John 2:3–7; Rev. 22:18–19.**

### *6. God's Purpose for Humanity*

**220.** We believe that the two great commandments which require us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, summarize the divine law as it is revealed in the Scriptures. They are the perfect measure and norm of human duty, both for the ordering and directing

of families and nations, and all other social bodies, and for individual acts, by which we are required to acknowledge God as our only supreme ruler, and all persons as created by Him, equal in all natural rights. Therefore all persons should so order all their individual, social, and political acts as to give to God entire and absolute obedience, and to assure to all the enjoyment of every natural right, as well as to promote the fulfillment of each in the possession and exercise of such rights.

**Lev. 19:18, 34; Deut. 1:16–17; Job 31:13–14; Jer. 21:12; 22:3; Micah 6:8; Matt. 5:44–48; 7:12; Mark 12:28–31; Luke 6:27–29, 35; John 13:34–35; Acts 10:34–35; 17:26; Rom. 12:9; 13:1, 7–8, 10; Gal. 5:14; 6:10; Titus 3:1; James 2:8; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 2:5; 4:12–13; 2 John 6.**

### *7. Marriage and the Family*

**222.** We believe that every person is created in the image of God, that human sexuality reflects that image in terms of intimate love, communication, fellowship, subordination of the self to the larger whole, and fulfillment. God's Word makes use of the marriage relationship as the supreme metaphor for His relationship with His covenant people and for revealing the truth that this relationship is of one God with one people. Therefore God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed only in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. This is the only relationship which is divinely designed for the birth and rearing of children and is a covenant union made in the sight of God, taking priority over every other human relationship. We adhere to the teachings of Scripture regarding gender identity, sexual conduct, and the sacredness of marriage, and believe that sexual relationships outside of marriage and sexual relationships between persons of the same sex are immoral and sinful.

**Gen. 1:27–28; 2:18, 20, 23–24; Isa. 54:4–8; 62:5b; Jer. 3:14; Ezek. 16; Hosea 2; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4–6; Mark 10:9; John 2:1–2, 11; 1 Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:23–32; 1 Tim. 5:14; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 19:7–8.**

### 8. *Personal Choice*

**224.** We believe that humanity's creation in the image of God included the ability to choose between right and wrong. Thus individuals were made morally responsible for their choices. But since the fall of Adam, people are unable in their own strength to do what is right. This is due to original sin, which is not simply the following of Adam's example, but rather the corruption of the nature of each mortal, and is reproduced naturally in Adam's descendants. Because of it, humans are very far gone from original righteousness, and by nature are continually inclined to evil. They cannot of themselves even call upon God or exercise faith for salvation. But through Jesus Christ the prevenient grace of God makes possible what humans in self effort cannot do. It is bestowed freely upon all, enabling all who will to turn and be saved.

**Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; Ps. 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21–23; Luke 16:15; John 7:17; Rom. 3:10–12; 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1–3; 1 Tim. 2:5; Titus 3:5; Heb. 11:6; Rev. 22:17.**

### 9. *Sin: Original, Willful, and Involuntary*

**225.** We believe that through the disobedience of Adam and Eve sin entered the world and all creation suffered its consequences. The effects of sin include disruption of the relationship between God and humanity, deterioration of the natural order of creation, and exploitation of persons by evil or misguided social systems. The whole of creation groans for redemption. Each person is born with a proclivity toward sin, manifested in an inordinate orientation toward self and independence from God, leading to deliberate acts of unrighteousness. The residual effects of Adam and Eve's disobedience include a marred human nature from which arise involuntary shortcomings, faults, infirmities, and imperfect judgments, which should not be accounted the same as willful sin. However, as manifestations of the fallen nature of humanity, these shortcomings of God's holiness still necessitate the merits of the atonement, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and the self-control of the believer. Willful sin results when a morally accountable person chooses to violate a known law of God, using freedom of choice to please self rather than obey God. The consequences of willful sin include a loss of fellowship with God, a self-absorption with one's own interests rather than love and concern for others, a bondage to things which distort the divine image, a persistent inability to live righteously, and ultimately

everlasting misery and separation from God. The atoning work of Christ is the only remedy for sin, whether original, willful, or involuntary.

**Gen. 3; 6:5; Ps. 1; 32:1–5; 51; Isa. 6:5; Jer. 17:9–10; Matt. 16:24–27; 22:36–40; Mark 7:20–23; John 16:8–9; Rom. 1:18–25; 3:23; 5:12–14; 6:15–23; 7:1–8:9; 8:18–24; 14:23; 1 Cor. 3:1–4; Gal. 5:16–25; Eph. 2:1–22; Col. 1:21–22; 3:5–11; 1 John 1:7–2:4; 3:7–10.**

### *10. The Atonement*

**226.** We believe that Christ's offering of Himself, once and for all, through His sufferings and meritorious death on the cross, provides the perfect redemption and atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual. There is no other ground of salvation from sin but that alone. This atonement is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. It is unconditionally effective in the salvation of those mentally incompetent from birth, of those converted persons who have become mentally incompetent, and of children under the age of accountability. But it is effective for the salvation of those who reach the age of accountability only when they repent and exercise faith in Christ.

**Isa. 52:13—53:12; Luke 24:46–47; John 3:16; Acts 3:18; 4:12; Rom. 3:20, 24–26; 5:8–11, 13, 18–20; 7:7; 8:34; 1 Cor. 6:11; 15:22; Gal. 2:16; 3:2–3; Eph. 1:7; 2:13, 16; 1 Tim. 2:5–6; Heb. 7:23–27; 9:11–15, 24–28; 10:14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.**

### *11. Repentance and Faith*

**228.** We believe that for men and women to appropriate what God's prevenient grace has made possible, they must voluntarily respond in repentance and faith. The ability comes from God, but the act is the individual's.

Repentance is prompted by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. It involves a willful change of mind that renounces sin and longs for righteousness, a godly sorrow for and a confession of past sins, proper restitution for wrongdoings, and a resolution to reform the life. Repentance is the precondition for saving faith, and without it saving faith is impossible. Faith, in turn, is the only condition of salvation. It begins in the agreement of the mind and the consent of the will to the truth of the gospel, but issues in a complete reliance

by the whole person in the saving ability of Jesus Christ and a complete trusting of oneself to Him as Savior and Lord. Saving faith is expressed in a public acknowledgment of His lordship and an identification with His church.

**Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3; 24:47; John 3:16; 17:20; 20:31; Acts 5:31; 10:43; 11:18; 16:31; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 1:16; 2:4; 10:8–10, 17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8; 4:4–6; Phil. 3:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 11:6; 12:2; 1 Peter 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9.**

### *12. Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption*

**230.** We believe that when one repents of personal sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that at the same moment that person is justified, regenerated, adopted into the family of God, and assured of personal salvation through the witness of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby a person is accounted righteous, granted full pardon of all sin, delivered from guilt, completely released from the penalty of sins committed, by the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith alone, not on the basis of works.

We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that work of the Holy Spirit whereby, when one truly repents and believes, one's moral nature is given a distinctively spiritual life with the capacity for love and obedience. This new life is received by faith in Jesus Christ, it enables the pardoned sinner to serve God with the will and affections of the heart, and by it the regenerate are delivered from the power of sin which reigns over all the unregenerate.

We believe that adoption is the act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer becomes a partaker of all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a child of God.

**Justification:** Hab. 2:4; Acts 13:38–39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:2–5; 5:1–2; Gal. 3:6–14; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil 3:9; Heb. 10:38.

**Regeneration:** John 1:12–13; 3:3, 5–8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:5, 10, 19; 4:24; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3–4; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1.

**Adoption:** Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5, 7; Eph. 1:5.

**Witness of the Spirit:** Rom. 8:16–17; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 2:3; 3:14, 18–19.

### 13. Good Works

**232.** We believe that although good works cannot save us from our sins or from God's judgment, they are the fruit of faith and follow after regeneration. Therefore they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and by them a living faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

**Matt. 5:16; 7:16–20; John 15:8; Rom. 3:20; 4:2, 4, 6;  
Gal. 2:16; 5:6; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess.  
1:3; Titus 2:14; 3:5; James 2:18, 22; 1 Peter 2:9, 12.**

### 14. Sin After Regeneration

**234.** We believe that after we have experienced regeneration, it is possible to fall into sin, for in this life there is no such height or strength of holiness from which it is impossible to fall. But by the grace of God one who has fallen into sin may by true repentance and faith find forgiveness and restoration.

**Mal. 3:7; Matt. 18:21–22; John 15:4–6; 1 Tim. 4:1, 16;  
Heb. 10:35–39; 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 24–25.**

### 15. Sanctification: Initial, Progressive, Entire

**236.** We believe that sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is separated from sin unto God and is enabled to love God with all the heart and to walk in all His holy commandments blameless. Sanctification is initiated at the moment of justification and regeneration. From that moment there is a gradual or progressive sanctification as the believer walks with God and daily grows in grace and in a more perfect obedience to God. This prepares for the crisis of entire sanctification which is wrought instantaneously when believers present themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, being effected by the baptism with the Holy Spirit who cleanses the heart from all inbred sin. The crisis of entire sanctification perfects the believer in love and empowers that person for effective service. It is followed by lifelong growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The life of holiness continues through faith in the sanctifying blood of Christ and evidences itself by loving obedience to God's revealed will.

**Gen. 17:1; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 130:8; Isa. 6:1–6; Ezek. 36:25–29; Matt. 5:8, 48; Luke 1:74–75; 3:16–17; 24:49; John 17:1–26; Acts 1:4–5, 8; 2:1–4; 15:8–9; 26:18; Rom. 8:3–4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:13, 24; 5:25–27; 1 Thess. 3:10, 12–13; 4:3, 7–8; 5:23–24; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 10:14; 12:14; 13:12; James 3:17–18; 4:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 1:7, 9; 3:8–9; 4:17–18; Jude 24.**

### *16. The Gifts of the Spirit*

**238.** We believe that the gift of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit Himself, and He is to be desired more than the gifts of the Spirit which He in His wise counsel bestows upon individual members of the church to enable them properly to fulfill their function as members of the body of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit, although not always identifiable with natural abilities, function through them for the edification of the whole church. These gifts are to be exercised in love under the administration of the Lord of the church, not through human volition. The relative value of the gifts of the Spirit is to be tested by their usefulness in the Church and not by the ecstasy produced in the ones receiving them.

**Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:38–39; 8:19–20; 10:45; 11:17; Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:1–14:40; Eph. 4:7–8, 11–16; Heb. 2:4; 13:20–21; 1 Peter 4:8–11.**

### *17. The Church*

**240.** We believe that the Christian church is the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ, who is the founder and only head of the church. The church includes both those believers who have gone to be with the Lord and those who remain on the earth, having renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil, and having dedicated themselves to the work which Christ committed unto His church until He comes. The church on earth is to preach the pure Word of God, properly administer the sacraments according to Christ's instructions, and live in obedience to all that Christ commands. A local church is a body of believers formally organized on gospel principles, meeting regularly for the purposes of evangelism, nurture, fellowship, and worship. The Wesleyan Church is a denomination consisting of those members within district conferences and local churches who, as members of the body of Christ, hold the faith set forth

in these Articles of Religion and acknowledge the ecclesiastical authority of its governing bodies.

**Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:41–47; 9:31; 11:22; 12:5; 14:23; 15:22; 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:28; 16:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:22–23; 2:19–22; 3:9–10, 21; 5:22–33; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23; James 5:14.**

### *18. The Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper*

**242.** We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ and ordained as a means of grace when received through faith. They are tokens of our profession of Christian faith and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, He works within us to quicken, strengthen, and confirm our faith.

We believe that water baptism is a sacrament of the church, commanded by our Lord and administered to believers. It is a symbol of the new covenant of grace and signifies acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ. By means of this sacrament, believers declare their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

**Matt. 3:13–17; 28:19; Mark 1:9–11; John 3:5, 22, 26; 4:1–2; Acts 2:38–39, 41; 8:12–17, 36–38; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom 2:28–29; 4:11; 6:3–4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27–29; Col. 2:11–12; Titus 3:5.**

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death and of our hope in His victorious return, as well as a sign of the love that Christians have for each other. To such as receive it humbly, with a proper spirit and by faith, the Lord's Supper is made a means through which God communicates grace to the heart.

**Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; John 6:48–58; 1 Cor. 5:7–8; 10:3–4, 16–17; 11:23–29.**

### *19. The Second Coming of Christ*

**244.** We believe that the certainty of the personal and imminent return of Christ inspires holy living and zeal for the evangelization of the world. At His



return He will fulfill all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over evil.

**Job 19:25–27; Isa. 11:1–12; Zech. 14:1–11; Matt. 24:1–51; 25; 26:64; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 17:22–37; 21:5–36; John 14:1–3; Acts 1:6–11; 1 Cor. 1:7–8; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–11, 23; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2:1–12; Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 9:27–28; James 5:7–8; 2 Peter 3:1–14; 1 John 3:2–3; Rev. 1:7; 19:11–16; 22:6–7, 12, 20.**

### *20. The Resurrection of the Dead*

**246.** We believe in the bodily resurrection from the dead of all people—of the just unto the resurrection of life, and of the unjust unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of the resurrection which will occur at Christ's second coming. The raised body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable.

**Job 19:25–27; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 22:30–32; 28:1–20; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 14:14; 24:1–53; John 5:28–29; 11:21–27; 20:1–21:25; Acts 1:3; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:1–58; 2 Cor. 4:14; 5:1–11; 1 Thess. 4:13–17; Rev. 20:4–6, 11–13.**

### *21. The Judgment of All Persons*

**248.** We believe that the Scriptures reveal God as the judge of all and the acts of His judgment are based on His omniscience and eternal justice. His administration of judgment will culminate in the final meeting of all persons before His throne of great majesty and power, where records will be examined and final rewards and punishments will be administered.

**Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 10:15; 25:31–46; Luke 11:31–32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; 2 Peter 3:7; Rev. 20:11–13.**

## 22. *Destiny*

**250.** We believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that there is a conscious personal existence after death. The final destiny of each person is determined by God's grace and that person's response, evidenced inevitably by a moral character which results from that individual's personal and volitional choices and not from any arbitrary decree of God. Heaven with its eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence is the final abode of those who choose the salvation which God provides through Jesus Christ, but hell with its everlasting misery and separation from God is the final abode of those who neglect this great salvation.

**Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:34–46; Mark 9:43–48; Luke 13:3;  
John 8:21–23; 14:2–3; 2 Cor. 5:6, 8, 10; Heb. 2:1–3;  
9:27–28; 10:26–31; Rev. 20:14–15; 21:1—22:5, 14–15.**

### **Article 3. Guides and Helps to Holy Living**

**260.** To be identified with an organized church is the blessed privilege and sacred duty of all who are saved from their sins and are seeking completeness in Christ Jesus. From the church's beginnings in the New Testament age, it has been understood that such identification involves putting off the old patterns of conduct and putting on the mind of Christ. In maintaining this Christian concept of a transformed life, The Wesleyan Church intends to relate timeless biblical principles to the conditions of contemporary society in such a way as to respect the integrity of the individual believer, yet maintain the purity of the Church and the effectiveness of its witness. This is done in the conviction that there is validity in the concept of the collective Christian conscience as illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit. The following items (265) represent historic, ethical, and practical standards of The Wesleyan Church. While it is hoped that our people will earnestly seek the aid of the Spirit in cultivating a sensitivity to evil which transcends the mere letter of the law, those entering into membership are encouraged to follow carefully and conscientiously these Guides and Helps to Holy Living. Disregard of the principles embraced in these Guides and Helps to Holy Living subjects all credentialed ministers and any member serving in an elected leadership capacity to Church discipline (268; 550–610).

**265.** Those admitted to membership in our Churches commit themselves to demonstrate their life in Christ in such ways as to:

*Toward God*

(1) Reverence the name of God and honor the Lord's Day by divine worship and spiritual edification, participating in those activities which contribute to the moral and spiritual purposes of this day.

**Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:3, 7–11; Deut. 5:11–15; Isa. 58:13–14;  
Mark 2:27; Acts 20:7; Heb. 4:9.**

(2) Seek only the leading of the Holy Spirit and abstain from all forms of spiritism, such as the occult, witchcraft, astrology, and other similar practices.

**Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:10–14; Acts 19:18–19;  
Gal. 5:19–20.**

*Toward Self*

(3) Exercise faithful stewardship through the wise use of their time and material resources, practicing careful self-discipline in order to further the mission of Christ's church (remembering the principle of tithing which is basic to the New Testament standard of stewardship) and demonstrate compassion to those in need.

**Prov. 3:9; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 25:34–40; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor.  
16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 5:16; Col. 3:17; James 2:15–16;  
1 John 3:17.**

(4) Demonstrate a positive social witness by abstaining from all forms of gambling and by abstaining from using or trafficking (production, sale, or purchase) in any substances destructive to their physical, mental, and spiritual health, such as alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and drugs (other than proper medical purposes of drugs); and by refraining from membership in secret societies and lodges which are oath bound, believing that the quasi-religious nature of such organizations divides the Christian's loyalty, their secret nature contravenes the Christian's open witness, and the secret nature of their oaths is repugnant to the Christian conscience.

**Ex. 20:17; Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 6:12.** Gambling violates the principle of Christian stewardship and the tenth

commandment, is harmful to the individual in that it is emotionally addictive, is a poor example to others, and pollutes the moral climate of society.

**Prov. 20:1; Rom. 6:12; 14:21; 1 Cor. 6:12–20; 10:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:22.** Christians are to regard their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. While no “thing” of itself is sinful, the Christian should avoid the use of anything which would not help build the fellowship of the church, would not help the believers to realize their full potential in Christ, or which would enslave them. In the light of the scientific knowledge of our day concerning the actual and potential harm of these substances, total abstinence is more in keeping with these biblical principles than is moderation.

**Ex. 20:3; Matt. 5:34–36; John 18:20; Acts 4:12; James 5:12.** These prohibitions do not restrict membership in labor, civic, or other organizations which do not contradict loyalty to Christ and the Church. When in these relationships Christian principles are violated, members shall be dealt with because of such violations and not because of the membership itself.

(5) Follow the teachings of the Scriptures regarding gender identity and sexual conduct.

**Gen. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:12–20; 7:17–24.**

### *Toward Family*

(6) Follow the teachings of the Scriptures regarding marriage and divorce. We affirm that sexual relationships outside of marriage and sexual relationships between persons of the same sex are immoral and sinful. We further affirm that marriage between one man and one woman is God’s design, and we regard sexual sin of the spouse, such as adultery, homosexual behavior, bestiality, or incest, as clear biblical grounds for considering divorce, and then only when appropriate counseling has failed to restore the relationship.

**Ex. 20:14, 17; 22:19; Lev. 20:10–16; Matt. 5:32; 19:19;  
Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18.**

(7) Preserve the sanctity of the home by honoring Christ in every phase of family life and by demonstrating Christlike love (always avoiding violence, including physical, psychological, emotional, or sexual abuse toward one's spouse or family members, as well as sexual infidelity or desertion, any of which warrant church discipline for the offender and may justify separation or divorce if true repentance and appropriate counseling cannot bring about reconciliation), and by living peacefully with one another, thereby building up one's spouse and family members through word and deed, and encouraging the nurture and education of the children in the Christian faith so as to bring them early to the saving knowledge of Christ.

**Prov. 22:6; Malachi 2:13–16; Mark 10:9; 1 Cor. 7:10–16;  
Eph. 5:28; 6:4.**

*Toward the Church*

(8) Work together for the advancement of God's kingdom and for the mutual edification of fellow believers in holiness, knowledge, and love; walk together in Christian fellowship by giving and receiving counsel with gentleness and affection; by praying for each other; by helping each other in sickness and distress; and by demonstrating love, purity, and courtesy to all.

**Rom. 15:1–2; Eph. 4; 1 Thess. 5.**

(9) Grow in the knowledge, love, and grace of God by participating in public worship, the ministry of the Word of God, the Lord's Supper, family and personal devotions, and fasting.

**Mark 2:18–20; Acts 13:2–3; 14:23; Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor.  
11:23–28; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1–2; 2 Tim.  
3:16–17; Heb. 10:25; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18.**

(10) Preserve the fellowship and witness of the Church with reference to the use of languages. The Wesleyan Church believes in the miraculous use of languages and the interpretation of languages in its biblical and historical setting. But it is contrary to the Word of God to teach that speaking in an unknown

tongue or the gift of tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit or of that entire sanctification which the baptism accomplishes; therefore, only a language readily understood by the congregation is to be used in public worship. The Wesleyan Church believes that the use of an ecstatic prayer language has no clear scriptural sanction, or any pattern of established historical usage in the church; therefore, the use of such a prayer language shall not be promoted among us.<sup>1</sup>

**Acts 8:14–17; 1 Cor. 12:1—14:40; Gal. 5:22–24.**

*Toward Others*

(11) Do good as much as is possible to all people as God gives opportunity, especially to those in the body of Christ, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the destitute, by visiting or helping those who are sick or in prison; and by instructing, correcting, or encouraging them in love.

**Matt. 25:31–46; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 3:13; 10:23–25.**

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1. In 2022, the North American General Conference and its subsequent district conferences passed Memorial 52 which purposed to change Paragraph 265:10 to the following:

**265:10** To promote love, the common good, and orderliness in Christ's church with reference to the use of the spiritual gift of tongues. The Wesleyan Church believes in the gifts of the miraculous use of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. Speaking, praying or singing in tongues, whether done privately or publicly, is the divinely enabled ability some believers experience to communicate to God words of thanksgiving, praise, and adoration in a language not previously learned. While The Wesleyan Church recognizes that the gift of tongues is given to some believers, there is no single gift that is given to all as evidence of the Spirit's infilling. The greatest expression of this work is a heart purified by the Holy Spirit and an empowered life of love and service to God and people. If speaking in tongues occurs publicly in a church gathering, Scripture requires one person to speak at a time and an interpretation to be provided by another so all in attendance, especially unbelievers, may understand and be edified. Pastors and leaders are to exercise discretion in light of these instructions to ensure our gatherings bear the fruit of unity and order in a manner helpful and intelligible to those hearing the gospel.

**Mark 16:17; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:4, 6, 8–11, 16, 33; 4:7, 31; 10:44–47; 19:6; Rom. 5:5; 13:1–5; 15:18–19; 1 Cor. 2:4; 12:3, 7, 10–11, 25, 28, 30; 13:1; 14:1–2, 5–6, 13–19, 23, 26–28, 33, 39–40; 1 Thess. 5:12, 23; Heb. 2:4; 1 Peter 4:10; 5:12**

Memorial 52 will not be ratified until the Caribbean (2023) and Philippines (2026) General Conferences take action. For the current status of Memorial 52 check [www.wesleyan.org/memorial-52](http://www.wesleyan.org/memorial-52).

(12) Respect the inherent individual rights of all persons, regardless of race, color, or sex.

**1 Cor. 8:13; 12:13; Gal. 3:28; 1 Tim. 5:21.**

(13) Live honestly, be just in all dealings and faithful in all commitments.

**Eccl. 5:4–5; Rom. 12:17; Phil. 4:8–9; 1 Peter 2:12.**

**268.** These are the Guides and Helps to Holy Living of our Church. We believe all these to be consistent with the principles of Christ as taught in the Word of God, which is the only and sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. If any among us do not observe them, and/or habitually break any of them, we will admonish such persons in love with the hope of restoring them to lives in harmony with the spirit of the above Guides and Helps to Holy Living.

**Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5:6–7, 9–13; 2 Cor. 2:5–7; 5:18–20;  
6:14–18; Gal. 6:1–10; Eph. 4:25–32; Titus 3:10–11.**

#### **Article 4. Elementary Principles**

**270.** Christ is the only head of the church, and the Word of God the only rule of faith and conduct.

**272.** No person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and obeys the gospel of God our Savior ought to be deprived of Church membership.

**274.** Every person has an inalienable right to private judgment in matters of religion, and an equal right to express personal opinions in any way which will not violate the laws of God or the rights of others.

**276.** All Church hearings should be conducted on gospel principles only, and no minister or member should be excommunicated except for immorality, the propagation of unchristian doctrines, or for neglect of duties enjoined by the Word of God.

**278.** The pastoral or ministerial office and duties are of divine appointment, and all ordained ministers in the church of God are equal, but ministers are forbidden to be lords over God's heritage, or to have dominion over the faith of the saints.

**280.** The Church has a right to form and enforce such rules and regulations only as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and may be necessary or have a tendency to carry into effect the great system of practical Christianity.

**282.** Whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations is inherent in the ministers and members of the Church; but so much of that power may be delegated from time to time, upon a plan of representation, as they may judge necessary and proper.

**284.** It is the duty of all ministers and members of the Church to maintain godliness and oppose all moral evil.

**286.** It is obligatory upon ministers of the gospel to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties, and it is also obligatory upon the members to esteem ministers highly for their work's sake, and to render them a righteous compensation for their labors.

### **Article 5. Observance of Sacraments**

**290.** All persons to be baptized shall have the choice of baptism by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling. Since children are born into this world with natures inclined to sin, and yet the prevenient grace of God provides for their redemption during the period before reaching the age of accountability, those parents who so choose may testify to their faith in God's provision by presenting their small children for baptism, while those who prefer to emphasize baptism as a testimony by individual believers to their own act of faith may present their children for dedication.

**Mark 10:13–16; Acts 2:38–39; 16:15; 18:8.**

**293.** The Lord's Supper shall be observed in each local Wesleyan church at least once each three months.

### **Article 6. Membership**

**295.** The privileges and conditions of membership in the Church are constitutional, and changes therein may be made only by constitutional enactment. The General Conference may at its own discretion establish categories of membership. Nothing shall be included in the membership ritual that is contrary to the following definitions, conditions, and privileges of membership.

**297.** The conditions of membership are:

(1) Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as evidenced by an inner witness of new birth through the Holy Spirit and a commitment to pursue holiness in all things.

(2) Christian baptism.



(3) Instruction in, acceptance of, and a commitment to abide by the Articles of Religion (210–250) which are summarized in 299, the Elementary Principles, and the authority of The Wesleyan Church in matters of church government.

(4) A commitment to live out the mission and vision of The Wesleyan Church through a discipling relationship within the local church.

**299.** Candidates for membership shall declare their agreement with the following summary of the Articles of Religion (210–250):

We believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ the Son suffered in our place on the cross, that He died but rose again, that He now sits at the Father's right hand until He returns to judge every person at the last day.

We believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

We believe that by the grace of God every person has the ability and responsibility to choose between right and wrong, and that those who repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by faith.

We believe that God not only counts the believer as righteous, but that He makes such persons righteous, freeing them from sin's dominion at conversion, purifying their hearts by faith, perfecting them in love at entire sanctification, and providing for their growth in grace at every stage of spiritual life, enabling them through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to live victorious lives.

**302.** The rights of membership are:

(1) The fellowship of the saints and the encouragement, admonition, and spiritual guidance of the ministry.

(2) The access to the sacraments and ordinances of the Church.

(3) The right to participate in any vote being taken by the local church conference.

(4) The eligibility to hold leadership positions (552:2–3), providing the qualifications are met (260–268; 558) and if not under discipline.

(5) The right to hearing and appeal if charged with failure to maintain the conditions of membership, with the specific provision that joining another religious body shall of itself sever membership in the Church.

(6) A member in good standing in any Wesleyan church is entitled to membership privileges in any Wesleyan church to which a transfer of membership may be desired, subject to 567.

**305.** Church membership may be terminated only by one or more of the following (585):

- (1) Voluntary withdrawal.
- (2) Joining another religious body or a secret order.
- (3) Expulsion after proper hearing and conviction.
- (4) Persistent neglect of Church relationship as defined by *The Discipline*.
- (5) Death.

### **Article 7. The Ministry**

**310.** The General Conference shall from time to time enact provisions for the training, qualification, and ordination of the ministry. Every Wesleyan minister must be a member of some Wesleyan church, and each ordained minister must be a member of a district. An ordained minister is a minister of the gospel fully invested with all the functions of the Christian ministry.

**313.** The constitutional rights of ministers in The Wesleyan Church, if not under discipline, shall include the right to:

(1) Preach the gospel, and in the case of ordained ministers, to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform all parts of divine worship, and to solemnize the rite of matrimony.

(2) Be eligible, in the case of ordained ministers, for election to any office in the Church for which ordained ministers are eligible.

(3) Contract the pastoral relationship with local Wesleyan churches subject to the other provisions of this Constitution (313:6; 323:1-2).

(4) Enjoy the use for religious meetings of the church building or buildings of the pastoral charge to which appointment has been made by the district conference.

(5) Serve the assigned pastoral charge without interference by unauthorized activities of another minister of The Wesleyan Church.

(6) Transfer in the manner prescribed by *The Discipline* from one district to another, subject to the approval of the district superintendent and the General Superintendent.

(7) Have recourse, even if under discipline, to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters involving complaint against the minister's character or ministerial conduct and to appeal the decision of such court.

## Article 8. Organization and Government

### Local

**315.** Pastoral Charges. The members of the denomination shall be grouped into local churches, one or more of which shall constitute a pastoral charge. Each pastoral charge has the constitutional right to:

(1) Receive and expel or discontinue members subject to the provisions of *The Discipline*. This right vests severally in each local church (365).

(2) Call its own pastor, subject to confirmation by the district conference.

(3) Grant or revoke local licenses for various ministries as provided in *The Discipline*. This right may be delegated to the church board (365).

(4) Recommend persons for various ministries to the district conference. This right may be delegated to the church board.

(5) Elect its own officers and to remove the same for cause. Except as provided in 365, no pastor or other official has any right to appoint an officer or declare an office vacant. This right belongs to the church alone, and vests severally in each local church.

(6) Elect trustees and through such trustees to supervise, control, and maintain its property for the use and benefit of the ministry and members of The Wesleyan Church, subject to its regulations and appointments as from time to time legislated and declared. This right vests severally in each local church.

(7) Be represented in the voting membership of its district conference, if not under discipline.

(8) Have recourse to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters of controversy between itself and other local, or district, or general units or agencies of the denomination. This right vests severally in each local church.

### District

**317.** The General Conference shall organize the work at large into districts, which shall operate under its jurisdiction and promote the interests of the denomination, and whose voting membership shall include the following: All ordained ministers on the appointed, retired, reserve, and educational leave lists; licensed ministers elected to ordained minister's status; all commissioned and licensed ministers serving as pastors of Wesleyan churches; all commissioned and licensed ministers serving as assistant pastors of Wesleyan churches; members of the district board of administration who are not members by some other right; and lay delegates elected as provided in *The Discipline*. In addition the

district conference shall include such nonvoting members as *The Discipline* shall provide. The principle of equal representation of the ministry and the laity in the district conference shall be maintained.

**320.** In transacting the business of the district conference the ministers and lay members shall deliberate as one body; but on the final vote on any question, at the call of one-fourth of the members, the house shall divide, and the ministers and lay members shall vote separately; and it shall require a majority vote of each branch to pass any question upon which the division has been called.

**323.** The constitutional rights of each district shall include the following. The right to:

(1) Take charge of all the ministers and churches within its bounds, as modified by 360:3e and 365 (except those serving the General Church as the General Conference shall define who shall be amenable to the General Board, and except the district superintendent who shall be amenable to the General Board), and subject to the right of the ministers and churches to enter into pastoral engagements.

(2) Alter the agreement entered into by any pastor and charge, or veto the action of the church and appoint another pastor on said charge when it deems this to be for the best interest of the charge or pastor involved or when the general interest of the work of the district would be better served by such change; and the said church or charge shall receive the pastor appointed by the district conference, provided that any such alteration of a previous arrangement between a pastor and church shall be separately reported and passed by vote of the district conference.

(3) Elect and ordain ministers, and to receive ordained ministers from other denominations subject to the restrictions of *The Discipline*.

(4) Receive or decline persons recommended to it for various ministries by the pastoral charges within its bounds.

(5) Organize and receive local churches within the boundaries of the territory assigned to it by the General Conference, and to fix the boundaries of its circuits and stations.

(6) Take such actions and adopt such rules as it shall judge necessary to promote the interest and prosperity of the Church and to amend or rescind the same, provided it shall not add to or take from any provision of the Constitution or of *The Discipline*, and provided further that if three members of a district shall take exception to its action on the ground that it violates this restriction, they may make an appeal therefrom through the channels prescribed by *The Discipline*.

(7) Elect its own officers as outlined in *The Discipline* and to dismiss them for cause.

(8) Elect in the manner prescribed by *The Discipline* its own board of trustees and through them to receive, hold, encumber, and dispose of all district property within the bounds of the district, including local property held by the district, according to the provisions of *The Discipline* and the laws of the state. All properties held by the district shall be held in trust for the use and benefit of the ministry and members of The Wesleyan Church and subject to its regulations and appointments as from time to time legislated and declared (4610).

(9) Be represented in the lay and ministerial voting membership of the General Conference, if not under discipline.

(10) Have recourse to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters of controversy between itself and other district, local, or general units or agencies of the denomination.

### General

**325. General Conference Membership.** The General Conference shall be composed of an equal number of ordained ministers and lay members elected by the districts, and each district superintendent and a lay delegate elected on the district superintendent's behalf; the presidents of the educational institutions including Wesley Seminary; such officers serving the General Church as the General Conference may establish by legislation, provided that it shall at the same time enact provisions to secure such further representation as shall be necessary to continue the principle of equal lay and ministerial membership.

#### **327. General Conference Delegates.**

(1) Each district, if not under discipline, shall be entitled to send one ordained minister and one lay member as delegates to the General Conference and additional ministerial and lay delegates according to membership on a basis of representation to be fixed by the General Conference.

(2) The delegates shall be elected by ballot. The ministerial delegates must be ordained, and at the time of their election, as also at the time of General Conference, must be members of the district which elected them.

(3) The lay delegates shall be chosen from the members of the Church in full relation within the bounds of the district they represent, and at the time of the General Conference they must be members of a church within the bounds of the district which elected them.

**330. General Conference Sessions.**

(1) The General Conference shall meet quadrennially, except that in cases of emergency or other unusual circumstances the General Board shall have the power to shorten or lengthen the interval. Each session shall be held at a time of the year specified in *The Discipline* at a place determined by the General Board; in case of emergency the General Board shall have power to change the time.

(2) The president or other elected officer of the General Conference whenever two-thirds of the districts shall request it, or the General Board, by such vote as the General Conference shall determine, shall call an extra session of the General Conference, fixing the place thereof and the time of assembling later than the next session of each district conference.

**332. General Conference Presidency.** The various sittings of the General Conference shall be presided over by the General Superintendent(s) in such order as these may determine; but in case no General Superintendent be present, the General Conference shall elect by ballot an ordained minister as president pro tem.

**334. Other Officers.** The General Conference shall elect by ballot such officers as it shall decide upon.

**336. General Conference Quorum.** At all times when the General Conference is in session, it shall require a majority of all the delegates elected by the districts to form a quorum to do business, but a smaller number may adjourn from time to time, until a quorum is obtained.

**338. General Conference Voting.** The ministers and lay members shall deliberate in the sessions of the General Conference as one body, but upon the final vote on any question except proposed amendments to the Constitution, on a call of one-fourth of the members, the house shall divide and ministers and lay members shall vote separately; and it shall require a majority vote of each branch to pass any question upon which the division has been called.

**340. General Board.**

(1) There shall be a General Board to carry out the will of the General Conference during the quadrennium. Such Board shall be composed of the General Superintendent(s) and such other general officers as shall be designated by the General Conference together with an equal number of ordained ministers and lay members chosen by the General Conference to represent equitably the several administrative areas of the Church. The number of such representative members shall be determined by the action of the General Conference.

(2) The General Board is the chief governing body of the Church in the interim of the General Conferences, and as such is empowered to perfect all plans necessary to the performance of its duties; it shall constitute or create the basic board of control of each and all of the Wesleyan societies and institutions

now incorporated or hereafter incorporated under the laws of any state of the United States or of any province of Canada or under any other jurisdiction where such is permitted by the laws of said jurisdiction. The General Board of Administration shall have jurisdiction over mission units under the North American General Conference. It shall have the authority to approve a discipline for each unit achieving recognition as a fully established General Conference and for each mission unit. In so doing, it shall have the power to adapt the name of the Church within the restrictions of paragraph 205, and to adapt the provisions of *The Discipline* of the North American General Conference, including both constitutional and statutory law, provided that it does not contravene the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church. In authorizing the adaptation of the name for a unit achieving recognition as an established General Conference, it shall first consult with the highest interim administrative bodies of the other established General Conferences which are members of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church.

### **350. The General Superintendency.**

(1) The General Conference shall elect by ballot from among the ordained ministers one or more General Superintendent(s), who shall be considered as the general spiritual and administrative leader(s) of the Church.

(2) They shall be elected for a four-year term of office to begin on the date determined by the General Conference.

(3) The General Superintendent(s) shall preside over the sittings of the General Conference and over the district conferences. At the district conference over which a General Superintendent is presiding, the district superintendent shall serve by being seated at the presiding officer's table to advise and assist the chair. In the event a General Superintendent is unable to be present at a district conference, the district superintendent shall preside as chair, unless another representative appointed by the General Superintendent is present.

(4) Further duties of the General Superintendent(s) shall be defined by the General Conference.

## **Article 9. Powers and Restrictions of the General Conference**

**360.** The General Conference shall have full power to:

(1) Designate a criterion for parliamentary procedure for itself and for the other bodies of The Wesleyan Church.

(2) Elect such officers as it shall choose and to define their duties and responsibilities.

(3) Make and administer rules and regulations for The Wesleyan Church subject to the Constitution and the following restrictions:

(a) It shall not have power to revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles, or any membership commitment, or the conditions of membership, or to establish any standards of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

(b) It shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to destroy the principle of equal representation of ministers and lay members in the representative bodies of the Church; or do away with the right of each General Conference to elect its own officers, or the maintenance of an itinerant ministry.

(c) It shall make no rule, except as provided in 365, that shall deny any church the right to receive, discontinue, or expel its own members subject to their right of appeal; or to elect and remove its own officers; or that shall deny to the district conference the final disposition of all pastoral arrangements, except those districts in which the General Conference or the General Board has transferred the supervision to a General Superintendent or other related general official, or that shall deny to preachers and churches initial negotiations concerning the same.

(d) It shall make no rule, except as provided in 365, that will discriminate against any member or minister on account of ancestry, color, or sex.

(e) It shall make no rule that will interfere with the supervision of established districts (in distinction from developing districts) over the ministers and churches within their bounds, unless said district (or districts) is under discipline.

(f) It shall not have the power to deprive any member or minister of the right of hearing by an impartial committee, or of the right of appeal.

### **Article 10. Coordination of Local, District, and General Discipline**

**365.** Paragraphs 315:1 and 360:3c (stating the local church's authority over local church membership); 315:3,5 and 360:3c (stating the local church's authority over local licentiates and church officers); 323:1 and 360:3c, e (stating the district's authority over ministers and churches); and 323:1 (stating the district's authority over ministers and churches and the General Church's authority over certain officials) are not intended to require multiple hearings and appeals dealing with the same person with amenability on more than one level. Further, these paragraphs do not deal with the potential of a lay person committing offenses with effects



beyond the local church or of a minister or local church committing offenses with effects beyond the district of which they are a part. Therefore, the General Conference shall enact legislation to deal properly with such cases.

### **Article 11. The Supreme Judiciary**

**370.** There shall be a judicial council to be known as the Board of Review whose number of members, qualifications, terms of office, and method of election shall be determined by the General Conference.

**375.** The Board of Review shall have authority to:

(1) Determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon appeal of the General Superintendent(s), or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference.

(2) Hear and determine any appeal from the decisions of the General Superintendent(s) as to the constitutionality of an action by a district or upon a point of Church law.

(3) Hear and determine the legality of any action by any General Church board upon appeal of one-third the members thereof, or by request of the General Superintendent(s).

(4) Settle questions in dispute between districts upon appeal by a two-thirds vote of a district that claims it has a grievance against another district.

(5) Determine the validity of any complaints against resources used in the course of study or in our schools.

(6) Settle and determine the legality of issues arising between a district and the General Conference.

**380.** A decision of the Board of Review shall be final unless the General Conference votes to overrule the same by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

### **Article 12. Amendments to the Constitution**

**385.** Upon the recommendation of a two-thirds vote of all members of the district conferences who are present and vote on a proposed change of any matter involving the Constitution, the next ensuing General Conference may by a two-thirds vote ratify the same and it shall become constitutional law. Also, when the General Conference shall originate and recommend by a two-thirds vote any such change, as soon as all members of the several district conferences present and voting shall have concurred by a two-thirds aggregate vote, the same shall be declared constitutional law.

## Chapter 5

### SPECIAL DIRECTIONS

**400.** The Special Directions are expressions by which The Wesleyan Church seeks to bear witness to contemporary society concerning the Christian life and character required by its Articles of Religion and Guides and Helps to Holy Living. While they may or may not be membership commitments, they are official admonitions to the members, ministers, and officials of The Wesleyan Church, and provide guidelines for bearing public testimony on the issues discussed.

The Holy Spirit gives wisdom and guidance to believers as they seek to discern personal boundaries for holy living. The Scriptures illustrate that personal conscience varies among individuals on matters for which direct commands of God are not given and that what God requires as a matter of obedience for one person He may not require of all. Therefore, relying on His help through prayer, Bible study, godly counsel, and thoughtful reflection, all believers should develop “personal convictions” to aid them in conforming to God’s will as they relate to and involve themselves in their culture as witnesses for Christ. Such private opinions apply only to one’s own conduct. Legalism is the attempt to impose one’s personal convictions upon others as if they are conditions for salvation or universal standards for holiness.

Issues arise periodically that require serious deliberation by the Church as a community of believers regarding its collective witness for Christ in society. Just as He does for individuals, the Holy Spirit also instructs the Church in discerning and applying biblical principles to its corporate response to current culture. Out of these prayerful deliberations, “collective conscience” statements are born. These statements are believed to be important enough that they should be a part of the identity of the Church and should characterize the lifestyle of those who are a part of our specific “family” within the larger body of Christ. These statements are not implied to be conditions for salvation, and as such become legalistic and judgmental. Rather they reflect commonly held values of our Church that are voluntarily accepted in order to make a positive statement to society; to protect the well-being and integrity of each person; to bring transformation to culture; and to be a safe haven for those seeking refuge from the damages inflicted upon them by an abusive and godless society. By speaking collectively, the Church also seeks to provide examples for and encourage young disciples, recent converts, new members, and its friends in conforming to

Christ's likeness in areas of personal conscience not yet informed by personal study and understanding of biblical principles.

These statements of collective conscience do not speak to every issue and must periodically be amended to speak redemptively to important emerging issues affecting the Church and society.

### A. Christian Social Concern

**410.** The Wesleyan Church seeks recognition by the society which surrounds it of the authority of Almighty God, and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, in civil, political, and temporal as well as spiritual matters, and the transformation of that society into the image of Christ insofar as is possible in this present age. It believes that such a transformation of society shall primarily be accomplished by the divine transformation through faith in Christ of the individuals who compose society, but that Christians ought also to manifest social concern in every manner that is in keeping with their Christian testimony. To this end:

(1) **Equal Rights.** The Wesleyan Church upholds the right of all individuals to equal opportunity politically, economically, and religiously, and pledges itself to an active effort to bring about the possession of dignity and happiness by all people everywhere (220; 265:11–13; 360:3d).

(2) **Peace.** The Wesleyan Church, knowing that war results in great suffering for the bodies, minds, and souls of men and women, staggering economic loss with its legacy of debt for future generations, and the unleashing of the baser passions of life, urges that persons and nations seek by every legitimate means to avoid armed conflict among the peoples and nations of the world. The Wesleyan Church also urges that holy people everywhere pray earnestly for those in authority, so that peace may prevail (1 Tim. 2:2), and for the quick return of the Prince of Peace.

(3) **Military Service.** The Wesleyan Church teaches respect for properly constituted civil authority and the proper loyalty to one's country. It recognizes the responsibility of the individual to answer the call of government and to enter into military service. However, there are those within the fellowship of The Wesleyan Church who believe that military service is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament and that their consciences are violated by being compelled to take part in such. The Wesleyan Church will therefore lend moral support to any member who asks and claims exemption by legal processes from military service as a sincere conscientious objector and who asks to serve one's country as a noncombatant.

(4) **Care of the Body and Substance Abuse.** The Bible teaches the sanctity of the human body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19–20).

Christians should avoid the use of anything which would damage the body, destroy the family, harm society (1 Cor. 10:23–24), undermine the fellowship of the church, hinder reaching full potential in Christ, enslave the will (1 Cor. 6:12), inhibit evangelism (1 Cor. 9:19–23), breach the Lord’s command to love God supremely and to love one’s neighbor as oneself (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37–39), or become a stumbling block to the young in age or faith (Matt. 18:6; 1 Cor. 8:9, 13; 10:32–33). The Wesleyan Church encourages its members to practice self-discipline and temperance in matters of proper eating, exercise, and rest. We oppose the production, sale, purchase, and use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, narcotics, and other harmful drugs, unless for mechanical, chemical, or medicinal purposes (265:4). The unprescribed use of hallucinogens, stimulants, and depressants, and the misuse and abuse of regularly prescribed medicines should be prohibited; only on competent medical advice and under medical supervision should such drugs be used. The consequences to society stemming from substance abuse are of major concern because of their unarguably negative impact on the spiritual character and nature of individuals and the welfare of society. These include the creation of barriers to conversion, family dysfunction and breakdown, poverty, disease and death, increased violence and crime, the incalculable loss to national economies, and the destruction of the individual caught by the power of addiction. In light of the overwhelming evidence of damage to society and the spiritual health of the individual by the abuse of such substances, we believe that even where their use may be legalized, we choose total abstinence as our appropriate response (i.e., voluntarily refraining from and totally avoiding the use of something in all unnecessary circumstances as determined by the individual Christian’s conscience in submission to the lordship of Christ and the admonitions of the Church). Such abstinence is a willing act of self-discipline, an acceptance of group accountability, and never a test of salvation or an evidence of superior spirituality.

(5) **Human Sexuality.** The Wesleyan Church maintains a biblical view of human sexuality which makes the sexual experience, within the framework of marriage, a gift of God to be enjoyed as communion of a man and woman, as well as for the purpose of procreation. Sexual relationships outside of marriage and sexual relationships between persons of the same sex are immoral and sinful. Yet we believe the grace of God sufficient to overcome both the practice of such activity and the inclination leading to its practice.

(6) **Divorce and Remarriage.** On the basis of a careful study of the Scriptures, and in keeping with its Guides and Helps to Holy Living (265:6), The Wesleyan Church teaches the following with reference to divorce and remarriage after divorce:

(a) To obtain a divorce on other than scriptural grounds is a sin against God and humanity. Such putting asunder of what God has joined is a direct and deliberate act of disobedience against both the law and the gospel. It separates one from God and may subject a member to Church discipline (222).

(b) However, recognizing the fallen state of humanity, divorce has been recognized in the Scriptures as a valid and permanent dissolution of marriage with all its rights and responsibilities. Divorce is not reversible. There is no way to “restore” a dissolved marriage. The divorced (unmarried) status can be changed only by a new marriage to the same person or another person. No divorced and remarried person has two spouses, only a former spouse and a present spouse, as in Deuteronomy 24:1–4 and 1 Corinthians 7.

(c) Divorce, however sinful the act and however serious the consequences, is not “unpardonable.” A redeemed sinner or reclaimed backslider is “free” to marry “in the Lord” or to remain unmarried, a eunuch for the kingdom of God’s sake. The one exception to this freedom of choice is mentioned by the apostle Paul. It is a believer who disobeys the commandment of God and puts away a believing spouse. That person must remain unmarried to leave room for reconciliation to the spouse (1 Cor. 7).

(d) The right to remarry in no way excuses the sin of divorce. It only implies that the Church must forgive and restore those whom the Lord forgives and restores. Neither penance nor penalty remain for the truly penitent and restored sinner, or backslider, whatever the traumatic consequences of the sin may be.

(7) **The Lord’s Day.** God prescribed that one day a week be set aside for the spiritual, mental, and physical well-being of humankind (Gen. 2:2–3; Deut. 5:12–14). The Wesleyan Church encourages its members to observe the Lord’s Day in an appropriate manner (Rom. 14:4–6) (265:1).

(8) **Religion in Public Life.** The Wesleyan Church, believing that it is possible to allow recognition of God and the invoking of His aid in public functions without violating the personal rights and freedoms granted in many nations, advocates the enactment of suitable legislation by legislative bodies at all levels of government which will strengthen provision for the free exercise of religion in public life and allow reference to, or the invoking of the aid of God by individuals serving, writing, speaking, leading, or contributing to any public function. The Wesleyan Church further affirms its belief in the public school’s duty to recognize the historical and ongoing contribution of the Judeo-Christian

tradition to world cultures and modern life. The Wesleyan Church verifies the Bible is an appropriate book for reading in public schools and the right of students to pray as desired.

(9) **Public School.** The Wesleyan Church supports the right and responsibility of parents to determine what is appropriate education for their children, testing the education their children are receiving in accordance with biblical principles and striving for excellence in the education provided for all children. We maintain the right of our members to seek exemption from participation by their children in all matters that are contrary to scriptural doctrines and principles as expressed in the Articles of Religion, Guides and Helps to Holy Living, Elementary Principles, or Special Directions of our Church, without prejudice to academic standing.

(10) **Judicial Oaths.** The Wesleyan Church reserves for its members the right to affirm the truth in testimony before the civil and criminal courts rather than to engage in a judicial oath.

(11) **Abortion.** The Wesleyan Church seeks to recognize and preserve the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death and, thus, is opposed to the use of induced abortion. However, it recognizes that there may be rare pregnancies where there are grave medical conditions threatening the life of the mother, which could raise a serious question about taking the life of the unborn child. In such a case, a decision should be made only after very prayerful consideration following medical and spiritual counseling. The Wesleyan Church encourages its members to become informed about the abortion issue and to become actively involved locally and nationally in the preparation and passage of appropriate legislation guaranteeing protection of life under law to unborn children.

(12) **Use of Time and Entertainments.** The Wesleyan Church believes that its members should exercise responsible stewardship of their time for worship, work, rest, personal leisure, and service to others. Special care should be given to honoring Christ in one's choices and pursuit of entertainments. This will include refusing to patronize and to carefully regulate the use in the home of activities, media, and communication where they feature the cheapening of human life, the gratuitously violent, the use of immoral or profane language, and the sexually explicit and pornographic. Members should avoid involvement with activities that tend to be addictive or conducive to gambling (i.e., risking one's assets or property on the outcome of legal or illegal games of chance, including government-sponsored lotteries). We believe gambling violates the principle of Christian stewardship (i.e., trusting God's provision for us, as exemplified in Matt. 6:25–34) and the tenth commandment which forbids coveting (Deut. 5:21); is harmful to the individual in that it is emotionally addictive; can be

a poor example to others of how to manage the resources of God or trust in God's provision; appeals to greed; endangers families; lowers socio-economic standards and self-esteem; engenders false hope; and is exploitative in that it takes advantage of the misplaced hopes, compulsions, or poor judgment of others. We believe that total abstinence is the best Christian response to gambling in all its forms.

(13) **Modesty in Attire.** The Wesleyan Church believes that our people should provide clear testimony to Christian purity and modesty by properly clothing the body and by dressing with Christian simplicity.

## B. Christian Worship and Fellowship

**420. Rites and Ceremonies of Churches.** True religion does not consist in any ritual observances such as forms or ceremonies, even of the most excellent kind, be they ever so decent and significant, ever so expressive of inward things. The religion of Christ rises infinitely higher and lies infinitely deeper than all these. Let no one conceive that rites and ceremonies have any intrinsic worth, or that true worship cannot subsist without them. Therefore, it is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same or exactly alike, for they have always been different and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and customs, provided that nothing be ordained against God's Word.

**Acts 15:10, 28–29; Rom. 14:2–6, 15, 17, 21; 1 Cor. 1:10; 12:25; 14:26; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:1, 13; Col. 2:16–17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; 1 Tim. 1:4, 6; 1 Peter 2:16.**

**430. Healing.** The truth that Jesus is both able and willing to heal the body as well as the human soul, whenever such healing is for His glory, is clearly set forth in God's Word and attested by the experience of many of His people at the present day. Prayer for healing according to the pattern set forth in the Scriptures shall be encouraged.

**Matt. 10:8; Luke 9:2; 10:9; Acts 4:10, 14; 1 Cor. 12:9, 28; James 5:14–16.**

**440. Christian Liberty.** Christ, through His death on the cross, has freed His followers from sin and from bondage to the law. Christians are "called unto liberty" (Gal. 5:13 KJV), and are not under the law as a means of salvation.

They are rather exhorted, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1 KJV).

This liberty, however, is not to be construed as license (Gal. 5:13). Rather, love for Christ constrains the Christian to live a righteous and holy life as God demands. By the Spirit of God, His laws are written on the heart (Heb. 8:10). So Christians resist evil and cleave to the good, not in order to be saved, but because they have been saved.

Within the bounds of Christian liberty, there will be differences of opinion. In such cases, the believer seeks to avoid offending other believers. The stronger one is mindful of the opinions of the one with the weaker conscience (1 Cor. 8 and 10), and is careful not to put a stumbling block in another’s way (1 Cor. 10:24; Gal 5:13). On the other hand, the weak does not criticize the strong (1 Cor. 10:29–30), for the conscience of the weak may need instruction.

The recognition and exercise of that liberty which Christ affords will glorify God and promote the unity of the Church.

**450. Christian Unity.** The Wesleyan Church, having originated through merger between those of like precious faith, is fully committed to that true Christian unity which is based on scriptural truth and the fellowship of the Spirit, and deplores the separation or division of Christians over peripheral and nonessential matters. While The Wesleyan Church opposes the building of one all-inclusive ecclesiastical organization which regards neither scriptural doctrine nor practice, it welcomes fellowship with those who are committed to the same doctrines and standards of holy living, and cooperation across denominational lines with those who hold the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion revealed in the Bible.

### C. Christian Stewardship

**460. Meaning of Stewardship.** The Scriptures teach that God is the owner of all persons and all things, that people are His stewards of both life and possessions, that God’s ownership and one’s stewardship ought to be acknowledged, and that every person shall be held personally accountable to God for the exercise of their stewardship (265:3). God, as a God of system and order in all of His ways, has established a system of giving which acknowledges His ownership and humankind’s stewardship. To this end, all His children should faithfully tithe and present offerings for the support of the gospel.

**465. Storehouse Tithing.** Storehouse tithing is a scriptural and practical performance of faithfully and regularly placing the tithe into that church to



which the member belongs. Therefore, the financing of the church shall be based on the plan of storehouse tithing, and The Wesleyan Church shall be regarded by all its people as the storehouse. All who are a part of The Wesleyan Church are urged to contribute faithfully one-tenth of all their increase as a minimum financial obligation to the Lord and freewill offerings in addition as God has prospered them.

**Gen. 14:20; 28:22; Lev. 27:30–32; Deut. 14:22; Prov. 3:9–10; 11:24–25; Mal. 3:10–11; Matt. 23:23; Acts 4:34–35; 6:1–3; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:13–14; Heb. 7:1–2, 6, 9.**

**470. Methods of Fund Raising.** In the light of the scriptural teaching concerning the giving of tithes and offerings (465) for the support of the gospel, and for the erection of church buildings, no Wesleyan church should engage in any method of fund raising which would detract from these principles, hinder the gospel message, sully the name of the Church, discriminate against the poor, or misdirect the people's energies from promoting the gospel.

**475. Wills, Bequests, and Annuities.** It is essential in the exercise of Christian stewardship that careful thought be given as to what shall be done with one's estate after death. Civil laws often do not provide for the distribution of an estate in such a way as to glorify God. Each Christian should give careful attention to the preparation of a last will and testament in a careful and legal manner, and The Wesleyan Church and its various ministries through the local church, the district, world missions, extension and evangelism, education, and benevolences are recommended for consideration. The General Superintendent's office is prepared to assist in these matters (4240; 4940).

## PART 2

### LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT

#### Chapter 1

### LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION

#### A. Function of Local Churches

**500.** The local Wesleyan church is a body of Christian believers who hold the faith set forth in the Articles of Religion of The Wesleyan Church, who have been duly received as members of The Wesleyan Church and formally organized according to its *Discipline*, who acknowledge the ecclesiastical authority of The Wesleyan Church, who support its worldwide mission, and who meet together regularly for the purposes of evangelism, nurture, fellowship, and worship (240).

#### B. Types of Organization

**503.** A pastoral charge may consist of a single church, or of two or more churches designated by the district conference as a circuit; is supplied as a regular pastoral appointment by the district conference; and transacts business through a local conference of the members. The constitutional rights of a pastoral charge are given in 315. If the district conference desires to appoint a minister to serve two or more churches that shall continue as separate pastoral charges, it may appoint the minister as pastor of one church and supply pastor of the other (3255–3260).

#### 1. Developing Church

**510.** A developing church is either a formerly established church that has been reclassified by the district board of administration because it no longer meets the qualifications in 518, or a church planting project supervised by a parent church, a cluster of parenting church partners, the district board of administration, or the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division. A developing church is eventually intended to become an established church, but does not yet meet all requirements for this classification (518). Its local organization shall be in keeping with 807. A developing church shall be authorized by the district conference (1180:24) or the district board of administration (1233:26), and shall be governed as follows:

(1) The pastor shall be selected by the district board of administration and appointed by the district conference, except in the interim of district conference sessions when the district board of administration shall have full power of appointment.

(2) A membership roll shall be maintained, ordinarily for one to twenty-four members. Candidates for membership shall be examined and recommended by the pastor until such a time as a local advisory council is formed and assumes this duty; and their reception shall be authorized by the district superintendent (1310:15).

(3) As soon as qualified members are available, the district superintendent, in cooperation with the pastor, may appoint a local advisory council of three to five members, and may designate one of them as the vice-chair. The pastor shall serve as chair of this council (807; 1310:15). The council shall exercise the duties and powers of a local board of administration (782), making all recommendations to the district superintendent or the district board of administration instead of the local church conference (1310:15). The vice-chair shall provide oversight for the pastor's compensation and benefits when neither the district superintendent nor a representative of the district superintendent is present. All investments in land, buildings, and equipment (1233:30; 4650–4670), matters involving employed staff, and other major decisions must be authorized by the district board of administration; and all actions of the local advisory council shall be subject to the review and approval of the district superintendent. The local advisory council shall be responsible to assist the district superintendent in qualifying the church as quickly as possible for organization as an established church.

(4) All property of a developing church shall be held by the district, with titles secured as given in 4660.

(5) A developing church may have one lay delegate to the district conference when so assigned by the district board of administration (1086; 1100:2; 1103).

(6) Each developing church shall be assigned by the district board of administration to one of the following categories for annual district conference and General Church reporting purposes, until it is organized as an established church or discontinued:

(a) District/denominational church plant (a new church initiated and supervised by the district or the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division but not yet classified as an established church in keeping with 518);

(b) Daughter church plant (a new church initiated and supervised by a parent church or a cluster of parenting church partners but not yet classified as an established church in keeping with 518);

(c) Revitalization project (a former established church reclassified by the district conference or the district board of administration in keeping with 518:7 for the intentional purpose of renewal and redevelopment); or

(d) Restart project (a former developing or established church temporarily closed by the district and subsequently reopened at the same location and/or with some of the previous members).

## 2. Established Church

**518. Authorization for Organization.** The organization of a developing church as a fully established church, or of a group of believers who have applied to a district superintendent for organization as a Wesleyan church, empowering it to assemble for business as a local church conference and to elect a local board of administration, and investing it with all the rights, powers, and duties of a local church as given in the Constitution (315) and as set forth elsewhere in *The Discipline*, may be authorized by the district board of administration and effected by the district superintendent when it meets these requirements:

(1) Twenty-five or more persons who are members or are approved and ready to be received as members when the organization shall be effected.

(2) Effective evangelism and a record of new converts and/or believers' baptisms incorporated into the church.

(3) An intentional investment of financial and human resources into community and global needs.

(4) A reasonable degree of financial stability, including the meeting of such obligations as it may have to the General Church and the district.

(5) A reasonable degree of leadership and organizational maturity, with sufficient qualified persons to staff the minimum organization provided for in 810.

(6) The holding of all property in trust for The Wesleyan Church as required in 4610 (4680) or steps taken to accomplish the same.

(7) An established church may be reclassified by the district conference or the district board of administration as a developing church if such is recommended by the district superintendent and:

(a) If its membership drops to thirty or fewer (1180:22; 1233:26); or

(b) If no new converts and/or believers' baptisms have been reported by the church within the previous two years;

(c) If no intentional investment of financial and human resources into the needs of those outside the church has been demonstrated within the two previous years;

(d) If it has consistently declined in attendance over the past seven years; or

(e) If it ceases to meet one or more of the other conditions set forth in 518:2–5 (4670).

**520. Organizational Meeting.** When the organization of an established church has been authorized by the district board of administration, the district superintendent shall consult with the pastor and the local advisory council, or if there are none, with those interested in forming the church, and appoint a time for an organizational meeting. The organizational meeting shall be conducted by the district superintendent or a representative appointed by the district superintendent as follows:

(1) The reading of the summary of the Articles of Religion (299) and the Guides and Helps to Holy Living by the presiding officer.

(2) An examination of each of the candidates for membership, conducted by the presiding officer, using the questions commonly addressed to such candidates (5560–5570), and the baptism of such as have not previously been baptized. When the organization involves a church previously organized as a developing church, those who have been accepted as members of the developing church need not be reexamined.

(3) A mutual pledge of purpose and fellowship on the part of all members, including those being received. The presiding officer shall ask each one:

**Question 1:** “Are you in Christian fellowship with all those who present themselves for membership in this church organization?”

**Answer:** “I am.”

**Question 2:** “In that Christian fellowship will you promise to walk with each other in love, giving and receiving counsel, sympathy, and instruction in the Spirit of Christ?”

**Answer:** “I will.”

(4) A declaration made by the presiding officer:

“On the basis of these mutual pledges in the presence of God, I proceed to give you each the right hand of fellowship, and declare by this act that you are a Christian church organized on the basis of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*, and are invested with all the rights, powers, and duties assigned to an established church by *The Discipline*.”

(5) The first session of the local church conference, with the election of officers who shall serve for the remainder of the year, or until specified, and the installation of the officers (5915) by the person presiding over the organizational service.

(6) The report of the organization by the district superintendent to the next regular session of the district board of administration, and to the next regular session of the district conference (1180:22; 1310:14).

(7) The taking of steps to provide for the pastoral oversight and care of the new church, if such has not already been done.

### 3. Urban Missional Church

**523.** An urban missional church is a local church located and serving in a high poverty area in a metropolitan area of over 200,000 people. It shall be recommended and approved by the district board of administration (1233:26) and must be approved by the General Superintendent. Its approval will be for two years, and may be renewed. Its organizational structure will follow the same pattern as a developing church or an established church. (510:1–5; 518:1–6). Should it cease to qualify as an urban missional church, it would move into developing church or established church status, as authorized by the district board of administration.

### 4. Circuit

**525. Relationship of Circuit and Church.** A circuit is a pastoral charge in which a district conference has grouped two or more local churches under one pastor, and designated them as a circuit, with business to be transacted by a circuit conference. Each church on the circuit shall be organized and shall conduct its business according to the regulations for an established church, and shall exercise its constitutional rights to receive, expel, and discontinue its members, to elect its own officers and trustees, and to have recourse to a proper court of jurisdiction in matters of controversy between itself and other units or agencies of The Wesleyan Church (315:1, 5, 6, 8). The circuit shall exercise all of the constitutional rights of a pastoral charge which are not reserved to the local church (315:2–4, 7), and take charge of all matters of circuit business as given in 525–535.

**526. Developing Circuit Conference.** When the churches on the circuit are all developing churches, the regulations governing a developing church will be applied to the developing circuit (510).

**528. Circuit Conference.** The members of the several churches on a circuit, duly called and assembled together to do business, shall constitute a circuit conference. It shall follow the same organizational and procedural pattern as a local church conference (630–650). Its duties and powers shall be to:

- (1) Call the pastor and set the terms of pastoral service (315:2; 690–722).
- (2) License lay ministers (3410–3420) and recommend suitable members to the district conference for district licenses as ministerial students and special workers (3015, 3033, 3460).

(3) Elect lay delegates to the district conference (315:7; 1100–1109).

(4) Elect a circuit secretary, such members of the circuit advisory council (530) in addition to the ex officio members as the circuit conference shall determine are needed to assure proper representation, and a circuit board of trustees (if such is needed, 532).

(5) Determine all matters involving two or more of the churches on the circuit, including the authorization of transactions involved in the purchase, erection, encumbrance, sale, or other disposition of a circuit parsonage or other property (4740–4750).

**530. Circuit Advisory Council.** The circuit advisory council shall direct circuit affairs between sessions of the circuit conference, bearing the same relationship to the circuit conference that the local board of administration bears to the local church conference (750; 782). It shall consist of the pastor as chair, the circuit secretary as secretary, the chair of the circuit board of trustees, the treasurer of each local church, and such other representatives as the circuit conference shall determine are needed to assure proper representation. It shall elect one of its members as vice-chair, and shall meet at least quarterly at such time and place as it shall determine. It shall nominate the pastor, make recommendations on all matters over which the circuit conference has authority, and carry out and administer the decisions of the circuit conference (690).

**532. Circuit Trustees.** The circuit board of trustees shall consist of three to five members elected by the circuit conference. They shall organize themselves and carry on their work under the direction of the circuit advisory council in the same manner as the board of trustees for a local church (850–859), except that they shall have jurisdiction only over that property owned by the circuit, such as the circuit parsonage (4740–4750).

**535. Circuit Committees.** The circuit advisory council may appoint such committees as are necessary to the proper conduct of circuit affairs, including a nominating committee to nominate the circuit officers (820–823).

## 5. Mission

**537.** A special evangelistic, rescue, or missionary work which cannot appropriately be organized as a developing church shall be carried on as a mission. A mission may be conducted by an established church subject to the approval of the district board of administration (655:14), by a district (1180:22; 1233:26) or by the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division. It shall not maintain a membership roll nor receive members. A mission shall have no local boards, officers, or committees except such as are appointed by the

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mission director, are amenable to the mission director, and can be replaced at the discretion of the mission director.

## **6. Local Churches in a Developing District**

**542.** Missions, developing churches, churches, and circuits located in developing districts shall be authorized, organized, and governed according to the *General Board Policy for the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division*, which shall be in harmony with *The Discipline* (4800).

## **7. Affiliate Church**

**548.** An independent congregation of the Wesleyan tradition which seeks a less than full relationship with The Wesleyan Church may be recognized and listed as an affiliate church. This relationship shall exist to encourage fellowship, to include and involve the affiliated body in ministries and opportunities available to Wesleyan churches, and to eventually lead the affiliated unit into full relationship with The Wesleyan Church. Provisions and procedures to establish and govern an affiliate church relationship are located in Appendix C, paragraph 7000 et seq.



## Chapter 2

### MEMBERSHIP

#### A. Essence and Meaning of Membership

**550.** Membership in The Wesleyan Church is the doorway into the church following an experience of conversion whereby a person becomes a member of the body of Jesus Christ, followed by discipleship within a family of believers for spiritual life, growth, and service. Therefore it is of high importance that immediate steps be taken to shepherd, disciple, and train believers through the process of membership for mutual accountability and ministry to the Church, community, and the world (566–570; 725:11; 782:8; 880:11).

**551.** The overall mission of membership in The Wesleyan Church is: to acknowledge believers as belonging to the body of Christ; to disciple them into a meaningful relationship with The Wesleyan Church; and to equip them for meaningful ministry in the world.

**(1) The Vision of Membership.** It is our belief and practice that The Wesleyan Church is not a collection of independent churches unrelated to each other nor just merely an association of churches, but rather we constitute a “family” of believers connected by our identity in Christ and our identity with one another. Membership serves as the common thread that unifies us within our diversity as a community with the passion for developing fully committed disciples of Christ. Membership is a ministry tool to use in the process of spiritual development, subsequent to conversion and leading to maturity in Christ. To enhance the discipleship process of maturing people toward Christlikeness, membership is the first step in the process of accountability. The accountability used within the community of faith is based on the primary authority of the Scriptures. We also acknowledge the role of tradition, experience, and reason to shape the collective conscience reflected in the membership and discipleship accountability process. Membership becomes the doorway into the process whereby people are disciplined and equipped to do ministry in and through the church, as a witness to the world at large.

**(2) The Value of Membership.** Membership in The Wesleyan Church is built on the premise that it is an initial step in one’s relationship with the Church, and a doorway into the discipleship process within the life of the Church. Each local fellowship adapts its ministry scope and sequence but a common path would involve the following process:

**Believing**—When people come to Christ in saving faith, they become members of the body of Christ. Membership is the door into the discipleship process in The Wesleyan Church which helps people identify the essential beliefs taught in the Bible, and how those beliefs impact our lifestyle, relationships, and our witness for Christ within the Church and beyond. This faith, empowered by the Holy Spirit, brings transformational growth to the believer.

**Belonging**—Every person who is a part of our local church fellowship appreciates a sense of belonging, which in turn opens the door for the Church to disciple each believer into a fully devoted follower of Christ. The Wesleyan Church intentionally places “belonging” at the front of the believer’s relationship with the local church, and assumes the responsibility to help the believer grow into a mature child of God.

**Becoming**—It is the responsibility of the local church to assume the care of the persons committed to its fellowship, to develop and employ an effective process of discipleship to help its members mature in their faith and character, leading to the raising up of effective leaders. The Wesleyan Church intentionally calls people to move beyond a decision for Christ, into a life of devotion to Christ which leads to a life of service for Christ.

### **552. Membership Structure.**

(1) Membership in The Wesleyan Church is the entry-level, basic relationship with the Church for believers who are willing to participate in the common life of the Church and enter into the process of discipleship through the local church. The Wesleyan Church also makes provision for young believers to be a part of the Church through student membership.

(2) Leadership. Membership is the basic standard required for designated leadership positions in The Wesleyan Church at local, district, and General Church levels, as well as for all credentialed ministers (552:3). Leaders are expected to live exemplary lives and to serve as models for others to follow. Persons who are elected to serve the Church in leadership positions are annually required to affirm and follow the Articles of Religion, the Guides and Helps to Holy Living, and the Elementary Principles; be faithful in local church attendance; practice biblical stewardship; participate in active witness and service for Christ; maintain unity in the Church; and agree to give proper accountability to those who are assigned spiritual authority over them by *The Discipline*.

(3) Leadership positions in the local church that require a person to be a member who meets the qualifications (260–268; 558) include:

- (a) any person in a credentialed ministry (3250–3490)
- (b) local board of administration member (752)

- (c) trustee (850)
- (d) delegate to district or General Conference (965, 1524)
- (e) nominating committee member (820)
- (f) local church secretary (638, 830)
- (g) lay leader
- (h) witness and membership committee member (if any)
- (i) church treasurer (842)
- (j) Sunday school superintendent or spiritual formation director (if any)

## **B. Categories of Membership**

### **1. Membership**

**553.** Persons to be admitted to membership in The Wesleyan Church shall be those who meet the conditions set forth in the Constitution (297:1–4).

(1) Candidates for membership shall be examined by the local board of administration (782:8; 835–837), to determine whether they meet the requirements of the Constitution concerning their experience of regeneration, Christian baptism, their willingness to be instructed in and acceptance of the Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles, and the authority of *The Discipline* in matters of church government, and their willingness to enter into a membership and discipleship relationship with The Wesleyan Church through the local church.

(2) Candidates for membership who have satisfactorily passed the examination by the local board of administration shall be voted upon by the local church conference unless the local church conference has delegated this responsibility to the local board of administration (567; 655:1). In either case, it shall require a majority vote of those present and voting to receive; and if objections are urged against the reception of a member, it shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

(3) Candidates for membership will be asked to affirm their commitment to their experience of regeneration, Christian baptism, their acceptance of the Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles, and the authority of The Wesleyan Church in matters of church government, and their willingness to continue a membership and discipleship accountability relationship with The Wesleyan Church.

(4) Persons who have been duly accepted for membership as explained in 553:2 should be received into membership in a public service, in which they shall make their confession and vows public (5565), and be given the right hand of fellowship by the pastor or the representative of the pastor.

**555.** The rights of membership are set forth in the Constitution (302). The judicial process for dealing with any member charged with failure to uphold the Articles of Religion are located in the Judiciary section of *The Discipline* (5000–5004) and in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

**557. Guides and Helps to Holy Living** (260–268) are the biblically based convictions historically held by The Wesleyan Church, which all members are encouraged to prayerfully consider and embrace.

**558. Leadership Qualifications.** All those serving in elected or credentialed office in The Wesleyan Church shall be required to follow carefully and conscientiously the Guides and Helps to Holy Living found in paragraphs 260–268.

## 2. Student Membership

**564.** Those children and youth who have testified to the experience of regeneration may be received as student members immediately after their conversion and baptism. The local board of administration, having provided for their examination concerning their relationship with Christ and their intention to develop toward spiritual maturity, may receive them by majority vote. Student members should be received formally in a public ceremony led by the pastor or staff pastor. The local church shall provide a program that will guide student members toward spiritual maturity and an understanding of the importance, privileges, and commitments of membership.

**565.** Student members shall have all the rights of adult-level members except to vote and hold office. They may become adult-level members at any time the local board of administration deems they are qualified, and should be received as given in 553. If student members are not qualified for adult-level membership by their sixteenth birthday, every effort shall be made by the pastor and local board of administration during the following year to prepare them for adult-level membership. When they are twenty-one years of age, they must either become adult-level members or be dropped from the student membership list (782:9). Student members who desire to become adult-level members shall be received as given in 553.

## C. Reception of Members

**566.** Members in The Wesleyan Church may be received by confession of faith or by letter of transfer. Student members shall be received by confession of faith.

**567.** Members shall be received subject to the approving vote of the local church conference, unless the church by vote shall delegate this right to the local board of administration (655:1). In both cases, it shall be by majority vote, provided that when objections are urged against the reception of a member, it shall require a vote of two-thirds of those present and voting to receive.

**568.** The pastor and the local board of administration shall be responsible to provide membership classes for all members, training them in the biblical doctrines and standards of the Church, acquainting them with the history and organization of The Wesleyan Church, and explaining to them the vows of membership (297; 5565–5595).

**570.** When a person from another denomination presents a letter of transfer or recommendation, the pastor and the local board of administration shall examine them concerning their relationship with Christ and their Christian baptism. If they give satisfactory testimony and are willing to be instructed in and accept the Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles, and the authority of The Wesleyan Church in matters of church government, and are willing to enter into a membership and discipleship relationship with The Wesleyan Church through the local church, they may be received as members.

#### **D. Transfer of Membership**

**575.** When any member shall request a letter of transfer to another Wesleyan church, the pastor and local church secretary shall grant it on the proper form as given in 6000–6020 providing the member is neither under discipline nor under charges. Both pastor and secretary shall sign the letter, and shall forward it to the pastor and local church secretary of the church to which the member is transferring. The letter shall be presented to the local board of administration of the receiving church at its next session, but not later than thirty days from the date of issuance, and acted upon in the manner indicated in 578. When the member has been duly received, the second part of the form shall be completed by the receiving church and forwarded to the church granting the transfer. The date the returned letter is received shall mark the expiration of membership in the church granting the letter, and in the official membership record the local church secretary shall enter opposite the member's name: the date and "Withdrawn by letter of transfer."

**578.** The receiving church shall handle transfers as follows:

(1) Members shall be received subject to the approving vote of the local church conference, unless the local church conference shall have delegated this responsibility to the local board of administration. The transfer of membership

may be questioned by the receiving church if it is evident that the person involved is not in a state of grace or is living in open violation of the Articles of Religion.

(2) The membership of a pastor, senior pastor, or assistant pastor and of such members of the pastor's family as so desire and have the proper credentials, shall be automatically transferred to the church to which appointed, or if the pastoral charge consists of more than one church, to the church of choice. The secretary of the church from which the pastor is moving shall forward the proper forms for the pastor's membership and that of family members who so desire to the secretary of the receiving church who shall record them without any further action by the local church conference or local board of administration.

**580.** A member of The Wesleyan Church transferring from one local church to another shall not be required to be involved in a public service of reception.

**582.** Student membership is not transferable.

### **E. Termination of Membership**

**585.** Membership in The Wesleyan Church may be terminated only by one or more of the following (305):

- (1) Voluntary withdrawal (553:3).
- (2) Joining another religious body or joining a secret order.
- (3) Expulsion after proper hearing and conviction (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5023:5).
- (4) Persistent neglect of church relationship as defined in 600–605.
- (5) Death.

**590.** When any member requests a letter of recommendation to some other denomination, the pastor and local church secretary shall grant it on the proper form provided in 6030 if the member is neither under discipline nor under charges. Such a person's membership in the local church granting the letter shall cease immediately, and the secretary shall enter opposite the member's name: the date and "Withdrawn by letter of recommendation."

**592.** When any member requests a letter of withdrawal, the pastor and local church secretary shall grant it on the proper form provided in 6040. The secretary shall enter on the record book (610), opposite the member's name, the date the letter was granted and "Withdrawn by letter of withdrawal." If the member's request occurs during the course of a judicial investigation, the secretary shall note on the membership record, "Withdrawn under accusation," and if withdrawal occurs during the course of a hearing, "Withdrawn under charges."

**593.** The local church conference may choose to employ membership accountability through a reaffirmation process. This process should be managed by the local board of administration in a fair and responsible manner, taking care to preserve both the life and health of the church as well as the established rights of the member. If a member chooses not to participate in the reaffirmation process, that choice may be considered as a voluntary withdrawal from membership.

**595.** When any member joins another denomination, or other religious body exercising the functions of a church, no hearing is necessary to remove such a member. The pastor, having investigated and ascertained the facts, shall report the same to the next session of the local board of administration, and upon the board's order the local church secretary shall enter opposite the member's name the date of the session and "Withdrawn having joined another body."

**598.** When any member moves away from the church in which membership is held, and it is evident that distance will not permit full and regular participation in the life of the church, the pastor shall encourage the member to transfer membership to the Wesleyan church nearest the new residence. To that end, the pastor shall notify the Executive Director of Communication and Administration of The Wesleyan Church of the name and address of the member.

**600.** When any member moves away from the church in which membership is held, and does not leave a forwarding address, or fails to report spiritual standing, or to send financial support, or to transfer membership to the nearest Wesleyan church, after one year the member may be dropped from the roll provided that every reasonable effort has been made to contact the member and notify the member of such an intention. The member's name shall be dropped upon the recommendation of the local board of administration and the majority vote of the local church conference, unless the local church conference shall have delegated full responsibility in such matters to the local board of administration. The secretary shall enter opposite the member's name the date of the vote and "Discontinued by vote."

**605.** When any member fails to attend the services of the church where membership is held for one year without a reason deemed justifiable by the local board of administration, or to support the church financially, as able, the pastor and local board of administration shall seek to restore the member to active fellowship, but if unable to do so, the member's name may be dropped upon recommendation of the local board of administration and the majority vote of the local church conference, unless the local church conference shall have delegated full responsibility in such matters to the local board of administration.

The secretary shall enter opposite the member's name the date of the vote and "Discontinued by vote for persistent neglect." If a member chooses not to participate in the reaffirmation process, that choice may be considered as a voluntary withdrawal from membership.

### **F. Record of Membership**

**610.** Each local church shall have a permanent record maintained by the local church secretary, in which shall be recorded all the names of the members, category of membership, the time when received and whether by confession of faith or by letter of transfer, the time and manner of termination of membership according to the list in 605, or by death; and all dedications, baptisms, marriages, pastoral terms, and other information essential to a permanent written record of the life and ministry of the local church.



## Chapter 3

### LOCAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

#### A. Composition and Function

**625.** The members of a local church, duly called and assembled together to do business, constitute the local church conference. It is the highest governing body of a local Wesleyan church, and exercises those powers granted to the local church by the Constitution (315), and other powers specifically granted to the local church conference by the General Conference as set forth in *The Discipline* (302; 500; 555).

#### B. Sessions

**630. Regular Sessions.** The local church conference shall meet annually within thirty days of the end of the district year (1180:17). It shall be announced from the pulpit at least two weeks in advance (625). Reports shall be made; the officers and local board of administration shall be elected (815; 823; 965; 1103); and such other business shall be transacted as necessary (650).

#### **633. Special Session.**

(1) **General Business.** The local church conference may be called into special session by the pastor, or in times of emergency by the district superintendent, for the transaction of any business, with announcement from the pulpit in two regular services, the first of which shall be given not less than one week before the appointed time. The requirements for special sessions dealing with legal or property matters are set forth in 4040 and 4700.

(2) **Pastoral Vote.** The vice-chair of the local board of administration (635; 773), when authorized to do so by the local board of administration, and having notified the district superintendent, may call a special session of the local church conference to conduct a pastoral vote, with announcement at least two weeks in advance of the appointed time. During negotiations for calling a new pastor, the announcement need be made only from the pulpit and in only one regular service in advance of the appointed time.

## C. Organization and Procedure

### 1. Officers

**635. Chair.** The pastor shall preside over the local church conference except over sessions dealing with the securing or retaining of a pastor. The vice-chair of the local board of administration (773) shall preside over sessions dealing with the securing or retaining of a pastor, if the district superintendent, or a representative appointed by the district superintendent, is not present. The vice-chair may also preside, at the request of the pastor, over other sessions of the local church conference. In emergencies, when the pastor is absent or incapacitated, the vice-chair may preside over other sessions with the permission of the district superintendent.

**638. Secretary.** The local church secretary, elected annually by the local church conference, shall serve as secretary of the local church conference by virtue of this office (830:1).

### 2. Procedure

**640. Quorum.** Those members who assemble for a meeting of the local church conference when such has been duly called shall constitute a quorum.

**643. Voting.** A majority vote of those present and voting in the local church conference shall be sufficient in all items of business unless otherwise required by *The Discipline* or by local laws when dealing with legal matters.

**645. Rules of Order.** The business of the local church conference shall be conducted according to the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except when formally suspended or otherwise ordered by *The Discipline*.

**650. Order of Business.** The local church conference, in all regular sessions, shall give special attention to the spiritual, numerical, and financial progress of the church, including the following items:

(1) Reading of minutes of last session, unless authority to approve the minutes has been delegated by the local church conference to the local board of administration.

(2) Receiving the reports of the pastor(s) and any others the local church conference shall order.

(3) Receiving the reports of the various treasurers (863).

(4) Receiving and acting upon the reports of boards and committees.

(5) Receiving the reports of the lay ministers.

(6) Granting or renewing of local licenses for lay ministers.

- (7) Recommending suitable members to the district conference for district licenses as ministerial students and special workers (315:3–4).
- (8) Electing of officers and delegates.
- (9) Miscellaneous business.

#### **D. Duties and Powers**

**655.** The local church conference has duties and powers to:

(1) Approve by vote the reception of members and to expel or discontinue members unless it delegates full authority concerning membership to the local board of administration (567; 315:1). Such authority may be withdrawn from the local board of administration at any annual session of the local church conference.

(2) Call a pastor or renew the call (315:2; 692; 705; 720; 735), or to vote on the termination of a renewed call as set forth in 722:2.

(3) Elect the church officers (315:5), which shall consist of the local church secretary (830), the local church treasurer (if any, 842), members-at-large of the local board of administration (752), and lay delegates to the district conference (315:5, 7).

(4) Receive reports from the pastor(s), church officers, lay ministers and other persons, boards, and committees as desired, and as listed in 650:2–5.

(5) Remove, when such is in the best interests of the church, by a majority vote of those present and voting, any church officer, trustee, or delegate mentioned in 655:4 (782:23).

(6) License lay ministers (315:3), and to renew or revoke such license (782:18; 3410; 3420; 3440:2). This power may be delegated to the local board of administration.

(7) Recommend suitable members to the district conference for district licenses as ministerial students, licensed ministers, or special workers (315:3). This power may be delegated to the local board of administration.

(8) Adopt petitions or resolutions to the district conference, including memorials proposed for recommendation to the General Conference (1150–1156).

(9) Adopt financial policies, which policies shall be administered by the local board of administration (782:27).

(10) Delegate to the local board of administration (782:28) full authority over the annual budget.

(11) Authorize the purchase or sale of property, the erection or major remodeling of buildings, and all mortgages or other indebtedness which

encumbers the property, subject to the prior approval of the district board of administration, according to the procedure set forth in 4700–4720.

(12) Corroborate by majority vote, if not under discipline, the action of the district board of administration to discontinue the local church (1233:26).

(13) Petition the district board of administration for the incorporation of the local church when it is deemed necessary as set forth in 4000, and to authorize the local board of administration to incorporate the church when such incorporation has been approved by the district board of administration (1233:30).

(14) Authorize, subject to the approval of the district board of administration, the establishment and operation of a mission (537; 782:6; 1233:26).

(15) Delegate such responsibilities as it shall choose to the local board of administration.

(16) Have recourse to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters of controversy between itself and other local, or district, or general units or agencies of the denomination (315:8; *General Board Policy on Church Discipline*).

(17) Authorize the establishment of a day care and/or a day school of preschool, elementary, and secondary levels only, when such is desired, subject to approval by the district board of administration; and to delegate governance of the day care and/or day school to the local board of administration (782:33; 1233:32). District conference and General Board approval is required before a local church conference can formalize postsecondary education in terms of an institute or of junior college or college-level programs (1180:25; 1655:36).

(18) Authorize significant changes in mission, facilities, or finances of an established day care and/or day school, subject to approval by the district board of administration (1233:32).

## Chapter 4

### PASTORS

#### A. Function

**675.** A pastor is an ordained, commissioned or licensed minister, who is called of God and appointed by the Church to serve as the spiritual shepherd, teacher, and administrative overseer of the local church; preaching the Word, directing the worship, administering the sacraments and ordinances of the Church; taking the comforts of the gospel to the sin-burdened, the sick, and the distressed; discipling converts, nurturing and instructing believers, equipping and enabling them for their part in ministry; and serving as chief executive officer in the government of the local church.

**678.** A minister who serves as the sole pastor of a church shall be referred to simply as “the pastor.” The term “senior pastor” shall be applied to the presiding minister of a multiple pastoral staff. The pastor shall be expected to carry out the full pastoral function as set forth in 675, and ultimate responsibility for the same shall rest upon the presiding pastor. An assistant pastor is a helping member of a multiple staff who normally is assigned more limited and specific aspects of the pastoral function (741).

#### B. Manner of Pastoral Voting

##### 1. Jurisdiction in Pastoral Voting

**690.** All matters related to voting on securing or retaining a pastor are the concern of a pastoral charge (503).

##### 2. Regulations for All Pastoral Voting

**691. Procedures of Candidating.** In all matters related to pastoral candidating, the following regulations shall be observed:

(1) Only one pastoral candidate at a time shall be presented to the congregation for a message. A decision by the local board of administration to recommend a pastor for a congregational vote, and the vote, if recommended, must take place before another candidate is considered.

(2) The support including salary, expense allowances, housing, benefits, moving expenses, and related matters which the church proposes to maintain must be provided in writing for the candidate prior to a pastoral vote.

(3) A minister who has agreed to give a candidating message and to submit to a pastoral vote at one church cannot do the same with another church until the first candidating situation is resolved. If the local board of administration does not recommend the candidating pastor for a congregational vote within seven days, the waiting restriction no longer applies.

**692. Procedure of Pastoral Voting.** In all matters related to voting on securing or retaining a pastor, the following regulations shall be observed:

(1) All pastoral votes shall be taken at a duly announced session of the local church conference (630–633).

(2) The district superintendent, or a representative appointed by the district superintendent, shall preside over the local church conference for the taking of the pastoral vote. If neither can be present, the vice-chair of the local board of administration shall preside.

(3) All pastoral votes shall be taken by secret ballot by members with special provision for absentee ballots (695).

(4) A favorable vote by a majority of members voting shall be required (705; 708; 720; 722). A favorable vote of less than two-thirds majority requires district approval.

(5) The minister shall be notified by the local board of administration of the results of the vote.

(6) If the vote is favorable, the minister shall notify the local board of administration and the district superintendent by phone and in writing of a decision within seven days following the official notification of such call by the local church.

**695. Absentee Ballots.** A member who cannot attend a pastoral vote session of the local church conference because of confining illness, required employment, or necessary out-of-town travel or seasonal residency may cast an absentee ballot subject to the following conditions:

(1) The member shall secure a standard ballot from the local church secretary, identical to the ballots to be used at the session, and submit the marked ballot prior to the session in a sealed envelope identified with the name of the absent member.

(2) The local church secretary must certify the envelope as being submitted by a member to whom the secretary has supplied a ballot, and who is eligible to cast an absentee ballot. In the event that the local church secretary is unable to certify the eligibility of the person casting an absentee ballot, the secretary

may consult the vice-chair of the local board of administration to determine eligibility.

(3) Envelopes containing such absentee ballots shall be opened at the session in which the vote is taken, by the secretary in the presence of the chair, prior to the tallying of the vote, and these ballots placed without inspection with the others for counting by the tellers.

**697. District Approval of Pastoral Agreement.** A pastoral agreement must be reviewed and recommended by the district board of administration, and becomes final upon the approval of the district conference. Each year the district board of administration shall review those pastoral agreements before making its report to the district conference (1180:24; 1233:10).

**700. Time of Pastoral Changes.** Except for such emergencies as resignations, removals, or deaths, pastoral changes shall take place on the Monday following the second Sunday of July.

### 3. Regulations for Initial Call of Pastor

**705. Procedure for Initial Call of Pastor.** Whenever it is necessary for a pastoral charge to secure a new pastor, the following regulations shall be observed:

(1) The vote shall be for an extended call, subject to such adjustment as the district superintendent shall approve.

(2) The local board of administration, under the leadership of its vice-chair, shall counsel with the district superintendent concerning possible candidates. If the church desires to call a minister from another district or from outside the denomination, the local board of administration shall first secure from its own district superintendent assurance that the transfer of the minister would be approved (313:6).

(3) When a candidate has been approved by a majority vote of the local board of administration (782:12), the candidate's name shall be presented as a nomination to the local church conference, and the vote shall be taken in keeping with the regulations governing all pastoral voting (692).

**708. Waiver of Local Church Rights.** If a pastoral charge has been unable to secure a pastor prior to thirty days before the annual session of the district conference, the local church conference may, at any time thereafter, by majority vote delegate full authority for the employment of a pastor to the local board of administration, or it may waive its rights and leave the selection of a pastor to the nomination of the district board of administration and appointment by the district conference. If a pastoral charge waives its rights, or if neither local church conference nor local board of administration shall have secured a

pastor by the time the annual session of the district conference convenes, the district board of administration shall nominate a pastor for appointment by the district conference. A pastor so appointed shall be received and supported by the pastoral charge the same as if the pastor had been employed in the usual manner.

**710. Call Resignation.** If a pastor resigns during the call term of service to a church, the pastor must notify the local board of administration and the district superintendent sixty days in advance. If the district superintendent and the local board of administration deem it wise, the pastor may be released sooner.

**712. Call Removal.** The district board of administration may remove the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of all members, provided such has been requested by the local board of administration by a two-thirds majority vote in a meeting presided over by the district superintendent, or such has been recommended by the district superintendent (1233:36).

**715. Ad Interim Procedures.** If a pastoral charge is left without a pastor between sessions of the district conference due to death, resignation, or removal, the local board of administration and the local church conference shall follow the regular procedures for securing a new pastor with all arrangements subject to the approval of the district board of administration (1233:36).

**720. Regulations for Extended Call.**

(1) The pastor may, when deemed advisable and when approval has been granted by the district superintendent, ask the local board of administration to conduct a vote by the local church conference on renewing the extended call. Such a vote shall be conducted in keeping with 692.

(2) The district superintendent or an ordained representative appointed by the district board of administration shall review the pastoral agreement with the local board of administration at least quadrennially. The local board of administration by a majority vote shall either reaffirm the call or ask the local church conference to vote on renewing the call. Such a vote shall be conducted in keeping with 692.

**722. Termination of Call.** The service of a pastor may be terminated in one of three ways:

(1) The pastor may resign, provided that the termination of service is first approved by the district superintendent. Except as otherwise mutually agreed upon by the local board of administration and the district board of administration, notification of the pastor's resignation shall be given at least sixty days in advance and the resignation shall become effective in sixty days or at the time set by the district for pastoral changes (700).



(2) If one-third of the members of the local board of administration so request the district superintendent in writing, the district superintendent or a representative appointed by the district superintendent shall call and preside over a special session of the local board of administration for the purpose of deciding on whether to call for a pastoral vote by the local church conference. If the local board of administration by majority vote calls for the taking of such a vote, and the district superintendent approves the taking of the same, it shall be taken in keeping with 692. If there is a majority vote of the local church conference in favor of retaining the pastor, and the pastor agrees to remain, the pastor shall be free to continue as if the vote had not been taken. A favorable vote less than two thirds majority requires district approval. If less than a majority are favorable to retaining the pastor, pastoral service shall terminate at the time set by the district for pastoral changes (700), or at a time mutually agreed upon by the pastor, the local board of administration, and the district superintendent.

(3) The district board of administration may, by a majority vote, order the district superintendent to conduct a pastoral vote in keeping with 692. Or the district board of administration, upon the recommendation of the district superintendent (1310:20), and for the sake of the pastoral charge involved, may remove the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of all members (1233:36), with the services of the pastor terminating in sixty days unless ordered otherwise by the district board of administration. If at any time the district board of administration shall deem it in the interests of the district as a whole that the pastor be free to serve elsewhere, it may by majority vote request the pastor to resign.

### **C. Pastoral Support and Sabbatical**

**723. Annual Review of Pastoral Support.** The pastor's cash salary and other benefits, including health insurance and employer contributions for Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc (WPF), shall be reviewed annually by the local board of administration prior to the annual session of the local church conference. Proper health insurance coverage should be provided by the local church for pastor and family except in cases in which they have adequate coverage through other employment of pastor and/or spouse, or in the case of pastors serving in Canada, through the national health program and district supplemental insurance programs. Full participation in Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc by the local church on behalf of all pastors is expected in the plan of support of all pastors. The obligation, responsibility, and liability for both health insurance premiums and employer contributions to WPF belong solely to the local church. The district and General Church have no obligation, responsibility, nor liability

for these matters, either expressed or implied. A report of the final action on the pastor's support shall be sent by the local board of administration in writing to the pastor (or pastor-elect, 691:2) and the district superintendent (746).

**724. Sabbatical for Pastors.** Every Wesleyan church is encouraged to provide a sabbatical leave for its pastor(s) at least every seven years of service. A sabbatical shall be for a minimum of four weeks in excess of vacation time with financial provisions as approved by the local board of administration (723, 746).

## D. Duties and Powers

**725.** The pastor shall administer the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church in keeping with *The Discipline* and other general and district regulations and shall be responsible to:

### General

- (1) Study the Scriptures, pray, and do the work assigned.
- (2) Seek, by all means, the conversion of sinners, the sanctification of believers, and the upbuilding of God's people in the most holy faith.
- (3) Pray to God for and with the flock.
- (4) Feed the flock by reading, expounding, teaching, and preaching the Word.
- (5) Have the general guidance, under the Holy Spirit, of the religious services and cultivate the practice of corporate worship.
- (6) Administer, if an ordained (313:1), commissioned (3059:2a), or licensed minister (3044:1), the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Each pastor is encouraged to provide for the observance of the Lord's Supper at least once each month, but is required to do so at least once every three months (293). A supply pastor shall secure the services of an ordained (313:1), commissioned (3059:2), or licensed minister (3044:1) who is a pastor, for such observance (3260:2), except when authorization has been granted by a district superintendent as provided in 3260:2.
- (7) Solemnize, if an ordained (313:1), commissioned (3059:2a), or licensed minister (3044:1), the rite of matrimony, in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline* (265:6; 3111–3112); to counsel with those being married and those already married, emphasizing the spiritual values in all phases of marital and parental life, seeking to develop the spiritual ideals and resources necessary to build permanent unions and godly homes (410:6).
- (8) Comfort the bereaved and to bury the dead.

(9) Provide pastoral guidance and oversight through visitation and counsel to the members of the church and to others in need of a pastor's help. The minister, as counselor, has the right to protect the conversation with a counselee as privileged communication.

(10) Keep all members fully conversant with the Christian lifestyle set forth in the Guides and Helps to Holy Living and the biblical basis for the same, and to maintain with diligence and love adherence to these membership requirements (260–268).

(11) Be responsible for the instruction of all prospective members in the Articles of Religion, Guides and Helps to Holy Living, and polity of The Wesleyan Church, and in the meaning and purpose of church membership, holding or arranging for membership classes for all members (566–570; 782:8).

(12) Administer the ritual of membership and give the right hand of fellowship on behalf of the church to new members (553:4; 5550–5595).

(13) Grant, in conjunction with the local church secretary, letters of transfer, recommendation, or withdrawal (575; 590; 592; 6000–6040).

(14) Receive any complaint or accusation against any member of a church under personal care, and to give such prompt and careful attention as required under the Judiciary (5000–5004) and the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*, and to refer any matter requiring official investigation or judicial proceedings to the local board of administration for disposition (782:10).

### **Administrative**

(15) Preside as chair of the local church conference and the local board of administration except as otherwise provided (635; 770–773), and to oversee and direct all departments and local church organizations as the chief executive officer.

(16) Serve as a voting member of boards and committees established by the local board of administration, and to meet with boards and committees as time will permit.

(17) Give leadership to the missionary, evangelistic, educational, and devotional programs of the local church in harmony with objectives and programs of the district and the General Church.

(18) Promote all the interests of the General Church and the district in the local church, in the manner and to the extent authorized by the General Conference, the General Board, and the district conference.

(19) See, together with the local board of administration, that the United Stewardship Fund and all other obligations are met in full; and to protect the church from solicitations not authorized by the General Church or the district.

(20) Promote stewardship, emphasizing tithing and the storehouse plan as a part of the Christian's total stewardship (460–475), and to see that tithes and freewill offerings are collected regularly.

(21) See that all church property is properly secured according to *The Discipline* and the local laws, with all legal papers submitted to the district superintendent for approval.

(22) See that no steps are taken involving the church in financial liability without proper authorization from the local board of administration and local church conference, or without the approval of the district board of administration when such financial liability involves the mortgaging or other encumbering of the church property (655:11; 782:28–32; 1233:30).

(23) See that all property and building transactions are carried out as set forth in 4700–4728.

(24) Circulate holiness literature.

(25) Have general supervision of the spiritual formation of the local church, organizing classes for the instruction of adults, youth, and children in the Word of God and for Christian living, and providing for the instruction and inspiration of the leaders in spiritual formation.

(26) Enlist laborers for the gospel ministry, and for missionary and other special work, encouraging and helping them to prepare for their God-appointed task at educational institutions provided by The Wesleyan Church; to sign, in conjunction with the local church secretary (830:3), licenses for lay ministers granted by the local church conference (655:7; 782:19); and to have the oversight over all lay ministers.

(27) Nominate to the local board of administration an assistant pastor (741) or a lay assistant to the pastor; to nominate to the local board of administration all members of the employed staff, and to supervise, with the assistance of the local board of administration, the services of all employed staff members.

(28) See that up-to-date files are kept on church constituency and membership, and be ready to turn over such lists to the successor in office (610; 830:2, 5).

(29) See that adequate historical records and financial records are maintained for the church (610; 842:2, 6).

(30) See that all necessary data are collected for the various statistical and financial reports, and present reports to the local board of administration

monthly, to the local church conference at its regular sessions, to the district superintendent as requested, to the district conference annually on forms approved by the General Superintendent, and to various General Church or district departmental officers as required.

(31) Attend district conference sessions, and participate in the life and work of the district and the General Church as opportunity affords.

### **E. Pastoral Staff**

**735. Pastor/Senior Pastor.** An ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister who is called of God and appointed by the Church to serve as sole pastor of a church shall be referred to simply as “the pastor.” The term “senior pastor” is applied to the presiding minister in a multiple pastoral staff who bears ultimate responsibility for carrying out the function set forth in 675.

**738. Clergy Couple.** If a clergy couple is appointed to the pastoral staff, only one shall be designated as senior pastor, unless the local church conference should vote to call the persons as co-pastors. In such case, the district shall appoint them as co-pastors and they shall be listed as such in the district journal (1332:8).

**741. Assistant Pastor.** An assistant pastor is an ordained minister or a commissioned or licensed minister, who is called of God and appointed by the Church to serve under the direction of the senior pastor as assigned by the senior pastor and approved by the local board of administration; this assignment normally includes more limited and specific aspects of the pastoral ministry (678). The calling and assignment of the assistant pastor shall be subject to the following guidelines:

(1) The assistant pastor shall have the training, experience, and ministerial standing which are suitable for this assignment.

(2) The assistant pastor is recommended to the local board of administration by the senior pastor. The assistant pastor cannot be employed initially without the recommendation of the senior pastor and the written approval of the district superintendent. The call cannot be renewed without the recommendation of the senior pastor. While the local church conference creates the position, the local board of administration employs the person subject to the recommendation of the pastor and approval of the district conference. Employment shall be for one year.

(3) The assistant pastor's appointment may be terminated at any time at the pastor's recommendation and the vote of the local board of administration. The term of service will end whenever there is a change in senior pastor in the

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local church where service is rendered. Whenever a senior pastor terminates service at a time other than the uniform time of pastoral change (700), the assistant pastor's term shall expire at the succeeding uniform time for such change. The newly called senior pastor may recommend the reemployment of the assistant pastor to the local board of administration.

(4) The office of assistant pastor is an employed position, subject to final approval by the district conference. It is to be assigned to no one as an honor or to provide special status.

**746. Annual Review of Staff Support.** The salaries and benefits of the pastoral staff and other employees of the church, including health insurance and employee contributions for Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc, shall be reviewed annually by the local board of administration in a manner parallel to that provided for the pastor. Reports on the provisions for staff and employees shall be sent to the district superintendent only for those under district appointment (724).

## Chapter 5

### LOCAL BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

#### A. Function

**750.** The local board of administration carries out the will of the local church conference, serving as the chief governing and coordinating body of the local church in the interim of local church conference sessions.

#### B. Membership

**752. Local Board of Administration Organizational Options.** The local church conference shall adopt one of the following structural models for the organization and election of the local board of administration (315:5). All board members shall be adult members, whose lives bear witness to the grace of holy living (297:1; 302:3–4; 552:2–3; 553:1–3); who are in harmony with our Articles of Religion, Guides and Helps to Holy Living, and the authority of The Wesleyan Church in matters of church government (297:3; 553:1–2); and who are faithful in worship attendance, involved in personal ministry, and supportive of the church financially at least to the level of personal tithing (265:3; 297:4).

(1) **Standard Model.** The local board of administration shall be comprised minimally of the pastor as chair (675, 678, 725:16, 735), the vice-chair (773), the church secretary (830), and the church treasurer or business manager (842). Two or more additional members-at-large may be elected by the local church conference in such numbers as it shall determine. It is recommended that the total number of all voting members of the local board of administration using the standard model should not exceed twelve persons.

(2) **Alternate Models.** Alternate models of local church governance may be considered by the local church conference in consultation with the district superintendent and with the prior approval of the district board of administration. When evaluating proposed alternate models, the district board of administration shall give due consideration to safeguard the following constitutional and practical principles:

(a) All local church officers, local board of administration members, and district conference delegates must be members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of the local church electing them (302:3–4, 552:2–3, 815).

(b) All officers, board members, and district conference delegates must be elected by the eligible voting members of the local church conference (315:5-7). No pastor or other official has any right to appoint an officer or declare an office vacant (315:5). Since the right to elect officers vests solely in each pastoral charge (315:5-6), no board has the right to become self-perpetuating by electing its own members, other than temporarily filling unexpired terms when vacancies occur in the interim of local church conferences (782:24).

(c) Due to obvious conflicts of interest, no compensated church staff member may vote on compensation issues on the governing board of the local church by which he or she is employed. The only exception is the pastor, who is the chair but not an employee of the local board of administration, rather being called by the local church conference and appointed by the district conference (323:1-2).

(d) No member may be excluded from local church leadership on the basis of ancestry, color, or gender (360:3d).

**755.** It is recommended that no two persons of the same household be elected to serve on the same local board of administration, that no person shall be elected to more than one office carrying ex officio membership on the board, and that a former pastor should not serve on the local board of administration (3097).

**758.** A local church conference may, by a two-thirds vote, adopt three-year terms for the local board of administration, with approximately one-third being elected each year.

### C. Sessions

**760. Regular Sessions.** It is recommended that the local board of administration meet at least quarterly.

**763. Special Sessions.** The local board of administration may authorize special sessions as it deems necessary, or it may be called into special session by the pastor, the vice-chair (for sessions dealing with a pastoral vote or with the pastor's financial support and related matters), or in times of emergency by the district superintendent or a representative appointed by the district superintendent. A special session may be held at any time if all members of the local board of administration are present. Otherwise, each shall have been notified personally at least forty-eight hours prior to the convening of the session. A special session may not be conducted in the absence of the pastor except as provided for in 773.



**767. Evaluation Session.** Each year, the local board of administration shall consider its priorities, review the distribution of its time, and evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts, using the duties and powers listed in *The Discipline* as a guide. Special attention should be focused on those responsibilities that are most likely to contribute to future outreach and growth to the glory of God.

## D. Organization and Procedure

### 1. Officers

**770. Chair.** The pastor shall be chair of the local board of administration, ex officio, presiding over all sessions except as noted in 773.

**773. Vice-Chair.** The pastor may nominate and the local board of administration shall elect one of its members as vice-chair. The vice-chair may preside over meetings of the local board of administration when a pastoral vote or the pastor's support is under discussion (for exceptions, 712; 722:2). The vice-chair may also preside over sessions or portions of sessions of the local church conference dealing with a pastoral vote or the pastor's support when neither the district superintendent nor a representative of the district superintendent are present (635; 692:2). The vice-chair may preside, at the request of the pastor, over other sessions of the local board of administration or of the local church conference. In emergencies, when the pastor is absent or incapacitated, the vice-chair may also preside over other sessions of the local board of administration and local church conference with the permission of the district superintendent. The district superintendent or a representative of the district superintendent shall preside over all sessions of the local board of administration considering the termination of a pastoral agreement (712; 722:2), and in times of emergency.

**775. Secretary.** The local church secretary shall be secretary of the local board of administration ex officio (830). If the secretary is absent, the local board of administration may elect a secretary pro tem.

### 2. Procedure

**778. Quorum.** A majority of the members of the local board of administration shall constitute a quorum.

**780. Voting.** A majority vote of those present and voting shall be sufficient in all items of business except when voting on the reception of a member against whom an objection has been made, which shall require a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting (567; 782:8); and when petitioning the district

board of administration to remove a pastor during the initial call, which shall require a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting (712; 782:12).

### **3. Local Church Governance Philosophy**

**781.** The health and growth of the local church is a shared responsibility, with the board focused on governing, the pastor on leading, the staff (employed or volunteer) on managing, and the congregation on ministering to the community and to one another. The local board of administration governs the local church primarily by (a) clarifying its mission and stating the primary outcomes it exists to achieve; (b) setting guiding principles within which the pastor and staff have great discretion and freedom to work in order to achieve the mission, including the adoption of operating policies, the budget, and measurable, annual goals proposed by the pastor for accomplishing the mission; (c) periodically evaluating the established goals in consultation with the district superintendent, giving special attention to rewarding achievement or requiring specific plans for improvement in areas of underperformance; and (d) protecting the pastor, staff, and church by dealing with problem issues and persons that threaten fulfillment of the mission.

As leader of the local church, the pastor is responsible for (a) inspiring and teaching the congregation through word and example; (b) chairing, motivating, and informing the board; (c) operating within the boundaries of established guiding principles; (d) proposing measurable goals for adoption by the board; (e) selecting, directing, and supervising the staff (employed or volunteer) for the daily operations and ministries of the church in order to accomplish mission-centered goals; and (f) being accountable to the board for achieving mutually agreed upon goals. In summary, the board focuses on mission clarity, policy, goals, evaluation, and accountability; the pastor and staff focus on leadership and management.

### **E. Duties and Powers**

**782.** The local board of administration shall administer the affairs of the church in keeping with *The Discipline*, other general and district regulations, and the directions of the local church conference, and shall be responsible to:

#### **General**

- (1) Direct all activities of the church toward the spiritual, moral, and social maturity of its people.
- (2) Provide a place of worship.

(3) Counsel with the pastor, as the pastor may request.

(4) Cooperate with the pastor in evaluating the health of the local church; establishing policies, goals, and objectives for more effectively fulfilling the mission of the church; empowering the pastor to pursue the goals and objectives, within the established policies and through the staff and members; and periodically receiving performance reports from the pastor regarding progress.

(5) Receive monthly reports from the pastor (725:30), church treasurer (842:3), and reports as the local board of administration shall require from all boards, committees, and officers.

(6) Direct the church in its evangelistic outreach, seeking to win its community to Christ; to recommend to the local church conference the establishment and operation of a mission.

(7) Adopt an annual calendar of events.

### **Membership**

(8) Authorize the reception of members by a majority vote, except that when an objection is raised against the reception of a member it shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to receive (553:2; 567; 780).

(9) Examine the church membership roll annually, and provide for its revision according to the provisions of *The Discipline* (553–610; 655:1).

(10) Consider all accusations and charges against members of the local church, and appoint a committee of investigation and a local judicial committee as provided for in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline*.

(11) Instruct the local church secretary concerning the removal of the name of a member.

### **Pastors, Staff, and Licensed Workers**

(12) Nominate a pastor (705:3); to assume full responsibility for securing a pastor when such is delegated by the local church conference (708); and to recommend to the district board of administration by a two-thirds majority vote the termination of a pastoral agreement if such becomes necessary (712).

(13) Review at least quadrennially with the district superintendent an extended call and by majority vote to reaffirm the call or recommend for the local church conference to vote on renewing the call (720:2); to meet, at the request of one-third of its members and under the district superintendent or a representative appointed by the district superintendent as chair, to consider the possibility of ordering a pastoral vote and to call for such a vote by majority vote (722:2).

- (14) Review annually the pastor's support and related matters (723; 724).
- (15) Recommend the number of employed staff positions; to employ persons for all such staff positions subject to the pastor's nominations; and to define the duties and working conditions of all such employees.
- (16) Employ special workers as needed.
- (17) Provide, in cooperation with the pastor, for the supply of the pulpit during the pastor's absence; and to provide, in cooperation with the district superintendent, for the supply of the pulpit during temporary vacancies.
- (18) Recommend to the local church conference the licensing and the renewing or revoking of licenses of lay ministers (315:3; 655:7).
- (19) Recommend ministerial students and special workers for approval and recommendation to the district conference for district licenses (315:4; 655:7).

### **Officers, Boards, Committees and Auxiliaries**

- (20) Elect two members of a nominating committee from among the members of the local board of administration and two or more additional members with the leadership qualifications who may not be a member of the local board of administration to serve as set forth in 820–823.
- (21) Elect annually at such time as it shall determine, an auditing committee (863).
- (22) Organize and elect such boards and committees as it deems necessary to the proper organization of the church.
- (23) Recommend to the local church conference the removal from office of any church officer or delegate (315:5; 655:5–6), and to remove by majority vote of the local board of administration all who fill other positions (825:4).
- (24) Fill all vacancies occurring in those offices elected by the local church conference, in the interim of its annual sessions.

### **Property and Finance**

- (25) Serve as the local board of trustees in the maintenance of church property, the signing of notes and mortgages, and the attending to all legal matters connected with the church, in keeping with the requirements of local laws (4510), and *The Discipline* (850–859; 4500–4720; 4760).
- (26) Serve as the local board of trustees to secure sufficient property and liability insurance to cover all buildings and vehicles owned and operated by the local church (856:6).

(27) Review all plans of support annually, adjusting salaries as advisable, adopting changes in the financial policies as necessary (746).

(28) Adopt the annual budget and authorize all expenditures within the limits of the budget and any expenditures not provided for in the annual budget; to provide for annual audits of all funds (863).

(29) Recommend to the local church conference: the purchase or sale of property, the erection or remodeling of buildings, all mortgages or other indebtedness which encumbers the property and major items of equipment (655:11; 4700–4728).

(30) Implement all General Church and district plans which apply to the local church, and to see that the local church raises its assigned portion of the United Stewardship Fund.

(31) Open the doors of the local church to properly authorized representatives of the General Church, the educational institutions of the area and the district.

(32) Request approval from the district board of administration when making investment or distribution of funds received as an undesignated estate gift, property for sale, or other out-of-pattern contribution with value equal to or exceeding the total contributions for all purposes of the preceding year (1233:30).

### **Day Care and/or Day School**

(33) Present to the district board of administration for approval a plan for a day care and/or day school following authorization by the local church conference (655:17–18) or any plans for a significant change in mission, facilities, or finances of an established day care and/or day school (1233:32); to govern and direct a day care and/or day school when such has been properly approved (1233:32), or to govern while delegating the operation to a separate school committee; to elect the separate school committee and name its chair when thus delegating said operation; to submit an annual report to the district board of administration including organization, administration, and fiscal operations (655:17–18) for its approval.

(34) Establish treasuries, distinct and separate from that of a local church, to provide for the financial administration of day care centers, day schools, retirement homes, nursing homes, and such enterprises (655:17–18; 1233:32) and to adopt financial policies to assure adequate supervision and accountability.

## Chapter 6

### LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

#### A. List of Local Church Officers, Boards, and Committees

**800.** The following summarizes for quick reference the various officers, boards, and committees of the local church:

- (1) The church shall have the following officers and personnel, elected by the local church conference:
  - board of administration, local (750–782)
  - church secretary (830)
  - church treasurer or business manager (842)—appointment may be delegated to the local board of administration delegates to district conference (965; 1086; 1100–1109)
  - pastor (675–725)
- (2) The church shall have the following officers and personnel, elected by the local board of administration:
  - auditor or auditing committee (863)
  - offering teller (845:3)
  - vice-chair of local board of administration (773)

#### B. General Regulations

##### 1. Minimum Organization

**807. Developing Church.** A developing church may operate without any regularly constituted officers other than the pastor, but will ordinarily have a local advisory council of three to five members appointed by the district superintendent in cooperation with the pastor. The pastor and these members will form the local advisory council. This council may then appoint such other officers and committees as are needed and for which qualified personnel are available (510:3).

**810. Church.** An established church, in addition to the local church conference and the local board of administration, shall have a minimum organization consisting of a local church secretary (830), a local church treasurer (842), an offering teller (845:3), an auditing committee (863), and a board of trustees consisting of at least three members (850–859).

## 2. Church Officers

**815.** The church officers shall include all members of the local board of administration and delegates to district conference who shall serve subject to the following regulations:

(1) They must be members of the local Wesleyan church electing them (302:4; 558) and meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558).

(2) They shall be elected by the local church conference at its annual session (315:5–7; 820–823). Vacancies occurring between annual sessions of the local church conference shall be filled for the unexpired term by the local board of administration.

(3) They shall carry out their duties as given in *The Discipline* and as further defined by the local church conference and the local board of administration.

(4) They shall be under the general supervision of the pastor, shall be amenable to the local church conference, and may be removed for cause or when the best interests of the church so require, by a majority vote of the local board of administration (752:1; 815:2; 825:4).

## 3. Nominating Committee

**820.** Each established church may have a nominating committee consisting of the pastor as chair and two members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) elected by the local board of administration from its membership (782:20). The local board of administration shall elect two or more additional members with the leadership qualifications, who are not members of the local board of administration.

**823.** When a nominating committee has been established, it shall present to the local church conference, at its annual session, nominations for each of the following officers: local church secretary and local church treasurer (if any), the Sunday school superintendent (if any). One or more names shall be presented for each office (755). The nominating committee shall present, at the properly announced session of the local church conference (965; 1103), nominations for as many delegates to the district conference as the district board of administration shall determine (1100). The nominating committee may be used for other nominations as ordered by the local church conference, or as ordered by the local board of administration for positions elected by the board (825).

#### 4. Other Positions

**825.** Persons holding positions of service within the local church, other than those specifically designated as church officers in 815, and including membership on committees, shall be governed by the following regulations:

(1) They shall be members of the local Wesleyan church electing them.

(2) They shall be elected annually by the local board of administration (782:22–23), or as otherwise provided.

(3) They shall carry out their duties as given in *The Discipline* and as further defined by the local church conference and local board of administration.

(4) They shall be under the general supervision of the pastor, shall be amenable to the local board of administration, and may be removed for cause or when the best interests of the church so require, by a majority vote of the local board of administration.

(5) Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by the local board of administration.

#### 5. Installation Service

**828.** Those elected to church offices and to other positions of service within the local church may be installed in office at an annual installation service following the ritual given in 5915–5925.

### C. Witness and Membership

#### 1. Church Secretary

**830.** The local church conference, at its annual session, shall elect by ballot, from among its members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558), a church secretary (820–823) to serve for one year or until a successor is elected. The church secretary shall be an ex officio member of the local board of administration (775). General regulations covering this office are given in 815. The duties and powers of the local church secretary shall be to:

(1) Record correctly and to preserve faithfully the minutes of all sessions of the local church conference and the local board of administration.

(2) Maintain the local church's record of membership, record of baptisms, marriages, and pastoral terms, and other information essential to a permanent written record of the life and ministry of the church (610).



(3) Issue, in conjunction with the pastor, all letters of transfer, recommendation, and withdrawal (575; 590–592; 6000–6040); and sign, in conjunction with the pastor (725:26), licenses for lay ministers granted by the local church conference (655:7; 782:18).

(4) Send to the district secretary a certified list of lay delegates to the district conference duly elected by the local church conference, immediately upon their election, and subsequently to certify an alternate delegate (965; 1100–1109).

(5) Have custody of all records, and take whatever steps are necessary to preserve them and other historical records and materials, as directed by the pastor and the local board of administration.

## **D. Finance and Stewardship**

### **1. Church Treasurer**

**842.** The local church shall have either a local church treasurer or a business manager. If there is a church treasurer, that officer shall be elected by the local church conference at its annual election, by ballot, from among the members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558), to serve for one year or until a successor is elected. Or the local church conference may authorize the local board of administration to appoint a treasurer or to appoint or employ a business manager who will assume the duties of the treasurer. The duties and powers of the person charged with the local church treasury are to:

(1) Receive, hold, and disburse, as ordered by the local church conference or the local board of administration, all moneys of the local church, including such of the departments and auxiliary organizations as the local board of administration shall order.

(2) Keep complete and accurate records of all moneys raised and of the manner in which they are disbursed, and provide the pastor with information concerning the same as the pastor shall require.

(3) Make monthly reports to the local board of administration, which shall be available upon request to any member of the local church, and make reports to all regular sessions of the local church conference.

(4) Make monthly remittances of all USF and district funds to the district treasurer or directly to the general department for which the funds are intended.

(5) Issue receipts annually to all contributors showing their total tithes and offerings and the various items of giving, and issue other receipts as requested or by order of the local board of administration.

(6) Submit all books for audit by the auditing committee annually (863), or as ordered by the local board of administration, and submit to the local board of administration the complete treasurer's records at such time as the person shall cease to hold the office of treasurer.

**845.** Assistants for the local church treasurer are provided for as follows:

(1) An assistant treasurer may be elected by the local board of administration, with authority to sign checks when the treasurer is unable to do so.

(2) A financial secretary or tithing secretary may be elected by the local board of administration to assist the treasurer in keeping the record of individual tithes and offerings (842:5).

(3) One or more tellers shall be elected by the local board of administration to assist the treasurer in the counting of all tithes and offerings, all moneys being counted by two or more persons and recorded as to date of reception, purpose of the offering, and amount. These records shall be preserved and made available to the auditor or auditing committee.

## 2. Board of Trustees

**850. Election.** The local board of administration, shall serve as the board of trustees. If the local board of administration so chooses, it may from its membership elect from three to seven to serve as the board of trustees.

**853. Organization and Procedure.** If the local board of administration chooses to elect the board of trustees from its members, the board of trustees shall meet following the annual session of the local church conference to elect a chair, vice-chair, and secretary, and shall meet at such other times as ordered by the local board of administration or as made necessary by their duties.

**856. Duties and Powers.** The local board of trustees shall carry out their duties as required by *The Discipline* (4500–4780) and shall be responsible to:

(1) Carry out the instructions of the local church conference and the local board of administration in supervising, controlling, maintaining, and improving all church property (315:6; 655:13; 782:25).

(2) Supervise such expenditures as have been approved by the local church conference or the local board of administration for repairs, improvements, and alterations.

(3) Attend to all legal matters regarding the acquisition, purchase, sale, mortgage, transfer, or other disposition of property as properly authorized (4700–4728); to see that titles are correct, contain the proper trust clause (4610), are approved by the district superintendent (1310:11; 4700:5), and

are recorded (4540); and to see that property and legal records are properly stored (4760).

(4) Attend to all other legal matters pertaining to the local church, as authorized and directed by the local church conference or the local board of administration, including renting property, borrowing money, and receiving and administering bequests and trusts.

(5) Carry out the directions of the local church conference or local board of administration concerning the purchase, sale, mortgage, transfer, or other disposition of property, provided that such transactions have been approved by the district board of administration as set forth in 4700–4790.

(6) Make recommendations to the local board of administration concerning sufficient property and liability insurance on the property and for any vehicles owned and operated by the local church, and to carry out the instructions of the local board of administration in securing such insurance (782:26).

(7) Make such reports as are requested by the local church conference or the local board of administration.

**859. Restrictions.** The local board of trustees shall be subject to the following restrictions:

(1) The local board of trustees must carry out the instructions of the local board of administration, the local church conference, and the district board of administration. If a local trustee refuses to carry out such instructions when the instructions meet all the requirements of local laws and of *The Discipline*, the trustee may be removed from office as given in 815:4 (4530).

(2) The local board of trustees cannot mortgage or otherwise encumber local church property without the express authorization of the local church conference and the approval of the district board of administration as set forth in 4700–4720.

(3) The local board of trustees cannot deny the use of the parsonage, church building, or other local church buildings, to the pastor who has been duly appointed by the district conference or district board of administration, nor the use of the church building to the membership of the local church and duly elected officials of The Wesleyan Church (4770).

(4) The local board of trustees cannot divert church property from The Wesleyan Church (4550; 4780).

(5) When a church is reclassified as a developing church (518:7; 1233:30), the office and power of the local board of trustees shall cease, and all property shall pass directly under the control of the district board of administration (4670).

### 3. Auditing Committee

**863.** The local board of administration shall be responsible to provide for the annual internal or external auditing of the books of the local church treasurer and of all departmental and auxiliary treasurers, either through the election of an auditing committee or the employment of an auditor. If an auditing committee is used for some or all of the treasuries, it shall consist of one to three persons. A report to certify the results of the annual audit shall be presented to the local board of administration. General regulations concerning committee members are given in 825.

### E. Worship

**870.** The worship ministry of the church falls under the authority of the pastor (725:5).

### F. Spiritual Formation

**885.** Each local church shall provide for systematic Bible study. Sunday school, small group Bible studies, and other programs or events that promote making more and better disciples of Jesus Christ are to be considered by the local church.

### G. Lay Delegates to District Conference

**965.** The local church conference, at one of its officially announced sessions, shall elect by ballot (820–823), from among its members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558), the number of lay delegates to the district conference assigned by the district board of administration and a sufficient number of alternate delegates who shall serve for the regular annual session and for any reconvened session. General regulations covering this office are given in 815 and in 1100–1109.

### H. Judicial Committees

**970.** The local board of administration shall elect, when it deems it necessary and in accordance with the regulations of the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline*, a committee of investigation or a local judicial committee. Complete regulations concerning the qualifications, procedures, and duties of such committees are given in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5012; 5110).

## PART 3

### DISTRICT CHURCH GOVERNMENT

#### Chapter 1

### DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

#### A. Definition

**1000.** A district is a grouping of churches created by the authority of the General Conference, within which the churches, ministers, and members of The Wesleyan Church are organized according to *The Discipline* and are under its governing authority (317).

#### B. Developing District

**1003. Purpose.** New work, or other work which does not meet the requirements for an established district (1038), shall be provided for by establishing a developing district.

**1006. Authorization.** The establishment of a developing district may be authorized by the General Conference (1590:11), upon recommendation of the General Board, or, in the interim of General Conference sessions, by the General Board. The authorizing act shall define the boundaries and assign an official name to the developing district. Any proposed boundaries that will alter the bounds of an established district in the interim of General Conference sessions must have the approval of such a district and shall be effected as required in 1060–1065 (1655:34).

**1009. Jurisdiction.** A developing district shall be under the jurisdiction of the General Board (1655:34). The General Superintendent shall be responsible for developing the work as rapidly as possible, in harmony with the missionary objectives of The Wesleyan Church (2306), to the status of an established district (1038).

**1012. Organization.** The General Superintendent shall appoint the superintendent, other officers and assigned workers, and grant ordination, commissioning, and licensing.

**1015. General Conference Representation.** The developing district shall be represented in the General Conference by the superintendent of the developing district as a nonvoting member (1503:2).

### C. Established District

#### 1. Authorization

**1036.** An established district is created by the General Conference (317; 1590:10), upon recommendation by the General Board, or, in the interim of General Conference sessions, may be created by the General Board, subject to the approval of the next General Conference (1655:35). The authorizing act shall define the boundaries of the district and assign to it an official name.

**1038.** The minimum requirements for an established district are:

- (1) Thirty churches.
- (2) Two thousand members.
- (3) The holding of all property in trust for The Wesleyan Church as required in 4610, or steps taken to accomplish the same (4140; 4590–4630; 4650–4880).
- (4) A reasonable degree of spiritual, organizational, and financial stability.
- (5) A recommendation by the General Superintendent.

#### 2. Organizing Conference

**1040.** When an established district has been authorized (1036), an organizing session of the district conference shall be convened by the General Superintendent. The General Superintendent shall declare it to be an established district of The Wesleyan Church, vested with all the authority and power as properly belong to it according to *The Discipline*. After such has been declared, the district conference shall proceed to do business and elect its officials.

#### 3. Reclassification

**1042.** If a district no longer meets one or more of the requirements for an established district (1038), it may be reclassified as a developing district by the General Conference (1590:11) or by the General Board.

**1045.** An established district, by a vote of its district conference, may petition the General Board for reclassification as a developing district if it falls

below the requirements for an established district (1038). The General Board shall have authority to reclassify it as a developing district (1038; 1655:34–35).

#### **4. Amenability**

**1050.** An established district is amenable to the General Conference and to the General Board. It may be placed under discipline for cause as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline 5350–5385* (360:3e).

#### **E. Merger or Realignment of Districts**

**1060.** The General Conference shall have the authority to approve the merger or division of districts or the realignment of any district boundaries (317). Negotiations for such a merger, division, or realignment of districts shall be under the supervision of the General Superintendent who shall work with representatives appointed for such a purpose by the General Board and the districts concerned (1655:34).

**1065.** Whenever each district conference involved in a merger, division, or other realignment of districts shall approve the proposed plan, the General Board shall have the authority to grant final approval in the interim of General Conference sessions (1655:34).

## Chapter 2

### DISTRICT CONFERENCE

#### A. Function

**1075.** A district conference is the chief governing body of a district, exercising such powers as are delegated to it in the Constitution and by the General Conference as set forth in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*.

#### B. Membership

##### 1. Plan of Representation

**1080.** The district conference, as required by the Constitution (317), shall be composed of an equal number of ministerial members and lay members as voting members, chosen in a way that maintains the principle of equal representation, and other nonvoting members as listed herewith.

##### a. Voting Members

**1083. Ministers.** The ministerial voting members of the district conference are those who meet the following requirements:

(1) Ordained ministers under appointment (1240:1:A:1–8), retired (1240:1:B; 3370), on reserve (1240:1:C; 3360), or on educational leave (1240:1:D; 3350:1).

(2) Licensed ministers who are ordained ministers-elect (317).

(3) Commissioned or licensed ministers who are pastors or assistant pastors of churches in that district (317; 1240:2:A; 1240:3:A; 3059; 3030).

(4) Ministerial members of the district board of administration who are not voting members by some other right (317).

(5) Ordained ministers (including licensed ministers who are ordained ministers-elect) who have applied for transfer to another district but whose processes of transfer out of the district are yet incomplete.

**1086. Laity.** The lay members of the district conference with voting rights are those elected as delegates by the churches or circuits of that district (315:7; 317; 1100–1109) and the lay members of the district board of administration (317). The total number of lay members with voting rights shall be determined as set forth in 1100:1 while maintaining the principle of equal representation



of the ministry and the laity. Each established church or circuit is entitled to a minimum of one lay delegate as its constitutional right (315:7; 503), and, according to its number of members, to additional lay delegates allotted by the district board of administration (1100:1–5). A developing church which is judged to be qualified may be allotted one lay delegate (510:5; 1100:2; 1103).

### **b. Nonvoting Members**

**1090.** The nonvoting members of the district conference, with a voice but without a vote, are (317):

- (1) Ordained ministers without appointment (1240:1:E; 3380).
- (2) Ordained ministers in process of transfer from another denomination (3104; 3390).
- (3) Commissioned or licensed ministers who are not voting members of the district conference as listed in 1083:2–4, including those in process of transfer from another denomination (3104).
- (4) Ministerial students (3015:3b; 3350:2).
- (5) Commissioned and licensed special workers (1240:5:A, B, C; 3460–3470).
- (6) Commissioned lay missionaries (1240:5:D).
- (7) Supply pastors (1240:5:E; 3260:4).
- (8) Interim pastors, unless qualifying as a voting member by some other right (1083; 3261).
- (9) Ordained ministers, commissioned ministers, and licensed ministers whose process of transfer into the district from other districts are pending completion.

## **2. Forfeiture of Representation**

**1095.** A local church or circuit which is under discipline as provided for in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* shall forfeit all rights to representation by a lay delegate in the district conference (315:7).

## **3. The Election of Lay Delegates**

**1100. Allotment.** The district board of administration shall assign to each church the specific number of lay delegates which it shall elect as its representatives to the district conference, in keeping with the provision in 1086 for the total number of lay delegates and subject to the following regulations:

(1) The district board of administration shall first determine the total number of lay delegates required for the next session of the district conference (1086), which shall initially equal the number of ministerial voting members eligible at the time such determination is made (1083:1–5). The district board of administration may adjust this number of lay delegates downward to be not fewer than the highest number of ministerial voting members who answered the roll call in each of the last three district conferences.

(2) One lay delegate shall first be allotted to each pastoral charge (315:7; 528:3; 317; 503), including any developing churches deemed qualified (510:5; 1086).

(3) One shall be subtracted from the number needed to balance the ministerial vote for each lay member of the district board of administration.

(4) The number of lay delegates yet required for the next district conference shall be allotted to the pastoral charges according to a ratio of representation. In fixing the ratio of representation, the members as listed on the statistical report of the preceding district conference shall be considered. The district board of administration shall establish the ratio of representation and apply it in such a manner as to assign the exact number of delegates to be elected by each pastoral charge.

(5) The district shall promptly notify each pastor of the exact number of lay delegates allotted to that particular pastoral charge.

**1103. Election.** The lay delegates to the district conference shall be elected at any duly called session of the local church conference by ballot, and by a majority vote of those members present and voting (823; 965). In the case of a developing church, election shall be by the local advisory council, subject to approval by the district superintendent (510:3, 5). A person accepting election as a delegate has an obligation to attend faithfully the entire district conference session, unless hindered by unforeseen and justifiable circumstances. The local church secretary shall promptly forward a certified list of the elected lay delegates to the district secretary.

**1106. Alternate Delegates.** A sufficient number of alternate lay delegates having the same qualifications (1109) shall be elected in the same manner and at the same session as the delegates (1103), and shall fill any vacancies in the order of their election. Whenever an alternate delegate is required to serve, the pastor or local church secretary shall certify this appointment to the district secretary.

**1109. Qualifications.** A lay delegate must be a member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) and in good standing of the pastoral charge represented, both at the time of election and at the time of the district

conference. An ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister may not be elected or serve as a lay delegate.

### C. Sessions

**1112. Annual Session.** The district conference shall meet annually at a place chosen by the district board of administration and at a time as decided upon by the General Superintendent in cooperation with the district board of administration (1233:6). The district secretary shall notify in writing all ministerial voting members, pastoral charges, and nonvoting members of the time and the place at least sixty days before the scheduled opening. Whenever an emergency shall require a change in the plans adopted, the district board of administration may declare that such an emergency exists and authorize the necessary changes.

**1115. Reconvened Session.** The district conference may be reconvened at any time during the year by a two-thirds majority vote of the district board of administration and the approval of the General Superintendent. A reconvened session shall also be ordered by the district board of administration when requested to do so by the General Board, its Executive Board, or the General Superintendent. The district board of administration shall designate the place and, in cooperation with the General Superintendent, establish the date, which shall be at least thirty days after the reconvened conference is announced. The district shall notify in writing all ministerial voting members, pastoral charges, and nonvoting members of the time, place, and purpose of the reconvened session. The district conference shall have the same rights and powers in a reconvened session as in the annual session.

### D. Organization and Procedure

#### 1. Officers

**1120. The Chair.** The General Superintendent, or a representative appointed by the General Superintendent, shall preside over the district conference, assisted by the district superintendent in the manner provided for in the Constitution (350:3). When neither the General Superintendent nor the appointed representative is present, the district superintendent shall preside or take the responsibility for the same. If none of the foregoing is present, the district conference shall elect from among its ordained ministers a chair pro tem.

**1123. The Secretary.** The district secretary shall be the secretary of the district conference ex officio. The district secretary shall accurately record the proceedings and preserve them in permanent form as prescribed by *The Discipline* (1178), and perform any other duties as shall be required by the district conference.

## 2. Procedure

**1126. Rights.** The rights of the district conference are declared in the Constitution (323:1–10; 325; 327:1; 350:3; 360:3c, e; 375:2, 4, 6; 385).

**1129. Quorum.** A majority of all the ministerial voting members and lay delegates of the district conference (1083–1086) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**1132. Delegates.** Once a delegate has been seated at the annual district conference, an alternate delegate cannot thereafter be seated in place of the previously seated delegate.

**1135. Voting (317).** The ministerial and lay members of the district conference shall deliberate and transact business as one body. However, on the final vote on any question, one-fourth of the members may call for a divided vote. The house shall then be divided, and the ministerial and lay members shall vote separately, with a majority vote of each branch required to pass the question on which the division has been called.

**1138. Rules of Order.** District conference business shall be conducted according to the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, except when otherwise ordered by *The Discipline* (1156).

**1141. Suspension of Rules.** The district conference may by two-thirds vote suspend any rules of order for a certain item of business, provided such a suspension does not contravene *The Discipline* or other General Conference legislation.

**1144. Appeals on Questions of Order.** The chair shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the district conference body. If any matter is ruled out of order by the chair on the basis that it is unconstitutional or in violation of *The Discipline*, the decision of the chair may be appealed by any member of the district conference. If the appeal is seconded, the chair shall clearly state the question and the reasons for the decision, and the one moving the appeal shall state the reasons for the appeal. The vote shall then be taken without debate. A two-thirds vote of the district conference, present and voting, shall be required to overrule the decision of the chair. If the chair is overruled, the action of the district conference shall be suspended until a ruling shall be given by the General Superintendent as provided for in 2064.

**1147. Legislation.** Rules and resolutions adopted by a district conference shall continue in force until amended or rescinded, unless such actions are by nature temporary or unless an action of the district conference is declared unconstitutional or contrary to *The Discipline* as set forth in 2064 and the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* 5445:2 (323:6).

### 3. Resolutions

**1150. Resolutions.** Resolutions may be submitted to the district conference by a local church conference, the district board of administration, or any three voting members of the district conference with their signatures.

**1153. Memorials.** All resolutions intended for eventual recommendation by the district conference to the General Conference, including changes in *The Discipline* and any other proposals, shall be designated as “memorials” (1557–1560). Anyone authorized to submit a resolution may also submit a memorial to be passed upon by the district conference.

**1156. Procedure.** All resolutions shall be submitted as directed by the district conference. The district board of administration shall be responsible to review each resolution or memorial as to its origin (1150), clarity, relationship to *The Discipline* and other existing legislation of the General Conference or district conference, and shall report them to the district conference together with their recommendations. A properly submitted resolution cannot be withheld from the conference body unless withdrawn by its authors or declared out of order by the chair of the district conference as contravening *The Discipline*. The district secretary shall present any resolutions in question to the district conference chair for a ruling before presenting them on the conference floor. The district conference may by a two-thirds vote suspend the requirement that a resolution must first be reviewed and immediately proceed to consider and vote upon said resolution.

### 4. Committees

**1159.** The district conference shall have such committees as are required by *The Discipline*, and may create and define the duties of such other committees as are deemed necessary.

**1172. District Conference Nominating Committee.** Each district shall have a district conference nominating committee consisting of the district superintendent as chair, and two or more ministers, and an equal number of lay members elected by the district conference (1180:9). The elected members of the nominating committee shall not succeed themselves and may not be

reelected until after a lapse of one year. The committee shall organize itself. It shall serve for one year and shall meet as called by the chair.

**1175.** The duties of this committee shall be determined by the district conference and may include the following to:

(1) Present nominations for the district secretary, members-at-large on the district board of administration, and each elected delegate to the General Conference.

(2) Give special consideration for the nomination of persons that reflect the full scope of the district's geographical, ethnic, and gender constituency.

(3) Present any other nominations as shall be requested by the district conference.

### **5. The District Conference Journal**

**1178.** The district conference journal shall contain the complete and accurate record of the proceedings of the district conference, prepared by the district secretary who shall have the duty to:

(1) Have it certified by the district superintendent.

(2) Arrange the journal as far as possible according to the table of contents and general format approved by the General Board.

(3) See that it contains a complete directory for the district as set forth in 1332:8.

(4) Deliver annually copies of the district journal in such quantities and format as needed for the offices in the World Headquarters.

### **E. Duties and Powers**

**1180.** The duties and powers of the district conference as set forth in the Constitution (1126) and as authorized by the General Conference are to:

#### **Relating to the Constitution**

(1) Propose an amendment to the Constitution, by a two-thirds vote, to be submitted to the General Conference as a memorial (385; 1560; 1590:1) or propose an amendment to the Constitution to be submitted first to the other district conferences (385; 1590:2).

(2) Vote on the ratification of an amendment to the Constitution adopted by the General Conference (385; 1590:1) and vote on a proposed amendment to the Constitution originating in another district conference (385; 1590:2).

### **Relating to the General Conference**

(3) Adopt memorials to the General Conference for proposed changes in *The Discipline* or for other legislation (1153; 1557–1560; 1565).

(4) Elect delegates to the General Conference as set forth in 1503–1526 (1175:1).

(5) Review all standing rules of the district and bring them into harmony with the Constitution, with other provisions of *The Discipline* as currently revised and amended, and with other General Conference legislation (323:6).

(6) Request a special session of the General Conference in concurrence with two-thirds of the district conferences (330:2; 1532).

### **Relating to the District Conference**

(7) Receive the appointed general representative to preside over the district conference whenever the General Superintendent is not present (350:3; 1935).

(8) Receive a report concerning the interests and progress of the denomination from the General Superintendent or if the General Superintendent is not present, from the general representative.

(9) Authorize a district conference nominating committee, designate its number of members, elect such members, and determine its duties as set forth in 1172–1175.

(10) Space reserved.

### **Relating to District Administration**

(11) Take charge of all ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers, ministerial students, commissioned and licensed special workers, missions, developing churches, pastoral charges, and other district work within its bounds, except when the district is under discipline (360:3c, e), and except for those members of the district who are elected as general officials (1800), missionaries appointed under the Global Partners Division (2272), and others who are amenable only to the General Board for their official duties (323:1; 360:2; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5150; 5203).

(12) Receive a report concerning their official duties from the following: the district superintendent (1310:27), the assistant district superintendent(s) (1323:5), the district treasurer (1337:8), and any others as desired by the district conference.

(13) Consider the numerical and financial progress of the district by receiving a complete statistical and financial report as compiled and submitted by the district secretary.

(14) Take such actions and adopt such rules as it shall judge necessary to promote the interests and well-being of The Wesleyan Church within the bounds of the district, and to amend or rescind the same, provided that it shall not add to or take from any provision of the Constitution or other provisions of *The Discipline*, and provided that any three members may appeal an action of the district conference as set forth in 323:6 (2061).

(15) Adopt financial plans which will provide for the support of the district work, and for the payment of the district obligation for the United Stewardship Fund (2015:1), assigning to each church its share of these obligations (2015:2; 1233:11).

(16) Space reserved.

(17) Determine the dates for the district fiscal year, which shall be binding on all churches, boards, committees, and organizations within the district for the keeping of records and reports.

(18) Authorize employment, if desired, of one or more assistant district superintendents (1320) as full-time district official(s).

(19) Authorize the incorporation of the district as provided for in 4100–4150. After such incorporation, the district board of administration shall carry out the will of the district conference concerning the holding of district and local church property (4680), and shall have power, on its own resolution, to acquire, purchase, manage, sell, exchange, mortgage, deed in trust, pledge, rent, lease, and convey any property, real, personal, or mixed, as may be necessary or convenient for the purpose of the corporation.

(20) Elect, in states or provinces where local laws prohibit such incorporation, or where the law requires the property to be held by trustees, a district board of trustees from among the members of the district board of administration, which shall carry out the will of the district conference concerning the holding of district and local church property (4680), and which shall carry out its duties as set forth in 1365 (4500–4630; 4800–4880).

(21) Delegate any of its duties not restricted to the district conference by the Constitution.

### **Relating to Churches, Ministers, and Lay Workers**

(22) Authorize the establishing of a mission (537), a developing church (510), a church (518), the reclassification of a church as a developing church (518:7;



1233:26); to declare a church as discontinued or abandoned (4730); and to hear a report from the district superintendent of the organization of new churches (520:6; 1310:14). Any established church that is not under discipline may not be discontinued without a corroborating vote of the local church conference (655:12; 1233:26).

(23) Determine the boundaries of each pastoral charge within the district (323:5; 1233:10c; 4750).

(24) Receive and pass the recommendations of the district board of administration concerning the pastoral agreements, appointments, and district conference relations, as follows (1233:10):

(a) Approve the pastoral agreements entered into between the pastoral charges and the ministers, or to alter such an agreement, or to veto the action of the pastoral charge and appoint another pastor, provided that any such alteration or veto shall be for reasons as set forth in the Constitution, and shall be voted on as a separate action by the district conference (323:1–2; 697).

(b) Appoint a pastor to those pastoral charges not yet supplied at the time of the district conference or whenever requested to do so by a local church (708); or to delegate such appointment to the district board of administration, and to appoint an interim pastor (3261:2); or to employ a qualified person as a supply pastor when deemed necessary (3260).

(c) Appoint each minister to the proper category of service or other appointment (3250–3391), appointing each ordained minister not included on the appointed list (1240:1:A) to the proper district conference relation as retired, on reserve, on educational leave, without appointment (1240:1:B–E), or in process of transfer (3104); appointing each commissioned or licensed minister to the proper category of service (1240:2:A–B; 1240:3:A–B; 3255–3391) or in the process of transfer (3104); to license as ministerial students those persons so qualified (1240:4; 3015:1); and to appoint as commissioned or licensed special workers, designating their particular ministry (3450–3480), those who have been granted the proper commissions and licenses (1240:5:A–C) or to list them as in process of transfer (1240:5:B); and to appoint commissioned lay missionaries.

(25) Grant in concurrence with the General Board prior approval to a local church conference for post-secondary education in terms of an institute, junior college, or college-level programs (655:17; 1655:36).

(26) Elect to ordination or for commissioning as a minister a candidate the district conference deems qualified (3070), after receiving a report from the

district board of ministerial development (1390:5) which shall be acted upon as a separate item of business.

(27) Grant a license, commission, recognition, or restoration, in keeping with the requirements of *The Discipline*, after receiving the report and recommendations from the district board of ministerial development (1390:5), as follows:

(a) A recognition as ordained minister in process of transfer to an ordained minister being received from another denomination (3104), and a recognition as an ordained minister of The Wesleyan Church in full standing when all requirements have been met (3104:4–5).

(b) A district ministerial license, the granting of which shall become effective when the person receives appointment as set forth in 3033:7 and 3040:3 (1180:24c; 1233:10).

(c) A recognition of a commissioned or licensed minister being received from another denomination as in process of transfer (3104) and a recognition of such commissioned or licensed ministers in full standing when all requirements are met (3104).

(d) A license as a ministerial student for those who are qualified (3015:1; 3350).

(e) A license or commission as special worker, designating the particular ministry (3450–3480), or a recognition of a commissioned special worker or the equivalent thereof in process of transfer from another denomination, and subsequent recognition as a commissioned special worker in full standing when all requirements have been met (3470).

(f) A commission as lay missionary (3490).

(g) Any other license or commission as shall be authorized by *The Discipline*.

(h) The restoration or reinstatement of ordination, commission, or license as set forth in 3120–3124; 3480; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5230–5248 (1390:4).

(28) Receive and pass on an annual service report, through the district board of ministerial development as set forth in 1390:7–9, from each ordained, commissioned, and licensed minister, ministerial student, and commissioned and licensed special worker; to receive an explanation from the district board of ministerial development relative to each person whose report has been found unsatisfactory, and to vote on the continuation of such person for appointment, which shall require a two-thirds vote of confidence for approval (1390:9).

### Relating to the Election of Officials and Committees

(29) Elect, by ballot and by majority vote, an ordained minister to the office of district superintendent for a term of four years (1303:2, 4). Reelection thereafter shall also be for a term of four years or for an extended call (1303:2, 4).

(30) Elect, by ballot and by majority vote, a district secretary (1330; 1175:1) and members-at-large of the district board of administration (1203–1206).

(31) Space reserved.

(32) Space reserved.

(33) Space reserved.

(34) Elect a district board of review as set forth in paragraph 1370 (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5218).

### Relating to Church Law and the Judiciary

(35) Request, by a two-thirds majority vote, a ruling on a point of Wesleyan Church law or an interpretation of *The Discipline* from the General Superintendent (2061:1); or appeal, by a two-thirds majority vote, such a ruling to the General Board of Review (2061:3; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:2).

(36) Appeal, by a two-thirds majority vote, a decision of the General Superintendent on the legality of an action by the district conference, a district board or committee, or a district official, to the General Board of Review (375:2; 2061; 323:6; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:2). All appeals must be filed with the Executive Director of Communication and Administration within sixty days after the date of the official decision on the matter.

(37) Adopt, by a two-thirds majority vote, a complaint against the General Conference or another district and order its presentation to the General Board of Review for settlement (375:4,6; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:4); and to adopt such a complaint, by a majority vote, against the General Board to be presented to the General Board of Review for settlement (323:10).

(38) Appeal, by a two-thirds majority vote, a judgment of the General Board of Review to the General Conference for final settlement (323:10; 380; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5450). All appeals must be filed with the Executive Director of Communication and Administration within sixty days after the date of the official decision on the matter.

(39) Exercise judicial powers according to the provisions of the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5200–5248; 5300–5325).

## Chapter 3

### DISTRICT BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

#### A. Function

**1200.** The district board of administration carries out the will of the district conference, promotes the interests of The Wesleyan Church within the district, and serves as the chief governing body of the district in the interim of district conference sessions.

#### B. Membership

**1203. Composition.** The district board of administration is composed of the district superintendent, the assistant district superintendent(s) (1320), the district secretary, the district treasurer, and members-at-large:

(1) The district conference shall elect at least seven members-at-large to the district board of administration, making a total of not fewer than ten members elected so that at least four are lay members (1203:2).

(2) Whenever a district conference chooses to elect more than the minimum number of members-at-large to its district board of administration, due regard shall be given to elect a proportionate number of lay members.

**1206. Regulations for a Member-at-Large.** Each member-at-large of a district board of administration shall be a member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of a local Wesleyan church within the district of service, both at the time of election and throughout the tenure of membership. A ministerial member-at-large shall be chosen from among the ordained ministers of the district. The term of office shall be for one, two, or three years (1282), and the member-at-large shall serve until a successor is elected and qualified. Regulations governing the amenability of a member-at-large of the district board of administration and the declaring and filling of a vacancy in such office are the same as those for district officials set forth in 1265 and 1272 (1233:24a).

#### C. Sessions

**1209. Organizing Sessions.** The district board of administration shall meet immediately after the close of the district conference for an organizing session to:

(1) Care for any business delegated to it by the district conference which requires immediate attention.

(2) Appoint or employ a district treasurer (1335), when such has been authorized by the district conference (1180:30).

(3) Elect those officers and members whose terms expire at the time of the district board's organizing session (1233:19).

(4) Make plans for the year and to care for any other business as deemed necessary.

**1212. Regular Sessions.** The district board of administration shall meet at such time and place as it shall determine, provided that it shall meet at least once each quarter.

**1215. Special Sessions.** The district board of administration may authorize special sessions as it deems necessary, or it may be called into special session by the district superintendent or in the event of an emergency, when the district superintendent is unable to act, by the assistant district superintendent (1320; 1323:2), or the General Superintendent, or the General Superintendent's representative. A special session shall also be called when requested by the General Board or the General Superintendent. All members shall be notified at least one week in advance of a special session, except when all are able to meet on shorter notice.

**1218. Evaluation Sessions.** The General Superintendent shall, with the district board of administration, evaluate periodically the service of and financial provision for the district superintendent. The method and extent of such evaluation shall be determined by the General Superintendent with special attention focused on those responsibilities that are most likely to contribute to future outreach and growth to the glory of God.

## D. Organization and Procedures

**1221. Chair.** The district superintendent shall preside as chair over the district board of administration. The designated assistant district superintendent, shall preside in the absence of the district superintendent or when requested to do so by the district superintendent (1320). If neither is present, the board shall elect from among its members a chair pro tem.

**1224. Secretary.** The district secretary is the secretary of the district board of administration by virtue of this office.

**1227. Quorum.** A majority of all members of the board shall constitute a quorum.

**1230. Voting.** A majority of those present and voting shall be sufficient except for those matters for which a larger majority is required by *The Discipline* or by legal or corporate requirements.

### **E. Duties and Powers**

**1233.** The duties and powers of the district board of administration are to:

#### **General Duties**

(1) Serve as the chief governing body of the district in the interim of district conference sessions, caring for all the interests of The Wesleyan Church within the bounds of the district in accord with *The Discipline*.

(2) Promote the interests of the general divisions and educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church; to encourage their support and to receive their representatives.

(3) Be responsible within the district for the promotion of world missions and general evangelism and church growth.

#### **Related to the District Conference**

(4) Cooperate with the district superintendent in evaluating the health of the district; establishing policies, goals, and objectives for more effectively fulfilling the mission of the district; empowering the district superintendent to pursue the goals and objectives within the established policies and through the district's pastors and members; and periodically receiving performance reports from the district superintendent.

(5) Carry out the plans and objectives of the district conference.

(6) Cooperate with the General Superintendent in establishing the date for the annual session of the district conference (1112).

(7) Call for a reconvened session of the district conference by a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the district board of administration, subject to the approval of the General Superintendent, and to call for a reconvened session when requested to do so by the General Board (1115) or the General Superintendent.

(8) Allot to each church or circuit of the district the number of lay delegates it shall elect to the district conference (1100).

(9) Submit resolutions directly to the district conference that will provide for a more efficient administration and advancement of the district work, and to submit proposed memorials to the General Conference (1557; 1180:3).

(10) Serve the district conference as a committee on pastoral relations and ministerial appointments, being responsible to:

(a) Review all pastoral agreements between churches and ministers of the district (690–722).

(b) Receive a report from the district board of ministerial development concerning matters related to district conference appointments and relations as set forth in 1390:10.

(c) Submit to the district conference a comprehensive report covering all the churches and ministers of the district: recommending any necessary changes in the boundaries of the pastoral charges or in the classification of churches (1180:22–23; 4720–4750); recommending the appointment of pastors for all churches for the coming year (510:1), including the approval, alteration, or veto of pastoral agreements already made by the churches and ministers (323:2), and the appointment of pastors or the delegation of responsibility for such appointment for churches otherwise without pastors (1180:24), and recommending the appointment and/or classification of all other ordained ministers (3075:5), commissioned or licensed ministers, special workers, and the licensing of ministerial students as set forth in 1180:24 and 1240 (3015:1).

(11) Carry out the following duties concerning the United Stewardship Fund (2000–2045): submit a recommendation to the district conference for the raising of the district obligation and the apportioning to each church of its share of the district obligation (2015; 1337:6); approve adjustments in United Stewardship Fund assessments due to building projects as set forth in 2005:2; administer the district plan for raising the district obligation and see that such obligation is paid in full (2015:3).

### **Duties Relating to District Officers, Committees, and Auxiliaries**

(12) Have the general oversight of all district officials (1255) and organizations of the district; approve their plans and to coordinate their work; and see that the work is administered according to *The Discipline* and the directives of the district conference (1265–1272; 1285–1292; 1337:8; 1384).

(13) Incorporate the district, when so authorized by the district conference (1180:19), as provided for in 4100–4150; serve as the board of directors of such corporation; have power on its own resolution to acquire, purchase, manage, sell, exchange, mortgage, deed in trust, pledge, rent, lease, and convey any property, real, personal, or mixed, as may be necessary or convenient for

the purpose of the corporation; and exercise its corporate powers in accord with the provisions of *The Discipline* (4100–4150; 4500–4630; 4660; 4680; 4800–4880).

(14) Carry out, whenever the district is not incorporated, such duties, and exercise such authority over district property and other legal affairs as set forth in 4500–4630 and 4800–4880.

(15) Provide for the preservation and security of all district records and archives, directing the district superintendent (1310:13; 4760), the district secretary (1332:6–7), the secretary of the district board of ministerial development (1387), and any others, concerning the care of the records placed in their custody.

(16) Space reserved.

(17) Adopt an annual budget of income and expense for the district; set the salaries, allowances, and related matters for the district officials (1303:2); to promote the raising of district funds in keeping with the plans of the district conference (1180:15); to set aside a portion of all local church base income for church multiplication purposes and to hold the same in accounts only for reporting that district's multiplication plans; to direct the district treasurer in the handling and disbursement of such funds (1337:3); to have the district treasurer bonded, and to set the amount of such bond, the expense for which shall be paid by the district.

(18) Employ an auditor and to assign the duties (1340), and direct an audit of the records and funds in the custody of the district treasurer, or any other treasurers of the district (1337:7).

(19) Elect or employ a district treasurer and to elect such district officers and members of the district boards or committees as required by *The Discipline* or delegated to it by the district conference (1180:30; 1233:34; 1245; 1340); to elect members of the district board of ministerial development in keeping with the requirements for that board; and to ratify the appointment of the chair if the district superintendent chooses not to serve (1378–1381).

(20) Take responsibility for developing, supervising, and promoting an aggressive program of district evangelism and church growth, and to cooperate in such endeavor with the General Superintendent.

(21) Space reserved

(22) Elect four ordained ministers and three lay members as members of the district board of review, and to elect two ordained ministers and two lay members to serve as alternates and to fill vacancies (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5218).

(23) Request a ruling on a point of Church law or an interpretation of *The Discipline* from the General Superintendent and to appeal the same to the Board of Review (2064; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:1–2); and to request



assistance from the General Board or its Executive Board, through the General Superintendent, when deemed necessary.

(24) Remove for cause or whenever the best interests of the Church and the district so require:

(a) Any of its own members, with the exception of the district superintendent (1307), by a two-thirds majority vote of all members, and to fill such vacancies for the unexpired term (1206; 1265; 1272).

(b) Any member of a board or other agency of the district by a majority vote and to fill such vacancies for the unexpired term (1292).

### **Related to Churches and Ministers**

(25) Organize and supervise all pastoral charges of the district in accord with *The Discipline* and other district directives so that each one may be an effective unit of The Wesleyan Church; to guard carefully the spiritual life and general welfare of all the churches; to plan and conduct conventions, institutes, or seminars for pastors and other workers in the district, promoting such for the purpose of spiritual refreshment, leadership development, greater efficiency, and a more united effort within the district and the General Church.

(26) Authorize the establishment of a mission (537; 655:14), a developing church (510), an urban missional church (523), or a church (518), and to receive a report from the district superintendent on the effecting of such organizations (520:6); to reclassify an established church as a developing church when its number of members drops to thirty or fewer (518:7a); and to declare a church as discontinued or abandoned (1180:22; 4730). Any established church that is not under discipline may not be discontinued without a corroborating vote of the local church conference (655:12).

(27) Approve an annual district church multiplication plan including a report on multiplication projects of the prior year, as well as planned projects for multiplication in the coming year, and submit the same to the General Superintendent for review. Any use of funds for other than designated purposes must be approved by the General Superintendent.

(28) Receive the report of the district superintendent concerning the actions of the local advisory council of each developing church (510:3).

(29) Approve all pastoral agreements and make all ministerial appointments in the interim of district conference sessions, subject to the final approval of the district conference (715; 722:1, 3).

(30) Approve in writing the proposal of a local church conference for the acquisition, purchase, sale, mortgage, transfer or other disposal of real property

in accord with the provisions in 4700–4790 (4000–4070); to advise a local board of administration when a local church has received an out-of-pattern contribution with value equal to or exceeding the total contributions of the preceding year (782:32); to authorize the incorporation of a local church in keeping with 4000 (655:13; 4010:6); to approve the name of a new church or name change or adaptation requested by a developing or established church.

(31) Supervise and coordinate the merger of two or more churches and to establish the procedures for such mergers. The plans for merger initiated by the local board or boards of administration must be submitted for approval to the district board of administration before presenting the proposals to the local church conference for consideration and vote.

(32) Approve the plans of a local board of administration for the establishment of a day care and/or day school, and after its establishment to approve any significant change in mission, facilities, or finances (655:17; 782:33–34).

(33) Take charge of any complaints or accusations against a local church or circuit within the district and to carry out disciplinary proceedings as deemed necessary in accord with the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5300–5325; 5221); to intervene and protect the property rights of The Wesleyan Church and the district as set forth in 4010:6; 4770; 4840:6; to authorize the district superintendent to call for an affirmation of loyalty; to reorganize a local church as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5300–5325).

(34) Grant temporary recognition (1390:3) to ordained ministers, commissioned ministers, licensed ministers, and commissioned special workers or persons with equivalent standing, from other denominations, as being in process of transfer, subject to the action of the next district conference (1180:27a, d, e; 1310:26).

(35) Consider and pass on the proposed resignation by, or a proposed vote on, a pastor after the renewal of the call, when such is considered before the term of service expires or in the interim of quadrennial reviews (722:2); or to remove a pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the district board of administration in keeping with the provisions of 712; 722:3; 1310:20; and to appoint a supply pastor, if necessary, until another pastor has been obtained (715); or to remove a supply pastor by a majority vote if deemed necessary (3260:5); and to appoint an interim pastor or to remove an interim pastor by a majority vote (3261:2).

(36) Take charge of judicial proceedings, the ordering of investigations (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5012) or hearings, for any ordained minister, commissioned minister, licensed minister, ministerial student, commissioned

or licensed special worker, or other worker under the jurisdiction of the district in accord with the provisions of the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5200; 5203–5215).

(37) Represent the district, in the interim of district conference sessions, in judicial proceedings over matters of controversy between the district and other local, district, or general units or agencies (323:10; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:2, 4).

## **F. The Listing of District Conference Relations and Appointments**

**1240.** The ordained ministers, commissioned ministers, licensed ministers, ministerial students, commissioned special workers, licensed special workers, commissioned lay missionaries, and supply pastors of the district shall be listed in the following order as appointed by the district conference (1180:24; 1233:10). This listing shall be included in the district conference journal (1178) as an official district directory and shall be used for that portion of the district conference roll call.

### **1. Ordained Ministers**

#### **A. APPOINTED ORDAINED MINISTERS (3250–3390).**

##### **1. District Service.**

The district superintendent and other ordained ministers in full-time service of the district in a ministerial capacity (3320; 1327; 1460).

##### **2. Pastoral and Local Service.**

- a. Ordained ministers appointed as pastors or assistant pastors, or interim pastors within the district (3255).
- b. Ordained ministers on loan to other districts of The Wesleyan Church for service as supply pastors (3100:2; 3260:1).
- c. Ordained ministers appointed to serve in a local church spiritual formation or Christian education program (3310:2).

##### **3. Evangelistic Service.**

- a. Associate general evangelists. Ordained ministers appointed as associate general evangelists (3270; 3280).
- b. General evangelists. Ordained ministers appointed as general evangelists (3270; 3275; 3285:1).
- c. Reserve evangelists. Ordained ministers appointed as reserve evangelists (3270; 3275; 3285:2).

**4. Denominational Service.**

- a. Ordained ministers elected by the General Conference or General Board as general officials (1800; 3320).
- b. Ordained ministers employed at the World Headquarters, or those elected or employed by the board of directors of a general subsidiary corporation other than an educational institution, for full-time General Church service in a ministerial capacity as set forth in 3320.
- c. Ordained ministers appointed by the General Board for service in a ministerial capacity as missionaries or workers under the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division or Global Partners Division as set forth in 3300.
- d. Ordained ministers employed to serve in a ministerial capacity on the administrative staff or faculty of an educational institution of The Wesleyan Church (2365) or one of the seminaries approved by the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (2382).
- e. Ordained ministers traveling and teaching in local churches and districts without a specific or pastoral assignment as itinerant Bible teachers (3310:3).

**5. Chaplains (3330).**

Ordained ministers approved by the Committee on Chaplains and commissioned by the government as military chaplains, or employed as full-time professional institutional chaplains.

**6. Interchurch Service (3335).**

Ordained ministers employed in a ministerial capacity in interchurch service, serving with an educational, evangelistic, or missionary organization not directly related to The Wesleyan Church, provided such service is approved by the district conference.

**7. Special Service (3345).**

Ordained ministers serving in active ministry not otherwise provided for, if such service is approved by the district conference.

**8. Affiliate Church Pastor (3346; 7010).**

Ordained ministers appointed by the district conference to service on staff of an affiliate church.

**B. RETIRED ORDAINED MINISTERS (3370).**

Ordained ministers retired because of age or incapacitated by infirmity, provided they were either on the appointed list, on reserve, or on educational leave at the time of such incapacitation or retirement.

**C. RESERVE ORDAINED MINISTERS (3360).**

Ordained ministers available for but without appointment. An ordained minister who remains on reserve for two consecutive years shall be automatically transferred to the list of ordained ministers without appointment unless continued on reserve by vote of the district conference.

**D. ORDAINED MINISTERS ON EDUCATIONAL LEAVE (3350:1).**

Ordained ministers enrolled in a seminary or other graduate school for advanced training for church service.

**E. ORDAINED MINISTERS WITHOUT APPOINTMENT (3380).**

1. Ordained ministers not available for appointment.
2. Ordained ministers employed in other than a ministerial capacity by the General Church (3320), by an educational institution or one of the seminaries connected with the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (3310), or in interchurch service (3335).
3. Ordained ministers not otherwise listed.

**F. ORDAINED MINISTERS IN PROCESS OF DISTRICT TRANSFER**

Ordained ministers receiving appointment by the district conference to 1240:1:A, B, C or D but whose processes of transfer between districts of The Wesleyan Church are not yet completed.

1. The receiving district shall list the ordained minister under the appropriate category of service, followed by the notation, "Pending Completion of District Transfer." The minister shall be a nonvoting member of this district until completion of the transfer (1090:9).
2. The sending district shall list the ordained minister as having "Applied for District Transfer." The ordained minister shall be a voting member of the sending district until completion of the district transfer (3100:1; 1083:5).

**G. ORDAINED MINISTERS IN PROCESS OF DENOMINATIONAL TRANSFER (3104; 3390).**

Ordained ministers from another denomination who have been granted recognition as ordained ministers in process of transfer (1180:29a; 1390:3; 3104).

## **2. Commissioned Ministers**

**A. PASTORS (3255).**

Commissioned ministers appointed as pastors or as full-time assistant pastors of Wesleyan churches in that district (317; 1083:3).

**B. OTHER APPOINTMENTS.**

Commissioned ministers appointed to service in a local church spiritual formation or Christian education program (3310:2) or in a ministerial capacity to district, denominational, or interchurch service (3250; 3300; 3320; 3335); itinerant Bible teachers (3310:3).

**C. COMMISSIONED MINISTERS WITHOUT APPOINTMENT (3380).**

1. Commissioned ministers not available for appointment.
2. Commissioned ministers employed in other than a ministerial capacity by the General Church (3320), by an educational institution or one of the seminaries connected with the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (3310) or in interchurch service (3335).

**D. COMMISSIONED MINISTERS IN PROCESS OF DISTRICT TRANSFER.**

Commissioned ministers receiving appointment by the district conference to 1240:2:A or B but whose processes of transfer from another district of The Wesleyan Church are not yet completed.

1. The receiving district shall list the commissioned minister under the appropriate category of service, followed by the notation, "Pending Completion of District Transfer." The commissioned minister shall be a nonvoting member of this district until completion of the transfer (3100:1).
2. The sending district shall list the commissioned minister as having "Applied for District Transfer." The commissioned minister shall remain a nonvoting member of the sending district until completion of the transfer (1083:3).

**E. COMMISSIONED MINISTERS IN PROCESS OF DENOMINATIONAL TRANSFER.**

Commissioned ministers or their equivalent from other denominations who have been granted recognition as commissioned ministers in process of transfer (3104).

**F. RETIRED COMMISSIONED MINISTERS (3371).**

Commissioned ministers retired because of age or incapacitated by infirmity, provided they were either on the appointed list, on reserve, or on educational leave at the time of such incapacitation or retirement.

### 3. Licensed Ministers

#### A. PASTORS (3255).

Licensed ministers appointed as pastors or assistant pastors of Wesleyan churches in that district (317; 1083:3).

#### B. OTHER APPOINTMENTS.

Licensed ministers appointed to service in a local church spiritual formation or Christian education program (3310:2) or in a ministerial capacity to district, denominational, or interchurch service (3250; 3300; 3320; 3335); itinerant Bible teachers (3310:3).

#### C. IN PROCESS OF DISTRICT TRANSFER.

Licensed ministers receiving appointment by the district conference to 1240:3:A or B but whose processes of transfer from another district of The Wesleyan Church are not yet completed.

1. The receiving district shall list the licensed minister under the appropriate category of service, followed by the notation, "Pending Completion of District Transfer." The licensed minister shall be a nonvoting member of this district until completion of the transfer (3100:1).
2. The sending district shall list the licensed minister as "Applied for District Transfer." Unless a licensed minister is an ordained minister-elect, said minister shall remain a nonvoting member of the sending district until completion of the district transfer (1083:2, 3).

#### D. IN PROCESS OF DENOMINATIONAL TRANSFER.

Licensed ministers or their equivalent from other denominations who have been granted recognition as licensed ministers in process of transfer (3104).

### 4. Ministerial Students

Those approved by the district conference to be licensed as ministerial students as set forth in 3015:1.

### 5. Lay Workers

#### A. COMMISSIONED SPECIAL WORKERS (3450; 3470).

List by specific category such as director of music, director of spiritual formation or Christian education, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, lay evangelist, social worker, or spouse in ministry.

**B. COMMISSIONED SPECIAL WORKERS IN PROCESS OF TRANSFER (3450; 3470).**

List by specific category (1240:5:A).

**C. LICENSED SPECIAL WORKERS (3450; 3460).**

List by specific category (1240:5:A).

**D. COMMISSIONED LAY MISSIONARIES (3490).**

**E. SUPPLY PASTORS (3260).**

**G. Executive Committee**

**1245.** A district board of administration may establish an executive committee consisting of the executive officers of the district board of administration (1255). Additional members may be elected upon the recommendation of the district superintendent. The executive committee may act for the district board of administration as that board shall authorize.



## Chapter 4

### DISTRICT OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

#### A. List of District Officers, Boards, and Committees

**1250.** The following summarizes for quick reference the various officers, boards, and committees of the district:

- (1) The district shall have the following officers and personnel, elected by the district conference:
  - administration, board of (1200–1233)
  - delegates to General Conference (1032; 1180:4; 1503–1526)
  - district secretary (1330–1332)—or this office may be combined as district secretary-treasurer
  - district superintendent (1300–1310)
  - trustees, district board of (if any, subject to 1180:20; 1360; 1365; 4855)
- (2) The district shall have the following officers and personnel, elected by the district board of administration:
  - assistant superintendent(s) (1320–1327)
  - auditing committee or auditor (1340)
  - ministerial development, board of (1378)
  - ordination council (1405)
  - review, board of (1370; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5218–5221)
- (3) The district may have any additional ministry leaders and committees deemed necessary, appointed by the district board of administration

#### B. District Officials

**1255. Identification.** The district officials include the district superintendent, the assistant district superintendent(s), the district secretary, and the district treasurer. The assistant district superintendent(s) (1320) and the district treasurer are elected by the district board of administration (1335; 1233:19). The district superintendent and the district secretary are elected by the district conference by ballot and by majority vote. All district officials are ex officio members of the district board of administration (1180:29–30; 1203).

**1258. Qualifications.** A district official other than the district superintendent (1303:1) must be, at the time of election and throughout the term of service, a member with leadership qualifications of a local Wesleyan church within the district and, if a minister, a ministerial member of the district where service is rendered (1272).

**1262. Term of Office.** District officials elected or appointed by the district conference or district board of administration (cf.1250; 1255; 1275; 1303:2) shall be elected or appointed for two-year terms of service with the exception of the district superintendent (1303:2). All district officials shall assume office at the close of the district conference session at which they are elected and shall serve until their successors are elected (1180:30).

**1265. Amenability.** A district official shall administer the respective office according to *The Discipline*, and as directed by the General Conference, the General Board, the district conference, and the district board of administration. District officials other than the district superintendent shall serve under the general supervision of the district superintendent, shall be amenable to the district board of administration, and may be removed for cause or when the best interests of The Wesleyan Church and the district so require, upon a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the district board of administration (1233:24a). The amenability of the district superintendent is set forth in 1307 (323:1).

**1268. Reports.** A district official shall report to each session of the district conference concerning all official duties (1180:12) and to the district board of administration as may be required.

**1272. Vacancies.** The office of a district official may become vacant by death, by cessation of membership in a local Wesleyan church within the district, by resignation, by removal (1265) or in the case of a minister, by ceasing to be a ministerial member of the district. In all cases other than that of the district superintendent (1303:6), the filling of a vacancy in the office of a district official until the next session of the district conference shall be by a majority vote of all members of the district board of administration (1233:24a).

### C. District Departmental Officers and Committees

**1278. Qualifications.** A district officer or member of a district board or committee (1275) must be a member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of a local Wesleyan church within the district at the time of election, with the exception of ordained ministers appointed to denominational service, and if a minister, a ministerial member of the district (1292).

**1282. Term of Office.** A district officer (1275) or member of a district board or committee elected or appointed by the district conference or district board of administration may be elected or appointed for a one-, two-, or three-year term of service, unless otherwise stated in *The Discipline* (1378). The district officer or member of a district board or committee shall assume office at the time of the election, and shall serve until the close of the designated term.

**1285. Amenability.** All district officers and members of district boards or committees (1275) shall carry out their duties according to *The Discipline* and other directives of the General Church or district. They shall serve under the general supervision of the district superintendent and shall be amenable to the district board of administration. They may be removed by the district board of administration, by a majority vote, for cause or when the best interests of The Wesleyan Church and the district so require (1233:24b).

**1288. Reports.** A district officer shall report to the district conference as required by *The Discipline* or by the district conference (1180:12), and shall make other reports to the district board of administration, or the district superintendent as may be requested.

**1292. Vacancies.** Membership on a district board or committee (1275) may become vacant by death, by cessation of membership in a local Wesleyan church within the district, by resignation, by removal (1285), or in the case of a minister, by ceasing to be a ministerial member of the district, or in the case of a minister serving under the special provision of paragraph 1278, by discontinuing the appointment to denominational service. A vacancy may be declared and filled for the unexpired term by the district board of administration, by a majority vote.

## Chapter 5

### DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

#### A. District Superintendent

**1300. Function.** The district superintendent is to be the spiritual and administrative leader of the district.

**1303. Qualifications and Tenure.** A district superintendent shall exhibit the desire to live a holy life and demonstrate the same in practice; shall live in full accord with the vision and values of The Wesleyan Church; have passion and compassion for the lost and the least; and exhibit vision and administrative leadership. The regulations for a district superintendent are (1255–1272):

(1) **Election.** The district superintendent shall be elected by the district conference, by ballot and by majority vote, from among the ordained ministers of The Wesleyan Church (1180:29). A favorable vote of less than two-thirds majority requires General Church approval. If the district superintendent who is elected is from outside the membership of the electing district, the district superintendent shall immediately arrange for the transfer of local and district membership.

(2) **Term of Office.** The election of a district superintendent shall be for a term of four years. The initial term of a newly elected district superintendent begins at the rise of the district conference. The salary of a district superintendent should be continued for one month beyond the date for the termination of service, unless the salary is removed by the district board of administration.

(3) **Reelection.** Unless a district superintendent whose term is expiring shall give notice to the General Superintendent and district board of administration no less than ninety days prior to district conference, the district superintendent shall be considered available. The General Superintendent shall lead the district board of administration in a formal evaluation of the district superintendent's job performance in relation to established missional goals and objectives prior to any vote on reelection to office. If necessary, by a majority vote the district board of administration may request procedural intervention by the General Superintendent to declare that reelection by a "yes/no" vote shall not occur but that the nomination process in *Discipline* 1303:7 must be followed. When an incumbent district superintendent does not receive a majority vote on the initial "yes/no" ballot for reelection, the provision of 1303:7 for the special committee on nominations shall become effective.

(4) **Term of Reelection.** One of the following alternative procedures shall be followed:

(a) A vote for a four-year renewal of the call shall be taken. If the vote on a four-year renewal of the call is favorable, the district board of administration, after consulting with the district superintendent and upon approval of the General Superintendent, may then recommend to the district conference that a ballot vote be taken to renew the call for an extended period.

(b) Or, prior to the vote on renewing the call, the district board of administration, after consultation with the district superintendent and upon approval of the General Superintendent, shall recommend to the district conference a specific call for four years or an extended call.

(5) **Ex Officio Duties.** The district superintendent is a ministerial member of the General Conference (325; 1503:1a), vice-chair of the district conference (350:3; 1120), chair of the district board of administration (1221; 1310:6), chair of the district board of ministerial development unless electing to appoint another to serve (1381), and chair of the district conference nominating committee.

(6) **Vacancy.** Whenever the office of superintendent is vacated other than at district conference, or when other existing circumstances warrant, the district board of administration, in consultation with the General Superintendent, shall appoint an interim superintendent to serve until the next annual session of the district conference, or until a successor is elected or the district board of administration declares the period of service ended. An interim district superintendent shall be granted full authority to carry out the duties assigned to a district superintendent by *The Discipline*.

(7) **Committee for Nominations.** Whenever a vacancy has resulted in the appointment of an acting superintendent, or whenever a district superintendent shall announce unavailability for continued service, the General Superintendent shall chair the district board of administration. The district board of administration shall screen and select persons believed to have the qualities needed for the office of district superintendent and present one or more nominees to the district conference session. The district conference shall elect in accordance with 1303:1, and shall not be limited to the persons nominated by the district board of administration.

**1307. Amenability.** The district superintendent is amenable, as provided in the Constitution, to the General Board (323:1). The district superintendent may be removed from office by the General Board, by a two-thirds majority vote of all its members, for cause or whenever the General Board deems it necessary for the best interests of the Church or the preservation of the district (1655:37, 40a).

**1310. Duties.** The district superintendent shall administer this office in accord with *The Discipline* and any other official directives from the General

Conference, the General Board, the General Superintendent, the district conference, and the district board of administration. The duties of the district superintendent are (1300; 1303:6) to:

### **General**

(1) Have the oversight of the Church within the district, endeavoring to lead the district forward in the fulfillment of the mission of The Wesleyan Church (100–105).

(2) Give special attention to an aggressive program of evangelism and church growth, as approved by the district board of administration (537; 510; 518; 1233:3, 20; 4840:6).

(3) Carry on a spiritual and inspirational ministry, teaching the people concerning the doctrines, purposes, and programs of The Wesleyan Church.

(4) Cooperate with the General Superintendent and the General Board in the oversight of the district work.

(5) Assist the General Superintendent in presiding over the district conference. If the General Superintendent is not present, it is the duty of the district superintendent to preside (350:3; 1120).

### **District Administration**

(6) Be the chair of the district board of administration (1203; 1221), and to submit recommendations to the district board of administration that will provide for a more efficient administration, and advancement of the district work.

(7) Be the chair of the district board of ministerial development, or to appoint another to serve instead, subject to ratification by the district board of administration (1381); and to be the chair of the district conference nominating committee (1172).

(8) Exercise administrative supervision over all district officials, boards, leadership teams, committees, auxiliary organizations, missions, developing churches, churches, ministers, and other workers (3260:2) of the district with the exception of those who are amenable to the General Board (323:1; 1180:11), and to see that the plans and policies of the General Church and district are carried out.

(9) Meet with any district committee, or other district entity at the discretion of the district superintendent, and make such recommendations as deemed advisable.

(10) Cooperate with the district board of administration and General Superintendent in evaluating the health of the district; establishing policies, goals, and objectives for more effectively fulfilling the mission of the district; pursuing the goals and objectives within the established policies and through the district's pastors and members; and periodically providing performance reports regarding progress.

(11) Examine all written instruments and legal papers for the conveyance of property acquired by local churches (4700:5) or the district and to approve them as to their conformity with the requirements of *The Discipline* (4590–4880; 4000–4070), the inclusion of the proper trust clause (4610), and conformity to local laws (4510); and to have the custody, under the direction of the district board of administration, of property and legal records for both the district and the local churches as provided for in 4760.

### **Local Churches**

(12) Visit, or to appoint an assistant district superintendent or other representative to visit, each church in the district according to a schedule of visits approved by the district board of administration, making careful inquiry into the progress and administration of the church and seeking to advance its spiritual life, and to preserve a written report of such visits in the district office for future reference and for the successor in office.

(13) Investigate carefully concerning the support of pastors and to advise and encourage the local churches to provide for their adequate support.

(14) Recommend that the district board of administration authorize the establishment of a mission (537), a developing church (510), a church (518), the reclassification of a church (518:7); and to preside over the organization of an established church or appoint a representative to do so (520); and to report the organization of new churches to the district board of administration and to the district conference (520:6).

(15) Supervise and promote the process of a developing church, approving the reception of members (510:2; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5105), appointing the local advisory council in cooperation with the pastor (510:3), and approving the plans of the pastor and the local advisory council in the interim of sessions of the district board of administration (510:3).

(16) Approve the date for the regular session of a local church conference (630:1), to preside over a local church conference whenever present (635); to convene, when deemed advisable, a local board of administration or a local church conference and preside over the same (633:1; 712; 722:2–3; 773); and

carry out any other provisions for a local board of administration or conference as prescribed in *The Discipline*.

(17) Counsel with a local board of administration for the securing of a pastor (705:1–3), proactively assessing the needs of the church and providing it with specific recommendations and names of potential pastors who best fit the profile to help meet those needs. The local board of administration and the district superintendent shall approve a pastoral candidate before that person is recommended to the church for a vote. The district superintendent shall also carry out the provisions of *The Discipline* concerning the call, the review and termination of a call, the resignation and release of a pastor from the pastoral agreement, and other matters pertaining to pastoral relations for the pastoral charges under district care (633:2; 692:2; 705:1–3; 710; 712; 720–722; 773).

(18) Work directly with the pastors and leaders of local churches in setting goals and objectives, or appoint another district leader to do so. The district superintendent, in consultation with the district board of administration, may advise a pastor and local board of administration to consider a pastoral change if goal progress remains unsatisfactory.

(19) Approve the transfer of any ordained minister or commissioned or licensed minister from another district, in concurrence with the General Superintendent (313:6; 705:2; 3100:1) and, when objecting to such a transfer, to state any reasons if requested to do so.

(20) Recommend the removal of a pastor to the district board of administration, whenever the best interests of the church involved demand it, and to recommend to the district board of administration the appointment of a supply or interim, if necessary, until another pastor has been obtained (712; 715; 722:3; 1233:29).

(21) Perform all the functions of a pastor for a local church within the district when such church is without a pastor, or to recommend to the district board of administration the appointment of a supply pastor or interim pastor until the local church obtains a pastor (1233:29, 36; 3260:2; 3261:2).

### **Ministers**

(22) Counsel with the ministers and special workers under district care, giving special attention to the encouragement and guidance of candidates for the ministry.

(23) Be responsible, if the General Superintendent is absent, for leading the Council of Ordination (3091; 1405) in conducting the ritual of ordination



(3070:6; 5750–5792), and the ritual of commissioning a minister (5800–5845), a special worker (3470; 5855), or a lay missionary (3490; 5855); to sign, with the district secretary, such certificates, licenses, or other official forms as are required of this office and issued to such persons as are authorized by the district conference; to have charge of services for the installation of pastors (5905).

(24) Provide or promote the ongoing personal and professional development of all ministerial personnel.

(25) Request any special reports from the pastors, ministers, and churches that will facilitate oversight of the district.

(26) Approve in writing the temporary service of an ordained minister in a district other than the one in which membership is held (3100:2); to grant a letter of transfer or standing to any ordained, licensed, or commissioned worker in good standing of the district (6440; 6460); to instruct the district secretary to enroll as a member of the district a minister who transfers from another district in the manner prescribed by *The Discipline* (313:6; 3100:1; 6440–6450), and to order the enrollment of a ministerial student or special worker so transferring (3015:3c, 5d; 3480; 6440–6450); to guide a minister or special worker from another denomination seeking recognition and membership in The Wesleyan Church (3104; 3470; 3117); and to provide oversight for the restoration of ministers (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5230).

### **Reports**

(27) Report annually to the district conference concerning official duties and personal ministry (1180:12), and to submit other reports to the General Board, the General Superintendent and the district board of administration as required; to counsel with the General Superintendent at least once a year concerning the plans and objectives for the district, reporting to the General Superintendent on the activities of the district and progress toward its objectives during the past year.

### **Judicial**

(28) Receive any complaint or accusation against any person or local unit under the jurisdiction of the district (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200:1–7; 5206; 5300–5320), and to give such complaint or accusation prompt and careful attention as required in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5206:2; 5300–5320), and to refer any matter requiring official investigation or judicial proceedings to the district board of administration for disposition (1233:33, 37; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5212:2; 5320).

(29) Forward to the Executive Director of Communication and Administration the credentials of a minister when such have been surrendered or removed by judicial process (3100:4; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5212:2; 5230).

### **B. Assistant District Superintendent(s)**

**1320.** A district shall have one or more assistant district superintendents as determined by majority vote of the district conference. The office shall be filled from among the ordained ministers of the district upon nomination by the district superintendent and election by the district board of administration. One of the assistant district superintendents shall be designated to serve as the vice-chair of the district board of administration and will serve on the executive committee of the district board of administration. The qualifications, term of office, amenability, and other regulations are those of a district official as set forth in 1255–1272.

**1323.** The duties of the assistant district superintendent(s) are to:

(1) Serve as member and vice-chair (cf.1320) of the district board of administration, presiding over the board whenever the district superintendent is not present or when appointed to do so by the district superintendent (1221).

(2) Convene the district board of administration in times of emergency when the district superintendent is not able to act (1215; 1320).

(3) Assist the district superintendent and to serve as a representative of the district superintendent to local churches or district organizations as the superintendent may request.

(4) Perform such other duties as may be required by the district conference or the district board of administration.

(5) Report annually to the district conference concerning all official duties (1180:12), and to the district board of administration as required.

**1327.** A district conference may choose to have one or more assistant district superintendent(s) as full-time district official(s), and shall further define the duties of the assistant district superintendent(s) in addition to those set forth in *The Discipline*.

### **C. District Secretary**

**1330.** The district secretary shall be elected by the district conference by ballot and by majority vote (1180:30; 1175:1). The qualifications, term of office, amenability, and other regulations are those of a district official as defined in 1255–1272.

**1332.** The duties of the district secretary are to:

(1) Be the secretary of the district conference, recording accurately and completely the proceedings of each session and forwarding the same to the Executive Director of Communication and Administration for distribution to the general offices and divisions (1178:4).

(2) Serve as a member and as the secretary of the district board of administration (1203; 1224), recording accurately and completely the proceedings of each session and preserving them in permanent form, forwarding a copy of the minutes of each session to each member of the board and to the General Superintendent.

(3) Issue official notices and communications from the district conference and from the district board of administration; and to keep permanent file copies of all correspondence, reports, and other records.

(4) Issue and sign all certificates, licenses, and other official forms as properly authorized by the district and as prescribed for a district secretary by the General Conference or General Board (1310:23).

(5) Forward promptly to the Executive Director of Communication and Administration the statistical and financial reports of the district conference as may be required by the General Board; a certified list of the General Conference delegates, and the certification of an alternate when a delegate is unable to attend (1512–1518); a copy of each memorial adopted for presentation to the General Conference; a copy of the official district directory for inclusion in the denominational directory, and of each change in the directory as it occurs (1332:8); and to cooperate in forwarding other information requested by the Executive Director of Communication and Administration.

(6) Be the custodian of the official district records and archives, except as otherwise provided for in *The Discipline* (1387; 4760), and to be instructed by the district board of administration as to the exercise of such custody (1233:15).

(7) Receive an official copy of the minutes of each board, committee, auxiliary organization or other district agency, and to preserve them in the district archives.

(8) Maintain a complete and current district directory, listing the district ministers and officers, the address of each mission, developing church, church, circuit, and parsonage within the bounds of the district, and other information as desired (1240).

(9) Notify all churches and ministerial members of the district of the time and place of the next regular session of the district conference at least sixty days in advance (1112), and to notify them of any reconvened sessions as directed by the district board of administration (1115).

(10) Perform such other duties as may be required by the district conference or the district board of administration and as pertain to this office.

#### **D. District Treasurer**

**1335.** The district treasurer shall be appointed by the district board of administration and shall serve as an ex officio member. Said treasurer's qualifications, term of office, amenability, and other regulations are those of a district official as defined in 1255–1272.

**1337.** The duties of a district treasurer are to:

- (1) Serve as a member of the district board of administration (1203).
- (2) Be bonded to the amount set by the district board of administration, the cost of which shall be paid by the district (1233:17).
- (3) Have custody of all district funds, unless otherwise provided for by *The Discipline*; to receive, record, hold, and disburse such funds in keeping with the financial plans of the General Conference and the district conference and as directed by the district board of administration.
- (4) Receive, record, and hold all USF funds for the General Church raised within the district and to remit such funds monthly to the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer on the approved forms.
- (5) Serve as a district director of stewardship, promoting stewardship and storehouse tithing on the district level, in cooperation with the General Superintendent.
- (6) Prepare and submit to the district board of administration a recommended plan to provide for the raising of the district obligation to the United Stewardship Fund, designating the amount to be assigned to each local church as its share of the district obligation, in accord with the regulations for the United Stewardship Fund (2015); which plan, as approved, shall be presented to the district conference for adoption (1180:15; 1233:11); and to promptly notify the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer of the district USF obligation on forms provided by the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (2015:2).
- (7) Submit all records and funds for an annual audit after the close of the fiscal year, as provided for in 1340, and at any other time as may be requested by the district board of administration (1233:18).
- (8) Submit a complete financial report of all funds administered or attended to by the district treasurer, to each regular session of the district conference (1180:12); to submit reports to the district board of administration

(1233:12), the district superintendent, and the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer as they may require.

(9) Perform such other duties as may be required by the district conference or the district board of administration and as pertain to this office.

### **E. District Auditing Committee**

**1340.** The district board of administration shall provide for the auditing of all district treasurers' books annually. Audits shall be conducted on the records and funds of the district treasurer (1337:8) and all other treasurers of district boards or agencies having custody of district funds. The audit reports shall be submitted to the district board of administration for adoption. After appropriate review, the district board of administration shall submit the reports to the district conference.

### **F. District Board of Trustees**

**1360.** The district conference of each established district shall be incorporated or shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained to facilitate the management of its legal and corporate affairs as set forth in 4100–4150. In places where local laws prohibit such incorporation, or where the local laws require property to be held by trustees, the district conference may elect from among the members of the district board of administration the members of the district board of trustees in such number as desired (1180:20; 4855). The district trustees shall hold office until their term expires as members of the district board of administration and until their successors are elected and qualified. The district board of trustees shall be amenable to the district board of administration (4840; 4855). A district trustee may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of all the members of the district board of administration whenever it is deemed necessary for the best interests of The Wesleyan Church and the district or whenever a trustee shall refuse to carry out the directions of the district board of administration, except when such directions are contrary to local laws or to *The Discipline* (1206; 1233:24a; 1265; 4540). The office of a district trustee may also become vacant by death, cessation of membership in The Wesleyan Church, or cessation of membership on the district board of administration. A vacancy, on the district board of trustees shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of all the members of the district board of administration (1206; 1233:24a; 1272).

**1365.** The district board of trustees shall administer its duties in accord with *The Discipline* (4500–4630; 4830–4880) and as directed by the district board of administration. Its duties are to:

(1) Hold all district property, and such local property as may be held by the district (4660; 4680), in trust for The Wesleyan Church as set forth in 4830 (323:8).

(2) Attend to all legal matters pertaining to the district transactions for the purchase, sale, encumbrance, transfer, or other disposal of property, as ordered by the district board of administration (4840).

(3) Fulfill such other duties as pertain to their office as trustees and as may be assigned to them by the district board of administration.

### **G. District Board of Review**

**1370.** Each established district shall have a district board of review, which shall consist of four ordained ministers and three lay members elected annually by the district board of administration (1233:22; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5218). Two ordained ministers and two lay members shall also be elected at the same time to serve as alternates and to fill vacancies in the order of their election. The district board of review serves as an appellate body for lay members and local churches. The duties and powers of the district board of review are set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5218-5221). General regulations governing the members of the district board of review are set forth in 1278–1292.

## Chapter 6

### DISTRICT MINISTERIAL SUPERVISION

#### A. District Board of Ministerial Development

**1375. Function.** There shall be a district board of ministerial development which shall be responsible for the examination and recommendation to the district conference of all candidates for ordination, license, commission, ministerial study, restoration, or transfer from another denomination.

**1378. Membership.** The board shall consist of the district superintendent, the assistant district superintendent (if any; 1320) and the district board of administration shall elect as many additional members as deemed sufficient. At least two members shall be from among the laity, and the ministerial members shall be ordained. The term of office for the elected members shall be for three years, with the election so arranged that approximately one-third shall be elected each year. General regulations for the members of this board are defined in 1275–1292.

**1381. Organization.** The district superintendent shall be the chair unless electing to appoint another to serve instead, with such appointment subject to ratification by the district board of administration. The board shall annually elect a vice-chair and a secretary. The board may divide into smaller groups and apportion the work among them as deemed necessary, provided that all recommendations of the board to the district conference shall be adopted by the full board.

**1384. Sessions.** The board shall be convened by the chair in sufficient time before the opening of the district conference to enable the board to complete its work in a careful and thorough manner, and shall meet at other times as deemed necessary upon the call of the chair.

**1387. Records.** The secretary of the district board of ministerial development shall keep suitable and permanent records which shall be the property of the district and shall be preserved as directed by the district superintendent and the district board of administration. The secretary of the board shall keep:

(1) A correct and complete journal of the proceedings of the board meetings, an official copy of which shall be submitted to the district secretary for permanent filing (1332:7).

(2) A record of the ministerial studies and training of each licentiate and ministerial student, including the work done in a university, college,

theological school, or by correspondence with the Ministerial Study Course Agency. A record of all credits earned shall be recorded at least once each year in cooperation with the Ministerial Study Course Agency as set forth in 2388:1, and shall be available to the board in considering its recommendations to the district conference.

(3) A personnel record of each ordained, licensed, or commissioned member of the district, on forms as authorized by the General Board, including important personal and family information; educational qualifications; record of ministerial service including pastoral and other district appointments, offices held, and credentials issued by the district. Whenever a letter of transfer is granted, a transcript of the personnel record shall be provided, if requested, but the record shall remain in the permanent files of the district.

**1390. Duties.** The duties of the district board of ministerial development shall be to:

#### **Related to Ordination, Commissions, Licenses, and Ministerial Students**

(1) Examine carefully each candidate for election by the district conference to ordination or election to a commissioned minister's status, the granting of a district ministerial license, a license as a ministerial student, a commission or license as a special worker, a commission as a lay missionary, and any other commission or license as may be authorized by *The Discipline*. The examination shall include an interview with each candidate, making such investigation as is deemed necessary to affirm the individual's:

- (a) Personal experience of salvation and entire sanctification;
- (b) Full commitment to the Articles of Religion, Guides and Helps to Holy Living, Elementary Principles, and polity of The Wesleyan Church and acceptance of its authority;
- (c) Evidence of having the qualifications for the ministry to which the candidate feels called as set forth in *The Discipline*.

The examination shall result in recommendations to the district conference for those whom the district board of ministerial development judges to be qualified for said ministry (1381; 1390:5).

(2) Consider each person recommended by a local church conference (655:7) or circuit conference (528:2) or local board of administration (655:7) for the granting of a license as a ministerial student (1240:4; 3015:1) and to recommend to the district conference for such license those who are deemed worthy (1180:27b, c; 3350:2); to encourage all such ministerial students to



enroll for ministerial training in an approved school of The Wesleyan Church (2365; 2382); to supervise and counsel them, keeping a record of their ministerial studies (1387:2) and cooperating with the director of the Ministerial Study Course Agency in supervising those enrolled in courses under the Agency (2388; 3170–3210).

(3) Consider and examine any person who desires to be received into the district from another denomination, and to be recognized as an ordained, commissioned or licensed minister, or commissioned special worker, and to recommend to the district conference for reception as in process of transfer, and subsequently for recognition as in full standing, only such a person as it deems properly qualified according to *The Discipline* (3104; 3470); and, in the interim of district conference sessions, to make such recommendation to the district board of administration (1233:33).

(4) Consider and examine any person applying for reinstatement or restoration of ordination, commission, or license and to recommend to the district conference only such a person as it deems properly qualified according to *The Discipline* (3120–3124; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5230–5248).

(5) Present to the district conference, as a separate report, a recommendation for the election of a candidate to ordination as an ordained minister (1180:28; 3070:5), or commission as a minister (3059), or the reinstatement or restoration of ministerial credentials (3120–3124; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5230–5248); and to present to the district conference a combined report of all other recommendations concerning the commissioning, licensing, and recognition of ministers and special workers, and the licensing of ministerial students (1180:27; 3015:1).

(6) Serve, with the exception of the lay members as a Council of Ordination (1405); and to perform such other duties as may be assigned by the district conference.

### **Related to the Annual Service Reports**

(7) Receive, on behalf of the district conference, an annual service report (1402) from each ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister, ministerial student, and commissioned or licensed special worker; to review such reports and pass on each one as follows (1180:28):

(a) A report which shows that the work has been done according to *The Discipline* and that the annual statistical report (1352:1) has been properly submitted shall be marked as approved and returned to the person submitting it (1390:9).

(b) A report in which there are unsatisfactory answers, or which shows that the work has not been done according to *The Discipline*, or that the annual statistical report (1352:1) has not been properly submitted, shall be reviewed with the person submitting the report. If reasons for such irregularities are not satisfactory to the district board of ministerial development, the report shall be marked as unsatisfactory and returned to the person submitting it (1390:9).

(8) Investigate the reason for the failure to submit an annual service report on the part of those persons required to do so (1402; 3015:4), and to take appropriate action as set forth in 3040:1; 3059:4c; 3089:3; 3460; and 3470.

(9) Present a report (1381) to the district conference concerning the results of the examination of the annual service reports, listing all members of the district responsible to submit such reports as to whether their reports were approved, unsatisfactory, or not received. The district board of ministerial development shall report to the district conference concerning a person whose annual service report has been found unsatisfactory (1390:7b) and it shall require a two-thirds vote of confidence by the district conference to approve such a person for continued appointment.

### **Related to Appointments and District Conference Relations**

(10) Submit reports to the district board of administration concerning the following matters related to district conference appointments and relations: the results of the examination of the annual service reports (1390:8–9); the availability for appointment, and any desired changes in appointment or district conference relations, as recorded on the annual service reports; those persons qualified for a district ministerial license, the granting of which shall become effective upon their appointment (1180:24c, 27b; 1233:10; 3033:7; 3040:3); those other persons qualified for a license, commission, reception from another district or denomination, or restoration (1180:24, 27; 1233:10).

### **Related to Ministerial Development**

(11) Cooperate with the district superintendent (1310:24) and the district board of administration (1233:25) in providing opportunities for the personal and professional growth of ministers within the district. The activities of the district boards of ministerial development may include individual or group interviews, assessments, growth contracts, seminars, or other means of assisting ministers to achieve their full potential for ministry.

### **B. Annual Service Reports**

**1402. Annual Service Reports.** The district conference shall receive an annual service report from each ordained minister, commissioned minister, licensed minister, ministerial student, and commissioned or licensed special worker on forms authorized by the General Superintendent and made available by the Executive Director of Communication and Administration. Pastors or senior pastors shall submit the “Pastor’s Annual Service Report.” Assistant pastors shall submit the “Assistant Pastor’s Annual Service Report.” Other ordained ministers and commissioned or licensed ministers shall submit the “Minister’s Annual Service Report.” Special workers shall submit the “Lay Worker’s Annual Service Report.” Ministerial students shall submit the “Ministerial Student’s Annual Service Report.” All such reports shall be submitted to the district board of ministerial development, serving on behalf of the district conference, as directed by the district board of administration or the district superintendent (1390:7–9).

### **C. Council of Ordination**

**1405.** Each district shall provide for a Council of Ordination to assist the General Superintendent (3091; 1935; 5752), or the district superintendent (1310:23) in the absence of the General Superintendent, in carrying out the will of the district conference for the ordination of ministers (3070:6; 5750–5792) and the commissioning of ministers (5805), special workers (5850), and lay missionaries (5850). The Council of Ordination shall consist of the ordained ministers of the district board of ministerial development as the Council of Ordination (1390:6). The Council of Ordination will be responsible to plan the ordination and/or commissioning services.

**PART 4**  
**GENERAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

**Chapter 1**

**GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**A. Function**

**1500.** The General Conference is the supreme governing body of The Wesleyan Church. The basic provisions, powers, and restrictions of this body are set forth in the Constitution (325–360).

**B. Membership**

**1. Plan of Representation**

**1503.** The General Conference shall be composed of voting and nonvoting members as follows:

**Voting Members**

(1) The voting members shall consist of an equal number of ordained ministers and lay members of The Wesleyan Church (325):

(a) The district superintendent of each district and developing district and a lay delegate elected at the same time and in the same manner as the other delegates (1512–1526).

(b) One ministerial and one lay delegate elected by an established district for every seven hundred fifty members and major fraction thereof. The district superintendent and the lay delegate elected (1503:1a) shall be the representatives for the first seven hundred fifty members.

(c) The general officials of the Church as defined in 1800, the General Superintendents Emeriti, members of the General Board who are not voting members by some other right, the presidents of the educational institutions and Wesley Seminary (2365 and 2366), the general directors of Hephzibah Ministries, Wesleyan Investment Foundation, Wesleyan

Pension Fund Inc, the Wesleyan Bible Conference Association, and the Immigrant Connection, and such delegates-at-large as shall be necessary to maintain parity between ordained ministers and lay members (1508–1510).

### **Nonvoting Members**

(2) The following, when they are not voting members by some other right, shall be seated as nonvoting members when present at the General Conference session: former General Superintendents and superintendents of developing districts (1015).

(3) The General Board shall designate the number of nonvoting members from mission units under the Global Partners Division, upon recommendation of the Executive Director of Global Partners.

## **2. Forfeiture of Representation**

**1506.** A district or developing district which has been placed under discipline as provided for in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5365–5370) shall forfeit all rights to any representation in the General Conference (323:9). The delegates, including the district superintendent and any delegate-at-large from that district, shall not be recognized or seated until the district or developing district they represent is officially reinstated (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5365).

## **3. Election of Delegates**

### **a. Delegates-at-Large**

**1508.** The election of delegates-at-large shall be arranged for by the recommendation of the Executive Director of Communication and Administration and the approval of the General Board in accordance with the following regulations:

(1) The parity of equal ministerial and lay membership in the General Conference shall be maintained (325; 360:3b).

(2) The established districts shall be considered in alphabetical order, and each eligible district in turn shall be appointed to elect one delegate-at-large. A developing district shall not be eligible to elect a delegate-at-large.

**1510.** The General Board shall act upon the recommendation of the Executive Director of Communication and Administration in one of its sessions

consistent with the provisions of paragraph 1512. The delegates-at-large shall be elected by the appointed districts at the same time and in the same manner as the other General Conference delegates (1512–1526).

### **b. Delegates**

**1512.** The delegates to the General Conference shall be elected by the district conference, by ballot and by majority vote, at its last annual session preceding the General Conference. When the last annual session is within sixty days of the opening date of the General Conference, the district conference may elect its delegates at the previous annual session. The statistical report for the annual session of the district conference at which the delegates are elected shall be used for determining the number of members, and consequently, the number of General Conference delegates (1503:1b). A certified list of all delegates to the General Conference shall be promptly forwarded by the district secretary to the Executive Director of Communication and Administration (1332:5).

**1514.** A person accepting election as a delegate is obligated to attend faithfully the entire General Conference session, unless hindered by unforeseen and justifiable circumstances (1541).

### **c. Alternate Delegates**

**1516.** Alternate delegates shall be the remaining nominees not elected to serve as General Conference delegates and shall fill vacancies in the descending order of votes received (1332:5).

**1518.** Whenever the district superintendent, who is an ex officio member of the General Conference (1503:1a), is unable to attend, the place of the district superintendent shall be filled by the assistant district superintendent (if any). If the assistant district superintendent is an elected delegate to the General Conference, the place of the assistant district superintendent shall then be filled like any other vacancy by an alternate ministerial delegate.

## **4. Qualifications of Delegates**

### **a. Ministerial Delegates**

**1520.** A ministerial delegate must be an ordained minister who is a member of the district represented, both at the time of election and at the time of the General Conference (327:2).

**1522.** Whenever a ministerial delegate-elect shall transfer membership to another district, the right to represent the district shall be vacated and an alternate ministerial delegate shall be certified (1332:5; 1516).

### **b. Lay Delegates**

**1524.** A lay delegate must be a lay person who is a member with the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of a local church in the district represented, both at the time of election and at the time of the General Conference (327:3).

**1526.** Whenever a lay delegate-elect shall cease to meet the requirements in 1524, the right to represent the district shall be vacated and an alternate lay delegate shall be certified (1332:5; 1516).

## **C. Sessions**

### **1. Regular Sessions**

**1528.** The General Conference shall meet quadrennially, in the spring season at a place, date, and hour determined by the General Board (330:1; 1655:4).

**1530.** Whenever an emergency shall require a change in the plans of the General Conference for the time of the next regular session, the General Board may, by a two-thirds vote, declare that such an emergency exists and authorize the necessary changes (330:1; 1655:5).

### **2. Special Sessions**

**1532.** A special session of the General Conference shall be called by the General Superintendent whenever authorized to do so by a two-thirds vote of the General Board (1655:6), or when requested to do so by two-thirds of the established district conferences (330:2; 1180:6). The time and place for the special session shall be decided by the General Board (1655:5), or, in the interim of its sessions, by the Executive Board. The time shall always be later than the next session of each district conference (330:2).

**1534.** Any duly called special session of the General Conference shall have full authority to transact any item of business which may be transacted at a regular session.

## D. Organization and Procedure

### 1. Officers

**1536. The Presidency (332).** The General Superintendent shall preside over the General Conference. When no General Superintendent is present, the General Conference shall elect by ballot an ordained minister as president pro tem.

**1539. The Secretary.** The Executive Director of Communication and Administration shall be the secretary of the General Conference and shall accurately record the proceedings, preserve them in permanent form, and perform any other such duties as shall be required by the General Conference.

### 2. Procedure

**1541. Delegates.** Once a delegate has been seated at the General Conference, an alternate delegate cannot thereafter be seated in place of the seated delegate (1514).

**1543. Quorum (336).** A majority of all the delegates elected by the districts shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A smaller number shall have the authority to adjourn from time to time until a quorum is obtained.

**1545. Voting (338).** The ministerial and lay delegates shall deliberate in the sessions of the General Conference as one body. However, upon the final vote on any question, except proposed amendments to the Constitution (200–385), on a call of one-fourth of the members, the house shall divide so that ministerial and lay delegates shall vote separately. It shall require a majority vote of each branch to pass any question upon which the division has been called.

**1547. Rules of Order.** General Conference business shall be conducted according to the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, except when formally suspended by the General Conference or when other procedures are required by *The Discipline* (360:1).

**1550. Appeals on Questions of Order.** The chair shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the General Conference. In case of such an appeal, the vote shall be taken without debate, except that the chair may state the grounds of the decision, and the appellant may state the grounds of the appeal.

**1553. Suspension of Rules.** The General Conference may suspend for a particular session any statutory law (155) set forth in *The Discipline* governing the procedures of the General Conference, by a two-thirds majority vote.



### 3. Memorials

**1557.** Memorials to the General Conference, including proposed changes to *The Discipline* other than the Constitution (200–385), may be submitted by a district conference, a district board of administration, the General Board, a General Conference committee, the governing board of an educational or benevolent institution, the governing board of a subsidiary corporation, the general executive committee of an auxiliary organization, or any ten members of the General Conference.

**1560.** Memorials proposing an amendment to the Constitution (200–385) may be submitted to the General Conference only by a district conference by a two-thirds vote (1180:1), or by the General Board (1655:8).

### 4. Committees

**1563.** The General Conference shall have such committees as it may deem necessary. The committees shall be nominated by the General Board, unless ordered otherwise in *The Discipline* or by the General Conference, and elected by the General Conference.

#### a. Committee on Memorials

**1565.** The General Board shall serve as the Committee on Memorials. It shall be the duty of the Committee on Memorials to receive all memorials for the General Conference, classify them, pass on each of them, and submit such memorials to the General Conference, together with the committee's recommendation, and in such order as the committee shall determine (1655:7). All memorials received no later than November 1 of the year prior to the General Conference shall be classified and printed for distribution to the General Conference delegates no later than sixty days before the opening date of the General Conference. Any memorial received by the Committee on Memorials after November 1 shall only be presented to the General Conference if it is recommended for adoption by the Committee on Memorials and if the General Conference votes to hear it.

#### b. General Conference Planning Committee

**1570.** The Executive Cabinet, with such other additional persons as it shall appoint, at least one year before the convening of a regular session of the General

Conference, shall constitute a General Conference Planning Committee. The General Superintendent, or a person designated by the General Superintendent, shall serve as chair.

**1573.** The General Conference Planning Committee shall be responsible to arrange all necessary matters for the General Conference subject to the approval of the General Board or, in the interim of its sessions, the Executive Board.

**1576.** The Executive Cabinet shall formulate a program for the General Conference, including any worship services and other special features, all of which shall be subject to the approval of the General Board or, in the interim of its sessions, the Executive Board.

### **c. Committee on Special Nominations**

**1580.** The General Board shall serve as the Committee on Special Nominations (1655:7). The duties of this committee shall be to:

(1) Receive from the General Superintendent recommendations from which to present to the General Conference one or more nominations for each of the general officials elected by the General Conference. In the event an incumbent is not nominated, the committee shall normally present two or more nominations for that office. The general officials involved are: the Executive Director of the Communication and Administration Division, the Executive Director of the Education and Clergy Development Division, the Executive Director of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, and the Executive Director of the Global Partners Division (1590:16).

(2) Present nominations for the members of the Board of Review (1590:18; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5400:3; 5405).

(3) Present such other nominations or fulfill such duties as may be assigned to them by the General Conference.

### **d. General Conference Editing Committee**

**1585.** The General Conference Editing Committee shall be elected by the General Board and shall be responsible for editing *The Discipline*, the *General Conference Journal*, and any other item assigned by the General Conference or the General Board. All recommendations concerning the dedication of the *General Conference Journal* shall be referred to the General Board which shall determine the matter and instruct the committee accordingly. The committee is authorized, in consultation with the General Superintendent, to make any and all changes and additions to *The Discipline* (except changes to the Constitution,

unless otherwise ordered by the General Conference) that it deems essential for implementing the intent of the General Conference in adopting specific legislation, subject to final review and approval of such changes by the General Board or its Executive Board.

### **e. Duties and Powers**

**1590.** The duties, powers, and restrictions of the General Conference are set forth in the Constitution (325–360), and as hereinafter provided:

#### **The Essentials and the Constitution**

(1) Vote on an amendment to the Essentials (125; 6765:1).

(2) Propose an amendment to the Constitution (200–385) by a two-thirds vote, subject to ratification by two-thirds of all the members of the district conferences, present and voting (385; 1180:1; 1560); to ratify, by a two-thirds vote, an amendment to the Constitution, which has originated in a district conference and has been approved by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the district conferences, present and voting (385; 1180:2; 1560). When the voting is completed, the General Superintendent shall canvass the vote; and when the amendment has received the required majority, it shall be declared effective as constitutional law (385).

(3) Request, by a vote of one-fifth of its members, present and voting, a judgment from the Board of Review as to the constitutionality of an action of the General Conference (375:1); and to overrule such a judgment by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting (380).

#### **General Legislation**

(4) Have full power in keeping with the Constitution (135; 145) and by majority vote to enact statutory law (155), and to adopt ritual (175) for *The Discipline*, and to adopt other rules and regulations for the Church, all of which shall be the chief authority for the North American General Conference of The Wesleyan Church and its subordinate units (2550); to ratify amendments to the Charter of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church (see Appendix A) or to authorize the General Board to approve such amendments in the interim of General Conferences.

(5) Authorize a corporation to be formed and maintained for The Wesleyan Church to facilitate the management of its legal and corporate affairs

(4200); and to approve its articles of incorporation and bylaws and any or all amendments thereto, by a two-thirds vote (4270).

(6) Authorize the incorporation of any agency, institution, board organization, or other similar body, as a subsidiary corporation of The Wesleyan Church (4300), and to approve the articles of incorporation and bylaws, and any amendments thereto, for such a subsidiary corporation (4300–4320). In the interim of General Conferences, this authority shall be vested in the General Board (1655:35; 4300; 2362).

(7) Receive reports of the spiritual, numerical, and financial condition of The Wesleyan Church, worldwide, including reports concerning their official duties from the general officials and others designated by the General Conference (1800; 1840).

(8) Adopt plans for the advancement of the Church in all phases of its ministry, including the financial plans for the General Church (1995–2050).

(9) Define in a general way the duties of the general officials, subject to the additional definition of their duties by the General Board in the interim of General Conference sessions (1845).

(10) Organize the work in the United States and Canada into districts and to determine their boundaries, for which a recommendation shall be received from the General Board (317; 1036; 1655:34; 2400–2403); to authorize the establishing of an established national conference as set forth in 2610:10; and to authorize the establishing of a General Conference as set forth in 2620.

(11) Authorize the establishing of a developing district (1006); or to reclassify an established district (1042; 1045).

(12) Group the districts into representative areas (2430–2445) to serve for the election of area representatives to the General Board and as the area divisions of Wesleyan Youth, for which a recommendation shall be received from the General Board (1655:14).

(13) Authorize the establishment, merger, or dissolution of any educational or benevolent institution for the General Church or an area of the same; to define the purpose and adopt any regulations deemed necessary for the government of such institutions (2362).

(14) Designate a criterion of parliamentary procedure for itself and other representative or official bodies of The Wesleyan Church as desired (360:1).

### **Elections**

(15) Elect by ballot and by majority vote, from among the ordained ministers of The Wesleyan Church, one General Superintendent. When an

incumbent General Superintendent's term of office is expiring and the General Superintendent is available for continued service, the reelection vote shall be a "yes/no" ballot. In the event of a vacancy, the General Board shall determine a process for the identification of eligible candidates for the office of General Superintendent. The General Board shall evaluate candidates to determine their availability for election. The General Board shall provide one or more nominations to the General Conference for election.

(16) Elect the following general officials by ballot and by majority vote, from one or more nominees for each office presented by the Committee on Special Nominations (1580:1) and any additional nominations from the floor of the General Conference: the Executive Director of the Communication and Administration Division, the Executive Director of the Education and Clergy Development Division, the Executive Director of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, and the Executive Director of the Global Partners Division.

(17) Elect by majority vote three ordained ministers and three lay members from each of the representative areas (2430–2445) as members of the General Board (1605:2), who shall be nominated by an area caucus. Area caucuses shall be held simultaneously at a time decided upon by the General Conference, for each of which a chair shall be appointed by the presiding officer. In an area caucus, the delegates of each district and developing district which comprise the representative area shall nominate three ordained ministers and three lay members of that area, by ballot and by majority vote, as their area representatives on the General Board.

(18) Elect by majority vote, from nominees submitted by the Committee on Special Nominations or made from the floor, five ordained ministers and four lay members as members of the Board of Review, and four ordained ministers and three lay members as alternate members (1580:2; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5400:3; 5405).

(19) Confer the title General Superintendent Emeritus or Emerita upon a former General Superintendent when recommended by the General Board (1945).

### **Judiciary**

(20) Space reserved.

(21) Hear and determine appeals from decisions of the Board of Review, and to overrule such decisions by a two-thirds majority vote (380; *also Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5450).

(22) Receive a report from the General Superintendent of official rulings on points of Church law, interpretations of *The Discipline*, and rulings on the legality of district actions; to sustain, modify, or annul such rulings, in whole or in part (2061–2064).

## Chapter 2

### GENERAL BOARD

#### A. Name and Function

**1600.** The General Board referred to in the Constitution shall in practice be referred to under the title “General Board.” The General Board carries out the will of the General Conference, promotes the interests of The Wesleyan Church, and serves as its chief governing body in the interim of General Conference sessions (340).

#### B. Voting Membership

**1605.** The General Board is composed of the General Superintendent and area representatives:

(1) **General Superintendent.** The General Superintendent is a member of the General Board by virtue of office.

(2) **Area Representatives.** Three ordained ministers and three lay members shall be elected by the General Conference from each representative area to serve as members of the General Board (340:1; 1590:17; 2430–2445). In order to accomplish broad representation when electing area representatives to the General Board, it is recommended that no more than two persons be elected from any one district. They shall serve from the close of the session at which they are elected until the close of the succeeding General Conference and until their successors are elected and qualified. Whenever an area representative shall transfer residence or membership outside the area represented, the General Board shall declare the office vacant and shall fill the vacancy in such a manner as to maintain the representation provided for herewith. An area representative who is not a voting member of the General Conference by some other right is a voting member of the General Conference by virtue of membership on the General Board (1503:1c).

#### C. Nonvoting Participants

**1606.** The following are nonvoting participants of the General Board: the four division executive directors, the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, the chief executive officer of The Wesleyan Investment Foundation, the chief

executive officer of Wesleyan Pension Fund, and all presidents of the educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church, including Wesley Seminary.

#### D. Sessions

**1610. Organizing Session.** The General Board shall meet immediately after the adjournment of the General Conference for an organizing session to:

(1) Elect officers and committees, as required by *The Discipline*, the General Conference, the articles and bylaws of the several corporations, or the policies and bylaws of the General Board.

(2) Care for any business assigned to it by the General Conference which requires immediate attention.

(3) Elect the Executive Board as provided in 1755.

(4) Care for any other necessary business.

**1615. Regular Session.** The General Board shall meet annually or semiannually at a time and place it shall designate or as fixed in its bylaws. The Executive Board may change the time and place by a two-thirds vote if circumstances so require (1785:1). Notice of all sessions shall be published by the Executive Director of Communication and Administration and sent in writing or electronically to all members at least four weeks in advance.

**1620. Special Session.** A special session may be ordered by the General Board, the Executive Board (1785:1), or the General Superintendent. All members shall be notified at least ten days before the convening of a special session (1615).

**1625. Evaluation Session.** Periodically, either during regular sessions or in a session called specifically for self-evaluation, the General Board shall consider its priorities, review the distribution of its time, and evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts, using the duties and powers listed in *The Discipline* as a guide. The method and extent of such evaluation shall be determined by the General Board, but special attention should be focused on those responsibilities that are most likely to contribute to future outreach and growth to the glory of God.

#### E. Organization and Procedure

**1630. Chair.** The General Superintendent shall serve as the chair of the General Board. The General Board shall at its organizing meeting following General Conference elect a vice-chair from among its ministerial members to serve as chair in the absence of or at the request of the General Superintendent.



**1635. Secretary.** The Executive Director of Communication and Administration is secretary of the General Board ex officio.

**1640. Quorum.** A majority of all the members of the General Board shall constitute a quorum.

**1645. Voting.** A majority vote of those present and voting shall be sufficient except for those matters for which a larger majority is required by *The Discipline* (1530; 1532; 1655:6, 11, 16, 18, 21, 23, 40a; 4300; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5279; 5365), by legal or corporate requirements, or by the policies and regulations of the General Board.

**1650. Bylaws.** The General Board shall adopt its own bylaws and perfect all plans necessary for the performance of its own duties, in harmony with *The Discipline* and the instructions of the General Conference.

## F. Duties and Powers

**1655.** The General Board shall serve as the chief governing body of The Wesleyan Church in the interim of General Conference sessions, caring for and promoting the general interests of the Church, with these specific duties and powers:

### Related to Leadership

(1) Join the General Superintendent and general officers in strategic planning, helping to define mission, vision, core values, and strategies, and to measure the denomination's progress in fulfilling its mission and vision.

(2) Engage in an ongoing review of the denominational structures, maintaining openness to needed changes and making appropriate recommendations to the General Conference.

(3) Establish policies, goals, and objectives for more effectively fulfilling the mission of The Wesleyan Church within the established policies, and periodically receiving performance reports from the General Superintendent and Executive Directors.

### Related to the General Conference

(4) Select the place and determine the day and the hour at which regular sessions of the General Conference shall convene, provided that the day and the hour are within the spring season (330:1; 1528).

(5) Declare that an emergency exists requiring a change in the time of the General Conference, and subsequently to alter the same (330:1; 1530).

(6) Authorize by a two-thirds vote a special session of the General Conference, and to set by majority vote the time and place of such special session (330:2; 1532).

(7) Serve as the General Conference Committee on Memorials (1565) and the Committee on Special Nominations (1580).

(8) Originate recommendations and memorials to the General Conference, including proposed amendments to the Constitution (1557–1560).

(9) Instruct the General Conference Editing Committee concerning the dedication (if any) of the *General Conference Journal* (1585).

(10) Care for any business delegated to the General Board by the General Conference.

### **Related to the General Board**

(11) Fill, for the unexpired term, vacancies occurring among the general officials elected by the General Conference (1800; 1850) or the area representatives of the General Board (1605:2), by a two-thirds majority of the members of the General Board present and voting or by a majority of all the members of the General Board, whichever is greater (1850); and to fill vacancies occurring among the general officials elected by the General Board by majority vote; all in such a manner as to fulfill all the requirements for such offices and positions (1605:2; 1800–1810; 1903).

(12) Elect by majority vote, from among the area representatives of its own membership, three ordained ministers and three lay members to be members of the Executive Board and an ordained minister as vice-chair of the General Board (1755), who will also serve as vice-chair of the Executive Board.

(13) Refer such matters to the Executive Board as shall be deemed wise (1785); to review such actions of the Executive Board as are not final (1785:2, 6); and to receive and act upon its recommendations.

### **Related to the Church in General**

(14) Recommend to the General Conference the number of representative areas and the boundaries of such areas for the election of representatives to the General Board (1590:12); and in the interim of General Conference sessions to assign new districts to the proper area.

### Related to Corporations

(15) Serve as the board of directors of The Wesleyan Church Corporation and its precedent corporations (4230); to appoint committees from among its own members and to delegate to such committees the exercise of such powers in the interim of its sessions as it shall deem wise.

(16) Buy, own, hold, manage, mortgage, sell, convey, donate or otherwise acquire, encumber, and dispose of any General Church property, whether real, personal, or mixed, in keeping with the trust provisions given in 4920; and to buy, sell, or lease any denominational headquarters site (by whatever name it shall be called) by a two-thirds majority of the members of the General Board present and voting, except that property for which other provision is made in the articles and bylaws of subsidiary corporations, and to provide for the proper care and maintenance of such property.

(17) Space reserved.

(18) Carry out the instructions of the General Conference relative to the incorporation of any agency, institution, board organization, or other similar body (1590:6); or, in the interim of General Conference sessions, to authorize the establishment of such a corporation by a two-thirds majority vote and to care for such corporation matters as the approval and amendment of articles and bylaws, all in keeping with the provisions of *The Discipline* (cf. 2358–2362; 4300–4320; 4425).

(19) Elect by majority vote all except the ex officio members of all other General Church boards; to be or to elect all boards of trustees, directors, or managers of subsidiary corporations, including all approved benevolent institutions, and to exercise such control and direction of said subsidiary corporations and related agencies as is provided for in *The Discipline* (2358–2362; 4300–4320) and in their several articles of incorporation and bylaws; and to remove a member of any such board, for cause or when the best interests of the Church so require, by a majority vote of all the members of the General Board (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5270:4; 5282; 5288), and to fill all vacancies.

(20) Direct an annual audit, and at other times as deemed necessary, of all corporations, general offices, divisions, agencies, auxiliaries, and institutions of the Church, and to take any action required by the findings of such audit (4320:7).

(21) Have the authority to negotiate and arbitrate legal and temporal matters in cases of dispute involving the General Church without resort to the courts when the General Board, by a two-thirds vote, deems such procedure necessary; provided, however, that the emergency authority hereby granted shall not be construed to modify or rescind any of the provisions of *The Discipline*

of *The Wesleyan Church* with reference to the prescribed conveyance of church property; and further provided that this authority to negotiate and arbitrate shall not be a limit on the power or authority to resort to litigation in the courts when such procedure is deemed advisable.

### Related to General Offices and Divisions

(22) Direct the general officials and those elected by the General Board in their work, in keeping with the provisions of *The Discipline* (1830), and assigning to them such special duties as shall be deemed necessary (1590:9); to receive reports annually and as needed from the general officials and such others as *The Discipline* or the General Board shall require (1840; 4320:8); and to set the salaries and allowances of all general officials (1800) and of those elected by the General Board.

(23) Adopt a comprehensive budget for each of the general offices, divisions, agencies, and auxiliaries (1880) and apportion the USF-Educational Institutions Fund among the educational interests; to determine the obligation to the United Stewardship Fund of churches within developing districts; and, in the interim of General Conference sessions, to designate those interests which will share in the benefits of the USF-General Fund, and to alter the percentage of the USF-General Fund, in case of emergency, by a two-thirds majority vote of all the members of the General Board (2005:2).

(24) Request the General Superintendent to rule on points of Church law and interpretations of *The Discipline* as set forth in 2061; to receive reports from the General Superintendent on all such rulings as a matter of information; and to appeal any such ruling to the Board of Review (375:2; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:2). All appeals must be filed with the Executive Director of Communication and Administration within sixty days after the date of the official decision on the matter.

(25) Receive and act upon the recommendations of the General Superintendent.

(26) Recommend at the discretion of the General Board that the General Conference confer the title General Superintendent Emeritus or Emerita upon a former General Superintendent (1590:19; 1945).

(27) Adopt official policies for the general offices, divisions, agencies, auxiliaries, and institutions of the Church, in keeping with the provisions of *The Discipline*, defining the duties of the various executive officers.

(28) Elect the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (1970); to receive, hold, borrow for, loan, and appropriate all General Church funds, in accordance

with the financial plans adopted by the General Conference, through the General Treasurer, in the execution of its lawful purpose, subject to the limitations imposed by *The Discipline*, the articles and bylaws of the several corporations, and the specific provisions of trust agreements; to have the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer bonded, and to set the amount of such bond (1976).

(29) Receive a report from the Executive Board regarding its annual review of all general officers based on mutually agreed goals and objectives.

(30) Elect content experts to the Executive Cabinet.

(31) Define the duties of the Executive Cabinet (1990).

(32) Authorize adaptation of the church name for units of The Wesleyan Church when necessary (80; 205; 340:2); to approve a discipline for each unit under the Global Partners Division in keeping with 340:2; and to recommend to the International Board the advancement to Established National/Regional Conference status of qualified mission units under the Global Partners Division (6516).

(33) Space reserved.

### **Related to Districts**

(34) Make recommendation to the General Conference for the establishment or alteration of district boundaries (1590:10); and to approve the merger, division, or other realignment of districts when each district conference involved has approved the plan (1065).

(35) Authorize the incorporation of a developing district (4105); to approve the articles of incorporation and bylaws for the incorporation of a district, and all amendments to the same (4110); and to exercise such control and direction of said district corporations as is set forth in 4120:3, 6, 9; 4250; 4870.

(36) Grant in concurrence with the respective district conference prior approval to a local church conference for post-secondary education in terms of an institute or of junior college or college-level programs (655:17; 1180:25).

### **Related to Judiciary**

(37) Exercise administrative and judicial discipline in accordance with the Constitution and as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* over officers elected by the General Conference including the general officials of the Church (360:2) and the area

representatives of the General Board (340:1), over those elected or employed by the General Board (323:1), over districts (360:3c), and over district superintendents (323:1; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5270–5288; 5350–5385).

(38) Hear and determine charges against the moral character of a minister or a lay member under its jurisdiction in keeping with the provisions of the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5270; 5279; 5282).

(39) Hear and determine any charges alleging an administrative offense in relation to official duties filed against a person under its jurisdiction and administer discipline as it deems necessary and proper (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5270; 5279; 5282).

(40) Remove from office any person under its jurisdiction whenever the best interests and preservation of the Church or the disabling physical or mental health of the person require it, subject to the following conditions:

(a) Remove from office a general official elected by the General Conference (1800:1a, b), or to remove from General Board membership an area representative, or to remove from office a district superintendent shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all the members of the General Board (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5279).

(b) Remove from office a person elected or employed by the General Board (1800:2) shall require a majority vote of all the members of the General Board (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5282).

(41) To hear and determine charges against a district for an offense as set forth in 5010 (375:6; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5350–5370).

(42) Administer discipline to a district which has been found guilty by the proper judicatory as set forth in the Judiciary (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5350–5385).

(43) Take whatever steps are necessary to preserve the interests of the Church within the bounds of a district under discipline.

(44) End the state of discipline for a district, by a majority vote of all the members of the General Board, when the offense has been removed to the satisfaction of said majority (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5365), or to authorize the reorganization of a district (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5375–5380).

### **Related to Public Morals and Social Concerns**

(45) Determine the manner in which the Church shall cultivate the Church's awareness of its responsibility to raise a standard for social righteousness; issue

guidance through the denominational periodical and other such means; and establish a voice for the Church in matters of public morals and social concerns.

(46) Approve official position statements for publication on behalf of The Wesleyan Church.

(47) Set and enact policy related to the governance of networks only in regard to legal, financial, and boundary implications. This policy may include the approval of networks, their relationship to districts, their financial impact, and their implications related to North American District, Global Partners, and International Wesleyan Church boundaries.

## **G. The Executive Board**

### **1. Function**

**1750.** The Executive Board carries out the will of the General Board, serving as necessary in the interim of General Board sessions.

### **2. Membership**

**1755.** The Executive Board shall be composed of the General Superintendent, the vice-chair of the General Board (who shall serve as the vice-chair of the Executive Board), and three ordained ministers and three lay members to be elected from among the area representatives by the General Board. They shall serve from the close of the session at which they are elected until the close of the next session of the General Conference or until their successors are elected and qualified. Whenever an area representative on the Executive Board ceases to be a member of the General Board, the General Board shall declare the office vacant and shall fill the vacancy in such a manner as to maintain the representation provided for herewith (1655:11).

### **3. Sessions**

**1760.** The Executive Board shall meet immediately prior to each meeting of the General Board and at other times and places as it may determine or upon the call of the chair.

### **4. Organization**

**1765. Chair.** The chair and vice-chair of the General Board shall serve as chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the Executive Board.

**1770. Secretary.** The Executive Director of Communication and Administration of The Wesleyan Church (2110; 4220) shall serve as secretary of the Executive Board by virtue of office but shall not be a member nor have the right to vote.

**1775. Quorum.** A majority of all members of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum.

**1780. Voting.** A majority vote of all those present and voting shall be sufficient except for those matters for which a larger majority is required by *The Discipline*, by legal or corporate requirements, or by the policies and regulations of the General Board.

## 5. Duties, Powers, and Restrictions

**1785.** In the interim of General Board sessions, the Executive Board shall exercise such powers and have such duties as may be assigned to it by *The Discipline* or by the General Board, including the power to:

(1) Transact all business referred to it by the General Board; to change the time and place of a regular session of the General Board if circumstances require it (1615); and to order a special session of the General Board if deemed necessary (1620).

(2) Transact any and all other business the General Board may transact except that the Executive Board shall not make recommendations directly to the General Conference, nor take final action on the adoption of the annual budgets (1655:3), nor the amending of General Board policies (1655), nor transact any business which requires more than a simple majority vote of the General Board (1530; 1532; 1655:6, 11, 16, 18, 21, 23, 40a; 4300; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5279; 5365).

(3) Provide overall correlation of corporate entities, divisions, agencies, auxiliaries, and institutions in planning and carrying out programs adopted by the General Conference and the General Board.

(4) Serve as the members of the budget committee with the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer serving as a nonvoting member of that committee.

(5) Require reports from all such officers as it shall designate and consult with and give direction to the same.

(6) Receive a report from the General Superintendent regarding the annual review of all general officers based on mutually agreed goals and objectives and issue a report of the same to the General Board (1655:29).

(7) Take emergency action by a two-thirds majority vote of all the members of the Executive Board, suspending from office a person under the



jurisdiction of the General Board (1655:37), pending the action of the General Board. In the case of a general official (1800), no more than thirty days shall elapse from the time such suspension is effected until the General Board shall review the matter, either through a regular or special session.

(8) Appoint such subcommittees as it shall deem wise, and to delegate duties and powers to the same.

**1790.** Minutes of the Executive Board meetings shall be forwarded promptly by the Executive Director of Communication and Administration to all members of the General Board for their information and review.

## H. Conflict of Laws

**1796. Generally.** In the event of a conflict between provisions of *The Discipline* relating to church administration at the local, district, or general level and applicable local laws, such provisions of *The Discipline* may be modified to the extent deemed necessary to comply with such local laws, by utilizing the approval process hereinafter specified; provided, however, that this clause shall not be construed to give the consent of The Wesleyan Church (or any component part or affiliated entity thereof) to the regulation of its affairs by any civil authority where such regulation would violate:

- (1) Any of the Essentials of the Church (2500:3);
- (2) The rights of the Church or its members to freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of speech, or other civil rights;
- (3) Separation of church and state, in the sense of excessive entanglement of the civil authority in the affairs of the Church; or
- (4) The rights of the Church to define its religious doctrines and membership requirements, to prescribe its rituals, and otherwise to maintain its polity on matters such as ordination, sacraments, religious beliefs and practice, requirements for employment by the Church (or its component parts or affiliated entities) or any other similar matters deemed by the Church to be central to the identity, faith, doctrine, and practice of the Church.

### **1797. Approval Process.**

(1) **Local level.** If the conflict which arises relates to church administration at the local level, no modification shall be effective until approved by the district board of administration.

(2) **District level.** If the conflict which arises relates to church administration at the district level, no modification shall be effective until approved by the General Superintendent.

(3) **General level.** If the conflict which arises relates to church administration at the general level, no modification shall be effective until approved by the General Board.

**1798. Record of Permitted Changes.** The Executive Director of Communication and Administration shall maintain a record of any change which has been approved under the foregoing procedure, and shall notify an affected level, district, or general entity when the process of approving a change relevant to that entity has been completed.

**1799. Report to General Conference.** All modifications approved under the foregoing procedure shall be reported to the next General Conference. If a modification approved under the foregoing procedure is unacceptable to the General Conference, it may, by resolution, identify the respects in which the modification is unacceptable, and direct the General Board to formulate an alternative plan which is consistent with the instructions of the General Conference.

## Chapter 3

### GENERAL OFFICIALS OF THE CHURCH

**1800. Identification.** The general officials of the Church are those general officers which are designated as follows:

(1) Elected by the General Conference:

(a) The General Superintendent.

(b) The Executive Director of the Communication and Administration Division, the Executive Director of the Education and Clergy Development Division, the Executive Director of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, and the Executive Director of the Global Partners Division.

(2) Elected by the General Board—the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer.

**1810. Qualifications.** A general official must be a member with leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of The Wesleyan Church at the time of election; and if at any time a general official ceases to be a member with leadership qualifications, the office shall be declared vacant as provided for in 1850.

**1820. Term of Office.** The General Superintendent and other general officials elected by the General Conference (1580:1; 1590:16–17; 1800:1a, b) shall be elected for a term of four years, beginning thirty (30) days after the General Conference adjourns and continuing until thirty (30) days after the adjournment of the next regular session of the General Conference or until their successors are elected and qualified. When mutually agreed upon or deemed in the best interests of the Church, the General Board may approve an earlier date for the transition between a newly elected official and an incumbent leaving office. A special session of the General Conference may declare that the term of any official is ended and order a new election. The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer shall be elected by the General Board for a term determined by the General Board. The salary of a retiring general official shall continue one month beyond the date of termination of service.

**1830. Amenability.** The general officials are amenable to the General Board for their official conduct and their moral character (323:1; 360:2). They are subject to direction from the General Conference, the General Board, and its Executive Board. They may be removed from office for cause or when the best interests of the Church or the disabling physical or mental health of the

official so requires. The removal from office of those general officials elected by the General Conference (1800:1a, b) shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the General Board (1655:40a; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5279). The removal from office of those general officials that are elected by the General Board (1800:2) shall require a majority vote of all members of the General Board (1655:40b; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5279).

**1840. Reports.** The general officials shall report to each session of the General Conference concerning their official duties, annually to the General Board concerning their official duties and personal ministry, and at other times as required by the General Conference, the General Board, or the Executive Board.

**1845. World Headquarters Structure.** The number and nature of general offices and divisions and the assignments of the general officials of The Wesleyan Church may be adjusted in times of exigency by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the General Board present and voting, or a majority of all members of the General Board, whichever is greater.

**1850. Vacancies.** The office of a general official may become vacant by death, by cessation of membership in The Wesleyan Church, by resignation from office, or by removal (1830). When a vacancy occurs, the General Superintendent shall provide recommendation(s) to the General Board for filling the office. Vacancies in the office of those general officials elected by the General Conference, except as provided for in paragraph 1845, shall be filled by a two-thirds vote of the members of the General Board (1655:11). Vacancies occurring in the office of those general officials elected by the General Board (1800:2) shall be filled by a majority vote of the General Board (1655:11).

**1860. Church and District Membership.** An ordained minister who serves as a general official may hold ministerial membership in any district, and church membership in any local church. The responsibilities to the General Church shall take precedence over responsibilities to the district and local church (323:1; 360:2).

**1870. Official Listing.** The official listing of the offices, divisions, agencies, auxiliaries, subsidiary corporations, benevolent, and educational institutions of the General Church is:

### Offices

Office of the General Superintendent

Office of the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer

**Divisions**

Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division  
Communication and Administration Division  
Education and Clergy Development Division  
Global Partners Division

**Agency**

Wesleyan Publishing House, Fishers, Indiana

**Subsidiary Corporations (Financial Institutions)**

Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc, Fishers, Indiana  
Wesleyan Financial Holdings, Fishers, Indiana  
Wesleyan Investment Foundation, Inc., Fishers, Indiana

**Subsidiary Corporations (Benevolent Institutions)**

Hephzibah Ministries, Inc., Macon, Georgia  
Immigrant Connection, Inc., Fishers, Indiana  
Wesleyan Bible Conference Association, Brooksville, Florida

**Subsidiary Corporations (Educational Institutions)**

Houghton College, Houghton, New York  
Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana  
Kingswood University, Sussex, New Brunswick  
Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Bartlesville, Oklahoma  
Southern Wesleyan University, Central, South Carolina  
Wesley Seminary, Marion, Indiana

## Chapter 4

### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

#### A. General Superintendent

##### 1. Function

**1900.** The General Superintendent is the spiritual, executive, and administrative leader of the Church (350:1). As such, the General Superintendent must communicate through preaching, writing, teaching, and various uses of technology the fourfold mission and vision of the Church: evangelizing the lost, discipling believers, equipping the Church, and ministering to society. The result will be that hope and holiness will spread throughout the globe producing transformed people, communities, and cultures.

##### 2. General Regulations

**1903.** The General Superintendent is elected from among the ordained ministers of The Wesleyan Church by the General Conference as a general official of the Church (325; 350:1; 1590:15), and is an ex officio member of the General Conference (1503:1c), the General Board (1605:1), the Executive Board (1755), and the Executive Cabinet (1990).

**1909.** The term of service, amenability, and other regulations for the General Superintendent are those set forth for a general official in paragraphs 1800–1870.

##### 3. Duties of the General Superintendent

**1935.** The General Superintendent shall devote full time to supervising, coordinating, and promoting the various branches of The Wesleyan Church. The General Superintendent shall have the following responsibilities which are expanded and defined in General Board Policy:

- (1) Spiritual
- (2) Executive
- (3) Administrative
- (4) Related to Districts
- (5) Toward Educational Institutions
- (6) Judicial Supervision

#### 4. General Superintendent Emeritus or Emerita

**1945.** The General Conference, upon recommendation of the General Board (1655:26), may confer the title of General Superintendent Emeritus or Emerita upon a former General Superintendent, provided the former General Superintendent shall have served as a General Superintendent for two or more quadrennia and shall have reached their sixty-fifth birthday, or shall have become disabled (1590:19). It is understood that the tenure of the emeritus or emerita relation is for life. A General Superintendent Emeritus or Emerita is a voting member of the General Conference (1503:1c).

#### B. The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer

**1970. Function.** The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer has custody of the General Church funds and accounting records and is responsible for assigned fiscal management.

**1976. Duties.** The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer is elected by the General Board as a general official (1800:2), is an ex officio member of the General Conference (1503:1c) and the Executive Cabinet, and serves as the chief financial officer for The Wesleyan Church Corporation (1800:2; 4220). The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer is amenable to the General Board, serves as a nonvoting resource person to the board, and is under the supervision of the General Superintendent (1935). The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer shall exercise leadership in this office in keeping with *The Discipline*, the *General Board Policy for the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer*, and other directives as may be given by the General Conference, the General Board, or its Executive Board. The term of service and other regulations for this office are provided for in 1810–1870.

#### C. Executive Cabinet

**1990.** The Executive Cabinet shall consist of the general officials (1800) as ex officio members and content expert(s) elected by the General Board annually. The Executive Cabinet shall have responsibility for internal cooperation and to provide leadership in keeping with the *General Board Policy for the Executive Cabinet* (1655:30). All members of the Executive Cabinet shall be available to attend the meetings of the General Board except for executive sessions, and shall be invited to speak to any issue. General officials shall comprise at least two-thirds of the Executive Cabinet.

## D. General Church Financial Plan

**1991.** The district and general church operations are made possible by the generosity of our local churches that invest funds to allow for vision casting, administration, developing future leaders, and planting new churches. It is recommended that a local church's investment in district and denominational support be limited to no more than 10 percent of its base income with up to 10 percent of that support going to church multiplication (2005:1).

### 1. Summary

**1995.** The financial plan for the General Church shall consist of the United Stewardship Fund, special offerings, and planned gifts:

(1) **United Stewardship Fund** shall be established and administered as set forth in 2000 through 2045.

(2) **Special offerings** shall be authorized and administered as set forth in 2050 and may be authorized by the General Conference or the General Board.

(3) **Planned gifts** shall be promoted through the General Superintendent's office and the funds shall be administered by the General Treasurer.

### 2. United Stewardship Fund

#### a. Definition

**2000. The United Stewardship Fund** is a unified budget for the financial support of designated General Church interests and the educational institutions. It shall consist of the following:

(1) **The General Fund**, which shall provide support for General Church administration, general benevolent institutions, ministerial training, and other General Church ministries.

(2) **The Education Fund**, which shall provide support for the approved educational institutions as listed in 2365 and in a manner as set forth in 2040 (2377).

(3) **The Church Multiplication Fund**, which shall provide continuing support for the planting of new churches, including the development of the leaders needed to serve in the new churches. The implementation of this fund shall be according to the *General Board Policy for the Church Multiplication Fund*. These funds shall be designated for church multiplication in accordance with this policy, which allows for the discretion of the district where the funds were given.



**b. Basis**

**2005.** The General Fund, the Education Fund, and the Church Multiplication Fund shall be determined annually by a percentage (2005:2) of the base income of all churches for the previous fiscal year which shall be computed in the following manner (2005:3):

(1) **Base Income.** The base income shall be the total of a local church's receipts of tithes and offerings given without restriction for the work of the church (465; 470).

(2) **Fund Allocations.**

(a) The percentages for determining the General Fund, the Education Fund, and the Church Multiplication Fund shall be fixed by the General Conference (1590:8). The percentage in each case shall be applied to the assessable income as defined in 2005:1 except as provided for in 2005:3, 4.

(b) In the event of an emergency during the interim of General Conference sessions, the General Board may alter the percentages of the General Fund by a two-thirds majority vote of all its members (1655:23).

(3) **Limits for Capped Churches.**

(a) **Assessment Limits and Maximum.** By Conference Year 2026, all churches shall be subject to full assessment on all assessable income up to \$550,000. Above that level, there shall be a graduated reduction in the percentage applied. For that portion of a church's assessable income between \$550,000 and \$1,100,000, there shall be a reduction of one in the total percentage divided proportionately between the General Fund, the Church Multiplication Fund, and the Education Fund. For that portion between \$1,100,000 and \$2,200,000, there shall be a reduction of two in the total percentage divided proportionately between the three funds. The percentage in each case shall be applied to the same base income as defined in 2005:1 subject to the exceptions set forth in 2005:4a, b.

(b) **Annual Rate.** The General Board shall set and publish the annual rate for capped churches based on the increase or decrease of consumer price indices for the previous year or 3 percent, whichever is less.

(4) **Exceptions for Developing and Urban Churches.**

(a) **Developing Church Exception.** Whenever a developing church is deemed, by the district board of administration, to be under financial duress, that board may subtract up to \$50,000 from the USF base income used to calculate the USF obligation.

(b) **Urban Missional Church Exception.** Whenever a local church is designated as an urban missional church, the USF obligation for that church shall be set at 25 percent of the regular assessment (523).

### c. District and Local Regulations

**2015. District Responsibility.** Each district and developing district, with the exception of the work under the Global Partners Division, shall be responsible to raise its share of the United Stewardship Fund, including the General Fund, the Education Fund, and the Church Multiplication Fund in accordance with the following regulations:

(1) **District Obligation.** The obligation of a district or developing district shall be an amount equal to the designated percentage of the total base income, as defined in 2005:1–2, of all developing churches and churches of the district, subject to such exceptions and adjustments as are indicated in 2005:3. When this amount has been paid in full to the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, for the General Fund, the Education Fund, and designated monies set aside in the district Church Multiplication Fund a district has met its obligation to the United Stewardship Fund. The computations for the district obligation shall be based on the financial reports of the local churches as compiled by the district statistical committee (1337:6) prior to the annual district conference.

(2) **District Apportionment.** The district conference shall apportion its total obligation among the local churches under its jurisdiction by assigning an amount to each as its share of the General Fund, the Education Fund, and the Church Multiplication Fund respectively, under whatever plan the district conference shall adopt after receiving a recommendation from the district board of administration (1233:11; 1337:6). Each local church shall be promptly notified of the amount assigned by the district by the person appointed by the district superintendent. The district treasurer shall promptly notify the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer of the district obligation on forms provided by the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (1337:6).

(3) **District Administration.** The district board of administration shall be responsible to administer the district plan for raising the United Stewardship Fund and shall be responsible to see that the district obligation is paid in full for the General Fund, Education Fund, and the Church Multiplication Fund (1233:10). All General and Education Fund monies received by the district treasurer shall be remitted monthly to the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer via the approved process.

**2025. Local Church Responsibility.** The pastor and the local board of administration shall be responsible for the faithful collection of the amount assigned by the district to their church, and shall raise it on the undivided plan. The local church treasurer shall forward all money received for the General Fund, the Education Fund, and the Church Multiplication Fund monthly to the district treasurer (842:4). A local church has met its obligation to the United Stewardship Fund when it has paid in full to the district treasurer the amounts assigned to it by the district for the General Fund, the Education Fund, and the Church Multiplication Fund. In a developing church, the pastor and the local advisory council shall have the responsibility for raising the United Stewardship Fund.

**2030. Developing District Responsibility.** The obligation of a developing district, or of the churches within a developing district, to the United Stewardship Fund shall be determined by the General Board (1655:23). The assigned obligation shall be raised by the superintendent of the developing district, under the direction of the Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship and in accord with the *General Board Policy for the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division*.

#### **d. General Church Regulations**

**2035. General Fund: Beneficiaries and Apportionment.** The General Fund shall provide support for General Church divisions and ministries and be apportioned among them as follows:

(1) **Beneficiaries.** The designated beneficiaries to receive support from the USF-General Fund are: the administrative offices of the General Superintendent and the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer; the Executive Director of the Communication and Administration Division, the Executive Director of the Education and Clergy Development Division, the Executive Director of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, and the Executive Director of the Global Partners Division, and such other benevolent institutions, offices, or agencies of the General Church as the General Conference or the General Board shall designate from time to time.

(2) **Apportionment.** The apportioning of the General Fund among the designated beneficiaries (2035:1) shall be determined annually by the General Board.

**2040. Education Fund: Beneficiaries and Apportionment.** The Education Fund shall provide support for educational institutions and general ministerial education, and shall be apportioned among them as follows:

(1) **Beneficiaries.** The beneficiaries receiving support from the Education Fund shall include the educational institutions (2365); approved programs for subsidizing ministerial training; the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (2382); and the Ministerial Study Course Agency (2385–2388).

(2) **Apportionment.** The General Board shall determine the apportionment of the Education Fund among the beneficiaries listed in 2040:1.

**2045. General Promotion and Administration.** The General Superintendent's office shall promote the raising of the United Stewardship Fund. The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer shall cooperate with the General Superintendent's office in such promotion and shall administer the USF funds as provided for in *The Discipline* and as directed by the General Board (1976).

### 3. Special Offerings

**2050. Special offerings,** in addition to the United Stewardship Fund for the support of General Church ministries and world outreach of The Wesleyan Church, shall include the following offerings and other such offerings as shall be authorized by the General Board. No agency, division, institution, organization, or similar body of The Wesleyan Church may solicit offerings or present financial appeals without the approval of the General Board.

(1) **Global Partners Support.** The Global Partners Division shall be supported by various approved offerings of the General Church, funds raised through missionary home ministries work, other solicitations, and money raised by auxiliary organizations.

(2) **Solicited Offerings.** The Global Partners Division, the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, and the educational institutions may raise financial support for the work under their care by sending representatives to visit the districts, local churches, members, and constituency of the Church. District and local officials shall receive them and cooperate in their work. Offerings received shall be used as designated and shall be in addition to and apart from the United Stewardship Fund, and shall be remitted promptly through the regular channels. An educational institution shall do its school representation work in the manner decided upon in the plans for such institutions approved by the General Board.

(3) **Auxiliary Organizations.** Any auxiliary shall raise financial support for approved projects in accord with their respective constitutions and subject to the general oversight of the General Board.

(4) **Other Contributions.** Other offerings, contributions, bequests, and donations shall be used as specified by the donor and may be forwarded

through the regular channels to the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer. Those individuals who prefer to contact the General Superintendent's office or a division or institution concerning annuities, bequests, and other special contributions may do so.

### **E. Interpretations of Church Law**

**2060. Informal Opinions and Inquiries about Church Law.** The Executive Director of Communication and Administration shall respond to routine inquiries from ministers or members seeking informal opinions about points of Church law or practical applications of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*. Such opinions are not "official rulings," but are offered rather as general advice and recommendations to assist church leaders and members in the proper, day-to-day administration of the Church. The Executive Director of Communication and Administration shall keep a log of such inquiries processed by that office for periodic reporting to the General Superintendent.

**2061. Official Rulings.** Official rulings are formal clarifications of Church law and authoritative interpretations of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* that become the temporary law of the Church, subject to being overruled or sustained by the next session of the General Conference. The General Superintendent shall prepare or may instruct the Executive Director of Communication and Administration to research and write initial drafts of official rulings when such are properly requested or whenever the General Superintendent deems necessary for the proper administration of the Church:

(1) A request for an official ruling shall be submitted to the General Superintendent, in writing, by the following: the General Board, the Executive Board (1785), a general official, the governing board of an institution or subsidiary corporation, a district conference (1180:35), or a district board of administration (1233:23).

(2) The General Superintendent shall consult with the Executive Board of the General Board prior to giving final approval to and signing all official rulings or interpretations.

(3) A ruling may be appealed to the Board of Review by the party submitting the original request or by the General Board (370; 375:2; 1180:37; 1233:23; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:2). All appeals must be filed with the Executive Director of Communication and Administration within sixty days after the date the official ruling is published by the General Superintendent. An official ruling that is not upheld by the Board of Review shall be null and void, unless the action of the Board of Review is overruled by the General Conference (375:2; 380).

**2062. Reporting Official Rulings.** The General Superintendent shall submit a report of all official rulings on points of law, interpretations of *The Discipline*, or other formal judicial acts, to the next session of the General Board or its Executive Board for their information, and to the next session of the General Conference for final review and approval (1590:22). Upon approval by the General Conference, such rulings become the law of the Church and shall be incorporated into the appropriate section(s) of *The Discipline*. A record of such rulings shall be inserted in a special appendix of the next issue of *The Discipline* as follows:

The General Superintendent on (date) officially interpreted (identify item) and the General Conference on (date) sustained (GC- ), thereby authorizing this provision to mean: (insert the ruling).

**2064. Rulings on District Actions.** The General Superintendent shall rule on the legality of an official action by a district conference, any district board or committee, or a district official as follows: Any three or more members of The Wesleyan Church within a district or developing district may request such a ruling and shall submit their petition in writing, signed by each petitioner (323:6). The General Superintendent shall decide if the official act in question, in whole or in part, is deemed properly taken according to the Constitution (200–385), or other provisions of *The Discipline* (155–185), stating reasons for the ruling in writing. If the action is ruled as contravening the Constitution or other provisions of *The Discipline*, it shall be null and void. Appeals from the decision of the General Superintendent may be made by the petitioners or the district board of administration to the General Board of Review (375:2).

**2066. Requests for Rulings by the Board of Review.** The General Superintendent shall request a ruling from the Board of Review on the constitutionality of an act of the General Conference (375:1), the legality of an act of any General Church board (375:3), and the legality of any issues arising between a district and the General Conference (375:6; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5445:1, 3, 4).

**2068. Canvassing Votes on Constitutional Amendments.** The General Superintendent, with the Executive Cabinet, shall canvass the vote taken by the several district conferences on an amendment to the Constitution originating in the General Conference and, when the amendment has received the required two-thirds vote, shall declare it effective as constitutional law (1590:2).

## F. General Board of Review

**2070. Members.** The General Board of Review is the appellate body for those who appeal the decisions of a general judicial committee and the judicatory for those who are subject to General Church jurisdiction (370; 1655:37). The General Board of Review shall consist of nine members, five of whom shall be ordained ministers and four of whom shall be lay members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of The Wesleyan Church.

(1) Their term of office shall be for four years. They shall serve from the close of the session of the General Conference at which they are elected until the close of the next session of the General Conference or until their successors are elected and qualified.

(2) A member of the General Board of Review may not at the same time be a member of the General Board.

(3) The General Conference shall elect by majority vote the members of the General Board of Review, from nominations presented by the Committee on Special Nominations. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the General Conference (1580:2; 1590:18).

Members of the General Board of Review shall recuse themselves in the case of conflict of interest. Whenever a member is disqualified, the chair shall appoint an alternate for the hearing of that particular case (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5405), provided that such appointment shall maintain the membership of the Board as five ordained ministers and four lay members who meet the leadership qualifications.

**2075. Alternates.** The General Conference shall elect, in the same manner described in 2070:3, four ordained ministers and three lay members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) to serve as alternate members of the General Board of Review, with the same qualifications (2070:2) and term of office (2070:1) as the members (1590:18). (Duties, powers, and procedures of the General Board of Review are located in the *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.)

## Chapter 5

### COMMUNICATION AND ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

**2100. Vision.** The vision of the Communication and Administration Division is to spread hope and holiness that transforms lives and nations by promoting The Wesleyan Church's Christ-exalting message and biblical values; by making denominational news and information, official views, and mission-aligned resources readily available to its leaders, members, and diverse constituents; and by assisting church personnel with essential legal, creative, editorial, and other administrative support.

**2105. Purpose.** It is the division's purpose to pursue this vision through serving the Church as its public voice, image guardian, media liaison, corporate agent, and legal representative; through the strategic use of electronic, digital, broadcast, video, print, and social media; through creative design, innovative messaging, public relations, resource production, marketing, and advertising; through efficient and effective recordkeeping, knowledge management, statistical analysis, information reporting and sharing, writing and editorial services, web design and supervision, reception and directory services, internal communications, and technology systems management and support; through providing professional advice and official responses related to legal and polity concerns; and through offering training, coaching, consulting, networking, convention or major event registration and project management services, and calendar coordination for those involved in the Church's governance and administration at all levels.

**2110. Executive Director.** The Executive Director of the Communication and Administration Division is elected by the General Conference as a general official (334; 360:2; 1539; 1580:1; 1800), and is an ex officio member of the General Conference (1503:1c) and the Executive Cabinet (1990). The Executive Director of Communication and Administration is amenable to the General Board, serves as a nonvoting resource person to the board, is under the supervision of the General Superintendent (1935), and serves as secretary of The Wesleyan Church Corporation (4220). The Executive Director of Communication and Administration shall exercise leadership in this office in keeping with *The Discipline*, the *General Board Policy for the Communication and Administration Division*, and other directives as may be given by the General Conference, the General Board, or its Executive Board. The term of service and other regulations for this office are provided for in paragraphs 1810–1870.



## Chapter 6

### GLOBAL PARTNERS DIVISION

**2258. Vision.** The ultimate objective of The Wesleyan Church is to fulfill the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ by sharing with all people the good news and glorious experience of full salvation.

**2259. Purpose.** The Global Partners Division is responsible for carrying out the missionary objectives of The Wesleyan Church in those fields and areas beyond the national borders of the United States and Canada, and in such other places as shall be assigned to it as approved by the General Conference or the General Board.

**2261. Executive Director.** The Executive Director of the Global Partners Division is elected by the General Conference from among the ordained ministers of The Wesleyan Church as a general official, and is an ex officio member of the General Conference (1503:1c) and the Executive Cabinet (1990). The Executive Director of Global Partners is amenable to the General Board, serves as a nonvoting resource person to the board, and is under the supervision of the General Superintendent. The Executive Director of Global Partners shall exercise leadership in this division in keeping with *The Discipline*, the *General Board Policy for the Global Partners Division*, and other directives as may be given by the General Conference, the General Board, or its Executive Board. The term of service and other regulations for this office are provided for in 1810–1870.

**2262. Strategic Directives.** The strategic directives of the Global Partners Division and its executive director shall be to:

(1) Evangelize the nations of the earth, seeking the salvation of the individuals and the entire sanctification of believers as the primary responsibility of all missionary work.

(2) Gather the converts into churches and enlist them in the work of God's kingdom.

(3) Give special emphasis to the training of workers and leaders for the Church.

(4) Share the benefits of the gospel and facilitate evangelistic work through specialized ministries such as medical, educational, literacy, and benevolent work.

(5) Promote, in accordance with scriptural and indigenous principles, the growth and development of the churches in each field or area to a church body that is spiritually mature, well organized, financially responsible, and missionary minded, and that can assume its place in The Wesleyan Church.

(6) Further, the specific vision, mission, global strategic plan, core missiological values, and general duties for the Global Partners Division shall be prepared by the divisional leadership in collaboration with the General Superintendent and be presented to the Executive Cabinet for ratification and to the General Board for final approval.

### 3. Missionaries

**2272.** A missionary or other worker duly appointed to serve under the Global Partners Division may retain membership in the local church and district where membership is held as of the time of appointment by the General Board. The missionary or other worker shall also relate to the national church where assigned and shall hold membership as set forth in *The Discipline* or other regulations adopted for the particular field to which assigned and according to the *General Board Policy for Global Partners*. The missionary or other worker shall be amenable for all conduct to the proper authorities on the field or area of service, the Executive Director of Global Partners, and the General Board as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* and the *General Board Policy for the Global Partners Division*.

### 4. Organization of Mission Units

**2275.** Mission units under the Global Partners Division shall be organized on four levels:

(1) A **developing district** shall be a unit which does not meet the requirements for an established district.

(2) An **established district** shall be a unit with a minimum of twenty churches and seven hundred fifty members.

(3) A **national or regional conference** shall be a unit with two or more developing or established districts.

**2278.** Mission units under the Global Partners Division shall be entitled to send representatives to the North American General Conference on a plan of representation determined by the General Board.

**2281. Membership Rights.** In keeping with the Statement of Relationship (6730) contained in the Essentials (see the Charter of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church), members of units under the Global Partners Division have the right to transfer membership not only among local Wesleyan churches but also from one unit under the division to any other unit under the division, or to districts within the United States or Canada (2550), subject to paragraph 567.

**2284. Transfer of Ministers.** The transfer of ministerial credentials from one unit under the Global Partners Division to any other unit under the division, or to any district of the United States or Canada, may be effected with the understanding that consideration must be given to differences in requirements for licensing and ordination of ministers as provided for in the various books of discipline of units worldwide (6730).

**2287. Eligibility for Holding Office.** As outlined in paragraph 2500:5, units under the Global Partners Division are expected to adopt, subject to the approval of the General Board, a discipline or other similar document for the administration of the churches within their boundaries. While the right to be elected to office is worldwide, the right to hold office shall be exercised within the administrative jurisdiction of each book of discipline.

## Chapter 7

### Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division

**2305. Vision.** The vision of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division is to make more and better disciples, leaders, and healthy churches within The Wesleyan Church and beyond of every age, ethnicity, and community. The church should be the pinnacle of declaring the truth of full salvation through Christ as recorded in the Holy Scriptures for both personal and public holiness. The local church is to guide sinful, fallen men, women, youth, and children of every culture, background, and ethnicity to experience the crises of conversion and entire sanctification that lead to dynamic service to God and humanity, fed by continuous, transformational growth into the fullness of Christ. The outcome of this process will be healthy, multiplying churches and ministries that boldly reach the lost, the least, and the leaders of all generations, communities, and cultures with the hope of Jesus Christ.

**2306. Purpose.** The Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division is responsible for carrying out the church multiplication objectives of The Wesleyan Church within the borders of the United States and Canada, and in such other places as shall be assigned to it by the General Conference or the General Board; carrying out, on the General level, the discipleship objectives of the Church through such means as Sunday school, small group ministries, the promotion of Christian family life, children's ministries, youth ministries, young adult ministries, and adult ministries; and serving as the Church's resource agency with regards to church health, church planting, evangelism, discipleship, and membership development.

**2307. Executive Director.** The Executive Director of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division is elected by the General Conference from among the ordained ministers of The Wesleyan Church as a general official, and is an ex officio member of the General Conference (1503:1c) and the Executive Cabinet (1990). The Executive Director is amenable to the General Board, serves as a nonvoting resource person to the board, and is under the supervision of the General Superintendent (1935). The Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship shall exercise leadership in this division in keeping with *The Discipline*, the *General Board Policy for the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division*, and other directives as may be given by the General Conference, the General Board, or its Executive Board. The term of service and other regulations for this office are provided in 1810–1870.

## Chapter 8

### EDUCATION AND CLERGY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

**2338. Vision.** The vision of the Education and Clergy Development Division is to spread hope and holiness that transforms lives and nations by promoting The Wesleyan Church's Christ-exalting message and biblical values by infusing Wesleyan theology and values throughout Wesleyan higher education; by ensuring effective ministerial education, development, and programs; and by providing pastoral care systems, assisting districts, and supporting healthy ministerial leadership.

**2339. Purpose.** It is the division's purpose to pursue this vision through serving the Church by coordinating the implementation of The Wesleyan Church's objectives for Christian education as they relate to the training of Christian ministers, missionaries, and educators on the study course, college, and seminary levels, the development of youth in higher education for various fields of service, and continuing education and career development for the ministers of The Wesleyan Church; by assisting in identifying and clarifying God's call to ministry; by providing the programs and resources for the training, credentialing, and continuing development of ministers; and by establishing the standards for credentialed ministry and tracking progress made toward meeting certification.

**2340. Executive Director.** The Executive Director of the Education and Clergy Development Division is elected by the General Conference from among the ordained ministers of The Wesleyan Church as a general official, is an ex officio member of the General Conference (1503:1c) and the Executive Cabinet (1990), and is a member and the executive secretary of both the Committee on Chaplains (2395) and the Wesleyan Educational Council (2355). The Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development is amenable to the General Board, serves as a nonvoting resource person to the board, and is under the supervision of the General Superintendent. The Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development shall exercise leadership in this division in keeping with *The Discipline*, the *General Board Policy for the Education and Clergy Development Division*, and other directives as may be given by the General Conference, the General Board, or its Executive Board. The term of service and other regulations for this office are provided in 1810–1870.

### **3. Wesleyan Educational Council**

**2355.** The Wesleyan Educational Council shall consist of the Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development, who shall serve as its executive secretary (2340), and the president and chair of the board of trustees for each educational institution and the president and chair of the board of Wesley Seminary (2365 and 2366). The Council shall serve as an advisory body to the Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development.

#### **D. Educational Institutions**

##### **1. Ownership and Control**

###### **a. Basic Principles**

**2358.** The educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church shall be governed in harmony with these principles:

(1) All schools, in fulfilling the mission of The Wesleyan Church, shall seek to produce Christian workers and committed lay members for the church of Jesus Christ. The Church recognizes that more than one type of educational institution will be needed. Some institutions will devote themselves primarily to the preparation of full-time Christian workers for the church. Some colleges, recognizing the God-given mandate to explore and bring under dominion the whole range of knowledge for the glory of God and the good of mankind (Gen. 1:26–28; 9:1–7; Matt. 6:10; 1 Cor. 3:21b–23; 2 Cor. 10:5; 1 Tim. 4:4–5), will offer a Christian liberal arts program. Some students will use such a curriculum as training for full-time, church-related vocations or as a foundation for graduate training for such vocations; some to prepare for other vocations in which they have been called to serve Christ, His church, and His world.

(2) The Church and all its schools shall work in the closest harmony. In its legislative assemblies, the Church defines its faith. In its classrooms, the Church studies, expounds, and defends its faith. In the congregation, the Church worships its Lord and proclaims its faith. To safeguard the doctrinal purity of the Church, it shall be required that all schools maintain and promote the doctrinal position of the Church as set forth in its Articles of Religion, Guides and Helps to Holy Living, and Elementary Principles. Any person employed on the administrative staff or faculty of an educational institution of The Wesleyan Church must affirm adherence to the doctrine of entire sanctification and other doctrines of The Wesleyan Church as set forth in the Articles of Religion.

(3) In establishing its educational institutions, and in guiding their life and work, The Wesleyan Church seeks to provide the highest possible quality of Christian education for its own constituents and for other persons who wish to study under its auspices without regard to race, national origin, or gender (265:12; 360:3d).

### **b. Lines of Authority**

**2362.** Ultimate authority over the educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church rests with the General Conference (1590:13). In practice this authority is delegated to the General Board and consists of the following:

(1) Authority, by two-thirds vote, to establish, merge or dissolve an educational institution, or to enter into a cooperative agreement with other persons/groups of like theological and behavioral commitment in the ownership and operation of an educational institution.

(2) Authority to provide for and deal with all matters pertaining to charters and bylaws.

(3) Provision for boards of control in keeping with 340:2.

(4) The adoption and revision of such *Standards of the General Board for Educational Institutions* as the General Board shall deem to be wise.

(5) The General Board is not empowered or authorized to contravene, override, or set aside a decision of a college board of trustees except as is provided and specifically stated in 2362:1–4.

## **2. Educational Institutions and Curricula Offerings**

**2365.** The educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church are:

(1) Houghton College, Houghton, New York.

(2) Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana.

(3) Kingswood University, Sussex, New Brunswick.

(4) Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

(5) Southern Wesleyan University, Central, South Carolina.

**2366.** The seminary of The Wesleyan Church is Wesley Seminary, Marion, Indiana.

**2368.** Each of the four-year colleges and Wesley Seminary shall maintain a curriculum which satisfies the educational requirements for ordination as minister for The Wesleyan Church.

### 3. Financial Support

**2377.** The financial support of the educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church shall be provided for as follows:

(1) **The General Fund** (2035). The General Fund shall include provision for the Education and Clergy Development Division (2338), and the Wesleyan Educational Council (2355).

(2) **The Education Fund** (2040). The Education Fund shall provide for the support of the approved educational institutions (2365), the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (2382), the Ministerial Study Course Agency (2385–2388), and the subsidizing of ministerial training (2035:1).

(3) **Special Offerings.** Each educational institution shall supplement its income through school representation work, solicitations, and special offerings (2050:3).

### E. Educational Agencies

#### 1. Wesleyan Seminary Foundation

**2382.** The Wesleyan Seminary Foundation is the Church educational agency. Its connection with a particular institution, the official agreement between The Wesleyan Church and the institution, and consequent policies and programs shall be determined as provided by the General Board. The Foundation shall be under the direction of the Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development.

#### 2. Ministerial Study Course Agency

**2385.** Ministerial training within The Wesleyan Church will ordinarily take place in one of the approved educational institutions. However, for those persons whose circumstances make such institutional education impossible in whole or in part, the Education and Clergy Development Division shall provide correspondence courses of study. The correspondence courses shall also be open to others who wish to prepare for Christian service (3200–3210).

**2388.** The Ministerial Study Course Agency shall be maintained at the denominational headquarters to centralize and standardize the keeping of records on all students for the various ministries recognized by The Wesleyan Church and the administering of the correspondence study courses for those ministries (3200–3210). It shall be directed by the Executive Director of Education



and Clergy Development. The duties of the Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development in this connection shall be to:

(1) Maintain records on all students for the various ministries recognized by The Wesleyan Church, whether enrolled in educational institutions or in correspondence courses (3170:1–3), and including students of the lay minister's course of study (3210:4; 3420), commissioned minister's course of study (3059:1b; 3210:3), the pre-ordination course of study (3040:2; 3051:1; 3070:3; 3210:1), the courses of study for specialized ministries (3210:2), and the special worker's courses of study (3210:5; 3460–3470). The records shall include transcripts, grades, courses finished, and current standing. The Agency shall exchange needed information with the educational institutions and the local and district boards directing the students, issuing an annual report concerning progress for the year and current standing to each student, a similar report on each student of the lay minister's course of study to the local board of administration of the local church where membership is held, and a similar report on each student recognized by the district to the home district board of ministerial development prior to the session of the district conference (1387:2; 1390:2; 3040:2; 3460).

(2) Provide a correspondence course for each course required in each course of study, securing the services of a qualified instructor and approving the choice of textbooks and study plans, providing for the registration of students properly authorized to use the correspondence courses (3170:3), and providing study guides and instructions as well as examinations which shall be administered through an ordained minister whenever possible (3200).

(3) Provide suitable transcripts and issue certificates upon the satisfactory completion of the work assigned (6410).

(4) Evaluate any training taken outside the institutions and agencies of The Wesleyan Church by a student for one of the ministries recognized by The Wesleyan Church, to judge the equivalence of such outside training to the appropriate course of study, and to report any conclusions and recommendations to the appropriate local board of administration or district board of ministerial development (3070:3; 3104:4; 3170:4; 3470).

### **F. Committee on Chaplains**

**2395.** The Committee on Chaplains shall include the Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development as its executive secretary, with other members to be selected as provided by the General Board.

## Chapter 9

### BOUNDARIES

#### A. District Boundaries

**2400.** The boundaries of an established or developing district shall be defined by the General Conference or, in the interim of its sessions, by the General Board as set forth in 317; 1006; 1020; 1034; 1036; 1042–1045; 1060–1065; 1590:10–11; 1655:34.

**2403.** The boundaries of the districts in the United States and Canada are:

(1) The **Atlantic District** shall include the Atlantic provinces (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) and the state of Maine.

(2) The **Central Canada District** shall include the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

(3) The **Chesapeake District** shall include the District of Columbia; the states of Delaware and Maryland; and shall include the Accomack, Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Northampton, Prince William, and Stafford counties, and the Winchester Wesleyan Church of Winchester in the state of Virginia, but with the exception of the New Hope Fellowship Wesleyan Church of Fairfax, Virginia.

(4) The **Crossroads District** shall include that part of the state of Indiana which is north of the northern boundaries of Vigo, Clay, Owen, Morgan, Johnson, Rush, Fayette, and Union Counties, and north of US Highway 40 in Hancock County.

(5) The **Florida District** shall include the state of Florida.

(6) The **Great Lakes District** shall include the states of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

(7) The **Greater Ohio District** shall include the state of Ohio, and shall include churches in South Parkersburg, and Weirton, West Virginia.

(8) The **Indiana South District** shall include that part of the state of Indiana which is south of the northern boundaries of Vigo, Clay, Owen, Morgan, Johnson, Rush, Fayette, and Union Counties, and south of US Highway 40 in Hancock County, and the church in Mecca, Indiana.

(9) The **Iowa-Minnesota District** shall include the states of Iowa and Minnesota.

(10) The **Kansas District** shall include the state of Kansas.

(11) The **Kentucky-Tennessee District** shall include the state of Kentucky, the state of Tennessee, and the churches in LaFayette and Rossville, Georgia.

(12) The **Mountain Plains District** shall include the states of Colorado, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Texas.

(13) The **North Carolina East District** shall include that part of the state of North Carolina which is east of the following boundary: beginning at the Virginia-North Carolina state line, following State Road 87 south to Reidsville, thence south on US 29 to Greensboro, thence southwest on Interstate 85 to Salisbury, thence south on US 52 to Wadesboro, thence east on US 74 to Laurinburg, thence south on US 15 and US 401 to the South Carolina state line, with the exception of the Midway church near Randleman and Peele's Chapel near Hamlet, and shall include the church in Kernersville, North Carolina.

(14) The **North Carolina West District** shall include that part of the state of North Carolina which is west of the following boundary: beginning at the Virginia-North Carolina state line, follow State Road 87 south to Reidsville, thence south on US 29 to Greensboro, thence southwest on Interstate 85 to Salisbury, thence south on US 52 to Wadesboro, thence east on US 74 to Laurinburg, thence south on US 15 and US 401 to the South Carolina state line, with the exception of the church in Kernersville, and with the further exception of Macon and Jackson Counties but including that portion of the Cherokee Indian Reservation in Jackson County beginning at a point one-quarter mile from Cherokee, North Carolina, on the Jackson and Swain County line on the Soco Gap Road and running directly southeast to Sheep Rock Mountain, and then following the southern watershed of Soco Creek to Water Rock Knob in Haywood County; and shall include the Midway church near Randleman, Peele's Chapel near Hamlet; and shall include the following churches in South Carolina: Clover, York and Rock Hill (York County); Prevatt's Chapel, Fletcher's Chapel, and Bennettsville (Marlboro County).

(15) The **Northeast District** shall include those parts of the states of New York and Pennsylvania that are north and east of the Penn York District, and including the states of New Jersey, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

(16) The **Northwest District** shall include the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

(17) The **Pacific Southwest District** shall include the states of Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada.

(18) The **Penn York District** shall include that portion of the states of New York and Pennsylvania in an area bounded as follows: beginning at the northernmost point of Jefferson County, New York, on the St. Lawrence River, and continuing southeastward along the northern boundaries of Jefferson, Lewis, and Herkimer Counties to the eastern boundary of Herkimer County, thence south along the eastern boundary of Herkimer County, then west along the southern boundary of Herkimer County, then south along the western boundaries of Otsego and Delaware Counties to the Pennsylvania state line, thence west along the northern boundary of Wayne County, then south along the eastern boundary of Susquehanna County, then west along the southern boundaries of Susquehanna, Bradford, Sullivan, and Tioga Counties to US 15, thence south on US 15 to the Pennsylvania-Maryland state line, thence west on the Pennsylvania state line to the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania, thence north to Lake Erie, thence east along Lake Erie to the New York state line, thence south and east along the New York state line to the western boundary of McKean County, thence south on the western boundary of McKean County, then east along the southern boundaries of McKean and Potter Counties, thence north along the western boundary of Tioga County, thence west on the New York state line and north to include that part of the state of New York which is east of the Western New York District.

(19) The **Shenandoah District** shall include the states of Virginia and West Virginia, except the counties of Accomack, Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Northampton, Prince William, Stafford, the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church, and the Winchester Wesleyan Church in Winchester, Virginia, the South Parkersburg Wesleyan, and Weirton Chapel Hill Wesleyan in West Virginia; and shall include the New Hope Fellowship Wesleyan Church in Fairfax, Virginia.

(20) The **South Carolina District** shall include the state of South Carolina except the Clover, Rock Hill, and York churches in York County and the Prevatt's Chapel, Fletcher's Chapel, and Bennettsville churches in Marlboro County; and shall include Jackson and Macon Counties in the state of North Carolina, except the part of the Cherokee Indian Reservation in Jackson County assigned to the North Carolina West District.

(21) The **South Coastal District** shall include the state of Alabama, the state of Georgia with the exception of the churches in LaFayette and Rossville, and the state of Mississippi.

(22) The **Tri-State District** shall include the states of Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

(23) The **Western New York District** shall include that part of the states of New York and Pennsylvania in an area bounded as follows: beginning on

Lake Ontario at the northwest corner of Monroe County, thence south and east along the western boundary of Monroe County to the Genesee River, thence southward following said river in the direction to include Mount Morris, thence southeast along the canal to the village of Dansville, thence along the boundary between Steuben and Allegany Counties to the Pennsylvania state line, thence west along the New York state line to the southwest corner of Chautauqua County, thence north along the western boundary of Chautauqua County to Lake Erie; thence following the New York state line along Lake Erie, Niagara River, and Lake Ontario to the point of beginning; and shall include Potter and McKean Counties in the state of Pennsylvania.

### **B. Representative Area Boundaries**

**2430.** The **NORTH CENTRAL REPRESENTATIVE AREA** shall include the Crossroads, Great Lakes, Greater Ohio Districts.

**2435.** The **NORTHEASTERN REPRESENTATIVE AREA** shall include the Atlantic, Central Canada, Chesapeake, Northeast, Penn York, and Western New York Districts.

**2440.** The **SOUTHERN REPRESENTATIVE AREA** shall include Florida, Indiana South, Kentucky-Tennessee, North Carolina East, North Carolina West, Shenandoah, South Carolina, and South Coastal Districts.

**2445.** The **WESTERN REPRESENTATIVE AREA** shall include the Iowa-Minnesota, Kansas, Mountain Plains, Northwest, Pacific Southwest, and Tri-State Districts.

**PART 5**  
**WORLD ORGANIZATION**

**Chapter 1**

**BASIC PRINCIPLES**

**2500.** The Wesleyan Church, in the fulfillment of its mission to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world (100–105), recognizes the following as basic principles for its worldwide organization:

(1) The missionary objectives of The Wesleyan Church, as set forth in 2258–2262, call for dynamic worldwide evangelism, resulting in the planting of local churches, which in turn develop into national church structures in the host countries or regions, each of which should become a partner in world evangelism as a unit of The Wesleyan Church worldwide.

(2) Such national churches shall be organized as developing or established districts, and national or regional conferences as set forth in 2275. As they increase in spiritual, numerical, financial, and organizational strength and maturity, they may become Established National/Regional Conferences and/or General Conferences as set forth in 2610–2625.

(3) The Essentials is a statement of faith, practice, and relationship which serves as a unifying bond for all units of The Wesleyan Church around the world. This statement is incorporated in the Charter of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church (see Appendix A; 125) and no unit of The Wesleyan Church may contravene any of the provisions of the Essentials in the development of its own book of discipline or in establishing church structures and practice.

(4) The church in each field or area under the Global Partners Division shall endeavor to establish its own pattern of government, since it is recognized that variations in local conditions, cultural patterns, governmental regulations, and other factors require local adaptations in the organizational structure of the church.

(5) The organization and government of the various units under the Global Partners Division shall be set forth in the *General Board Policy for the Global Partners Division* and a book of discipline or a supplement to *The Discipline* shall be approved by the General Board for each unit (205; 340:2; 1655:27).

(6) It shall not be the purpose of The Wesleyan Church to keep units under the Global Partners Division dependent on the parent body, but to develop strong churches that are aggressive in assuming responsibility for progress and growth in their own countries or regions, as well as having the vision of participating in the missionary objectives of The Wesleyan Church worldwide.

## Chapter 2

### GENERAL CONFERENCES AND ESTABLISHED NATIONAL/REGIONAL CONFERENCES

**2550.** The North American General Conference shall be composed of the established and developing districts in the United States and Canada, all of which are governed by the North American *Discipline*. The regional/national conferences, established districts and developing areas under the North American Global Partners Division (2275), and the Established National/Regional Conferences (2610) are all governed by their own disciplines as approved by the General Board (2500:5), and shall be represented in the North American General Conference according to a plan approved by the General Board (325; 1655:33).

**2560.** The General Conference of The Wesleyan Church of the Philippines shall be composed of all developing and established districts in the Philippines and Indonesia and such other units as it shall receive.

**2565.** The General Conference of The Wesleyan Holiness Church of the Caribbean shall be composed of all developing and established districts in the Caribbean and such other units as it shall receive.

#### A. Established National/Regional Conferences

**2610.** A mission unit may be advanced to the status of an Established National/Regional Conference by the authority of the North American General Conference (6515:2; 6745:11) when it meets the following requirements:

- (1) An effective church organization on the local, district, and/or national/regional levels.
- (2) Effective programs for the nurture and training of members, new converts, children, young people, and lay workers.
- (3) An effective program for ministerial training.
- (4) Evidence of responsible stewardship of life and possessions, including the proper management of funds and the provision for the support of its own pastors, workers, and officers.
- (5) A defined and operational program of evangelism, church planting, and cross-cultural mission outreach.
- (6) The existence of a property-holding body, or more than one such body, if required by local laws.



(7) Agreement to adhere to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church.

(8) A discipline as approved by the General Board.

(9) A recommendation for such status from the Executive Director of Global Partners.

(10) Authorization for such status from the North American General Conference (6515:2; 6745:11).

(11) Approval of such status by The International Conference (6745:11).

**2615.** An Established National/Regional Conference has “defined autonomy”: the right to manage its own internal governance which includes revising its discipline as long as it does not violate the Essentials. An Established National/Regional Conference remains in relationship with the North American General Conference and the General Superintendent has a continuing role as mentor/coach and participation in the Established National/Regional Conference.

## B. General Conferences

**2620.** An Established National/Regional Conference may be advanced to the status of a general conference by The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church, upon authorization by the North American General Conference (1590:10; 6745:10; 6515:2i).

**2625.** A General Conference is a body which has full authority over the Church in its assigned territory, in keeping with the provisions of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church. A General Conference has the right to manage its own internal governance, including revising its discipline, as long as it does not violate the Essentials.

## C. General Conference Interrelations

**2630.** The relationships between general conferences shall be supervised by the International Board of Appeals (see Appendix A).

**2640.** The unity of The Wesleyan Church worldwide is to be recognized and maintained through the relationships provided in the Charter of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church (see Appendix A). The North American General Conference shall relate to all other general conferences as outlined in the Charter, including the recognition of the right of members and ministers to transfer membership and/or credentials between general conferences, subject to the same approval as that provided for transfers between its own local churches and districts (325; 6730).

## Chapter 3

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

**2650.** There shall be an International Conference of The Wesleyan Church for the purpose of promoting worldwide holiness evangelism in keeping with the mission of The Wesleyan Church (100–105), the coordinating of the activities of The Wesleyan Church worldwide, the promoting of a closer fellowship and mutual understanding, and the providing of a means for joint planning and cooperative action among all units and general conferences of The Wesleyan Church (6505).

**2660.** The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall consist of those bodies which have originated in or which have affiliated with The Wesleyan Church and which adhere to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church and other provisions of its Charter.

**2670.** The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall function through its quadrennial sessions composed of representatives from each general conference, each Established National/Regional Conference, and each mission unit functioning under a missions department. The number of representatives from each unit shall be determined according to the number of members, with due regard to the principle of lay representation. In the interim of International Conference sessions, it shall function through the International Board and the International Board of General Superintendents.

**2680.** The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall be organized and governed in accord with its Charter (see Appendix A).

## PART 6

### MINISTRY

#### Chapter 1

### MINISTERIAL ORDERS AND REGULATIONS

#### A. Meaning of Ministry

**3000.** Ministry in the Christian context means service. It is a term which has been lifted out of the commonplace through the modeling of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is identified in both the Old and New Testaments as the servant or minister of God and man. His service involved His humiliation in the incarnation, His self-forgetful teaching and healing activity, and His shameful suffering and death on the cross for the redemption of the human race. Our Lord also chose this term to characterize the activity of His followers in obedience to His commands and mission. He called all members of His body to a general or corporate ministry which would glorify Him, edify the church, and evangelize the world. And He made such possible through imparting to each believer one or more gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7–27) in order that each member might participate in the work of the ministry and contribute to the growth and development of the whole body (Eph. 4:11–16).

#### B. Qualifications and Call of the Specialized Minister

**3003.** While God, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, assigns to each believer a part in the general or corporate ministry of the church, He also calls some to a specialized or representative type of ministry. As Christ called unto Him whom He would, chose and ordained His twelve apostles “that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14), so He still calls and sends forth His messengers to be servants of the servants who make up the whole church. And as the Holy Spirit impresses this call upon the individual involved, He also confirms the call through the Church. It is the responsibility of the Church both to recognize and endorse God’s call, providing for the training and employment of those He selects, and to respect the office of the specialized ministry by refusing its exercise to those not called of God. The Church’s endorsement may be limited to a probationary period, taking the

form of a license, or it may be granted on a more permanent basis, taking the form of commissioning or ordination.

**3006.** The Wesleyan Church believes that four marks will concur in the person whom God has called: grace, gifts, fruit, and an abiding sense of a divine call. All candidates for ministerial license, commission, or ordination shall be examined concerning each of these marks as to:

(1) Grace, are they converted? are they entirely sanctified? are they manifesting the fruit of the Spirit? are they worthy examples to the church and to the world?

(2) Gifts, are they able to think clearly? to understand and communicate clearly matters related to salvation? to speak persuasively? to practice loving care? to provide leadership?

(3) Fruit, have any been truly convicted of sin and converted to God through their ministry? and have believers been edified?

(4) An abiding sense of a divine call, can they testify to a continuing and increasing conviction that they have been chosen by God for a specialized and representative ministry?

**3012.** Any person sustaining a marriage relation contrary to the Scriptures and the Guides and Helps to Holy Living (265:5–7; 410:5–6; 3108) shall be ineligible for licensing, commissioning, or ordination in The Wesleyan Church.

### C. Ministerial Student

**3015.** Those pursuing ministerial studies under the direction of the district board of ministerial development shall include those licensed as ministerial students as follows:

(1) **Ministerial Student.** A member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of The Wesleyan Church who confesses a call to be a minister (3000–3006) may be granted a license as a ministerial student by meeting the following requirements in order:

(a) Membership in a local Wesleyan church within the district granting the license.

(b) Recommendation from the local church conference or the local board of administration (655:7) to the district conference for license as a ministerial student.

(c) Readiness to pursue studies with all diligence until completed, to prepare for ordination, and to give oneself wholly to the ministry in The Wesleyan Church when studies are completed.

(d) Examination by the district board of ministerial development (1390:2) relative to qualifications for ministry (3000–3006) including a personal religious experience, ministerial call, and evidence thereof, and its recommendation to the district conference for the granting of the license (1390:5).

(e) Enrollment in the Ministerial Study Course Agency and in a program of ministerial education approved by the district board of ministerial development.

(f) Recommendation by the district board of administration for appointment as a ministerial student (3350:2) and its adoption by the district conference (1180:27d; 1233:10c; 1390:2).

(g) Issuance and signing of the license by the district superintendent and the district secretary (6260).

(2) **Renewing a License for a Ministerial Student.** The license for a ministerial student may be renewed annually by meeting the following requirements:

(a) The reports from both the ministerial student and the Ministerial Study Course Agency show that progress has been made in the course of study.

(b) The ministerial student shows readiness to continue studies in preparation for ordination in The Wesleyan Church (3350:2) or, for one having just completed the course of study, to take an appointment within the coming year.

(c) The proper reports have been made (3015:4).

(3) **Rights of a Ministerial Student.** As long as a ministerial student qualifies for and receives a license, the student shall have the right to:

(a) Preach the gospel.

(b) Be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:4).

(c) Transfer from one district to another (3015:5d). The district superintendent shall send a letter directly to the district superintendent of the district to which the student is transferring and the student shall continue to be considered a member of the former district until a reply has been received from the latter district that the student has been duly received as a member of a local church within the district and has been duly enrolled as a ministerial student by the district.

(d) Have recourse, even if under discipline, to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters involving complaint against character or ministerial conduct and to appeal the decision of such a court (302:5; 313:7; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200; 5206–5212).

(4) **Duties of a Ministerial Student.** A person holding a license as a ministerial student shall be responsible to report annually to the district board

of ministerial development concerning progress in studies (1390:2) and service (1390:7); and to report to the district superintendent and the board of ministerial development at other times as required.

(5) **Regulations for a Ministerial Student.**

(a) A ministerial student is amenable to the district which grants the license, and the license may be revoked between sessions of the district conference by judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5206–5212).

(b) A ministerial student's credentials shall consist of the license, signed annually by the district superintendent and the district secretary (6260), and an annual pocket certificate of standing, issued and signed by the district secretary (6430).

(c) A ministerial student from another denomination will need to qualify for such license in The Wesleyan Church as set forth in 3015:1.

(d) A ministerial student, when transferring district membership (3015:3c; 3100:1), in addition to a letter of transfer, shall be supplied by the district superintendent and the district board of ministerial development with a properly attested statement of standing in the ministerial study course.

#### D. Licensed Minister\*

**3030. Identification.** A licensed minister is one whose ministerial calling and gifts have been formally recognized by a district conference, through the granting of a ministerial license which serves as authorization for and appointment to actual service in the ministry, subject to supervision and evaluation, as a step toward ordination. A licensed minister may be a former ministerial student who has qualified for and been appointed to regular service in one of the categories listed in 3250–3345.

**3033. Granting a District Ministerial License.** A member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of The Wesleyan Church who confesses a call of God to be a minister (3000–3006), may be granted a district ministerial license by meeting the following requirements in order:

(1) Membership in a local Wesleyan church within the district granting the license.

(2) Satisfactory service as a ministerial student in The Wesleyan Church for at least one year.

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\*The 2022 General Conference adopted legislation which allows districts to make Licensed Minister a terminal status. See the *Manual of Ministerial Preparation* for additional information.

(3) Certificate from the Ministerial Study Course Agency showing completion of the courses adopted as being prerequisites for licensing (6410; 3170:1–4; 3210).

(4) Recommendation from the local church conference to the district conference for a district ministerial license (655:7–8).

(5) Readiness to accept the district conference's appointment to active service in one of the categories listed in 3250–3335; to pursue the studies with all diligence until completed; and to prepare for ordination; and to give oneself wholly to the ministry.

(6) Examination by the district board of ministerial development (1390:1) relative to the qualifications for the ministry and for a district ministerial license (3000–3006; 3033:1–5), including a personal religious experience, ministerial call, and evidence thereof, matters of education, doctrine, and practice, and circumstances of personal, family, and business life which bear upon the ministry; and subsequent recommendation by the district board of ministerial development to the district conference for the granting of a district ministerial license (1390:5).

(7) Recommendation by the district board of administration for immediate appointment to one of the categories of service listed in 3250–3335.

(8) Adoption by the district conference of the separate recommendations of the district board of ministerial development (3033:6) and of the district board of administration (3033:7).

(9) Issuance and signing of the license by the district superintendent and the district secretary (1310:23; 1332:4; 6260).

**3040. Renewing a District Ministerial License.** A district ministerial license is effective for one year only, and authority to carry on the office and work of a minister under such a license shall cease unless it is renewed annually by the district conference until such time as the holder of the license is commissioned or ordained to the ministry. A minister may be granted renewal of the ministerial license by meeting the following requirements:

(1) Satisfactory service under a previous appointment, including loyalty to and compliance with the rules of The Wesleyan Church and of the district, and including the proper filing of reports. If a licensed minister fails to file the annual service report (1402), unless such failure is due to illness, injury, or a similar emergency, the license shall not be renewed (1390:8).

(2) Confirmation through the annual report of the Ministerial Study Course Agency that the minister has completed at least two courses in the pre-ordination study course (3210:1). The pre-ordination study course must be completed within seven years of service under a ministerial license. The ministerial

license shall not be renewed beyond the seventh year unless an extension of time is granted by the district board of ministerial development (3059:1c).

(3) Agreement to continue under district appointment to one of the categories of service listed in 3250–3335 or, for one having completed the course of study for ordination, to take an appointment within the coming conference year.

**3044. Rights of a Licensed Minister.** As long as a minister qualifies for and receives a district ministerial license, the minister shall have the right (313) to:

(1) Preach the gospel (313:1) and, when appointed as a pastor or full-time assistant pastor of a Wesleyan church, to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform all parts of divine worship, and to solemnize the rite of matrimony wherever local laws will permit.

(2) Contract the pastoral relationship with local Wesleyan churches subject to the approval of the district conference and other regulations of *The Discipline* (313:3; 323:1–2).

(3) Enjoy, if appointed as a pastor, the use for religious meetings of the church building or buildings of the pastoral charge to which assigned by the district conference (313:4); and to serve the assigned pastoral charge without interference by unauthorized activities of another minister of The Wesleyan Church (313:5; 3114).

(4) Be a voting member of the district conference if an ordained minister-elect, or the pastor, or assistant pastor of a Wesleyan church in that district (317; 1083:2–4); to be a nonvoting member if otherwise classified or appointed (1090:3); to be eligible for election to any office not restricted to ordained ministers or lay persons.

(5) Transfer in the manner prescribed by *The Discipline* from one district to another, subject to the concurrence of the district superintendent and the General Superintendent (313:6; 3055:3; 3097; 3100:1).

(6) Have recourse, even if under discipline, to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters involving complaint against character or ministerial conduct and to appeal the decision of such court (313:7; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200; 5206–5212).

**3051. Duties of a Licensed Minister.** A person holding a district ministerial license shall be responsible to:

(1) Enroll in the pre-ordination study course (3210:1) under the Ministerial Study Course Agency and the district board of ministerial development, and to pursue the study course with all diligence until completed, either through a program of ministerial training at one of the Wesleyan educational institutions, or through correspondence courses from the Ministerial Study Course Agency (3200).



(2) Serve the district faithfully under whatever appointment is received, seeking to complete the service requirements for ordination as quickly as possible.

(3) Report annually to the district conference on the appropriate service report form (1402; 3040:1), and to the district superintendent and the board of ministerial development as required (725:30).

### **3055. Regulations for a Licensed Minister.**

(1) A licensed minister is amenable to the district which grants the license, and the license may be revoked between sessions of the district conference by judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5206–5212).

(2) A licensed minister's credentials shall consist of the license, signed annually by the district superintendent and the district secretary (3033:9; 6260), and an annual pocket certificate of standing, issued and signed by the district secretary (6430).

(3) A licensed minister, when transferring district membership (3100:1), in addition to a letter of transfer, shall be supplied by the district superintendent and the district board of ministerial development with a properly attested statement of standing in the pre-ordination study course and a record of service under the appointment of the district conference.

## **E. Commissioned Minister**

**3059. Identification.** A commissioned minister is one who may have demonstrated calling, gifts, and usefulness, who has responded to the call to ministry, yet after counsel with and agreement by the district board of ministerial development, has chosen not to pursue full ministerial development as an ordained minister, and has been separated to the service of Christ by the vote of a district conference and by a commissioning service and thus has been invested with those functions of the Christian ministry essential to this level of service. The commissioned minister shall be subject to the following regulations:

(1) **Qualifications for Commissioning.** A licensed minister of The Wesleyan Church who has an abiding conviction of God's call to be a minister (3000–3006) may be commissioned as a minister by meeting the following requirements in order:

(a) Forty years of age or older at the time of receiving a license as a ministerial student or a person who because of aptitude or other extenuating circumstances is approved by the district board of administration.

(b) Satisfactory service as a licensed minister with appointment by the district for a minimum of two years.

(c) Certification from the Ministerial Study Course Agency that the commissioned minister's course of study or its equivalent has been completed (3210:3). The commissioned minister's course of study must be completed within seven years of service under a ministerial license. The ministerial license shall not be renewed beyond the seventh year unless an extension of time is granted by the district board of ministerial development.

(d) Recommendation of the district board of ministerial development after consultation with the district board of administration.

(e) Election by the district conference by a majority vote to a commissioned minister's status (1180:26–27).

(f) Public service of commissioning (5800), in which the minister shall witness to a Christian experience, conviction of a divine call to the ministry, commitment to the doctrines and practices of The Wesleyan Church, and loyalty to The Wesleyan Church, after which the minister shall be separated to the Christian ministry through the laying on of hands in the person of the General Superintendent (if present, 1935) or the representative appointed by the General Superintendent (1935; 3091), the district superintendent (1310:23), and Council of Ordination (1405).

(g) Issuance and signing of a commission certificate by the General Superintendent, the district superintendent, and the district secretary (6280).

(2) **Rights of a Commissioned Minister.** As long as a commissioned minister maintains spiritual life, moral character, and faithful ministry, and is neither under discipline nor expelled from the ministry, the minister shall have the right (313) to:

(a) Preach the gospel and administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform all parts of divine worship, and to solemnize the rite of matrimony wherever local laws will permit (313:1).

(b) Be eligible for election to any office not restricted to ordained ministers or lay persons. The commissioned minister shall not be eligible for election as district superintendent, assistant district superintendent, member-at-large on the district board of administration, member of the district board of ministerial development, nor as a delegate to General Conference.

(c) Contract the pastoral relationship with local Wesleyan churches subject to the approval of the district conference and other regulations of *The Discipline* (313:3; 323:1–2).

(d) Enjoy, if appointed as a pastor, the use for religious meetings of the church building or buildings of the pastoral charge to which appointed by the district conference (313:4); and to serve the pastoral charge without

interference by unauthorized activities of another minister of The Wesleyan Church (313:5; 3114).

(e) Be a voting member of the district conference if pastoring a Wesleyan church or serving as an assistant pastor of a Wesleyan church (317; 1083:3), or a nonvoting member of the district conference if appointed to some other category of service or in the process of transfer (317; 1090:3).

(f) Transfer in the manner prescribed by *The Discipline* from one district to another, subject to the concurrence of the district superintendent over the district into which transfer is sought (313:6; 3097; 3100:1).

(g) Have recourse, even if under discipline, to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters involving complaint against character or ministerial conduct and to appeal the decision of such court (313:7; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200; 5206–5212).

(3) **Duties of a Commissioned Minister.** A commissioned minister shall:

(a) Be devoted without reservation to the Christian ministry, following the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the appointment of the district conference in determining and occupying the field of service.

(b) Report annually to the district conference on the appropriate service report form (1402; 3059:4c), and to the district superintendent as required (725:30).

(c) Voluntarily file all credentials with the district superintendent if service in one of the categories of ministry listed in 3250–3335 ceases for four or more consecutive years (3124); this does not apply to those listed under 3370–3371.

(d) Voluntarily surrender credentials if guilty of an offense which would disqualify from service as a commissioned minister (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5230; 5233–5236).

(4) **Regulations for a Commissioned Minister.**

(a) A commissioned minister is amenable to the district where membership is held, and may be deposed from the ministry and ordered to surrender credentials by judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5206–5212).

(b) A commissioned minister's credentials shall consist of the commission certificate (6280) and an annual pocket certificate of standing, issued and signed by the district secretary (6430).

(c) A commissioned minister who fails to file the annual service report (1402) for two successive years, shall be notified by the district board of ministerial development, and requested to report at the next session

of the district conference. One who then fails to report shall be declared withdrawn from the district, and this person's name shall be so entered upon the minutes of the district conference.

(d) When a commissioned minister surrenders the commission certificate after acknowledging guilt for an offense (3059:3d), or is ordered to surrender it after due judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5212:4), it shall be lawful to publish such fact in the official church publication.

## F. Ordained Minister

**3067. Identification.** An ordained minister is a minister whose calling, gifts, and usefulness have been demonstrated and enhanced by proper training and experience, and who has been separated to the service of Christ by the vote of a district conference and by the solemn act of ordination (5750–5792), and thus has been fully invested with all the functions of the Christian ministry.

**3070. Qualifications for Ordination.** A licensed minister of The Wesleyan Church who has an abiding conviction of God's call to be a minister (3000–3006) may be ordained by meeting the following requirements in order:

(1) Membership with the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) in a local Wesleyan church within the district granting ordination.

(2) Satisfactory service for two years subsequent to completion of the pre-ordination study course, except for those who have been under appointment and supervision during the years spent completing said course of study. This service must be full-time (as determined by the district board of ministerial development) in one of the categories of service listed in 3250–3335. At least one year must have been in The Wesleyan Church within the district in which ordination is to take place except as hereinafter provided. In case of a ministerial student graduating from a three-year divinity course at an approved seminary, the service requirement is for one year. If ordination is to be in a district other than the one in which the service requirement was met, the district board of ministerial development of the appointing district must recommend the student to the ordaining district.

(3) Certificate from the Ministerial Study Course Agency showing completion of the pre-ordination course of study or of its equivalent (6410; 3170:4; 3210:1).

(4) Examination by the district board of ministerial development relative to qualifications for the ministry and for ordination (3000–3006; 3070:1–3), including a personal religious experience, ministerial call and evidence thereof; matters of education, doctrine, and practice, particularly a personal commitment without reservation to each of the Articles of Religion and the Guides and Helps to Holy

Living; loyalty to The Wesleyan Church; and circumstances of personal, family, and business life which bear upon the ministry; and a subsequent report by the district board of ministerial development to the district conference (1390:1, 5).

(5) Election by the district conference to ordained minister's orders (1180:26). In case of an emergency, a candidate who has been recommended by the district board of ministerial development may be elected to ordained minister's orders by the district board of administration in the interim of the sessions of the district conference (1233:29).

(6) Public service of ordination (3091; 5750–5792), in which the minister shall witness to a Christian experience, affirm conviction of a divine call to the ministry, commitment to the doctrines and principles of The Wesleyan Church, and loyalty to The Wesleyan Church, after which the minister shall be separated to the Christian ministry by the Church through the laying on of hands in the person of the General Superintendent (if present, 1935) or the representative appointed by the General Superintendent (1935; 3091), the district superintendent (1310:23), and a Council of Ordination (1405).

(7) Issuance and signing of a certificate of ordination by the General Superintendent, district superintendent, and district secretary (6300).

(8) The General Superintendent, after consultation with the district board of ministerial development of the involved district, may postpone the intended ordination of any candidate and/or refer the same to the district board of ministerial development for further consideration.

**3075. Rights of an Ordained Minister.** An ordained minister who maintains spiritual life, moral character, and faithful ministry, and is neither under discipline nor expelled from the ministry shall have the right (313) to:

(1) Preach the gospel and administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform all parts of divine worship, and to solemnize the rite of matrimony (313:1).

(2) Be eligible for election to any office in the Church for which ordained ministers are eligible (313:2).

(3) Contract the pastoral relationship with local Wesleyan churches subject to the other provisions of *The Discipline* (313:3).

(4) Enjoy, if appointed as a pastor, the use for religious meetings of the church building or buildings of the pastoral charge to which assigned by the district conference (313:4); and to serve the assigned pastoral charge without interference by unauthorized activities of another minister of The Wesleyan Church (313:5; 3114).

(5) Be a voting member of the district conference if under appointment, retired, on reserve, on educational leave, or a member of the district board of administration (317; 1083:1; 1240:1:A–D), and a nonvoting member if

without appointment or in the process of transfer (1090:1–2); and to have these conference relations changed only after careful investigation by the district board of administration, and interview if possible (1233:10).

(6) Transfer in the manner prescribed by *The Discipline* from one district to another, subject to the concurrence of the district superintendent over the district into which transfer is sought (313:6; 3100:1).

(7) Have recourse, even if under discipline, to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters involving complaint against character or ministerial conduct and to appeal the decision of such court (313:7; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200; 5206–5212).

**3085. Duties of an Ordained Minister.** An ordained minister shall:

(1) Be devoted without reservation to the Christian ministry, following the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the appointment of the district conference in determining and occupying a field of service.

(2) Report annually to the district conference on the appropriate service report form (1402; 3089:3), and to the district superintendent as required (725:30).

(3) Attend and participate in the annual district conference, unless excused in writing by the district superintendent.

(4) Be faithful in attendance, in tithes, and in participation in the ministries of a local Wesleyan church, if one is within driving distance. Exceptions to this requirement may be granted only by the approval of the district board of administration.

(5) Voluntarily file all credentials with the district superintendent if service in one of the categories of ministry listed in 3250–3346 ceases for four or more consecutive years (3124); this does not apply to those given other ministerial listings set forth in 3350:1; 3360; 3370.

(6) Voluntarily surrender credentials if guilty of an offense which would disqualify one for service as an ordained minister (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5212; 5230–5251).

**3089. Regulations for an Ordained Minister.**

(1) An ordained minister is amenable to the district where membership is held, and may be deposed from the ministry and ordered to surrender credentials by judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5206–5212).

(2) An ordained minister's credentials shall consist of the certificate of ordination (3070:7; 6300) and an annual pocket certificate of standing, issued and signed by the district secretary (6430).

(3) An ordained minister who fails to file the annual service report (1402) for two successive years shall be notified by the district board of ministerial

development and requested to report at the next session of the district conference. If no report is filed at that time, the district shall declare the minister withdrawn and shall record the action upon the minutes of the district conference.

(4) When an ordained minister surrenders the certificate of ordination because guilty of an offense (3085:6), or is ordered to surrender it after due judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5212:4), it shall be lawful to publish such fact in the columns of the official church publication.

**3091. Ordination Service.** The public service of ordination shall be presided over by the General Superintendent or a representative appointed by the General Superintendent. If the General Superintendent is unable to be present to preside over a district's service of ordination or commissioning of ministers, first to be considered to represent the General Superintendent will be a former General Superintendent in good standing. The service shall be planned by the district superintendent and the Council of Ordination; the time and place shall be subject to the approval of the General Superintendent. The General Superintendent shall deliver the ordination sermon except when delegating that responsibility to another. The rituals of commissioning ministers, special workers, and lay missionaries may be blended with the ordination service or may be conducted separately. The laying on of hands shall be by the General Superintendent (or the representative appointed by the General Superintendent), the district superintendent, the Council of Ordination, and such other ministers as they shall invite (1310:23, 1405, 3059, 3067, 5752).

## **G. General Regulations for Ordained Ministers and Commissioned or Licensed Ministers**

### **1. Special Advice to Ministers**

**3093.** John Wesley's "Rules of a Helper" have perhaps never been excelled as counsel to ministers, whether young or old. These "Rules" are, in part, as follows:

(1) Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment, never be triflingly employed, never while away time; spend no more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

(2) Be serious. Let your motto be, "Holiness unto the Lord." Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

(3) Believe evil of no one without good evidence; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. The judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

(4) Speak evil of no one, else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast till you come to the person concerned.

(5) Tell every one under your care what you think wrong in his conduct and temper, and that lovingly and plainly as soon as may be: else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

(6) Avoid all affectation. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

(7) Be ashamed of nothing but sin. Let your industry, as well as your humility, commend itself to all.

(8) Be punctual: do everything exactly at the time.

(9) Do not mend the rules, but keep them; not for wrath but for conscience' sake.

(10) You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore spend and be spent in this work; and go always not only to those that desire you, but to those who need you most.

## 2. Membership of Ministers

**3097. Local Church Membership.** Each Wesleyan minister, whether ordained, commissioned, or licensed, must be a member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) of a local Wesleyan church (310). If serving as a pastor, membership is automatically transferred to the church of service (578:2). If serving in some capacity other than that of a pastor, the holding and transfer of local church membership shall occur in the same manner as a lay member. A commissioned or licensed minister must be a member of a local Wesleyan church within the district where appointed or licensed. An ordained minister may be a member of a local Wesleyan church outside the district where ministerial membership is held except when regulations governing a particular appointment or office prohibit such (578:2; 1258; 1278). In recognition of the undesigned but inherent potential to create divided loyalties or undermine the strengths of new pastoral leadership, ministers should be discouraged from remaining in the congregation or community immediately following pastoral service in that place. If a minister leaves a pastoral assignment to accept appointment to another service category or to begin retirement and, for such reason as a prior home purchase and/or no other Wesleyan church in the community, feels it necessary to retain membership and worship in the church where pastoral leadership was just terminated, it is recommended that said former pastor shall not accept appointment to the local board of administration (755).



**3100. District Membership.** An ordained or commissioned minister shall be a member of the district where appointed to service (3059:4), and each licensed minister a member of the district which issues the license (3015:3b; 3044:4; 3075:5). The ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister's district membership shall be subject to the following regulations:

(1) If a minister desires to accept a pastoral call from a church within the bounds of another district, or if a minister not serving as a pastor desires to transfer ministerial membership to another district, the minister must first obtain the written permission of the General Superintendent and the district superintendent over the district into which transfer is desired (313:6; 1310:19; 3124). When such has been obtained, the minister shall ask the district superintendent for a letter of transfer (6440; 1310:26) to be sent directly to the district superintendent of the district into which transfer is desired (3055:3). The minister shall continue to be considered as a member of the former district until a reply has been received from the district to which application has been made stating that the minister has been duly enrolled as a member of the district conference (6450; 1310:26). To avoid dual listings, ministers receiving appointment by the receiving district conference prior to completion of enrollment shall be listed in that district conference journal as an ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister Pending Completion of District Transfer (1240:1:F; 1240:2:D; 1240:3:C).

(2) In an emergency, an ordained minister may serve as supply pastor of a church located within the bounds of a district other than the one in which ministerial membership is held (3260:1), provided that such an arrangement has the written approval of the superintendent of each district involved (1310:26), and does not continue beyond the next session of the district conference in which membership is held without the consent of the district conference.

(3) If a minister so requests, the district superintendent may grant a letter of standing (6460; 1310:26), which shall immediately terminate ministerial membership in The Wesleyan Church. Such a letter of standing shall be valid for one year from the date of issuance in the case of an ordained minister, or until the next session of the district conference from which withdrawn in the case of a commissioned or licensed minister (3124).

(4) If a minister joins another denomination or, in writing, declares withdrawal from the Church, said action shall immediately terminate ministerial membership in The Wesleyan Church (3124), upon recommendation of the district superintendent to the district board of administration.

(5) If a minister leaves for parts unknown or fails to submit the annual service report (1402; 3059:4c; 3089:3), the district board of administration may

recommend and the district conference may order that the minister be declared withdrawn (3040; 3120; 3124).

(6) No letters of transfer or standing shall be granted to any minister by a district superintendent until satisfactory evidence is given by the applicant that no outstanding debts are unprovided for, and that the minister has honorably withdrawn from the contract for service with the church or district.

### **3. Reception of Ministers from Another Denomination**

**3104. Reception of a Minister from Another Denomination.** An ordained minister from another denomination, or a minister from another denomination who has been ordained to deacon's orders or who has been licensed or authorized in some manner equivalent to the commissioning or licensing of a Wesleyan minister by a district conference, may seek reception into The Wesleyan Church as an ordained minister or commissioned or licensed minister, as the case may justify (1233:34), according to the following procedure:

(1) The applicant shall complete a written application for transfer provided by the Executive Director of Communication and Administration office and present it, along with a valid letter of standing or photocopy of ministerial credentials and photocopies of transcripts or other records of ministerial training, to the district superintendent (1310:26), who shall research the applicant's background, check references, and verify his or her current credential status and good standing.

(2) If favorable to the transfer, the district superintendent shall so recommend in writing and request approval by the General Superintendent with copies of the application, credentials, and educational records submitted by the applicant.

(3) If approval is granted by the General Superintendent, the applicant shall be examined by the district board of ministerial development relative to Christian experience, call, and qualifications for the ministry as given in 3000–3006 (3059:1; 3070:4), and to the nature of ordination, commission, or license.

(4) If the district board of ministerial development so recommends (1390:3), the district conference may appoint the applicant as an ordained minister in process of transfer (1180:27a; 1240:1:G; 3390; 3067), a commissioned minister in process of transfer (1240:2:E; 3059; 3391), or a licensed minister in process of transfer (1240:3:D; 3391), which relation shall continue for one year unless the district conference shall by vote extend it. While serving under this relation, the applicant is a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:2–3), may serve as a supply pastor (3260), and shall

seek to satisfy any requirements of the district board of ministerial development in ministerial training, particularly in Wesleyan doctrine, history, and polity. If at any time the district board of administration shall determine that it is not in the best interests of the district to continue the relationship, they may by majority vote terminate the relationship and any supply assignment, and thus dismiss the applicant from all ministerial relations to The Wesleyan Church. An ordained minister in the process of transfer shall have authority to administer the sacraments and perform marriages, while serving as a supply pastor (3260:2).

(5) If the year of service is satisfactory and all requirements in ministerial training have been met, the district board of ministerial development may recommend to the district conference that the applicant be recognized as an ordained minister or commissioned or licensed minister of The Wesleyan Church and be received as a ministerial member of the district (1390:3). If the transferring minister has not previously joined a local Wesleyan church within the district, this must be done prior to the vote by the district conference receiving the applicant as a ministerial member of the district. If an ordained minister in process of transfer faces extensive additional academic requirements, and age or other extenuating circumstances make it doubtful to the applicant and the district board of ministerial development that such requirements can be met, the district board of ministerial development may authorize the applicant to qualify for commissioned minister's status and proceed accordingly (3059).

(6) When an ordained minister or commissioned minister has been received, a proper certificate validating the ordination or commission shall be signed and issued (6320). For the licensed minister, a license shall be issued (6260).

#### **4. Minister and Marriage**

**3108.** Any minister who enters into a marriage relationship contrary to the Scriptures and to those expositions of Scripture as set forth in the Guides to Helps and Holy Living (265:5–7; 410:5–6), after having been ordained, commissioned, or licensed, shall be dismissed from ministerial standing, provided that guilt shall be established in accord with the judicial processes (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5206–5212).

**3111.** In performing marriages, Wesleyan ministers shall not unite in marriage any person who is divorced, unless such divorce and remarriage is in keeping with the Scriptures and the Guides to Helps and Holy Living (265:5–7). In carrying out this duty, the minister shall be guided by the principles set forth in 410:6.

**3112.** In performing marriages, Wesleyan ministers shall not unite in marriage persons of the same gender.

## 5. Relationship to Other Ministers and Churches

**3114.** Each minister of The Wesleyan Church shall respect the rights of each other minister within the field of labor, and shall not interfere with the work of, nor influence anyone against any pastor, district official, or other minister of The Wesleyan Church (313:5). In the event of any such violation of ministerial ethics, the aggrieved person may file a complaint with the district superintendent (5004:2, 4; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5206).

**3117.** If a Wesleyan minister shall engage to serve another denomination, or an interdenominational or independent work, as a pastor or in some other regular capacity, except by permission of the district conference, or in the interim of its sessions, by permission of the district board of administration, the district board of administration may recommend and the district conference may order that the minister be declared withdrawn. If serving within the territory of a district other than the one to which the minister belongs, the minister must have not only the permission of the district in which membership is held, but also the permission of the district superintendent over the territory where labor is proposed (1310:26). An ordained minister serving outside The Wesleyan Church with the permission of the district in which membership is held shall be placed either on the appointed list in the category of interchurch service (3335) or special service (3345) or listed as an ordained minister without appointment (3380).

## 6. Reinstatement of Ministers

**3120.** If a licensed minister or ministerial student ceases to be licensed or is declared withdrawn from the district conference, and was neither under charges nor under discipline, the minister may at a later time again be recommended by the local church conference and qualify for and be granted a district license.

**3124.** An ordained minister or commissioned minister who has voluntarily filed credentials with the district superintendent (3059:3c; 3085:5), or who has taken a letter of standing and has not used the same within the prescribed time (3100:3), or who has been declared withdrawn when neither under charges nor under discipline (3059:4c; 3089:3; 3100:4; 3117; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5380), may be reinstated in the office of an ordained minister or commissioned minister in The Wesleyan Church, if such is approved by the district board of ministerial development and district board of administration of the district in which ministerial membership is sought and the district board of administration of the district in which credentials were previously held, and if such reinstatement is approved by the General Superintendent.

## Chapter 2

### MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

#### A. Priority of Ministerial Education

**3150.** The importance of the training of the Christian minister has been evident ever since Christ gave the name of “disciples” or “learners” to His first preachers, and ever since the aging Paul provided for successive classes of ministerial students by admonishing Timothy, “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Such training becomes even more urgent in an age when the thirst for knowledge is almost universal, when human knowledge is multiplying, and when formal education on the highest level is becoming the normal pattern for a large segment of society. The Wesleyan Church gives priority in its organization and its educational institutions to the training of its youth for the Christian ministry and related fields of labor (2358:1). The Church expects each person who answers the call to preach to prepare thoroughly for this ministry and to continue this ministry devoted to being an able dispenser of divine wisdom.

#### B. Administration of Ministerial Education

**3160.** The administration of ministerial education in The Wesleyan Church involves both general and district bodies, officers, and agencies. The General Conference adopts the overall framework for ministerial training and establishes the various agencies and schools responsible to carry out the work (1590:4, 13; 2362). The General Board provides the framework for adopting the basic courses of study and coordinating the total program (3200–3210). The Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development promotes the enlistment and preparation of candidates for the ministry, and directs the Ministerial Study Course Agency, which maintains records on all ministerial students in The Wesleyan Church and administers the correspondence courses (2340; 2385–2388). The various colleges and the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation adapt the basic study courses to their use, and enroll candidates for the ministry in classroom preparation. The district board of ministerial development has a part in recognizing potential ministers, in encouraging and guiding them in their training, and in administering the oral examination to

a candidate prior to recommendation for ordination or commission (1390:1; 3059:1d; 3070:4).

## C. Types of Ministerial Education

### 1. Programs of Study

**3170.** The following programs of study are open to the candidates in meeting the educational requirements for becoming an ordained minister in The Wesleyan Church.

(1) **Seminary.** It consists of graduation from a four-year course of study at one of the institutions of higher education of The Wesleyan Church, plus graduation from a three-year divinity course under the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (3170:4). This is recommended as the most adequate academic preparation for the Wesleyan minister. Graduation from a three-year divinity course at an approved seminary reduces the period of service required before ordination (3070:2). One-year and two-year master's degrees in ministerial preparation are not as adequate as the standard three-year divinity course, but may be combined with undergraduate courses to meet academic requirements for ordination.

(2) **College/University.** It consists of graduation from one of the institutions of higher education of The Wesleyan Church, involving the completion of a minimum of four years' work and covering the authorized ministerial study courses (3200; 3210:1-3). This is recommended as the minimum academic preparation for becoming an ordained minister in The Wesleyan Church.

(3) **Correspondence.** It is recognized that some individuals are converted late in life, and hear God's call to the ministry after the normal time for education has passed and family responsibilities make attendance at an institution of higher education extremely difficult. In such cases, a district board of ministerial development may grant special permission to a candidate for the ministry to secure part of the training through correspondence courses administered by the Ministerial Study Course Agency. These courses will of necessity concentrate on the specialized subjects needed for the ministry, and the district board of ministerial development shall encourage such candidates to secure training in the more general educational subjects in formal class settings (1390:2; 3210:1).

(4) **Training Outside The Wesleyan Church.** Some candidates for the ministry will have secured some or all of their higher education outside the

institutions and agencies of The Wesleyan Church. In such a case, the district board of ministerial development shall forward copies of transcripts or other records of study to the Ministerial Study Course Agency so that it can carefully evaluate such work in terms of its equivalence to the ministerial courses of study of The Wesleyan Church, giving particular attention to the candidate's qualifications in the areas of Wesleyan doctrine, history, and polity (2388:4; 3033:3; 3059:1b; 3070:3; 3104:2). Subsequent to each evaluation and the report of the Ministerial Study Course Agency, the district board of ministerial development shall have the right to require additional work until it and the Agency are fully satisfied that all requirements for the Wesleyan ministry have been met (1390:2).

## 2. Courses of Study

**3200.** The Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development shall develop courses of study for pre-ordination, specialized ministries, commissioned ministers, and special lay ministries. Each course of study shall be composed of a number of courses, each course being implemented by a college or seminary course of two or more hours, or by a correspondence course involving the use of a study guide issued by the Ministerial Study Course Agency, the intensive study of one or more textbooks plus collateral reading, and other pertinent study assigned by the Agency, and an examination prepared by the Ministerial Study Course Agency and taken in the presence of an ordained minister. No credit shall be given for any correspondence course in which the final grade is less than passing.

**3210.** The following courses of study shall be provided:

(1) **Pre-ordination Course of Study.** It shall require as a prerequisite a high school diploma or its equivalent. It shall consist of four years of college and/or seminary-level work, and shall cover necessary general education courses as well as the full range of ministerial training subjects—biblical, historical, theological, and practical, including courses in Wesleyan doctrine, history, and polity.

(2) **Courses of Study for Specialized Ministries.** These shall consist of special adaptations of the pre-ordination study course (3210:1) for those who are called to the work of minister of music, minister of Christian education, or others as deemed necessary.

(3) **Commissioned Minister's Course of Study.** It shall consist of two years of college-level work, and shall incorporate biblical, historical, theological, and practical courses, including courses in Wesleyan doctrine, history, and polity.

(4) **Lay Minister's Course of Study.** It shall consist of one year of college-level work, and shall include courses in Wesleyan doctrine, the history of The Wesleyan Church, the polity of The Wesleyan Church, including a study of *The Discipline*, and other basic ministerial subjects.

(5) **Special Workers' Courses of Study.** These shall be designed to prepare lay members for special fields of service, such as director of music, director of spiritual formation, evangelistic singer, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, and social worker. Such study courses shall consist of two years of college-level work, and shall include courses in Wesleyan doctrine, history, and polity, and such other subjects as are pertinent.

### 3. Continuing Education

**3240.** The Executive Director of Education and Clergy Development shall adopt, within structure provided by the General Board, varying programs of continuing education for the ordained ministers, ordained ministers' spouses, commissioned ministers and spouses, and commissioned special workers of The Wesleyan Church.



## Chapter 3

### MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

#### A. Categories of Service

**3250.** While The Wesleyan Church recognizes only two levels of ministry which in and of themselves have a degree of permanency, that of ordained minister and that of commissioned minister, it also recognizes that the ordained minister, commissioned minister, or licensed minister preparing for ordination may serve the Church in various capacities. Christ has called some to be “apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:11–12). The Church recognizes the following categories of service to which a district conference may appoint an ordained minister, or, as circumstances warrant, a commissioned or licensed minister (1180:26): pastor (3255–3261); evangelist (3270–3286); missionary (3300); educator or itinerant Bible teacher (3310); administrator (3320); chaplain (3320; 3330); interchurch service (3335); special service (3345); and affiliate church pastor (3346). Service within these categories that qualifies as being “in a ministerial capacity” would include that service for which ministerial training is required or greatly desired. The General Board adopts guidelines for each category which will aid district boards in identifying the kinds of service which are considered to be “in a ministerial capacity.”

#### 1. Pastors

**3255. Regular Pastoral Service.** The pastoral office is defined in 675. In The Wesleyan Church, pastoral service includes the pastor of a church or churches (735), and an assistant pastor (741). An ordained minister appointed by a district conference to any of these levels of pastoral service in connection with a Wesleyan church, developing church, or mission shall be placed on the appointed list (1240:1:A:2); a commissioned or licensed minister appointed as pastor or assistant pastor of a Wesleyan church shall be a voting member of the district conference (317; 1083:3; 1240:2:A; 1240:3:A; 3044:4; 3059:2e).

**3260. Supply Pastors.** A district conference (503; 1180:24b; 1240:5:E), or, in the interim of its sessions, the district superintendent and the district

board of administration (1233:29, 36; 1310:20–21) shall have the power to appoint a supply pastor, who shall serve subject to the following regulations:

(1) A supply pastor may be a Wesleyan ordained minister or commissioned or licensed minister serving under some other appointment or an ordained minister on loan from one district to another (503; 1240:1:A:2b; 3100:2); a licensed special or commissioned worker (3460–3470); a minister in process of transfer from another denomination (3104); a minister who belongs to another denomination, a ministerial student, a lay minister, or a lay member.

(2) A supply pastor shall be appointed temporarily to fill the pulpit and to provide a spiritual ministry, but shall not have authority to administer the sacraments or to perform marriages unless that authority adheres on some other basis, and shall not perform the administrative function of the pastor except in filing of reports unless authorized to do so by the district superintendent (1310:8, 25). If a supply pastor is serving a congregation isolated from Wesleyan ministers, making it difficult to provide for administration of the sacraments (725:6), the district superintendent may grant the supply pastor special authorization to administer them.

(3) A supply pastor's church membership shall not be automatically transferred to the church of service.

(4) A supply pastor shall be granted a certificate of authorization to supply on the form provided in 6240, and shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference unless qualifying as a voting member by some other right (1090:7).

(5) A supply pastor may be removed or replaced at any time by the district board of administration (1233:36; 1310:20–21; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200:4; 5215:1).

**3261. Interim Pastors.** A district conference (503; 1180:24b), or, in the interim of its sessions, the district superintendent and the district board of administration (1233:29, 36; 1310:20–21) shall have the power to appoint an interim pastor, who shall serve subject to the following regulations:

(1) A pastoral charge receiving an interim pastor must participate in an assessment process led by the district superintendent or a representative designated by the district superintendent to evaluate local church health and pastoral leadership needs.

(2) An interim pastor shall be appointed for a specific period mutually agreed upon by the pastor, the local board of administration, and the district superintendent (usually not more than 24 months). This period may be modified based upon the recommendation of the district superintendent and the approval of the district board of administration. An interim pastor may be removed or

replaced at any time by a majority vote of the district board of administration (1233:36; 1310:20–21; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200:5; 5215:1).

(3) An interim pastor may be fully empowered to exercise administrative authority in the local church, if a Wesleyan ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister, and shall fulfill all the functions of the pastor or senior pastor of a pastoral charge or circuit (725), which may include presiding as chair of the local church conference and the local board of administration (except as provided in 635 and 770–773).

(4) An interim pastor's local church membership and district ministerial membership shall not be automatically transferred to the church of service, given the temporary nature of the appointment. However, an interim pastor may personally request transfer of local church membership and district ministerial membership if desired.

(5) An interim pastor may be a nonvoting member of the district conference if ministerial membership is maintained in another district (1090), or unless qualifying as a voting member by some other right (1083).

## 2. Evangelists

**3270. Functions.** An evangelist is an ordained minister or commissioned or licensed minister who devotes time to traveling and preaching the gospel without any specific pastoral assignment, and who is authorized by the Church to promote revivals and to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ abroad in the land. The Wesleyan Church recognizes three levels of evangelistic service to which a district conference may appoint ministers: associate general evangelist, general evangelist, and reserve evangelist.

**3275. Examination.** Before appointment as an evangelist, the candidate shall be examined carefully by the district board of ministerial development relative to personal Christian experience, full personal commitment to and support of the Articles of Religion and Guides to Helps and Holy Living, to the government, institutions and best interests of The Wesleyan Church, gifts and aptitudes for the work of an evangelist, and the intention to devote time to the work of evangelism.

**3280. Associate General Evangelist.** An associate general evangelist is an ordained minister, commissioned minister, or licensed minister appointed by a district to serve in the field of evangelism. An ordained minister so appointed shall be placed upon the appointed list (1240:1:A:3a). A commissioned or licensed minister so appointed shall be listed under "B. Other Appointments" (1240:2:B; 1240:3:B) and is a nonvoting member of the district conference

(1090:3). To receive such an appointment, the minister must devote a major portion of time to do the work of evangelism. Those entering the field of evangelism will serve in this category for at least two years. To be continued in this appointment the minister must conduct at least forty services devoted to evangelism each year after the first year of appointment.

**3285. General Evangelist.** A general evangelist is an ordained minister appointed by a district conference to the field of evangelism and recommended for service to the church. An ordained minister so appointed shall be placed on the appointed list (1240:1:A:3b). Appointment as general evangelist is subject to the following conditions and procedures:

(1) Upon completion of two years of service as an associate general evangelist, the district board of administration may recommend that person to the district conference as a general evangelist. The two-year requirement may be waived if, in the judgment of the district board of administration and the district conference, an ordained minister is uniquely qualified to serve the General Church in this capacity. Endorsement of the district conference, the General Superintendent, and the Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship shall be required for appointment as a general evangelist. Upon approval for appointment to the category of general evangelist, a certificate of such appointment shall be issued and signed by the district superintendent, the district secretary (6340), and the Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship.

(2) Appointment and certification as a general evangelist shall only be continued in subsequent years if the evangelist reports to the district conference at least eighty services each year devoted to evangelism. At the time this requirement is not met, the general evangelist shall be reclassified as an associate general evangelist or reserve evangelist.

**3286. Reserve Evangelist.** An ordained minister who, due to age or physical disability, is limited in activities may be appointed as a reserve evangelist (1240:1:A:3c). Appointment and certification as a reserve evangelist shall be by the district. To qualify for renewal of the appointment, the reserve evangelist shall be required to conduct a satisfactory level of evangelistic service each year as determined by the district board of ministerial development.

**3295. Evangelistic Reports.** Each associate general or general evangelist shall file an annual service/statistical report with the district statistical committee, the district board of ministerial development, and the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division on forms approved by the General Superintendent and made available by the Communication and Administration Division.

### 3. Missionaries

**3300.** When an ordained or licensed minister has been appointed by the General Board to serve in a ministerial capacity under the Global Partners Division or under the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, the district conference shall list the minister as if it had made the appointment. An ordained minister so appointed shall be placed upon the appointed list (1240:1:A:4c) and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1). A commissioned or licensed minister so serving shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference and shall be listed under “Other Appointments” (1090:3; 1240:2:B; 1240:3:B; 2272).

### 4. Educators/Itinerant Bible Teachers

**3310.** Ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers may serve as educators in educational institutions, or itinerant Bible teaching ministers to local churches and districts, and be appointed as follows:

(1) When an ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister has been employed to serve in a ministerial capacity on the administrative staff or faculty of one of the educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church, or of one of the seminaries approved by The Wesleyan Seminary Foundation, the district conference shall list the minister as if it had made the appointment. An ordained minister so serving shall be placed upon the appointed list (1240:1:A:4d) and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1). A commissioned or licensed minister so serving shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:3).

(2) An ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister may be employed in a ministerial capacity in spiritual formation or a special Christian education program of a local Wesleyan church, subject to review by the district board of administration and appointment by the district conference (1180:24; 1233:10). An ordained minister so appointed shall be placed upon the appointed list (1240:1:A:2c) and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1). A commissioned or licensed minister so serving shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference and shall be listed under “Other Appointments” (1090:3; 1240:2:B; 1240:3:B).

(3) When an ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister devotes time to traveling and teaching in local churches and districts without a specific or pastoral assignment, the minister shall be recognized as an itinerant Bible teacher subject to recommendation and appointment by the district conference

of which the minister is a member. An ordained minister so appointed shall be placed on the appointed list (1240:1:A:4e) and shall be a voting member of the district conference. A commissioned or licensed minister so appointed shall be a non-voting member of the district conference and shall be listed under “Other Appointments” (1240:2:B or 1240:3:B) as is appropriate.

### **5. Administrators**

**3320.** When an ordained minister has been elected by the General Conference as a general official (1800), or an ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister has been employed at the World Headquarters, or elected or employed by the board of directors of a general subsidiary corporation other than an educational institution, to serve the General Church in a ministerial capacity, or an ordained minister has been elected by the district conference as district superintendent or full-time assistant district superintendent, or an ordained, commissioned or licensed minister has been elected or employed for full-time service of the district in a ministerial capacity, the district conference shall list the minister as if it had made the appointment. An ordained minister serving in this manner shall be placed on the appointed list (1240:1:A:1, 4a, b), and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1). A commissioned or licensed minister so serving shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference and shall be listed under either “Commissioned” or “Licensed Ministers, Other Appointments” (1090:3; 1240:2:B). Any ordained or commissioned minister employed by the General Church in other than a ministerial capacity shall be placed on the appropriate list of ministers without appointment (1240:1:E; 1240:2:C).

### **6. Chaplains**

**3330.** When an ordained minister has been approved by the Committee on Chaplains and commissioned by the government as a military chaplain, or employed as a full-time professional institutional chaplain, the district conference shall list the chaplain as if it had made the appointment. An ordained minister serving in this capacity shall be placed on the appointed list (1240:1:A:5) and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1).

### **7. Ministers Engaged in Interchurch Service**

**3335.** An ordained minister employed in a ministerial capacity as an officer in a church-related organization serving The Wesleyan Church, or approved

upon careful evaluation of the district conference to serve with an educational institution, evangelistic or missionary organization not directly related to The Wesleyan Church, shall be appointed to interchurch service and shall be listed by the district as an appointed ordained minister (1240:1:A:6) and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1). A commissioned or licensed minister so appointed shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference and shall be listed under “Other Appointments” (1240:2:B; 1240:3:B). Ministers serving in this category shall sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), available from the district superintendent, also signed by the district superintendent and the supervisor of the district/judicatory of the ministry with which the minister is serving. The MOU will clarify reporting and accountability responsibilities of this service as well as defining the length of service expected in this appointment. Service extending beyond five years of initial appointment in this capacity must be approved by the district board of administration.

### **8. Ministers Engaged in Special Service**

**3345.** An ordained minister serving in active service not otherwise provided for shall be appointed to special service, if such service is approved by the district conference, and shall be listed by the district as an appointed ordained minister (1240:1:A:7) and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1). Ministers serving in this category shall sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), available from the district superintendent, also signed by the district superintendent and the supervisor of the district/judicatory of the ministry with which the minister is serving. The MOU will clarify reporting and accountability responsibilities of this service as well as defining the length of service expected in this appointment. Service extending beyond five years of initial appointment in this capacity must be approved by the district board of administration.

### **9. Affiliate Church Pastor**

**3346.** An ordained Wesleyan minister appointed by the district conference to serve on staff of an affiliate church shall be listed by the district as a minister appointed to affiliate church pastor (7010; 1240:1:A:8) and shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1).

## B. Other Assignments

### 1. Students

**3350.** The district conference may list ordained ministers and others pursuing ministerial studies in keeping with these regulations:

(1) **Ordained Minister on Educational Leave.** An ordained minister without other appointment who enrolls in a seminary or other graduate school for advanced training for church service shall be listed as an “ordained minister on educational leave” (1240:1:D). An ordained minister so appointed shall be a voting member of the district conference (1083:1).

(2) **Ministerial Student.** A student engaged in full-time study in preparation for ordination, either by enrolling in the four-year or five-year ministerial or pre-ministerial course of a Wesleyan educational institution, or in an approved theological seminary or other approved graduate-level program of theological education, or by pursuing full-time study in the Ministerial Study Course Agency either by correspondence or by work in a college along with correspondence, and who meets all other qualifications (3015:1), may be granted a license and appointed by the district conference as a ministerial student (3015:1). The ministerial student shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:4).

### 2. Reserve Ministers

**3360.** An ordained minister on reserve is one available for appointment but left without one (1240:1:C). The ordained minister on reserve shall be a voting member of the district conference (317; 1083:1). An ordained minister remaining on reserve for two consecutive years without definite appointment shall be automatically transferred to the list of ordained ministers without appointment (3380) unless continued on reserve by the district conference (1180:24c).

### 3. Retired Ministers

**3370. Ordained Ministers.** An ordained minister who is retired because of age or incapacitated by infirmity, and who was on either the appointed list, on reserve, or on educational leave at the time of retirement or incapacitation, shall be placed on the retired list (1240:1:B). A retired ordained minister shall be a voting member of the district conference (317; 1083:1). When special



circumstances are present, the district conference may place an ordained minister without appointment on the retired list.

**3371. Commissioned Ministers.** A commissioned minister who is retired shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1083:3; 3059).

#### **4. Ministers without Appointment**

**3380.** An ordained or commissioned minister in active service outside The Wesleyan Church with the consent of the district conference but who is not eligible for inclusion in 3345 or 3350:1, or an ordained or commissioned minister who is not available for appointment, or an ordained or commissioned minister who is not otherwise provided for in the appointed, reserve, educational leave, or retired lists shall be placed on the appropriate list of ordained or commissioned ministers without appointment (1240:1:E; 1240:2:C). An ordained or commissioned minister without appointment shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:1, 3).

#### **5. Ministers in Process of Transfer from Another Denomination**

**3390. Ordained Ministers.** An ordained minister seeking to be received into The Wesleyan Church from another denomination shall be listed by the district conference for the first year and until all deficiencies in educational or service requirements are cared for as an ordained minister in process of transfer (1240:1:G; 3104; 3170:4). An ordained minister in process of transfer shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:2).

**3391. Other Ministers.** A commissioned or licensed minister or ordained deacon seeking to be received into The Wesleyan Church from another denomination shall be listed by the district conference for the first year and until all deficiencies in educational requirements are cared for as a commissioned or licensed minister in process of transfer (3104). A commissioned or licensed minister in process of transfer shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:3).

## Chapter 4

### SPECIAL LAY MINISTRIES

#### A. Lay Minister

**3400. Identification.** A lay minister is a lay member of The Wesleyan Church whom the local church conference, or the local board of administration if so delegated, has licensed to preach or serve (655:6), under the pastor's direction and as opportunity affords (725:26), thus providing for the employment and development of gifts and usefulness.

**3410. Granting a Lay Minister's License.** A local Wesleyan church member, who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558), and who applies for a license as a lay minister or who is presented as a candidate for such license by the pastor shall be examined by the local board of administration. If the local board of administration is satisfied that the candidate shows promise of the proper gifts and usefulness, it shall recommend to the local church conference the granting of a license (782:18), unless the local church conference has delegated such authority to the local board of administration. When the license has been authorized (650:6; 655:6), the pastor and local church secretary shall issue the license on the approved form (6200; 725:26; 830:3).

**3420. Renewing a Lay Minister's License.** A lay minister's license is effective for one year only, and authority to preach or serve under such a license shall cease unless it is renewed annually by the authorized body. The authorized body may renew the license if its holder has served satisfactorily under the pastor's direction, if personal gifts and graces give promise of continued usefulness, and if the annual report of the Ministerial Study Course Agency shows that the lay minister has completed two courses in the study course for lay ministers (3210:4) during the year, or if the lay minister holds a certificate from the Ministerial Study Course Agency showing that the study course has been completed.

**3430. Duties of a Lay Minister.** A person holding a lay minister's license shall be responsible to:

(1) Enroll in the course of study for lay ministers under the Ministerial Study Course Agency (3210:4), and to pursue it with all diligence until completed, either through a program of ministerial training at one of the Wesleyan educational institutions or through correspondence courses from the Ministerial Study Course Agency. Any training taken outside The Wesleyan

Church shall be carefully evaluated by the Ministerial Study Course Agency which shall have authority to determine to what extent it may be credited toward the prescribed study course (3170:4).

(2) Assist the pastor as directed (725:26), preaching as often as opportunity affords, including the holding of evangelistic services in neighboring churches with the pastor's approval or serving in other ways befitting the lay minister's gifts and local needs.

(3) Report the progress of studies and the nature and extent of labors to the pastor and the local board of administration as they shall require (782:5) and to the local church conference annually (650:5; 655:4).

#### **3440. Regulations for a Lay Minister.**

(1) A lay minister has no authority to solemnize marriages or to administer the sacraments, except as provided for in 3260:2, nor any vote in the local board of administration nor in the district conference unless elected thereto.

(2) A lay minister is amenable to the local church conference, and the license may be revoked by the authorized body for cause or when the best interests of the church so require (655:6; 782:18).

(3) A lay minister who transfers membership may also ask for a letter of standing as a lay minister (6220) and present it to the pastor of the church to which transfer is sought, for consideration by the local board of administration there in issuing a new license.

### **B. Special Worker**

**3450. Function.** A special worker is a lay person with a sense of divine leading to serve the Church as a director of music, director of spiritual formation or Christian education, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, social worker or in some other special capacity, and who has been authorized to carry on such work by a district conference.

**3460. Licensed Special Worker.** A Wesleyan Church member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) may be granted a special worker's license by the district conference (1180:27e) provided that the candidate has been recommended for such license by the local church conference, or by the local board of administration if so delegated (655:7; 782:19); that the candidate promises to pursue the course of study for the particular field of service (3210:5); and that the candidate has been recommended for such license by the district board of ministerial development after careful examination concerning Christian experience, gifts, calling, and experience in the particular field of service (1390:5). The license shall be issued and signed by the district superintendent

and district secretary (6360; 1310:23; 1332:4). The license may be renewed annually by continued qualification as above, if the candidate completes two courses in the course of study as attested by the Ministerial Study Course Agency, and if service is satisfactory, including the proper filing of reports. If a licensed special worker fails to file the annual service report (1402), unless such failure is due to illness, injury, or a similar emergency, the license shall not be renewed (1390:8). The licensed special worker shall be amenable to the district (1233:37) and the license may be revoked between sessions of the district conference by judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200:3; 5206). A person from another denomination holding a district license as a special worker or its equivalent may be received into The Wesleyan Church subject to the regulations which govern the reception of a minister (3104).

**3470. Commissioned Special Worker.** A licensed special worker may be commissioned by the district conference provided that the worker has completed the course of study (3210:5) or its equivalent (3170:3) as certified by the Ministerial Study Course Agency (6410); has served satisfactorily under a district special worker's license for at least two years; and has been recommended for commissioning by the district board of ministerial development after careful examination concerning Christian experience, gifts, calling, and experience in the particular field of service (1390:5). The commissioning shall include the affirmative vote of the district conference (1180:27e), a solemn act of consecration as set forth in 5855 (1405; 3091), and the issuance of a commission signed by the General Superintendent, the district superintendent, and the district secretary (6380; 1310:23; 1332:4; 1935). The commission shall be continuous until such time as the worker ceases to be active in the particular field of service and files the commission with the district superintendent, or unless deprived of the commission by judicial process (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5200:3; 5206). A commissioned special worker who fails to file the annual service report (1402) for two successive years, shall be notified by the district board of ministerial development and requested to report at the next session of the district conference. A commissioned special worker who then fails to report, shall be declared withdrawn from the district, and the special worker's name shall be so entered upon the minutes of the district conference (1390:9). A person from another denomination holding a commission as a special worker or its equivalent may be received into The Wesleyan Church subject to the regulations which govern the reception of an ordained minister (1233:34; 1390:3; 3104).

**3480. General Regulations for Special Workers.** A licensed or commissioned special worker shall be a local church member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558). A commissioned special worker's

membership must be in a local church within the district that authorizes the service, and shall serve under the direction of the pastor, or upon the call of local churches, or under a district or general agency, as the case may be. The special worker shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:5), and shall report annually to the district conference (1390:7). The special worker may be granted a letter of transfer or standing (6440–6460). The license or commission of a special worker may only be restored in keeping with the provisions of *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5230–5248. See also the *General Board Policy on Ministerial Restoration* 2002–2022.

### **C. Lay Missionary**

**3490.** A lay member who has been appointed to service under the Global Partners Division, or under the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, shall be commissioned by the district conference (1180:27f) as a lay missionary. The commissioning shall include a solemn act of consecration as set forth in 5855 (1405; 3091), and the issuance of a commission signed by the General Superintendent, the district superintendent, and the district secretary (6400; 1310:23; 1332:4; 1935). The commission shall be continuous with the period of service. The missionary shall be a nonvoting member of the district conference (1090:6). The missionary shall be amenable in keeping with the provisions of 2272.

**PART 7**  
**CORPORATIONS**  
**Chapter 1**  
**LOCAL CHURCH CORPORATIONS**

**A. Authorization**

**4000.** A local church within an established district may be incorporated (655:13) when so authorized by the district board of administration (1233:30). The Wesleyan Church shall provide local churches with access to information to assist in the incorporation process. Each incorporated local church shall be responsible to ensure that it complies with all state reporting and filing requirements to remain in good standing. The incorporation of a local church within a developing district may be authorized when deemed necessary by the Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship.

**4005.** The articles of incorporation and bylaws for the incorporation of a local church shall be according to the standard provisions in 4010, any other pertinent requirements of *The Discipline*, and the requirements of local laws as advised by competent legal authority, and shall be approved in writing by the authorizing district board of administration or official (4000).

**B. Standard Provisions**

**4010.** The standard provisions for the incorporation of a local Wesleyan church are as follows, provided that whenever such standard provisions shall conflict with the local laws under which the incorporation is effected, such provisions shall be deemed to be modified to the extent necessary to conform with such local laws (4510).

(1) The name of the corporation shall be: “ \_\_\_\_\_ (name or place) Wesleyan Church, Inc.”

(2) The corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and/or educational purposes within the meaning of IRC section 501(c)(3), including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and in keeping with the purposes of The Wesleyan Church as set forth

in its *Discipline* (100–105; 2105, 2259; 2306; 2339), and shall not be for the pecuniary gain or profit to the members thereof, and especially, to purchase, hold in trust for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church, manage, encumber, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, real, personal, or mixed, as may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the corporation; to acquire or erect and maintain buildings for the worship of God, the use and occupancy of its ministers, Christian education, and other purposes in keeping with the doctrines and principles of The Wesleyan Church; to receive, manage, and hold in trust for members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church, any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind or character that may be given, bequeathed or conveyed to the local church or to the trustees of the local church as such, and to administer the same and income therefrom in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, or testator; provided that any and all of the foregoing purposes shall be carried out in conformity with the provisions of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* as legislated and declared from time to time (4040). Further, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on

(a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or

(b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

(3) The corporation shall be subject to The Wesleyan Church, its duly elected officials, and its rules and regulations as set forth in its *Discipline* from time to time and as otherwise legislated and declared in keeping with said *Discipline*.

(4) The bylaws of the corporation shall include *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* as legislated and declared from time to time; and no other bylaws shall be adopted that are inconsistent with the provisions of said *Discipline* (4005).

(5) The term for which the corporation is to exist is perpetual.

(6) If the corporation shall be dissolved or become inactive, or whenever the board of directors (4010:7) shall cease to function or cease to be amenable to The Wesleyan Church as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5305–5320), any or all assets of the corporation shall inure to the district of which the local church is a member, and the district board of administration shall be authorized and empowered to carry on the function of said board of directors (1233:30, 33), provided such district is then exempt

under 501(c)(3), and if not, then the assets shall inure to another district or entity of The Wesleyan Church at the discretion of the General Board, provided such district or entity is then exempt under 501(c)(3); and if no such Wesleyan entity exists that is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity, then to a similar organization which is tax exempt under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(7) The directors of the corporation shall be the members of the local board of trustees as set forth in *The Discipline* (850–859; 4500–4780), who shall carry out the directions of the local church conference (655:11), and the local board of administration (782:25) as set forth in *The Discipline*. A member of the board of directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or obligations of the corporation.

(8) The members of the corporation shall be the members of the local church, or such other body as local laws may require, provided that each voting member of the corporate body shall be a member of The Wesleyan Church.

### C. Ownership

**4030.** All grants, conveyances, devises, gifts, transfers, and assignments made of any property, real, personal, or mixed, to or for an incorporated local church shall be held by and/or conveyed and transferred to the corporate body in its corporate name, in trust for the use and benefit of such local church and The Wesleyan Church, and subject to *The Discipline*, regulations, and appointments of said Church as from time to time legislated and declared. Every instrument or conveyance of real property shall contain the trust clause as set forth in 4610 (4690) and shall be approved by the district superintendent as being in conformity with the requirements of *The Discipline* (1310:11).

### D. Acquisition, Sale, Transfer or Mortgage of Property

**4040.** An incorporated local church shall acquire, purchase, sell, mortgage, transfer, or otherwise dispose of real property subject to the following authorization and conditions:

(1) A resolution authorizing the proposed action shall be recommended by the local board of administration (782:29) and passed by the local church conference (655:11) in corporate session, or such other corporate body as local laws may require and as set forth in the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the local church corporation, 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 session duly called for such purpose (630:1; 633:1), provided that notice of such intended action shall be given to the members of the local church through announcement from the pulpit in two regular services, the first of which shall be at least one week prior to the meeting at which the action shall be presented and through such other notice as may be required by local laws or by the bylaws of the local church corporation.

(2) The written approval of the district board of administration as stated in 1233:30 shall be necessary and shall be affixed to the written instrument involved.

(3) The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct and authorize the corporation's board of directors (4010:7) to take all necessary steps to carry out the action so authorized, and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument.

(4) The board of directors of the local church corporation (4010:7) shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required to carry out the proposal as approved, provided that such shall be in conformity with *The Discipline* and as required by local laws (4510).

(5) The chair of the board of directors (4010:7), or another designated director shall submit all written instruments of conveyance and title for the acquisition of property to the district superintendent for the approval of the district superintendent as to their conformity with *The Discipline* as stated in 1310:11 and shall see that permanent legal and property records are properly stored as required in 4760.

### **E. Other Regulations**

**4060.** An incorporated local church and/or its board of directors (4010:7) may not divert property from the ownership and use of The Wesleyan Church and is subject to other regulations concerning local church property as set forth in *The Discipline* in 4500–4630, 4700–4780, and any other pertinent provisions.

**4070.** The proceeds from the sale of any real property by an incorporated local church shall only be used for the purchase or improvement of property for that local church, unless otherwise authorized by the district board of administration as set forth in 4720–4738 (1233:30).

## Chapter 2

### DISTRICT CORPORATIONS

#### A. Authorization

**4100.** Except where prohibited by state or provincial law, the district conference of each established district shall be incorporated or shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained as a subsidiary corporation of The Wesleyan Church (1180:21; 4310) such as will enable it to receive, hold in trust, encumber, sell, transfer, and otherwise dispose of district property and such local property as may be held by the district (323:8; 4660–4680; 4730–4750; 4770–4780), and to facilitate the management of its legal and corporate affairs in such manner as may be directed by the district conference (1180:21) from time to time and according to *The Discipline* (4590). In places where such incorporation is prohibited by law, or where the law requires the property to be held by trustees, the legal affairs of the district shall be administered as set forth in 4830–4880.

**4105.** A developing district may be incorporated when so recommended by the Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship and authorized by the General Board (1655:34) or its Executive Board, and such incorporation shall be according to the standard provisions for an established district (4120).

**4110.** The articles of incorporation and bylaws for the incorporation of a district, and any amendments thereto, shall be according to the standard provisions in 4120 and any other pertinent requirements as set forth in *The Discipline*, and shall be subject to the approval of the General Board (1655:35).

#### B. Standard Provisions

**4120.** The standard provisions for the incorporation of a district of The Wesleyan Church shall be as listed herewith, provided that when such standard provisions shall conflict with local laws under which the incorporation is effected, said standard provisions shall be deemed to be modified to the extent required by the local laws (4510):

(1) The name of the corporation shall be: “ \_\_\_\_\_ (official district name) District of The Wesleyan Church, Inc.”

(2) The primary purposes for which the corporation is formed shall be religious, benevolent, charitable, and educational, in keeping with the purposes

of The Wesleyan Church as set forth in its *Discipline* (100–105; 200), and shall not be for the pecuniary gain of the members thereof, and especially shall be to acquire, purchase, manage, sell, exchange, mortgage, deed in trust, pledge, rent, lease, and convey any property, real, personal, or mixed, as may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the corporation; provided that all such property shall be held in trust, in the corporate name, for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church as set forth in 4140; to acquire or erect and maintain buildings for the worship of God, the use and occupancy of its ministers, Christian education, and other activities that are in harmony with the doctrines and purposes of The Wesleyan Church; to receive and hold in trust for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind or character, real, personal, or mixed, that may be given, devised, bequeathed, or conveyed to the district, or to the district board of trustees as such, for any purpose consistent with the purposes of the corporation and to administer the same in accordance with the direction of the donor, trustor, or testator; and in addition to have all other powers as are expressed or implied given to said corporation by the laws under which it is incorporated when such do not contravene the provisions of *The Discipline*.

(3) The corporation shall be subject to The Wesleyan Church, its duly elected officials, and its rules and regulations as set forth in *The Discipline* as legislated and declared from time to time and as otherwise directed by the General Conference (1590:4) and the General Board (1655:35); and shall not have authority to divert property from the ownership or use of The Wesleyan Church and its duly elected officials (4870–4880).

(4) The bylaws of the corporation shall include *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* as legislated and declared from time to time, and no bylaws shall be adopted that are inconsistent with the provisions of said *Discipline* (4110).

(5) The term for which the corporation is to exist is perpetual.

(6) The district board of administration, duly constituted and organized as required in 1203–1230, shall be the board of directors of the district corporation (1233:13), shall exercise its corporate powers, shall carry out the duties assigned to the district board of administration in *The Discipline* in all matters relating to property in 4830–4840 and any other provisions. It shall carry out the directions of the district conference (1180:20; 1233:14) and, in the interim of its sessions, shall have power to act on its own resolution to acquire, purchase, sell, exchange, mortgage, deed in trust, pledge, rent, lease, and convey any property, real, personal, or mixed, as may be deemed necessary

or convenient for the purpose of the district and so to order the district board of trustees (1360–1365; 4855), provided that in transactions concerning real property used for district purposes, such as a district parsonage for the district superintendent, district headquarters, or district campground, the district board of administration shall consult with the General Superintendent (1935), and further provided that said district board of administration shall be subject to the general regulations concerning property as set forth in 4500–4630. The district board of administration of an incorporated district, acting as its board of directors, may authorize and direct the district corporation to guarantee in writing any note, mortgage, contract, or any other evidence of indebtedness, of any local church of said district. The district board of administration shall be amenable to the district conference, the General Board, and the General Conference (4870–4880). A director shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or obligations of the corporation.

(7) The board of directors (4120:6) shall be authorized and empowered to institute all necessary legal and equitable actions in the name of the district corporation to protect the interests and rights of The Wesleyan Church within the bounds of the district, including all matters relating to property and the rights to property, whether arising by gift, devise, or otherwise, for all property held by the district corporation and all property held by local churches, circuits, or other agencies within the bounds of the district.

(8) The members of the corporation shall be the members of the district conference as constituted and organized in 1080–1109, or such other body as local laws may require, provided that all voting members of the corporate body shall be members of The Wesleyan Church.

(9) In the event the corporation shall be dissolved, or become inactive, or whenever the board of directors (4120:6) shall cease to function, any and all assets of the corporation shall inure to The Wesleyan Church Corporation (4200), and the General Board, in the name of The Wesleyan Church Corporation, shall carry on the functions of the corporation and exercise its corporate powers and shall be authorized to institute any necessary legal or equitable actions to preserve the interests and rights of the district and of The Wesleyan Church (1655:35).

### C. Ownership

**4140.** All grants, conveyances, devises, gifts, transfers, and assignments made of any property, real, personal, or mixed, to or for an incorporated district shall be held by and/or conveyed and transferred to the corporate body in its

corporate name, in trust for the use and benefit of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church and of such district and subject to *The Discipline*, regulations, and appointments of said Church, as from time to time legislated and declared. Every instrument or conveyance of real property shall contain the trust clause as set forth in 4610 (323:8).

#### **D. Other Regulations**

**4150.** The members (4120:8) and/or board of directors (4120:6) of a district corporation shall not have authority to divert any property from the ownership and use of The Wesleyan Church and its duly elected officials, and said members and/or board of directors are subject to the regulations concerning property held by a district as set forth in *The Discipline* (4870–4880; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5375). The board of directors of a district corporation shall consult with the General Superintendent concerning transactions involving real property used for district purposes such as a district parsonage, headquarters, or campgrounds (1935; 4840:1).

## Chapter 3

### THE WESLEYAN CHURCH CORPORATION

#### A. Name and Purpose

**4200.** The General Conference shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained for The Wesleyan Church such as will enable it to receive, own, encumber, sell, transfer, and otherwise dispose of property, and such as will facilitate the management of its legal and corporate affairs as may be directed by the General Conference from time to time (1590:5). Said corporation shall be known and incorporated under the name of The Wesleyan Church Corporation.

#### B. Board of Directors and Bylaws

**4210.** The General Board, duly constituted as required by *The Discipline* (1605–1650), shall be and constitute the board of directors of The Wesleyan Church Corporation and of each of its precedent corporations as listed in 4230. The corporate powers, business, and other affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised, conducted, and controlled by its board of directors in accord with its articles of incorporation and bylaws, *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* as from time to time amended (which shall serve as the bylaws of the Corporation), and any other directives of the General Conference (1655:10, 15), and the laws of the several states (4510). The Executive Board, duly constituted as required by *The Discipline* (1750–1790), shall be the executive committee of said board of directors and shall exercise its powers and authority in the interim of its sessions except for that business which requires more than a simple majority of said board (1785:2); shall carry out such duties as are required of it by the board of directors; and shall be subject at all times to the control of said board of directors (1750; 1785). The board of directors shall be authorized to appoint committees from among its own members and to delegate its corporate powers to such committees as it may deem wise in the interim of its sessions, all as may be permitted by the corporation laws of the state of Indiana.

#### C. Officers

**4220.** The president, vice president, and other officers of the Corporation shall be elected by the board of directors, with the exception of the Executive

Director of Communication and Administration who shall be the secretary of the Corporation (2110), and the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer who shall be the treasurer of the Corporation (1976). All officers shall serve as set forth in the bylaws.

#### **D. Precedent Corporations**

**4230.** The Wesleyan Church Corporation shall receive and administer new trusts and funds, and so far as may be legal, shall be the legal and ecclesiastical successor in trust and carry out the functions of “The Pilgrim Holiness Church Corporation,” an Indiana corporation, “The Pilgrim Holiness Church Corporation,” a Michigan corporation, “The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America,” a New York corporation, “The Wesleyan Methodist Publishing Association of America,” a New York corporation, “The Wesleyan Educational Society,” a New York corporation, “The Missionary Society of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America,” a New York corporation, “The Woman’s Missionary Society of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, Inc.,” a New York corporation, “The Missionary Bands of the World,” an Indiana corporation, “The Pentecost Bands of the World,” an Illinois corporation, and Wesleyan Native Ministries, Inc., a South Dakota corporation; and so far as is legal and as such successor in trust it shall be and is authorized and empowered to receive from its said precedent corporations all trust funds and assets of every kind and character, real, personal, or mixed, held by them or any one of them and it shall be and is authorized to administer such trusts and funds in accordance with the conditions under which they have been previously received and administered by said precedent corporations. Nothing herein contained, however, shall be construed to require the dissolution of any of the precedent corporations above listed, and they shall continue to administer such funds as may not be legally transferred to the new corporation (4210–4220).

#### **E. Indemnification of Officers**

**4235.** To the extent not inconsistent with applicable law, every person (and the heirs and personal representatives of such person) who is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of The Wesleyan Church shall be indemnified by the Church against all liability and reasonable expense that may be incurred by him or her in connection with or resulting from any claim, action, suit, or proceeding (a) if such person is wholly successful with respect thereto or, (b) if not successful, then if such person is determined to have acted in good faith,

in what he or she reasonably believed to be the best interests of the Church (or, in any case not involving the person's official capacity with the Church, in what he or she reasonably believed to be not opposed to the best interests of the Church) and, in addition, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, is determined to have had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was lawful (or no reasonable cause to believe that the conduct was unlawful). The termination of any claim, action, suit, or proceeding, by judgment, settlement (whether with or without court approval), or conviction, or upon a plea of guilty or of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not create a presumption that a person did not meet the applicable standards of conduct. (The entire Articles of Incorporation that provide indemnification are on file with the Office of the Secretary and with the Indiana Secretary of State.)

### **F. Donations, Bequests, Devises**

**4240.** The Wesleyan Church Corporation shall receive and hold in trust by donation, gift, grant, bequest, devise, or otherwise, any property, real, personal, or mixed, in any state in the United States of America or any other country, in behalf of The Wesleyan Church or any of its subsidiary interests, for any benevolent, charitable, religious, or educational purpose and to administer the same and the income therefrom in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, or testator and in the interests of the general department, office, institution, agency, society, or other body contemplated by such donors, trustors, or testators, the whole to be under the direction of and amenable to the General Conference (1590:4–5). The board of directors shall have power, with the advice of competent investment counsel, to invest, reinvest, buy, sell, transfer, and convey any and all funds and properties which it may hold in trust, subject always to the terms of the legacy, devise, or donation and shall, whenever it is necessary to do so, determine the use or uses of each such fund or trust which shall correspond with the general intentions of the donor, trustor, or testator.

### **G. Power of Intervention**

**4250.** The General Board as the board of directors shall be authorized and empowered to intervene and institute all necessary legal and equitable actions in the name of The Wesleyan Church Corporation to protect the interests and rights of The Wesleyan Church anywhere, including all matters relating to property and rights to property, whether arising by gift, devise, or otherwise,



or where held in trust for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church (1655:21; 4120:3; 4590; 4770; 4870–4880).

**4260.** Whenever any group of ministers or members shall put themselves in an attitude of insubordination or disobedience to The Wesleyan Church (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5010), the General Board shall be empowered to institute and carry out disciplinary proceedings as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5305–5320; 5355–5380), and pertinent provisions of *The Discipline*, and, when deemed necessary, may authorize the General Superintendent or other general official(s) to request an affirmation of loyalty and reorganize the district or other unit involved as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (5320–5325; 5375–5380). Whenever such insubordination occurs in a local church, the General Board shall intervene only when the district officials or district board of administration over the local church shall fail or refuse to act.

### **H. Amendments**

**4270.** The articles of incorporation for The Wesleyan Church Corporation may be amended (a) by the General Conference by a two-thirds vote at any regular or special session (1590:5), or (b) by a two-thirds vote of the General Board when designated and authorized by the General Conference.

## Chapter 4

### SUBSIDIARY AND AFFILIATE CORPORATIONS AND ADJUNCT ENTITIES

#### A. Authorization of Subsidiary Corporations

**4300.** The General Conference may authorize the incorporation of any agency, institution (for matters relative to an educational institution, 2362), board, organization, or similar body as a subsidiary corporation of The Wesleyan Church, and shall approve the articles of incorporation and bylaws and any amendments thereto (1590:6). The General Board shall carry out the directions of the General Conference regarding such subsidiary corporations, assign each one to the supervision of the General Superintendent; and, in the interim of General Conference sessions, may authorize such an incorporation by a two-thirds majority vote of all its members, and may approve the articles of incorporation and bylaws and any amendments thereto for any subsidiary corporation except as otherwise restricted by the General Conference (1655:18).

#### B. Subsidiary Corporations

**4310. Definition.** Those corporate units of The Wesleyan Church which are intrinsic to the priority mission of the Church are known as subsidiary corporations. These include the following:

(1) **Districts** (4100–4150). Local churches, whether incorporated or unincorporated (4000–4070), are units of the related district and subject to the authority of said district as set forth in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* (1233:25–38; 1310:12–21; 4650–4780).

(2) **Educational institutions** (2365–2366).

(3) **Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc** (4400–4425).

(4) **Hephzibah Ministries** is incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana. It is administered by a board of directors elected by and amenable to the General Board (1655:19). The board of directors shall administer all matters pertaining to Hephzibah Ministries in accord with *The Discipline* (4570), the articles of incorporation, and bylaws of the corporation.

(5) **Wesleyan Investment Foundation, Inc.** The Wesleyan Investment Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation incorporated under the laws of the state of Indiana. It is governed by a board of directors of eleven members elected

by the General Board (1655:19). The board of directors shall administer all matters pertaining to the Wesleyan Investment Foundation, Inc. in accord with *The Discipline* (4570), its articles of incorporation and bylaws, and is amenable to the General Board.

(6) **Immigrant Connection, Inc.** is incorporated under the laws of the state of Indiana. It is administered by a board of directors elected by and amenable to the General Board (1655:19). The board of directors shall administer all matters pertaining to Immigrant Connection, Inc. in accord with *The Discipline* (4570), the articles of incorporation, and bylaws of the corporation.

(7) **Wesleyan Property Holdings, Inc.** is incorporated under the laws of the state of Indiana. It is administered by a board of directors elected by and amenable to the General Board (1655:19). The board of directors shall administer all matters pertaining to Wesleyan Property Holdings, Inc. in accord with *The Discipline* (4570), the articles of incorporation, and bylaws of the corporation.

(8) **Wesleyan Financial Holdings, Inc.** is incorporated under the laws of the state of Indiana. It is administered by a board of directors elected by and amenable to the General Board (1655:19). The board of directors shall administer all matters pertaining to Wesleyan Financial Holdings, Inc. in accord with *The Discipline* (4570), the articles of incorporation, and bylaws of the corporation.

(9) **Wesleyan Bible Conference Association, Inc.** is incorporated under the laws of the state of Florida. It is administered by a board of directors elected by and amenable to the General Board (1655:19). The board of directors shall administer all matters pertaining to Wesleyan Bible Conference Association, Inc. in accord with *The Discipline* (4570), the articles of incorporation, and bylaws of the corporation.

(10) Other corporate units may be designated as subsidiary corporations by the General Conference, or a two-thirds vote of all members of the General Board.

### C. Basic Provisions of Subsidiary Corporations

**4320.** The articles of incorporation or charter for the incorporation of any agency, institution (other than a district, 1000–1405), or an educational institution (2362), board, organization, or similar body as a subsidiary corporation (4300; 4310:6), now established or hereafter created, and its bylaws, shall be in accord with the following basic provisions, provided that whenever such basic provisions shall conflict with the local laws under which

the incorporation is effected, such provisions shall be modified to the extent required by local laws (4510):

(1) The purposes of the subsidiary corporation shall be in keeping with the religious, charitable, benevolent, and educational purposes of The Wesleyan Church and consistent with its doctrines and principles as stated in *The Discipline* (100–105; 200; 2105; 2259; 2306); and pecuniary profit shall not accrue to the members of the corporation.

(2) The bylaws of the corporation shall include *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* as amended from time to time (4570); and no bylaws may be adopted that are inconsistent with the provisions of *The Discipline* or contrary to local laws as stated in 4510. The bylaws, and any amendments thereto, shall be subject to the approval of the General Board, who shall also have the right to initiate any such bylaws or amendments, provided they do not contravene any action of the General Conference (1655:18).

(3) The General Board shall be and constitute the board of directors or shall elect the members of the board of directors as required by the Constitution except where prohibited by local laws (340:2; 1655:19; 4510), and shall have the authority to remove for cause any member thereof (1655:40b).

(4) All members of the boards of directors and all principal officers of subsidiary corporations in 4310:1 shall be Wesleyan Church members who meet the leadership qualifications. Two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each board of directors of other subsidiary corporations shall be Wesleyan Church members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558). The remaining one-third (1/3) of those boards of directors may be non-Wesleyan.

(5) A member of the board of directors may not be held personally liable for any debts, liabilities, or obligations of the corporation.

(6) All fiscal operations shall be under board control, with budget, investment, and cash control by a board of directors of no less than seven members.

(7) The General Board shall be authorized to direct an annual audit of all assets, records, and other affairs of the corporation, and at any other time as it shall deem necessary (1655:20), and all records shall be open to the General Superintendent (1935) and to any other representative the General Board shall appoint for such a purpose.

(8) The board of directors shall make a complete and faithful report of finances and other activities to the General Board at any time as shall be required by such General Board (1655:22).

(9) An official copy of the minutes of all meetings of the board of directors and of the financial reports shall be forwarded to the Executive Director of

Communication and Administration of The Wesleyan Church for permanent filing as requested.

(10) The bylaws shall establish proper safeguards for the borrowing or loaning of funds, and it shall be required that there will be adequate security by full mortgage protection or the like whenever there is an investment in property.

(11) All property, whether real, personal, or mixed, shall be held in trust for the use and benefit of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church and shall contain the appropriate trust clause as set forth in 4610.

(12) Notwithstanding any provision of *The Discipline* to the contrary, Wesleyan Investment Foundation, Inc. is expressly authorized to act as a church extension fund for other evangelical churches and denominations related, affiliated, or associated with The Wesleyan Church or which share a common religious heritage, historical ties, similar purposes, faith, doctrine, and/or background with The Wesleyan Church.

#### **D. Affiliate Corporations**

**4340. Definition.** An affiliate corporation may be formed and exist when a subsidiary corporation (4310) of The Wesleyan Church seeks to develop responses to social, humanitarian, or community needs which can best be achieved by a separate legal entity. This may be for the purpose of carrying on specific religious, benevolent, charitable, or educational activities apart from the usual activities of the subsidiary corporation, such as, but not limited to, the operation of nursing homes, retirement centers, special educational or recreational activities, and the like. When the organization and operation of such a ministry is desired, it shall be incorporated apart from the subsidiary corporation and termed an affiliate corporation.

#### **E. Basic Provisions of Affiliate Corporations**

**4350.** The articles of incorporation or charter for the incorporation of any affiliate corporation hereafter created (other than by an educational institution, (2362; 4320), and its bylaws, shall be in accord with the following basic provisions, provided that, whenever such basic provisions shall conflict with the local laws under which the incorporation is effected, such provisions shall be modified to the extent required by local laws:

(1) The principal purpose of an affiliate corporation shall be to augment one or more of the religious, charitable, benevolent, or educational purposes of the subsidiary corporation with which it is affiliated, and pecuniary profit shall not accrue to the members of the affiliate corporation.

(2) The bylaws of the affiliate corporation shall be in accord with the bylaws of the subsidiary corporation with which it is affiliated, as amended from time to time, and no bylaw may be adopted by the affiliate corporation that is inconsistent with the provisions of the charter or bylaws of such subsidiary corporation or contrary to local, state, or federal laws governing the affiliate corporation. The bylaws, and any amendments thereto, shall be subject to the approval of the board of directors of the subject subsidiary corporation, and the concurrence in writing of the General Superintendent of The Wesleyan Church after the receipt of competent legal counsel (1935).

(3) The board of directors of the subsidiary corporation shall be and constitute, or shall elect, the members of the board of directors of the affiliate corporation, and shall be and constitute the membership of such corporation, except where prohibited by local laws, and shall have the authority to remove for cause any member.

(4) All principal officers of the affiliate corporation and at least two-thirds of the board of directors shall be Wesleyan Church members who meet the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558) or ministers of The Wesleyan Church. The affiliate corporation's bylaws (4350:2) may provide for up to one-third (1/3) of the board of directors to be believers who are non-Wesleyan.

(5) Except where liability is allowed by law, a member of the board of directors of the affiliate corporation may not be held personally liable for any debts, liabilities, or obligations of the corporation.

(6) All fiscal operations, including budget, investment, and cash control, shall be under the control of a board of directors of not less than seven members.

(7) The board of directors of the affiliate corporation, other governing board, or the General Superintendent, shall be authorized to direct an annual audit of all assets, records or other affairs of the corporation, and at any other time as it or the General Superintendent shall deem necessary, and all records shall be open to the General Superintendent and to any other representative of the board of directors of the subsidiary corporation shall appoint for such a purpose (1935).

(8) The board of directors of the affiliate corporation shall make a complete and faithful report of finances and other activities annually, and at any other time as shall be required, to the board of directors of the subsidiary corporation with which it is affiliated.

(9) An official copy of the minutes of all meetings of the board of directors and of the financial reports shall be forwarded to the chair and the secretary of the board of directors of the subsidiary corporation for permanent filing and to the General Superintendent (1935).

(10) The bylaws of the affiliate corporation shall establish proper safeguards for fiscal soundness, legal requirements, integrity of purpose, and protection of the assets of the corporation.

(11) All property of the affiliate corporation, whether real, personal, or mixed, shall, in the event of the liquidation or dissolution of such corporation, devolve upon and pass to The Wesleyan Church Corporation or one of its subsidiary corporations.

### F. Adjunct Entities

**4370. Definition.** An adjunct entity may exist when an entity heretofore has been developed in response to social, humanitarian, or community needs for the purpose of carrying on activities which are apart from the usual activities of a subsidiary corporation, such as, but not limited to, the operation of nursing homes, retirement centers, special educational or recreational activities, and the like. Where the operation of such an adjunct ministry presently exists, and where such entity fails, prior to January 1, 1990, to incorporate and hereafter exist and conduct its affairs as an affiliate corporation (4340; 4350), it shall exist apart from any subsidiary, any affiliate corporation and The Wesleyan Church Corporation, and shall be termed an adjunct entity. In all such latter cases, the governing body of the subject subsidiary corporation shall use its best efforts on a continuing basis to cause the adjunct entity to meet the following conditions:

(1) The relationship between the adjunct entity and any subsidiary corporation, affiliate corporation, or The Wesleyan Church, shall only be described and shown as “related through common religious heritage” rather than by use of name or such words as “agent,” “agency,” “subsidiary,” or “affiliate.”

(2) All financial responsibility arising from conduct of any activities of the adjunct entity shall be that solely of the adjunct entity, and no such responsibility shall fall upon any subsidiary corporation, affiliate corporation, The Wesleyan Church corporation, or any member or former member of the governing body thereof.

(3) No subsidiary corporation shall directly or indirectly elect, approve nominations for, or confirm elections or selections of, members of the board of directors or other governing body of any adjunct entity.

(4) The real, personal, or mixed property of the adjunct entity shall not be held in trust for a subsidiary corporation, an affiliate corporation, or The Wesleyan Church.

(5) The adjunct entity shall, to the satisfaction of the subject subsidiary corporation or affiliate corporation, and the General Superintendent, take all

necessary and other reasonable measures to avoid creating the impression to the public, or any part thereof, that its existence or operation is in any fashion sponsored, controlled, or operated by the subsidiary corporation, an affiliate corporation, or The Wesleyan Church Corporation (1935).

**4390. Restriction.** Except as expressly permitted by paragraphs 4310, 4320, 4340, or 4350, no two or more members of the Board of Directors of The Wesleyan Church Corporation or of the board of directors or other governing body of any subsidiary corporation or affiliate corporation of The Wesleyan Church Corporation, whether acting individually or severally, shall directly or indirectly form or become members of any corporation, association, partnership, or other legal entity which promotes, sponsors, encourages, or in any manner engages in any activity which directly or indirectly purports to be sponsored or operated in any manner by or in the name of The Wesleyan Church or any subsidiary or affiliate corporation, except as authorized by a two-thirds vote of the General Board. Provided, however, that nothing contained in this paragraph 4390 or elsewhere in this Chapter 4 of Part 7 of *The Discipline* is intended to prohibit the formation or operation of one or more private foundations or supporting organizations as described in Internal Revenue Code Section 170(b)(1)(E)(ii) or Section 509(a)(3) (or any successor provisions thereto of such Code) which benefit The Wesleyan Church.



## Chapter 5

### PENSION CORPORATION

#### Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc

**4400. Purpose.** The Wesleyan Church shall maintain and conduct a pension plan to be known and incorporated as Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc, for the benefit of its ministers and other persons as defined in the bylaws.

**4405. Government.** All matters pertaining to Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc shall be administered by a Board of Pensions who shall govern Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc in accord with *The Discipline* (4570) and its articles of incorporation and bylaws. The Board of Pensions is amenable to the General Board.

**4410. Duties and Powers.** This corporation shall receive and administer new trusts and funds and shall be and is directed and authorized to honor and carry out all commitments made by The Pilgrim Pension Plan, Inc., to its members through its bylaws and the commitments made by The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America to its ministers through the Superannuated Ministers' Aid Society and the Wesleyan Retirement Plan, as stated herewith:

(1) The Board of Pensions of Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc shall be and constitute the Board of Pensions of The Pilgrim Pension Plan, Inc., which corporation shall continue in full force and effect until such time as all of its liabilities shall have been satisfied and discharged, at which time any remaining assets thereof shall, insofar as may be legal, by appropriate action of the General Conference be paid over to and become a part of Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc.

(2) Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc, insofar as may be legal, shall be the successor in trust of the Superannuated Ministers' Aid Society of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, a New York corporation, and as such successor in trust it shall be and is authorized and empowered to receive from its precedent corporation all trust funds and assets of any kind and character—real, personal, or mixed—held by it; and it shall be and is authorized to administer such trusts and funds in accordance with the conditions under which they have been previously received and administered by said precedent corporation. But nothing herein contained shall be construed to require the dissolution of the said precedent corporation and it shall continue to administer such funds as may not be legally transferred to the new corporation.

(3) Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc, insofar as may be legal, shall be the successor in trust for the Wesleyan Retirement Plan of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, Inc., and as such successor in trust it shall be and is

authorized and empowered to receive all trust funds and assets of any kind or character pertaining to the Wesleyan Retirement Plan, real, personal, or mixed, held by said corporation; and it shall be and is authorized to administer such trusts and funds in accordance with the conditions under which they have been previously received and administered by said precedent corporation.

**4425. Bylaws of Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc.** The bylaws of Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc are to be maintained in a current and accurate form. Copies of the official and complete bylaws shall be provided upon request to any member of Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc. The bylaws of Wesleyan Pension Fund Inc may be amended by the Board of Pensions, subject to ratification by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the General Board (1655:18).

## PART 8

### PROPERTY

#### Chapter 1

### GENERAL REGULATIONS

#### A. Application

**4500.** The general regulations set forth in this chapter shall be binding on all trustees and their governing bodies of The Wesleyan Church, whether local, district, or General Church, including all institutions, subsidiary corporations, and similar bodies, unless otherwise stated in *The Discipline* or in the articles of incorporation and bylaws governing such trustees.

#### B. Local Laws

**4510.** All provisions of *The Discipline* relating to property, both real and personal, and relating to the formation and operation of any corporation, are conditioned upon their being in conformity with the local laws (4580) of the country, state, territory, or other like political unit within the geographical bounds in which the property is located; and in the event of conflict therewith, said provisions of *The Discipline* shall be modified to the extent required to conform with any such local laws. This regulation, however, shall not be construed to give the consent of The Wesleyan Church to deprivation of its property without due process of law, or to the regulation of its affairs by statute where such regulation violates the constitutional right of freedom of religion, separation of church and state, or the rights of the Church to maintain its polity.

#### C. Requirements

**4520.** A trustee must be a Wesleyan Church member who meets the leadership qualifications (260–268; 558). Whenever a trustee ceases to be a member with said qualifications for any reason, the office as trustee shall be declared vacant and a successor shall be elected for the unexpired term in the manner provided in *The Discipline*.

**4530.** All trustees shall administer their duties in accord with *The Discipline* as from time to time amended, as directed by the governing body to which they are amenable, and subject to local laws as set forth in 4510. Whenever a trustee refuses to carry out properly given orders and instructions and submit to the authority to which amenable, the trustee may be removed from office and a successor shall be elected for the unexpired term as provided for in *The Discipline*.

**4540.** A board of trustees shall have and hold in trust for the use and benefit of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church any and all property committed to it; shall see that titles are good; that deeds and all written instrumentalities are in harmony with *The Discipline* and with local laws as set forth in 4510; that all property deeds and titles contain the required trust clause as set forth in 4610; that they are promptly recorded; that abstracts and all other legal papers are properly stored and secured; and shall perform such other duties as are required of them in *The Discipline* or by the governing body to which they are amenable, and in the case of incorporated bodies, as set forth in the articles of incorporation and bylaws or charter of the corporation.

#### **D. Restrictions**

**4550.** A trustee or board of trustees and/or its governing body may not divert property from the ownership and use of The Wesleyan Church.

**4560.** A board of trustees shall not normally accept a deed which contains a clause by which the land conveyed may revert to the original grantor, the heirs, or assigns of the original owners.

#### **E. Terms**

**4570.** “*The Discipline*” shall always refer to *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* as from time to time legislated and declared (125–185; 1590:1–2; 2066).

**4580.** “Local laws,” whenever used in *The Discipline*, shall be construed to mean laws, including regulations and case law, of the civil jurisdiction(s) applicable to the matter at hand. With respect to property matters, this would normally be the law of the jurisdiction within which the property is located, and with respect to any other legal matters, would normally be the law of the civil jurisdiction(s) within which the matters arise.

### F. Trust Clause and Release Therefrom

**4590.** All property, whether real, personal, or mixed, acquired by any local church, circuit, district, institution, agency, or other similar body of The Wesleyan Church, whether incorporated or unincorporated, shall be held in trust for The Wesleyan Church, incorporated as The Wesleyan Church Corporation under the laws of the state of Indiana, and shall contain the trust clause as set forth in 4610 (315:6; 323:8). The absence of the trust clause in the evidence of the title or other written instruments, regardless of whether such absence is due to mistake, inadvertence, or willful omission, shall in no way exclude a local church, circuit, district, institution, agency, or similar body, whether incorporated or unincorporated, from or relieve it of its responsibility to The Wesleyan Church and subjection to the authority of said Church, and such property can only be sold, transferred, or otherwise disposed of in accord with the provisions of *The Discipline*, concerning the sale, transfer, or encumbrance of property.

(1) For property in developing districts see 542; 4650; 4800; 4920; 4200–4260; 4500–4630.

(2) Space reserved.

(3) For local property in established districts see 510:4; 518:6; 528:5; 655:11; 725:21–22; 782:25–26, 29, 32; 850–856; 1038:3; 1180:19–20; 1233:13–14; 1310:11; 1360–1365; 4000–4070; 4100–4150; 4500–4630; 4660–4780; 4240–4250; 4830–4880.

(4) For district property in established districts see 1038:3; 1180:19–20; 1233:13–14; 1310:11; 1360–1365; 4100–4150; 4240–4250; 4500–4630; 4830–4880.

(5) For General Church property see 4200–4270; 4500–4630; 4900–4940; 475.

(6) For property of an educational institution see 4500–4630; 2362; 4250.

(7) For property of a subsidiary corporation, board, or institution other than an educational institution see 4300–4370; 4500–4630; 4240–4250.

**4610. Trust Clause.** All titles, deeds, and other written instruments for the conveyance of property to or for The Wesleyan Church as set forth in 4590 shall contain the following trust clause:

In trust for the use and benefit of the ministry and members of The Wesleyan Church, incorporated under the laws of the state of Indiana as The Wesleyan Church Corporation, subject to *The Discipline*,

regulations, and appointments of said Church as from time to time legislated and declared.

**4620.** Real property acquired by a conveyance containing the foregoing trust clause in 4610 may be sold in conformity with the provisions of *The Discipline*, and when such provisions have been complied with, the real property so sold or conveyed shall be released from the foregoing trust clause, and the trustees enabled to give a good and sufficient deed (4690:1).

**4630.** Real property acquired by a conveyance containing the foregoing trust clause in 4610 may be mortgaged or otherwise encumbered in conformity with the provisions of *The Discipline*, and when such provisions have been complied with, the foregoing trust clause shall be subordinated to the mortgage lien (4690:2).

## Chapter 2

### LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY

#### A. Developing Church Property

**4650. Developing District.** Developing churches within the bounds of a developing district shall be under the jurisdiction of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division as set forth in 4800.

**4660. District.** The regulations concerning property for a developing church within the bounds of an established district are as follows:

(1) The district board of administration shall be vested with power and authority to purchase, manage, sell, encumber, transfer, and dispose of any and all property of a developing church, whether real, personal, or mixed (510:3–4; 1233:13–14), and shall direct the pastor and the local advisory council concerning the same in keeping with *The Discipline* (1233:1, 30).

(2) The pastor and local advisory council of a developing church shall be responsible to supervise, control, and maintain the property under their care as directed by the district superintendent and the district board of administration (510:3–4; 1233:1, 30).

(3) All property of a developing church shall be held by the district in trust for the use and benefit of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church as required in 323:8 and shall contain the trust clause as given in 4610 (4140; 4590–4630; 4830).

(4) Whenever a developing church has been organized as an established church (518–520), the district board of trustees may transfer the property to the local board of trustees as set forth in 4680, provided that the property is free of debt.

**4670. Reclassification.** Whenever an established church is reclassified as a developing church as set forth in 518; 1180:22; and 1233:26, the office of the members of the local board of administration shall thereupon cease (859:5) and the district board of administration shall be responsible for the property as set forth in 4660:1–4 (510:4). Whenever the property of such a church has been held by the local trustees, it shall be conveyed or transferred to the district to be held as set forth in 4120:6–7; 4830 (859:5).

## B. Church Property

### 1. Ownership

**4680.** Local property within an established district may be held by the local church or by the district, as decided upon by the district conference (1180:19–20). In those districts where the local churches are to hold their own property, all grants, conveyances, devises, gifts, transfers, and assignments now owned or hereafter acquired of any property, real, personal, or mixed, to or for any unincorporated local church or any organization, board, or similar body connected thereto, shall be held by and/or conveyed to its duly elected board of trustees, and to their successors in office and their assigns, as the board of trustees of such local church, in trust for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church, subject to its *Discipline*, regulations, and appointments as from time to time legislated and declared, and shall contain the appropriate trust clause as set forth in 4610 (4590; 4620). An omission of the name of any or all of the trustees shall not render any instrument invalid. (The regulations for an incorporated local church are set forth in 4000–4070.) In those districts where the district is to hold local property (323:8), such local property shall be held as set forth in 4140 or 4830.

### 2. Trust Clause and Release Therefrom

**4690.** All written instruments of conveyance by which property is held or hereafter acquired by any local church, whether incorporated or unincorporated, shall contain the trust clause in 4610, and release therefrom shall be as follows:

(1) Whenever the real property of a local church acquired by a conveyance containing the trust clause as set forth in 4610 is sold in conformity with the provisions of *The Discipline* (4700–4728), the written approval of the district board of administration (4700:3) shall constitute a release and discharge of the real property so sold and conveyed from the trust clause (4620).

(2) Whenever the real property of a local church acquired by a conveyance containing the trust clause in 4610 is mortgaged or encumbered, as provided for in *The Discipline* (4700–4728), the written approval of the district board of administration for such mortgage or encumbrance (4700:3) shall constitute a formal recognition of the priority of such mortgage lien and the subordination of the trust clause thereto (4630).



### 3. Acquisition, Sale, Mortgage, and Transfer of Property

**4700.** An unincorporated local church within an established district may acquire, purchase, sell, mortgage, transfer, or otherwise dispose of real property in accord with the following authorization and conditions:

(1) A resolution authorizing such action shall be recommended by the local board of administration (782:27), and passed by the local church conference (655:11) by a majority of those present and voting, at any regular or special session duly called for such purpose, provided that notice of the intended action shall be given to the local church members by announcement from the pulpit in two regular services, the first of which shall be not less than one week before the date of the session of the local church conference at which the proposal shall be considered, and that such other notice shall be given as may be required by local laws (633:1).

(2) Space reserved.

(3) The district board of administration, after receiving the recommendation of the district building committee (if any), shall approve the proposal of the local church in writing and such approval shall be affixed to the written instrument involved (1233:30).

(4) The resolution authorizing such action shall direct that any contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other necessary written instrument be executed by and on behalf of the local church by the proper officers of the local board of trustees, who thereupon shall be duly authorized to carry out the directions of the local church conference and the local board of administration in keeping with the requirements of *The Discipline* (850–859; 4500–4630; 4720); and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the local church.

(5) The chair of the local board of trustees, or other designated trustee, shall submit all written instruments of conveyance and title for the acquisition of property to the district superintendent for approval as to their conformity with *The Discipline* as stated in 1310:11 and shall see that permanent legal and property records are properly stored as set forth in 4760.

(6) When real property is donated to a Wesleyan church for ministries or in a capital or fund-raising campaign, and the donor's intent is that the property be sold and the proceeds invested accordingly, the local board of administration shall have full power to authorize the reception and disposal of the property, subject to the express written approval of each transaction by the district superintendent.

**4720.** The proceeds from the sale of any real property of a local church, whether incorporated or unincorporated, other than as provided for in 4700:6, shall be used for the purchase or improvement of property for that local church, unless otherwise authorized by the district board of administration (1233:30). In the event of a situation where two or more local churches have merged, proceeds from the sale of such property shall be used by the merged church unless otherwise authorized by the district board of administration. Whenever a local church does not wish to invest the money received as stated herewith, the money shall be forwarded to the district treasurer, and provided that all debts against such property being sold shall first be paid, it shall be used as ordered by the district conference or the district board of administration for the construction of churches or parsonages within the bounds of the district, for district property, or for purchase of property or construction of buildings involved in the planting of new churches. Such moneys may be used for other expenses involved in the planting of new churches only with the approval of the General Superintendent.

**4725.** From the sale, acquisition, or transfer of real properties that occur within its fiscal year, a district may choose to invest or contribute up to 15 percent from the net proceeds to expand Wesleyan presence. Up to 10 percent may be used for technology upgrades to meet multimedia, network, and internet needs. In addition, up to 5 percent may be used to assist in the development of a Wesleyan presence in another country through Global Partners or to assist domestic Wesleyan compassionate ministries. The aggregate total of the district's investment and/or contribution, whether internationally or domestically, cannot exceed 15 percent of the net proceeds of its transactions. The district board of administration must approve each investment and/or contribution with a two-thirds vote. Furthermore, each investment and/or contribution must have the written approval of the General Superintendent.

**4728.** Any district that chooses to exercise the provision of *Discipline* 4725 may make a lump sum investment and/or contribution under the conditions mentioned therein or it may make a series of smaller investments and/or contributions, so long as the aggregate total does not exceed 15 percent of the total proceeds from transactions as noted in *Discipline* 4725.

#### **4. Abandoned Church Property**

**4730.** When the property of a local church is no longer used, a local church may be declared by the district board of administration as discontinued or abandoned (1233:26) and the title shall thereupon vest in the district

corporation (4100), or in the district board of trustees in the case of an unincorporated district (4855). The district board of administration shall have the authority to order the sale of said property and to appropriate the proceeds for the purchase of property for a local church, for the construction of churches or parsonages within the bounds of the district, for district property, or for the purchase of property or construction of buildings involved in the planting of new churches. Such moneys may be used for other expenses involved in the planting of new churches only with the approval of the General Superintendent. The actions of the district board of administration shall be reported to the next session of the district conference. Any bequests, devises, gift annuities, or other benefits to a local church that accrue or become available after said church has been discontinued shall become the property of the district corporation (4100), or, in the case of an unincorporated district, shall become the property of the district board of trustees (4855).

**4735.** From the sale, acquisition, or transfer of real properties that occur within its fiscal year, a district may choose to invest or contribute up to 15 percent from the net proceeds to expand Wesleyan presence. Up to 10 percent may be used for technology upgrades to meet multimedia, network, and internet needs. In addition, up to 5 percent may be used to assist in the development of a Wesleyan presence in another country through Global Partners or to assist domestic Wesleyan compassionate ministries. The aggregate total of the district's investment and/or contribution, whether internationally or domestically, cannot exceed 15 percent of the net proceeds of its transactions. The district board of administration must approve each investment and/or contribution with a two-thirds vote. Furthermore, each investment and/or contribution must have the written approval of the General Superintendent.

**4738.** Any district that chooses to exercise the provision of *Discipline* 4735 may make a lump sum investment and/or contribution under the conditions mentioned therein or it may make a series of smaller investments and/or contributions, so long as the aggregate total does not exceed 15 percent of the total proceeds from transactions as noted in *Discipline* 4735.

### C. Circuit Property

**4740.** The organization and government for a circuit within an established district are set forth in 525–535. The regulations concerning the acquisition, purchase, sale, encumbrance, transfer, or other disposition of circuit property within an established district shall be the same as for local church property within the district as set forth in 4680 and 4700:1–5. The proceeds from the

sale of circuit property shall also be disposed of in the same manner as the proceeds from the sale of local church property as set forth in 4720–4738. The circuit board of trustees shall carry such duties concerning circuit property as are required of a local church board of trustees (850–859) and shall be subject to the general regulations as set forth in 4500–4630.

**4750.** Whenever the discontinuance of a circuit shall be ordered by the district conference, or whenever a local church is separated from a circuit and established as a separate pastoral charge (1180:22), the district conference shall also order the sale or disposition of circuit property, for which a recommendation shall be received from the district board of administration (1233:10c). Each local church shall be entitled to receive its just share of the property in which it has invested funds; and the amount of such value and just share shall be determined by the district board of administration or a special committee appointed for that purpose.

#### **D. Property Records**

**4760.** All deeds, titles, and other legal or property records of each developing church, church, or circuit within the bounds of the district shall be placed in the custody of the district superintendent (1310:11) who shall be responsible for their preservation and permanent filing as directed by the district board of administration (1233:15). The district superintendent may authorize a local church to retain such records when deemed necessary, in which case a certified or true copy shall be kept in the district files which are in the district superintendent's custody.

#### **E. Rights to Property**

**4770.** The district board of administration, in the name of the district corporation (4100; 4855), shall have the right to intervene or to institute any legal or equitable actions as may be deemed necessary against a local church or circuit within the bounds of the district to preserve the rights and interests of the district and The Wesleyan Church, in all matters relating to property and the rights to property within the bounds of the district, as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline* (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5305–5320), and as otherwise provided for in *The Discipline*. The General Board, in the name of The Wesleyan Church Corporation, shall also have the right to intervene and protect the rights and interests of The Wesleyan Church as set forth in 4250–4260.

**4780.** No local church may vote to withdraw as a body from The Wesleyan Church or in any way sever its relation thereto, and no local church conference

and/or local board of administration and/or local board of trustees can divert property from The Wesleyan Church (859:4; 4550). If any local church violates or in any way attempts to circumvent these provisions, then all rights, title, and interest in and to all real property of such local church shall thereupon immediately vest in the district corporation (4100) or in the district board of trustees in the case of an unincorporated district (4855); and all such property shall be vacated immediately by the offending party or parties. The district conference or, in the interim, the district board of administration shall have authority to deny the use of any such property to the offending party or parties and to order the immediate eviction of any such party or parties who do not comply therewith.

**4790.** An existing local church that joins The Wesleyan Church with church facilities and/or other properties deeded in the name of their church will have up to ten years to transfer all properties into the name of The Wesleyan Church. At the time of the transfer, all written instruments of conveyance by which property is held shall contain the trust clause in 4610. If, during this ten-year period of time, the church acquires property or borrows funds needing a loan guarantee from their district, the church will at that time transfer all properties into the name of The Wesleyan Church, and all written instruments of conveyance by which property is held shall contain the trust clause. If the church fails to transfer all properties (containing the trust clause) into The Wesleyan Church within the ten-year period of time, the church's relationship with The Wesleyan Church would be subject to review.

## Chapter 3

### DISTRICT PROPERTY

#### A. Developing District Property

**4800.** The regulations concerning property within the bounds of a developing district shall be set forth in the *General Board Policy for the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division* in accord with the following:

(1) The authority for the purchase, sale, encumbrance, transfer, or other disposal of real property within a developing district shall be vested in the General Board (1655:35; 4810).

(2) All property shall be held by and/or conveyed to The Wesleyan Church Corporation and shall be General Church property (4920), except when otherwise required by local laws or otherwise directed by the General Board (1655:39), in which case it shall be held in trust for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church and shall contain the appropriate trust clause as set forth in 4610 (4590–4630).

(3) The superintendent and any other workers of the developing district shall supervise, control, and maintain the property under their care in accord with *The Discipline*, the *General Board Policy for the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division*, and other directives, and as supervised by the Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship.

(4) All legal and property records shall be in the custody of the Executive Director of Communication and Administration unless otherwise directed by the General Board, in which case certified or true copies shall be filed in the custody of the Executive Director of Communication and Administration.

#### B. District Property

##### 1. Ownership

**4830. Unincorporated District.** Except when local laws shall otherwise require, all grants, conveyances, devises, gifts, transfers, and assignments, now owned or hereafter made, of any property, real, personal, or mixed, to or for any unincorporated district or any organization, board, or similar body connected thereto and for any local property held by such a district (4660; 4680), shall be held by and/or conveyed to its duly elected board of trustees (1360–1365;

4855), and to their successors in office and to their assigns, as the board of trustees, of said district, in trust for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church and subject to its *Discipline*, regulations, and appointments, as from time to time legislated and declared, and shall contain the trust clause as set forth in 4610 (4590–4630). (The regulations for an incorporated district are set forth in 4100–4150.)

## 2. Management and Control

**4840.** The district board of administration shall have the following duties and powers concerning the district property and such local property as may be held by the district (4660; 4680):

(1) Carry out the directions of the district conference (1180:19–20; 1233:14–15) and, in the interim of its sessions, have power to act on its own resolution to acquire, purchase, sell, exchange, mortgage, deed in trust, pledge, rent, lease, and convey any property, real, personal, or mixed, as may be deemed necessary or convenient for the purpose of the district and so to order the district board of trustees (1360–1365; 4855), provided that in transactions concerning real property used for district purposes, such as a district parsonage, headquarters, or campground, the district board of administration shall consult with the General Superintendent (1935), and further provided that said district board of administration shall be subject to the general regulations concerning property as set forth in 4500–4630.

(2) Carry out the directions of the district conference (1180:19–20; 1233:14–15), and in the interim of its sessions, direct the district board of trustees (1360–1365; 4855) concerning any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind or character, real or personal, that may be given, devised, bequeathed, or conveyed to the district, or to the district board of trustees as such, for any benevolent, charitable, or religious purpose, and direct the board of trustees in the administration of such in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, or testator, and in the interest of the church, institution, organization, or agency contemplated by such donor, trustor, or testator.

(3) Supervise, control, and maintain all district property.

(4) Space reserved.

(5) Act in regard to the disposition of the proceeds from the sale of local church or circuit property, and the discontinuance or disposal of abandoned property (4720–4738).

(6) When district property is sold, the district board of administration may approve the use of the proceeds from the sale of the property to fund

ongoing ministries that previously took place on the property that was sold, with written approval of the General Superintendent.

(7) Intervene and institute all necessary legal and equitable actions to safeguard and protect the rights and interests of the district and of The Wesleyan Church, including all matters relating to the property and rights to property, including any property held by a local church, circuit, or other organization within the district, whether arising by gift, devise, or otherwise, or where held in trust for the benefit and use of the members and ministers of the district and The Wesleyan Church (4770–4790).

(8) Direct the district superintendent in the care and preservation of all legal and property records for the local churches and the district (4760).

### 3. District Board of Trustees

**4855.** The district conference of each established district shall be incorporated or shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained to facilitate the management of its legal and corporate affairs as set forth in 4100–4150. In places where local laws prohibit such incorporation, or where the local laws require property to be held by trustees, the district conference shall elect from among the members of the district board of administration the members of the district board of trustees in such number as desired (1180:19–20; 1360–1365). The district trustees shall hold office as trustees until their term of office expires as members of the district board of administration and until their successors are qualified and elected. The district board of trustees shall be amenable to the district board of administration and shall hold all district property, and such local property as may be held by the district (4660; 4680), in trust for The Wesleyan Church as set forth in 4590–4610; shall attend to all legal matters pertaining to the district property and other business as directed; and shall carry out such transactions for the purchase, acquisition, sale, encumbrance, transfer, or other disposal of district property as ordered by the district board of administration (4840). Whenever a trustee shall refuse to carry out the directions of the district board of administration, the trustee may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the district board of administration, who shall also fill the vacancy for the unexpired term (1233:24a; 1360).

### D. Rights to Property

**4870.** A district, whether incorporated or unincorporated, that has been placed under discipline in accord with the procedures set forth in the *General*



*Board Policy on Church Discipline (Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc. 5355–5370)*, and each local church within that district shall be suspended from the right to acquire, purchase, sell, mortgage, transfer, or otherwise dispose of any real property without the approval of the General Superintendent or general official appointed to have charge of the district (*Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc. 5365*). Whenever a district is reorganized as set forth in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline 5375*, the members and ministers affirming loyalty to The Wesleyan Church shall be and constitute the district and shall have the right to control and manage all district property as set forth in *The Discipline*.

**4880.** No district conference may vote to withdraw as a body from The Wesleyan Church or in any way sever its relation thereto, and no district board and/or committee and/or board of trustees can divert property from The Wesleyan Church (4540–4550). Provided, however, that no sale, exchange, mortgage, deed in trust, pledge, lease, conveyance, or other alienation of property, in whole or in part, whether such property is real, personal, or mixed, as may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the district, and when undertaken in accordance with the provisions and requirements of *The Discipline*, shall constitute a “diversion” of such property from The Wesleyan Church. If a district conference violates or in any way attempts to circumvent these provisions, then all right, title, and interest in and to all district real property shall thereupon immediately vest in The Wesleyan Church Corporation (4200–4270). The General Conference or, in the interim, the General Board shall have the authority to deny the use of any such property to the offending party or parties and to order the immediate eviction of any such party or parties who do not comply therewith from such property.

### **E. Loan Guarantees**

**4890.** The district board of administration of an unincorporated district may authorize and direct the district trustees to guarantee in writing any note, mortgage, contract, or any other evidence of indebtedness of any local church of said district.

## Chapter 4

### GENERAL CHURCH PROPERTY

#### A. Incorporation

**4900.** The General Conference shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained under the name of The Wesleyan Church Corporation, through which it shall acquire, sell, manage, encumber, transfer, and otherwise dispose of General Church property (4200–4260; 1590:5).

#### B. Ownership

**4920.** All grants, conveyances, devises, gifts, transfers, and assignments now owned or hereafter made of any property, real, personal, or mixed, to or for The Wesleyan Church, or any general office, department, institution, agency, or organization connected thereto, with the exception of those that are separately incorporated (1590:6; 4300), shall be held by and/or conveyed to The Wesleyan Church Corporation in its corporate name, for the use and benefit of the members and ministers of The Wesleyan Church, subject to its *Discipline*, regulations, and appointments as from time to time legislated and declared (4570).

#### C. Suggested Forms for Bequests and Devises

**4940.** The General Superintendent's office is available for special advice and instruction for those who desire to make wills, donations, or bequests to The Wesleyan Church or any of its various ministries (475).

(1) **Form for Bequests of Money or Personal Property.** I give, devise, and bequeath to The Wesleyan Church Corporation, a corporation created and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the state of Indiana, the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars, (or if personal property, notes, bonds, etc., describe the same); to be used and appropriated by that body to religious, benevolent, missionary or educational purposes (or, if desired, state the specific purpose); and the receipt of the treasurer of the said corporation shall be a full and sufficient discharge of my executor for the same.

(2) **Form for a Devise of Land.** I give, devise, and bequeath to The Wesleyan Church Corporation, a corporation created and existing under and

by virtue of the laws of the state of Indiana, the following described lands and premises, viz: (full description of land); to have and to hold the same with the privilege or appurtenances unto said corporation (state a specific purpose if desired), its successors and assigns forever; and the receipt of the treasurer of said corporation shall be a full and sufficient discharge of my executor for the same.

(3) **Form for a Devise of Residuary Estate or Any Part Thereof.** I give, devise, and bequeath to The Wesleyan Church Corporation, a corporation created and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the state of Indiana, all (or some specific part of) the rest, residue, or remainder of my estate, real or personal to said corporation (state specific purpose if desired), its successors and assigns forever; and the receipt of the treasurer of said corporation shall be a full and sufficient discharge of my executor for the same.

(4) Suggested forms for other types of donations and delayed gift giving are available from the General Superintendent's office.

## PART 9

### JUDICIARY

#### Chapter 1

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### A. Meaning and Purpose of Church Discipline

**5000.** The Church has the responsibility to provide a holy and harmonious environment that fosters Christlike conduct and relationships. The purpose of church discipline is the vindication of the truth, the preservation of the integrity of the body, the restoration and salvation of the guilty, and the warning of the careless.

#### B. The Administration of Church Discipline

**5002.** In order that the purposes of the church may be realized, discipline in The Wesleyan Church shall be administered in accord with the following principles:

(1) A prayerful and Christlike spirit shall be maintained at all times by all parties.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Every effort shall be made to bring back to the Lord any who have wandered from Him (268).<sup>2</sup>

(3) A sincere and reasonable effort shall be made to resolve an accusation or to deal with an offending person in keeping with scriptural admonitions.<sup>3</sup>

(4) Each accusation and all proceedings shall receive prompt and careful attention by the proper authorities.

(5) Any offending person shall be dealt with kindly, yet faithfully, according to the seriousness of the offense and as provided for in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* and the *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

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1. 1 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2.

2. 1 Thess. 5:14; Jude 22–23.

3. Matt. 18:15–18; Gal. 6:1–2; James 5:16, 19–20.

### C. Conflict Resolution

**5004. Conflict Resolution.** The person having the grievance shall be first required to follow the Lord's directions in Matthew 18:15–17.

(1) The person having the grievance should go to the accused and point out the issue, just between the two of them.

(2) If unresolved, the person having the grievance shall seek counsel from the official having jurisdiction (pastor, district superintendent, general officer) relative to the steps to be taken.<sup>4</sup>

(3) If the personal grievance remains unresolved or affects the body of believers, the official having jurisdiction or a designated representative shall privately inquire, and, if necessary, instruct and admonish an offending person. If there is an acknowledgment of the fault and correction is made, the matter shall be dropped.

(4) If the grievance continues, the official in charge shall provide intervention. If the conflict remains unresolved, and if the matter rises to the level of a fair and impartial hearing of charges pending, procedures shall be followed according to the *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

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Paragraphs 5010–5450 were relocated by the 2016 General Conference to the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline*. A copy of the publication may be obtained by request at [communications@wesleyan.org](mailto:communications@wesleyan.org).

4. 2 Cor. 6:1–8.

**PART 10**  
**THE RITUAL**  
**Chapter 1**  
**BAPTISM**

**A. Dedication of Infants**

**5500.** *(When the parents, guardians, or other sponsors have presented themselves with their children before the minister, the minister shall say:)*

Dear friends, you have brought *these children*\* whom God has given you to be dedicated to God and to His service. By this act you testify to your faith in the Christian religion, and also your desire that your *children* shall receive the benefits of consecration to God, and of the prayers of the church, and may early learn to know and follow the will of God; and therefore may live a Christian life.

In order for this to happen, it will be your duty as parents to teach your *children* early the fear of the Lord; to watch over *their* education, that they may not be led astray by false teachings or doctrines, to direct *their minds* to the Holy Scriptures as expressing the will and authority of God for all people, and to direct *their* feet to the sanctuary, to restrain *them* from evil associates and habits; and, as much as you are able, to bring *them* up in the Lord's discipline and instruction. Will you endeavor to do so, by the help of the Lord?

*(Then the parents or guardians shall answer:)*

We will.

*(Then the minister shall read the following Scripture lesson:)*

"People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them" (Mark 10:13–16).

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\*Throughout the ritual, whenever instructions are given to the officiating minister, or a word may change form due to the gender or number of persons involved in the ritual on a given occasion, that word(s) is printed in italics to alert the minister who reads. "These children" may become "this child," "he" may become "she" or "they," etc."

*(Then the minister shall ask the parents or guardians the name of each child to be dedicated, take each child in arms, lay a hand upon the child's head, and say:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, on behalf of your *parents* and of this congregation, I dedicate you unto the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Then the minister may pray.)*

## B. Baptism of Infants

**5510.** *(When the parents, guardians, or other sponsors have presented themselves with their children before the minister, the minister shall say:)*

Dear *friends*, you have brought *these children* whom God has given you to be baptized, thereby testifying to your own commitment of faith in Christ and the assurance you hold that the grace of God is even now at work in *their lives*. Forasmuch as *these children* are now presented by you, it will be your duty as *parents* to teach *them* as soon as *they are* able to learn the nature and meaning of this sacrament. In order to testify to your faith and to your desire to nurture your *children* within this faith, please respond to these questions.

Do you present your *children* for baptism as a sign of the grace of God which is extended even now to your *children* through the atoning work of Christ and declares *them* to be a part of the family of God? And,

Do you promise with the help of God to bring your *children* up in the instruction and discipline of the Lord, to pray with *them* and for *them*, and to make every effort to so order your own life that you will not cause *these little ones* to stumble? And,

Do you intend to encourage your *children*, as soon as *they are* able to comprehend its significance, to acknowledge personally *their own* faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to serve God faithfully in the fellowship of His church?

*(Then the parents will respond:)*

We do, God being our helper.

*(Then the minister shall ask the parents or guardians the name of each child, take it in arms, and baptize each child, saying:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Then the minister may pray.)*

### C. Baptism of Believers

**5515.** *(When the candidates for baptism have presented themselves before the minister, the minister shall say:)*

Dear *friends*, in keeping with the example of Jesus, you have presented *yourselves* this day that you might receive the sacrament of baptism. Baptism is not itself the door to salvation, but rather is an outward sign of the new birth which God has wrought in your heart. It proclaims to all the world that you have taken Christ Jesus as the Lord of your *lives*, and that it is your purpose always to obey Him. In order that we may hear your testimony of what God has done for you, and that we may know that you understand the significance of the step you are taking, we want to ask you these questions:

Do you believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? That Jesus Christ the Son suffered in your place on the cross, that He died but rose again, that He now sits at the Father's right hand until He returns to judge all people at the last day? And do you believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God? That by the grace of God every person has the ability and responsibility to choose between right and wrong, and that those who repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by faith?

**Answer:** All this I steadfastly believe.

Do you intend by this act to testify to all the world that you are a Christian and that you will be a loyal follower of Christ?

**Answer:** I do.

*(Then the minister shall ask the name of each candidate and shall immerse the candidate in water or, if desired, sprinkle or pour water, saying:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Then the minister shall pray.)*



### D. Affirmation of Parental Vows

**5530.** *(Persons who were baptized as infants, upon coming to maturity and being converted, and desiring to make personal the vows earlier taken in their behalf by their parents, may do so by publicly answering the questions in the ritual of baptism as given in 5515 and as directed by the pastor.)*

Dear friends, \_\_\_\_\_ were presented by their parents for baptism as children. They now desire to make personal the vows made in their behalf by publicly declaring their commitment to the faith in which they were baptized.

*(Then the minister shall address the candidate:)*

Do you believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? That Jesus Christ the Son suffered in your place on the cross, that He died but rose again, that He now sits at the Father's right hand until He returns to judge all people at the last day? And do you believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God? That by the grace of God every person has the ability and responsibility to choose between right and wrong, and that those who repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by faith?

**Answer:** All this I steadfastly believe.

Do you affirm the act of *your parents* as they presented you for baptism and do you hereby testify to all the world that you are a Christian and that you will be a loyal follower of Christ?

**Answer:** I do.

*(Then the minister shall pray.)*

## Chapter 2

### RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

**5550.** When candidates for membership have been approved for reception as given in 550–565, the pastor shall appoint a time during a regular worship service for their public reception, and shall preside over the service of reception or appoint a representative to preside. In those churches in which the local churches must vote on the reception of members, such vote should be taken at a meeting prior to the service of reception. Paragraphs 5565–5567, “Reception of Members,” “Covenant Questions,” and “Declaration of Purpose,” have the authority of statutory law. The paragraphs must be followed as prescribed, except that paragraph 5566 may be addressed during membership preparation classes and omitted during the service of reception if a shortened service is desired.

**5555.** *The service of reception may begin with a hymn and Scripture reading such as one of those listed below, and with the administration of the sacrament of baptism to any who have not previously received it.*

**Hymn.** “*The Church’s One Foundation*,” “*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*,” “*Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*,” “*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*.”

**Scripture Lesson.** *Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–27; Ephesians 4:1–7, 11–16; 5:25b–27.*

#### **5560. Introductory Remarks.**

**Minister:** Dear *friends*, the privileges and blessings which we have within the fellowship of the church of Jesus Christ are very sacred and precious. Christ so loved the church that He gave Himself for it, sanctifying Himself that the church might be sanctified. He chose to speak of Himself as the Head of the church and of the church as His body; and again He spoke of Himself as the husband and of the church as His bride. Christ gave Himself unselfishly, and He asked the church to share its glorious relationship with all humankind, sending it into the world to preach the Scriptures, to save the lost, to administer the sacraments, to maintain Christian fellowship and discipline, and to build up the believer until He comes again. All of us, whatever our age or position, stand in need of Christ’s church and of those means of grace which it alone makes available.

It is in keeping with Christ’s commission to the church that we meet together now. There *are some* among us who *testify* to having been received already into the spiritual fellowship of the universal church, and who *desire* to be received into the official and visible fellowship of this local unit of the body of Christ.

**5565. Reception of Members.**

*(The minister shall call before the congregation those who are being received as members. If the covenant questions have not been addressed previously, or if a public response to the questions is desired, the questions in paragraph 5566 shall be asked as prescribed).*

*These persons standing before you come to enter into covenant as members of The Wesleyan Church, with all of the accompanying rights, privileges, and responsibilities. They testify to having been born again. They have received the sacrament of baptism, have been instructed in and have accepted the doctrines and polity of The Wesleyan Church, and have been approved by vote as manifesting in spirit and practice God's work of grace within their hearts.*

*(If a shortened service is desired, and the candidates have been asked the membership covenant questions and have responded appropriately, the presiding minister may add the statement "They have each responded appropriately to the membership covenant questions as required by The Discipline" [5550], omit the questions, and move to paragraph 5567.)*

**5566. Covenant Questions.**

**Minister:** We now propose, in the fear of God, to question *these persons* as to *their* experience, faith, and purpose, that you may know that *they are* proper persons to be admitted into this Church.

Dear *friends*, you have come seeking union with the church of Jesus Christ. We rejoice that you have chosen to undertake the privileges and the responsibilities of membership in The Wesleyan Church. Before you are admitted thereto, you should here publicly and individually make your vows, confess your faith, and declare your purpose, by answering the following questions:

**Minister:** Do you believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? That Jesus Christ the Son suffered in your place on the cross, that He died but rose again, that He now sits at the Father's right hand until He returns to judge all people at the last day? And do you believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God? That by the grace of God every person has the ability and responsibility to choose between right and wrong, and that those who repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by faith? And do you believe that God not only counts believers as righteous, but that He makes them righteous, perfecting them in love at entire sanctification, and providing for their growth in grace at every stage of their spiritual life, enabling them through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to live a victorious life?

**Candidate:** This I believe.

**Minister:** Do you have the witness of the Spirit that you are a child of God?

**Candidate:** I do.

**Minister:** Is it your commitment to pursue holiness in all things?

**Candidate:** It is.

**Minister:** Do you cordially accept and agree to abide by our Articles of Religion and Elementary Principles as biblical guidelines for your conduct, and do you accept the authority of The Wesleyan Church in matters of church government?

**Candidate:** I do.

**Minister:** Do you commit to live out the mission and vision of The Wesleyan Church through a discipling relationship within the local church?

**Candidate:** I do.

#### **5567. Declaration of Purpose.**

**Minister:** By coming before us today you indicate your purpose to publicly confess the Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be your God and the object of your highest love. You accept the Lord Jesus to be your Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit to be your Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide. You joyfully dedicate *yourselves* to God, that within the everlasting covenant of His grace you might be used in His service to glorify and honor Him. And you promise to hold to Him as the highest good of your *lives*; that you will give diligent attention to the commandments and principles of His Word; that you will seek the honor and advancement of His kingdom; and that forsaking all ungodliness and worldly desires, you will live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

You do also purpose to join *yourselves* to this church, submitting *yourselves* to its principles of government; and by walking in love and fellowship with all its members, seek its peace, purity, and growth in grace.

Do you freely and sincerely devote *yourselves* to be the Lord's within the fellowship of this church?

**Candidate:** I do.

#### **5570. Reception of Transfers from Other Denominations.**

**Minister:** There are *those* who have found Christ in some other branch of His church, but who now *desire* to transfer *their* membership to The Wesleyan Church, and who present *themselves* for reception as *members* by transfer. To *them* we address this question:

**Minister:** Dear *friends*, in transferring your covenant relation to this branch of Christ's church, you again renew your vows of church fellowship. Relying upon the grace of God, you promise to walk in all His commandments and ordinances, and to seek His service as your highest joy. You promise to submit

to the rules and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*; to strive earnestly for peace, purity, and growth in grace, and to walk with all members in love and Christian faithfulness. Do you sincerely devote *yourselves* to be the Lord's and do you hereby renew your covenant with the church of Jesus Christ by joining *yourselves* to this fellowship of believers?

**Transferee:** I do.

*(If no student members are being received, the minister shall skip and go directly to 5580.)*

### **5577. Reception of Student Members.**

**Minister:** The Church desires to embrace within its care and nurture those who are converted to Christ early in life and who desire to know more about Jesus and His will for themselves. These have come for reception as student members so they may be disciplined by the Church and may, at the proper time, assume a greater place of responsibility and leadership in the Church. To these we address these questions.

**Minister:** Does the Lord now forgive your sins?

**Candidate:** Yes, He does.

**Minister:** Is it your purpose that you will grow in your knowledge of Jesus Christ and His will for you, to study daily in private devotions and regularly at the church, so you will mature in your faith and be prepared to serve as the Lord may direct you?

**Candidate:** Yes, it is.

### **5580. Response of the Church.**

**Minister:** May the members of the church now join me in welcoming *these new ones* to our fellowship, assuring *them* of our love, of our prayers, and of our care over *them* in days to come. Do you, the members of this church, receive *these* to our communion and fellowship as beloved *brothers and sisters*, and promise to walk with *them* in love, to instruct, counsel, admonish, and cherish *them*, and to watch over *them* with all long-suffering, gentleness, and love?

**Congregation:** We do.

### **5585. Prayer.**

**Minister:** O God of the church, we thank You for the blessing of Christian fellowship, for joining together in one body all those who truly believe in Jesus Christ, Your Son. We thank You for *these* who this day *are* becoming a part of this local church, this branch of Christ's body. Grant to *them* the grace and strength *they* shall need to fulfill *their* vows, and bind our hearts together in Your holy love, that we may aid each other and that together we may share Your gospel with the world for which Christ died. In His name we pray. Amen.

**5590. Right Hand of Fellowship.**

**Minister:** And now, on behalf of The Wesleyan Church and of this local congregation, I extend to you the right hand of fellowship, welcoming you as *members* with us of the body of Christ.

**5595.** *The service of reception may close with a hymn and a benediction such as the following:*

**Hymn.** “*Blest Be the Tie That Binds,*” “*Onward, Christian Soldiers,*” “*Lead On, O King Eternal,*” “*Soldiers of Christ, Arise.*”

**Benediction.** Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

## Chapter 3

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### A. General Directions

**5600.** Each local church is encouraged to provide for the observance of the Lord's Supper at least once each month but is required to do so at least once every three months (293; 725:6).

**5605.** It is expected that Wesleyan ministers shall carefully admonish the people that only those who are in right relations with God and with their neighbors should come to the Lord's Table, and that others should come only if in so doing they are expressing repentance and seeking forgiveness.

**5610.** Only unfermented grape juice shall be used in observing the Lord's Supper.

**5611.** The officiating minister may enlist the assistance of other ministers, persons preparing for the ministry, or laypersons for the distribution of the elements.

#### B. Order of the Lord's Supper—as Part of a Service

**5615.** *(The elements of the Lord's Supper shall be placed upon a table and covered with a white linen cloth. The minister shall read a Scripture lesson, such as one of the following: Isa. 53; Matt. 26:26–29; Luke 22:14–20; Rom. 5:1–2, 6–12, 18–21; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 11:23–29; Eph. 1:3–12; 2:1–10, 12–22; Heb. 9:11–17, 22–28; 1 Peter 1:18–23; 2:21–25.)*

*(Then the congregation shall sing a hymn, such as one of the following: "Alas! and Did My Saviour Bleed," "Man of Sorrows, What a Name," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Arise, My Soul, Arise," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," "Rock of Ages," "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood.")*

*(Then the minister may preach a sermon on some phase of the Lord's Supper. Afterwards the congregation may sing another hymn such as one of those listed above. Then the minister shall direct the people as to the plan for distribution of the elements of the Supper, either directing them to come and kneel at the altar or to be served while seated, in either instance using this invitation:)*

You who are walking in fellowship with God, and are in love and harmony with your neighbors; and you who do truly and earnestly repent of your sin and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from this time in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and meekly make your humble confession to Almighty God.

*(Then the minister shall remove the cloth, folding it neatly, and laying it to one side. Then the minister shall pray the prayer of consecration:)*

O God of grace and mercy, we thank You that You ever loved us and provided for our redemption. We thank You for Your Son who died to save us, and for Your Spirit who invites us to draw near. Guide us now as we commemorate the suffering of our Lord. Help us to remember the cost of our salvation. Help us to commune with You and with each other. And so consecrate the bread and the cup which are here prepared, that as we partake of them we may receive the spiritual benefits of Christ's broken body and shed blood. In His name we pray. Amen.

*(Then the minister shall first partake of the bread, and then distribute it to the people, saying:)*

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this remembering that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.

*(Then the minister shall partake of the cup, and then distribute it to the people, saying:)*

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this remembering that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

*(After all have partaken, let that which remains of the consecrated elements be returned to the table, and covered with the white linen cloth. Then let the minister pronounce the benediction:)*

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

### **C. Order of the Lord's Supper—as an Entire Service**

**5635.** *(The elements of the Lord's Supper shall be placed upon a table and covered with a white linen cloth. The minister shall address the congregation, saying:)*

#### **Call to Worship**

The Lord Jesus Himself instituted the holy sacrament we call the Lord's Supper, giving it to the disciples as a means of remembering Him until He comes again, and as a seal of the new covenant between God and man. This service is therefore a time of special sacredness and we can only be properly



prepared by giving our hearts and minds to reverent worship, and by being freed of all things contrary to the divine nature and purpose. Therefore let us bow in a period of silent prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and to bring us into conformity with the holiness of the God we serve.

*(The minister shall allow sufficient time for each person to prepare for the service, and then shall pray:)*

### **Invocation**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are opened, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Hymns**

*(Then the congregation shall sing a hymn, such as one of the following: "Alas! and Did My Saviour Bleed," "Man of Sorrows, What a Name," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Arise, My Soul, Arise," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," "Rock of Ages," "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood.")*

### **Scripture Readings**

*(Then the minister shall read a Scripture lesson, such as one of the following: Isa. 53; Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; Rom. 5:1-2, 6-12, 18-21; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-29; Eph. 1:3-12; 2:1-10, 12-22; Heb. 9:11-17, 22-28; 1 Peter 1:18-23; 2:21-25.)*

### **Prayer**

*(Then the minister shall pray an extemporaneous prayer or use the following:)*

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all persons, we acknowledge that in Your sight all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. Outside of Christ we are sinners, and it is only through His atonement that we are forgiven and cleansed. Whatever there is of purity and virtue in our hearts or in our lives is the product of Your grace. We come today to remember once again how Christ obtained our salvation. And as we do, we ask that the Holy Spirit shall search our hearts. If we have committed any act which is displeasing to You, or neglected any duty which would have honored

You, reveal it and forgive, we pray. Or if there is any tendency to disobedience, to the love of the world, or to the exaltation of self, reveal it and purge it from our hearts, we pray. You have told us that if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Our hope, our trust, our righteousness are in Him alone. Have mercy upon us for His sake, and grant that we may serve and please You in newness of life and purity of heart, world without end, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Sermon, Hymn, Instructions**

*(Then the minister may preach a sermon on some phase of the Lord's Supper. Afterwards the congregation may sing another hymn such as one of those listed above. Then the minister shall direct the people as to the plan for distribution of the elements of the Supper, either directing them to come and kneel at the altar or to be served while seated, in either instance using this invitation:)*

### **Invitation**

You who are walking in fellowship with God, and are in love and harmony with your neighbors; and you who do truly and earnestly repent of your sin and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from this time in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and meekly (kneeling) make your humble confession to Almighty God.

*(When all are in place, the minister shall remove the cloth, folding it neatly, and laying it to one side. Then the minister shall pray the prayer of consecration:)*

### **Consecration of Bread and Cup**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in mercy gave Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption: accept our praise, we beseech You. We thank You for Your love, for the gift of Your Son, for the sacrifice He made in our behalf, for the forgiveness of our sins and the cleansing of our hearts, for the present witness of Your Holy Spirit to our hearts that we are Your children. Grant that, as we receive this bread and wine, in memory of Christ's death and suffering, in communion with You and with Your children, we may be made partakers of His body and blood; who, on the night He was betrayed, took bread,

*(Here the minister may take the plate of bread in hand.)*

and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: do this in memory of me." In the same way, after supper He took the cup,

*(Here the minister may take in hand the vessel from which the cup is to be poured, or the tray of individual cups.)*

and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins; do this, whenever you drink it, in memory of me." Amen.

### **Distribution of Bread and Cup**

*(Then the minister shall direct the distribution of the elements, either first kneeling at the table and partaking, then serving others who may be assisting, and then serving the people; or directing first the distribution of the bread with all holding their portion until the time for simultaneous participation, and then the distribution of the cup in the same manner.)*

*(In either instance, either before or during the distribution, or immediately before the simultaneous partaking of the bread, the following shall be read:)*

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this remembering that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.

*(And in like manner, either before or during the distribution, or immediately before the simultaneous partaking of the cup, the following shall be read:)*

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this remembering that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

*(After all have partaken, let that which remains of the consecrated elements be returned to the table, and covered with the white linen cloth. Then let the minister and congregation join in praying:)*

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Benediction**

*(Then the minister shall conclude the service with the benediction:)*

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

## Chapter 4

### MARRIAGE

#### A. Marriage Ceremony—Longer Form

**5650.** *(At the day and time appointed for the solemnizing of matrimony, the persons to be married standing together, the man on the right hand of the woman, the minister shall say:)*

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted of God, and signifying unto us the mystical union which exists between Christ and His church. It is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons come now to be joined.

*(Speaking to the persons to be married, the minister shall say:)*

I charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, before whom the secrets of all hearts are disclosed, that, having duly considered the holy covenant you are about to make, you do now declare before this company your pledge of faith, each to the other. Be well assured that if these solemn vows are faithfully kept, as God's Word demands, and if steadfastly you endeavor to do the will of your heavenly Father, God will bless your marriage, will grant you fulfillment in it, and will establish your home in peace.

*(Then shall the minister address the man by name, and ask:)*

Will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep yourself only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

*(The man shall answer:)*

I will.

*(Then shall the minister address the woman by name, and ask:)*

Will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

*(The woman shall answer:)*

I will.

*(Then shall the minister ask:)*

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

*(The father of the woman, or whoever gives her in marriage, shall answer:)*

I do (or Her mother and I).

*(Then the minister shall cause the man and woman to join right hands and shall cause the man, using their given names, to say after him:)*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy law; and thereto I pledge you my faith.

*(Then shall the minister cause the woman, using their given names, to say after him:)*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy law; and thereto I pledge you my faith.

*(If an exchange of rings is desired, the minister shall ask for the rings, deliver the ring to the man, and say:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, place this ring on the finger of your bride and repeat after me: This ring I give you, in token and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love.

*(The minister shall then deliver the ring to the woman and say:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, place this ring on the finger of your groom and repeat after me: This ring I give you, in token and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love.

*(Here may be offered the following prayer, or an extemporaneous prayer closing with the Lord's Prayer.)*

O eternal God, creator and preserver of all mankind, giver of all spiritual grace, the author of life everlasting, let Your blessing descend and rest upon these Your children, whom we bless in Your name. Bless this marriage and make it to them the source of abundant and enduring good. Look graciously upon them that they may love, honor, and cherish each other. May their mutual affection never know change, doubt, nor decay. Direct and strengthen them in the discharge of all their duties. Bless the home which they establish. Teach them to order their household wisely and well, and to regard all their possessions as Your gifts to be employed in Your service. May they so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and a place of peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Then shall the minister cause the man and woman to join right hands and placing a hand on top of theirs shall say:)*

Forasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company and thereto have pledged their faith each to the other, and have declared the same by joining hands [and by giving and receiving rings]; I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together let not man put asunder. Amen.

*(Then the minister shall give this blessing.)*

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

### **B. Marriage Ceremony—Shorter Form**

**5680.** *(At the day and time appointed for the solemnizing of matrimony, the persons to be married standing together, the man on the right hand of the woman, the minister shall say:)*

My friends, the ordinance of marriage was instituted by God Himself in the garden of Eden, and is one of the most solemn and binding of obligations, because it involves the sacred relations of the home and the family. Your happiness for the future will largely depend upon the faithfulness with which the marriage vows are cherished and kept. There must be mutual affection the one for the other, and the marriage covenant must be kept in purity of spirit, as well as in actual word and deed, if you would reap the full fruition of happiness in your marriage.

If, with full and free consent, and thoughtful determination to keep the marriage covenant, you desire to enter the holy estate of marriage, you will acknowledge the same by taking the other by the right hand.

*(With their hands joined, the minister shall address the man by name, and ask:)*

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

*(The man shall answer:)*

I will.

*(Then the minister shall address the woman by name, and ask:)*

Will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort

him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

*(The woman shall answer:)*

I will.

*(Then the minister shall place a right hand upon their joined hands and say:)*

Since they have taken the marriage covenant before God, and in the presence of these witnesses, by the authority committed unto me as a minister of the church of Jesus Christ, I declare that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are now husband and wife, according to the ordinance of God and the law of the state, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together let not man put asunder. Amen.

*(Then the minister shall offer an appropriate prayer.)*



## Chapter 5

### BURIAL OF THE DEAD

#### 5700. At the House, Church, or Funeral Chapel.

##### Opening Sentences

*(The minister shall open the service with an opening sentence, such as one of the following:)*

“I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.  
And after my skin has been destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I will see God;  
I myself will see him  
with my own eyes—I, and not another” (Job 19:25–27).

“God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging” (Ps. 46:1–3).

“I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (John 5:25).

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die’” (John 11:25–26).

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Cor. 1:3–4).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the

things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17–18 NKJV).

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6–8).

### Hymn

*(Then a hymn shall be sung, or played. Then the minister shall read a Scripture lesson, such as one of the following:)*

### Scripture Readings

“Show me, O LORD, my life’s end  
 and the number of my days;  
 let me know how fleeting is my life.  
 You have made my days a mere handbreadth;  
 the span of my years is as nothing before you.  
 Each man’s life is but a breath.  
 Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro:  
 He bustles about, but only in vain;  
 he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.  
 But now, LORD, what do I look for?  
 My hope is in you” (Ps. 39:4–7).

“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.  
 Before the mountains were brought forth,  
 Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,  
 Even from everlasting to everlasting, You *are* God.

For a thousand years in Your sight  
*Are* like yesterday when it is past,  
 And *like* a watch in the night.

We finish our years like a sigh.  
The days of our lives *are* seventy years;  
And if by reason of strength *they are* eighty years,  
Yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow;  
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

So teach *us* to number our days,  
That we may gain a heart of wisdom”  
(Ps. 90:1–2, 4, 9b–10, 12, NKJV).

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?  
Where, O death, is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:20–26, 51–52, 54–58).

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

‘Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb.’

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

‘Amen!  
Praise and glory  
and wisdom and thanks and honor  
and power and strength  
be to our God for ever and ever.  
Amen!’

Then one of the elders asked me, ‘These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?’ I answered, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said, ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore,

‘they are before the throne of God  
and serve him day and night in his temple;  
and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.  
Never again will they hunger;  
never again will they thirst.  
The sun will not beat upon them,  
nor any scorching heat.  
For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd;  
he will lead them to springs of living water.  
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’” (Rev. 7:9–17).

### **Prayer**

*(Then the minister shall pray an extemporaneous prayer or use the following prayer:)*

O God of life, as we have learned to do in all our experiences, we come to You in the hour of death. We know that You love us, and that You can turn even the shadow of death into the light of morning. Help us now to wait before You with reverent and submissive hearts. Make this a time of opening our eyes and our

understanding, and a time of admonition to our hearts and souls. Bless those who feel this sorrow most keenly, and cause the bonds of Christian love to bind us closer together, so that we may share with them that spiritual strength and that faith in God which is ours through the love of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

### **Message and Prayer**

*(Then the minister shall preach a funeral message. The service may be closed with an extemporaneous prayer, and the following benediction:)*

### **Benediction**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit abide with us now and evermore. Amen.

### **5725. At the Graveside.**

### **Scripture Readings**

*(The minister shall read a brief Scripture lesson, such as one of the following:)*

“I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
 where does my help come from?  
 My help comes from the LORD,  
 the Maker of heaven and earth.  
 He will not let your foot slip—  
 he who watches over you will not slumber;  
 indeed, he who watches over Israel  
 will neither slumber nor sleep.  
 The LORD watches over you—  
 the LORD is your shade at your right hand;  
 the sun will not harm you by day,  
 nor the moon by night.  
 The LORD will keep you from all harm—  
 he will watch over your life;  
 the LORD will watch over your coming and going  
 both now and forevermore” (Ps. 121).

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am

going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:1-6).

### Committals

*(Then the minister shall read one of the following committals:)*

And now, we commit this body to its resting place; and we commit the spirit, O our Father, together with every sacred interest of our hearts, into Your keeping; praying that You will deal graciously and mercifully with each of us, until we too shall come to You in glory, through the riches of grace in Jesus our Lord.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. 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.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son'" (Rev. 21:1-7).

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more

night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:1–5).

### **Prayer and Benediction**

*(Then the minister may offer a brief extemporaneous prayer, and conclude with the following benediction:)*

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## Chapter 6

### ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

#### A. Regulations

**5750.** That portion of the ritual of ordination “Examination of Candidates” (5772) has the authority of statutory law, and must be followed as prescribed.

**5752.** The ordination service shall be planned by the Council of Ordination (1405; 3070:6) and shall be presided over by the General Superintendent (1935) or, in absence of the General Superintendent (3091), by the district superintendent (1310:23). They shall be assisted in the various parts of the service and in the act of ordination by the Council of Ordination (1405; 3070:6).

#### B. The Order of the Ordination of Ministers

##### Call to Worship

**5755.** *(The appointed minister shall commence the service with a Call to Worship, such as Isa. 52:7; 1 Cor. 1:21–24; 2 Cor. 4:5–6.)*

##### Hymn

*(Then the congregation shall join in singing a hymn, such as: “Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak,” “A Charge to Keep I Have,” “Lead On, O King Eternal,” “Soldiers of Christ, Arise,” “Conquering Now and Still to Conquer.”)*

##### Invocation

*(Then the minister appointed shall give the invocation:)*

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by the Holy Spirit has appointed ordained ministers in the church, grant us Your assistance in this service given to the ordination of such ministers, and mercifully behold *these Your servants*, now called to this office, and replenish them so with the truth of Your doctrine, and adorn *them* with innocence of life, that both by word and good example *they* may faithfully serve You in this office to the glory of Your name and the edification of Your church, through the merits of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.



### Sermon

*(Then the General Superintendent or the minister appointed [3091] shall preach the ordination sermon [1935].)*

### Presentation of Candidates

**5758.** *(Then the district superintendent or the appointed representative shall have those to be ordained to stand and shall present them to the General Superintendent, saying:)*

I present *(read names aloud)* to be ordained as *(a) minister(s)* in The Wesleyan Church and in the church universal.

### Acceptance of Candidates

*(Then the presiding minister [5752] shall say to the people:)*

Dear friends, *these* are *they* whom we purpose, God willing, this day to ordain *ministers*. For, after due examination, we find that *they* are truly called to this function and ministry, and that *they* are qualified for the same.

*(The ordinands shall be seated, after which the appointed ministers shall read the Epistle and the Gospel, respectively:)*

### The Epistle

**5762.** “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things” (Eph. 3:7–9).

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for 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” (Eph. 4:11–13).

### The Gospel

**5765.** “Therefore Jesus said again, ‘I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. . . . I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:7, 9–16).

### The Charge

**5768.** *(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5752] shall ask the candidates to stand for the Charge and the Examination and shall address the candidates, giving the Charge:)*

Dear *Servant(s)* of God:

You have heard, both in your private examination by the district board of ministerial development and in the message which has just been delivered, something of the importance of the ministry to which you are called. You are *undershepherd(s)* of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, called to teach and admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord’s family, to bring the lost into the fold, to bring each person unto the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Remember always the greatness of this responsibility and give *yourselves* without reservation unto the ministry to which God has called you. We charge you to pray daily for divine guidance and strengthening so that by your study of the Scriptures and your own personal growth and development you may both model the ideal of Christ and lead your people to live in keeping with His example and instructions.

### Examination of Candidates

**5772.** *(Then while the candidates remain standing, the presiding minister [3091; 5752] shall administer the Examination to the candidates:)*

This assembled congregation represents the church of Jesus Christ everywhere as they witness your responses to the inquiries we shall make of you. In this way we shall understand your mind and will in these things, and you may also be moved to greater faithfulness in doing your duties.

**Question:** Is it your sincere conviction that you have been called of God to the office and work of a minister, and are you persuaded that you ought to fulfill that call by serving as an ordained minister in The Wesleyan Church and among God's people everywhere?

**Answer:** That is my sincere conviction.

**Question:** Do you believe the Holy Scriptures are the fully inspired and inerrant written Word of God, containing sufficiently all doctrine necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Christ Jesus? Are you determined to instruct people from the Scriptures in order that they may be born again in Christ, become committed to holy living, and be prepared to serve for the upbuilding of the Christian community in this present age?

**Answer:** All of this I believe, and accept as my duty.

**Question:** Do you cordially accept our Articles of Religion and Guides and Helps to Holy Living, and agree to declare and defend them? And do you recognize your responsibility and cheerfully accept your obligation to promote and support The Wesleyan Church and all institutions and ministries approved by The Wesleyan Church?

**Answer:** Yes, I do.

**Question:** Will you with diligence minister the doctrines, sacraments, and disciplines of Christ, being always ready to challenge strange doctrine which is contrary to God's Word wherever it may arise?

**Answer:** I will, as God enables me.

**Question:** Do you intend to make reading of the Word and effectual prayer your earnest pursuit, and will you seek to make your lifestyle and family government exemplary so far as is possible for you?

**Answer:** Yes, the Lord being my helper.

**Question:** Believing that accountability and acceptance of authority is God's design for His church, will you cheerfully accept the direction of those whom the Church may place over you in the doing of your work?

**Answer:** I will cheerfully do so.

### Covenant with Candidates' Spouses

**5775.** *(Then, if it is so desired, the presiding minister [3091; 5752] may call the spouses of the candidates to come and stand beside them, and shall address them saying:)*

It is the teaching of Scripture that a spouse shall be a loving companion in the ministry of a mate. You have witnessed the examination of your marriage partner in which commitment to the work and responsibilities of ministry has been stated. Your participation in God's purposes for ministry through your marriage partner is important also. You will be needed to share in prayer, to extend love and compassion to all, to carry forward the example of marriage harmony and family wholesomeness. As the companion of your loved one who is now entering the ranks of ordained ministers in the Church, will you dedicate yourself to complement and embrace that ministry as God enables you?

**Answer:** I will, by God's grace.

### Act of Ordination

**5782.** *(Then the candidates for ordination shall kneel, and, if so desired, their spouses may kneel at their sides, and the presiding minister [3091; 5752] and the Council of Ordination shall lay their hands severally upon the head of each one, and the presiding minister (3091; 5752) shall say:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, as we lay our hands upon you we ask the Lord to give the unusual outpouring of the Holy Spirit needed for your service as an ordained minister in the Church. May God's anointing enable you to be a faithful exponent of His Word, and an instrument for His holy sacraments, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen!

\_\_\_\_\_, take authority to preach the Word of God, to administer the holy sacraments, and to perform the duties of an ordained minister in the Church.

### Prayer for Enduement

**5785.** *(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5752] or other appointed minister shall pray an extemporaneous prayer of enduement or use the following:)*

Our Father, we beseech You to send upon *these* Your servants Your heavenly blessings: that *they* may be clothed with righteousness and with the power of the Holy Spirit, that Your Word spoken in *their mouths* may have success and that it may never be spoken in vain. Grant also that we may have grace to hear and to receive what *they* shall deliver out of Your Holy Word as the means of our

salvation; and that in all our words and deeds we may seek Your glory and the increase of Your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Assist us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Your most gracious favor, and further us with Your continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in You, we may glorify Your holy name, and finally by Your mercy obtain everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Right Hand of Fellowship**

**5788.** *(The newly ordained ministers shall then arise, and the presiding minister [3091; 5752] and the members of the Council of Ordination shall extend to each the right hand of fellowship, welcoming the newly ordained ministers to the work and labors of the ministry. Then the presiding minister may direct the congregation to file by and greet the newly ordained ministers, or the service may be closed with the following benediction:)*

### **Benediction**

**5792.** “May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever Amen” (Heb. 13:20–21).

## Chapter 7

# COMMISSIONING OF MINISTERS

### A. Regulations

**5800.** That portion of the ritual of commissioning ministers entitled “Examination of Candidates” (5825) has the authority of statutory law, and must be followed as prescribed.

**5805.** The commissioning service shall be planned by the Council of Ordination (1405) and shall be presided over by the General Superintendent (1935), or a representative appointed by the General Superintendent (3091), or if absent by the district superintendent (1310:23). They shall be assisted in the various parts of the service and in the act of commissioning by the Council of Ordination (1405; 3059:1f).

### B. The Order of the Commissioning of Ministers

#### Invocation

**5810.** *(The minister appointed shall give an extemporaneous invocation.)*

#### Hymn

*(Then the congregation shall join in singing a hymn, such as “Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak,” “A Charge to Keep I Have,” “Take My Life and Let It Be.”)*

#### Scripture Reading

*(Then the minister appointed shall read a Scripture lesson, such as 1 Tim. 6:3–16; 2 Tim. 1:6–14; 2:1–16, 22–26; 4:1–8; Titus 2:11–15; 3:3–9.)*

#### Sermon

*(Then a sermon or address may be given [1935; 3091].)*

### Presentation of Candidates

**5815.** *(Then the appointed minister shall bring the candidates and present them to the General Superintendent, saying:)*

I present *(read names)* to be commissioned as ministers in The Wesleyan Church.

*(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5805] shall say unto the people:)*

Dear friends, *these are they* whom we purpose, God willing, this day to commission as *ministers*. For, after due examination, we find that *they are* truly called to this function and ministry, and that *they are* qualified for the same.

### The Charge

**5820.** *(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5805] shall address the candidates, giving the charge:)*

Dear Servants of God:

You have heard, both in your private examination by the district board of ministerial development and in the message which has just been delivered, something of the importance of the ministry to which you are called. You are *undershepherds* of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, called to teach and admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family, to bring the lost into the fold, to bring each person unto the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Remember always the greatness of this responsibility and give *yourselves* without reservation unto the ministry to which God has called you. We charge you to pray daily for divine guidance and strengthening so that by your study of the Scriptures and your own personal growth and development you may both model the ideal of Christ and lead your people to live in keeping with His example and instructions.

### Examination of Candidates

**5825.** *(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5805] shall administer the examination to the candidates:)*

Is it your sincere conviction that you have been called of God to serve as a commissioned minister in The Wesleyan Church?

**Answer:** That is my sincere conviction.

**Question:** Do you believe the Holy Scriptures are the fully inspired and inerrant written Word of God, containing sufficiently all doctrine necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Christ Jesus? Are you determined to instruct

people from the Scriptures in order that they may be born again in Christ, become committed to holy living, and be prepared to serve for the upbuilding of the Christian community in this present age?

**Answer:** All of this I believe, and accept as my duty.

**Question:** Do you cordially accept our Articles of Religion and Guides and Helps to Holy Living, and agree to declare and defend them? And do you recognize your responsibility and cheerfully accept your obligation to promote and support The Wesleyan Church and all institutions and ministries approved by The Wesleyan Church?

**Answer:** Yes, I do.

**Question:** Will you with diligence minister the doctrines, sacraments, and disciplines of Christ, being always ready to challenge strange doctrine which is contrary to God's Word wherever it may arise?

**Answer:** I will, as God enables me.

**Question:** Do you intend to make reading of the Word and effectual prayer your earnest pursuit, and will you seek to make your lifestyle and family government exemplary so far as is possible for you?

**Answer:** Yes, the Lord being my helper.

**Question:** Believing that accountability and acceptance of authority is God's design for His church, will you cheerfully accept the direction of those whom the Church may place over you in the doing of your work?

**Answer:** I will cheerfully do so.

### Covenant with Candidates' Spouses

**5835.** *(Then if it is so desired, the presiding minister [3091; 5805] may call the spouses of the candidates to come and stand beside them, and shall address them saying:)*

It is the teaching of Scripture that a spouse shall be a loving companion in the ministry of a mate. You have witnessed the examination of your marriage partner in which commitment to the work and responsibilities of ministry has been stated. Your participation in God's purposes for ministry through your marriage partner is important also. You will be needed to share in prayer, to extend love and compassion to all, to carry forward the example of marriage harmony and family wholesomeness. As the companion of your loved one who is now entering the ranks of commissioned ministers in the Church, will you dedicate yourself to complement and embrace that ministry as God enables you?

**Answer:** I will, by God's grace.



### **Act of Commissioning**

**5840.** *(Then the candidates for commissioning shall kneel, and if so desired, their spouses may kneel at their sides, and the presiding minister (3091; 5805) and the Council of Ordination shall lay their hands severally upon the head of each one, and the presiding minister shall say:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, as we lay our hands upon you we ask the Lord to give the unusual outpouring of the Holy Spirit needed for your service as a commissioned minister in the Church. May God's anointing enable you to be a faithful exponent of His Word, and an instrument for His holy sacraments, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen!

\_\_\_\_\_, take authority to preach the Word of God, to administer the sacraments, and to perform the duties of a commissioned minister in the Church.

### **Prayer for Empowerment**

**5845.** *(Then the appointed minister shall pray an extemporaneous prayer for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit upon each candidate.)*

### **Right Hand of Fellowship**

*(The newly commissioned ministers shall then arise, and the presiding minister [3091; 5805] and the members of the Council of Ordination shall extend to each the right hand of fellowship, welcoming them to the work and labors of the ministry. Then the presiding minister may direct the congregation to file by and greet the newly commissioned ministers, or the service shall be closed with the following benediction:)*

### **Benediction**

“May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20–21).

## Chapter 8

### COMMISSIONING OF LAY WORKERS

**5850.** The commissioning service shall be planned by the Council of Ordination (1405) and shall be presided over by the General Superintendent when present (1935) or, if absent, by a representative appointed by the General Superintendent (3091) or by the district superintendent (1310:23).

#### **5855. Order of Commissioning of Lay Workers.**

*(This ritual is adaptable for use in commissioning any type of lay worker, including special workers, such as director of music, director of spiritual formation, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry; lay missionaries, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, spouses of ordained missionaries, office workers; and any other lay worker commissioned by a district conference. In each case, the presiding minister [3091; 5850] and others helping in the commissioning service [1405; 1935; 3470; 3490] shall insert the title of the commission being granted in the blanks, and make such other adaptations or modifications as are needed.)*

#### **Invocation**

**5860.** *(The presiding minister or other appointed minister shall give an extemporaneous invocation.)*

#### **Hymn**

*(Then the congregation shall join in singing a hymn, such as one of the following: "Take My Life and Let It Be," "Hear Ye the Master's Call," "Give of Your Best to the Master," "Hark! The Voice of Jesus Calling.")*

#### **Scripture Reading**

*(Then the presiding minister or other appointed minister shall read a Scripture lesson, such as one of the following: Acts 2:41-44 and 6:1-8; Rom. 12:4-15; 1 Cor. 12:4-12.)*

#### **Sermon**

*(Then the presiding minister or other appointed minister may give a sermon or address declaring the need and function of lay workers.)*

### Presentation of Candidates

**5865.** *(Then the district superintendent shall present the candidates individually to the General Superintendent, saying:)*

I present \_\_\_\_\_ unto you to be commissioned as \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5850] shall address the congregation, saying:)*

Dear Friends, *these are they* whom we purpose this day to commission as \_\_\_\_\_ in The Wesleyan Church. After inquiry and examination, we discover that *they have* met the stated requirements of the Church, and we believe *them* to be worthy and proper *persons* for this service.

### Address to Candidates

**5870.** *(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5850] shall address the candidates, saying:)*

Dear Friends, we rejoice that in the providence of God a door of usefulness has been opened to you in the service of the Church. It is with infinite wisdom that God has provided diversities of gifts for His workers, distributing and administering them according to His good pleasure through the Holy Spirit. It is with joy that we have watched God's will revealed in your *lives*, and your own resolve grow firm to use your *gifts* for His glory. Turning aside from worldly interests and pursuits, you are devoting *yourselves* to the Lord's work, and to being *helpers* of the ministry. You will be pouring out of your talent, your time, your possessions, your strength, your very *selves* in a living sacrifice to Christ. You have not entered upon this solemn responsibility lightly, and doubtless already in the sacred stillness of the sanctuary of your heart you have consecrated *yourselves* to this service. What you have done alone with God, you do now formally and publicly in the presence of the Church.

### Questioning of Candidates

**5875.** *(Then the presiding minister [3091; 5850] shall question the candidates:)*

Do you believe that you have been led by the Spirit and the providences of God to engage in this work and to assume the duties of this service?

**Answer:** I do.

Do you, in the presence of God and of this congregation, promise faithfully to perform the duties of \_\_\_\_\_ in The Wesleyan Church?

**Answer:** I do.

Do you accept the Bible as God's Word, and will you make it a lamp to your feet and a light unto your path?

**Answer:** I accept it, and will walk in its light.

Will you be diligent in prayer, in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and in such other devotions as will help you to grow in the knowledge and love of God?

**Answer:** I will.

Will you cheerfully accept the direction of those whom the Church may place over you in the doing of your work?

**Answer:** I will cheerfully do so.

### Consecration of Candidates

**5880.** *(Then the candidates shall kneel for a brief season of silent prayer, after which the presiding minister or other appointed minister shall pray extemporaneously or use the following:)*

Our Father, who called Stephen, Lydia, and other lay members into the service of Your church, look upon *these* Your servants who are to be set apart to service as \_\_\_\_\_. Give, we pray, such understanding of Your holy gospel, such firmness of Christian purpose, such diligence in service, and such beauty of life in Christ, that they may be to all whom *they teach* or *serve* a worthy revelation of the meaning and power of the Christian life. May *they* so order *their* time and nourish *their minds* and *hearts* that *they* may constantly grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and steadily increase in the ability to lead others unto Him. Grant that *they* may have strength of body, mind, and soul for the fulfillment of Your will in the holy task to which You have called *them*; and grant *them* Your Holy Spirit, that they may worthily discharge the work committed to *them*, to the blessing of all people and to the praise of Christ our Savior. Amen.

*(Then the presiding minister shall address the candidates, saying:)*

May the Spirit of the living God descend upon you and abide with you always. May His holy anointing impart to you the grace for every trial, and gifts for every duty. May His presence be to you a pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night, all along the journey of life. And may the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and evermore. Amen.

### **Act of Commissioning**

**5885.** *(Then the candidates shall rise, and the presiding minister shall take each by the hand and say:)*

I commission you to service as \_\_\_\_\_ in The Wesleyan Church, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Hymn**

*(Then the congregation shall join in singing a hymn, such as one of the following: "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee," "O Jesus, I Have Promised," "Work, for the Night Is Coming," "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go.")*

### **Benediction**

*(Then the presiding minister or other appointed minister shall pronounce the benediction:)*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

## Chapter 9

### INSTALLATION CEREMONIES

#### A. General Regulations

**5900.** The installation ceremonies provided herewith shall normally be used as a part of some general service of worship, and in most instances the other parts of the service, such as hymns, Scripture readings, and prayers, will need to be supplied, being chosen in such a manner as to give the entire service unity and dignity.

#### B. Installation of a Pastor

##### **5905. Order of Installation of a Pastor.**

*(The district superintendent or representative shall preside over the installation of a pastor [1310:23]. The presiding minister or other appointed minister shall give the invocation:)*

O Lord, You have made known Your will to us that we should pray for You to send forth laborers into Your harvest. We earnestly ask You to send forth into the world true teachers and ministers of Your Word, and to enlighten their minds with the knowledge of Your truth, that they may faithfully make known the whole counsel of God unto salvation, to the glory of Your name and the saving of souls; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

*(The presiding minister or other appointed minister may read a Scripture lesson such as John 15:1-8 and may deliver an appropriate message. At the proper time, the presiding minister shall address the congregation, saying:)*

Dear friends, we are assembled before God to install the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, who has answered your call to become the pastor of this church, and whose installation has been duly authorized by the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church.

*(The pastor shall come and stand before the presiding minister, who shall address the pastor, saying:)*

Dear fellow minister, the duties of your holy office are clearly set forth in the Word of God. As an ambassador of our Lord Jesus Christ, you are first of all to preach both law and gospel, as they are comprehended in the Holy Scriptures and defined in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*. This you are to do without the addition of private opinion, as the apostle admonishes,

“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God” (1 Peter 4:11).

Whatever is contrary to sound doctrine shall be refuted with all restraint as the Scripture warns, “The Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct” (2 Tim. 2:24–25a).

Those who are committed to your pastoral care are to be diligently admonished to walk in the commandments of the Lord blamelessly. The erring are to be warned with the fidelity which the Word of the Lord demands of faithful pastors, as the prophet Ezekiel was instructed, “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel” (Ezek. 3:17).

You are also to be the steward of the holy sacraments which you are to administer to the comfort of troubled souls.

In view of the Savior’s gracious words, “Let the little children come to me” (Mark 10:14), the children and youth of the church must in a special sense be the object of your pastoral instruction and care.

The measure of faithfulness with which you are to seek the erring is set forth in the Holy Scriptures in the words of the apostle Paul who said, “I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

The example of holy men and women of God will impel you to pray diligently for your people and to be a pattern unto them in faith and good works.

Do you therefore earnestly purpose to diligently fulfill these duties, and thus be able in this life to answer before The Wesleyan Church and the church universal, and in the life to come to give an account before the judgment seat of Christ?

**Answer:** Yes, I do so purpose, by the help of God.

“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. . . . Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:1–2, 5).

*(The congregation shall rise, and the presiding minister shall address them, saying:)*

And now, dear friends, I admonish you to receive as your pastor the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, whom God has given you. Accept the Word of God as preached by His messenger to you, whether it be for your comfort, your admonition or your instruction, even as Christ has said, “Consider carefully how you listen” (Luke 8:18).

Use all diligence that your children receive instruction in the Christian faith and are present with you in the services at God's house, in accordance with the counsel of the apostle Paul to Christian parents to bring children "up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Pray for your pastor that the ministry offered in this place may tend to the salvation of many souls, and that through sacrificial labors, you, together with your pastor, may be saved.

Honor and esteem the one who is to minister to your souls. As the apostle Paul exhorts, "Respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other" (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

Do you now, as becomes a Christian church, accept these obligations?

**Answer:** Yes, by the help of God.

*(Then the presiding minister shall address the pastor, saying:)*

Upon these, your solemn mutual promises, I now install you, the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, as pastor of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Then the presiding minister shall lead in prayer, concluding by leading the congregation in the Lord's Prayer. Then the presiding minister shall address the congregation and the pastor, saying:)*

The Lord bless you that you may bring forth much fruit and that your fruit may remain.

*(Then the congregation shall join in singing a hymn such as, "A Charge to Keep I Have." Then the congregation may come forward to greet the pastor and family at the altar. The pastor shall pronounce the benediction.)*

### C. Installation of Local Church Officers

#### 5915. Order of Installation of Local Church Officers.

*(This installation may be held during a Sunday morning service or other appropriate service just prior to the time when the newly elected officers shall assume their duties. The congregation may join in singing a hymn, such as: "A Charge to Keep I Have," or "I'll Live for Him Who Died for Me." The pastor may read a Scripture lesson such as Acts 2:41-44 and 6:1-8. Depending upon the number of officers involved, the pastor may wish to read something concerning their duties from The Discipline. At the proper time, the pastor shall call the newly elected officers before the congregation, and shall address them, saying:)*

Dear friends, it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles that when the early church was growing and the number of disciples was multiplying, and the duties



of the church so increased, and so became diversified, that the church called its members together and chose those of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, to assist in administering the affairs of the church; and that the officers thus chosen by the church were set before the apostles, who laid hands on them and prayed, thus setting them apart in the presence of the church to the duties of their honorable office.

In like manner this church, having first sought the guidance of the divine Spirit, has chosen you to similar offices to be associated with those already in office and with the pastor before whom you have now come for public consecration.

Therefore, we, the pastor and the people of this church, call upon you to hear and join in this pledge of trust to Christ and His church.

### **The Officers' Pledge**

**5920.** Trusting in Jesus Christ, the great head of the church, I humbly promise Him and His church that I will be faithful to the extent of my ability to all known duties and responsibilities assigned to me as an officer of this church. I will endeavor to be regular in my attendance, cheerful in my service, wholehearted in my giving, open-minded in my planning, patient in the face of trials, persistent in the face of difficulty, and Christlike in my faithfulness to His service. I will seek by example and precept the promotion of Christian fellowship among all our members and the spreading of the message of full salvation at home and abroad. Do you cheerfully and yet solemnly accept the obligations of this pledge?

**Answer:** I do.

*(Then the pastor shall address the congregation, asking them to stand, and saying:)*

We, the pastor and officers of this church, call upon the members and friends of this church to hear and join in this pledge of loyalty to those called of God and elected by the church as its leaders.

### **The Church's Pledge**

**5925.** Having chosen these officers to guide us in the administration of the church, we, its members and friends, do now pledge our loyalty to its work and promise our consideration of the plans and our friendly cooperation in the service suggested to us. We acknowledge our duty and declare our determination to pray for all our leaders and to share with them in the glorious responsibility

of spreading the good news, thus hastening the coming of Christ. Do you cheerfully and yet solemnly accept the obligations of this pledge?

**Answer:** We do.

*(The officers shall then kneel at the altar while the pastor and people offer prayer in their behalf.)*

## D. Installation of District Superintendent

### 5930. Order of Installation of a District Superintendent.

*(The General Superintendent or representative shall be in charge of installing the district superintendent before the adjournment of the district conference in which election to the office has occurred [1935]. The newly elected district superintendent, and such other district officers as are desired, shall be called before the General Superintendent, who shall first address the district superintendent, saying:)*

District superintendent \_\_\_\_\_, today you stand before us along with the other duly elected officers of the district. You have been prayerfully selected by this district conference to serve as leader of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church. It is in you that the ministers and members of the various churches within the bounds of this district are investing their confidence and trust. Yours is indeed a position of significant honor and responsibility, and it is only as God is with you that you will be enabled to fill it.

In counseling, may He grant needed grace; in decisions, may He impart of His wisdom; in labors, may your secret be His all-sufficient strength; in administration's numerous phases, may He be your "very present help." The support and cooperation of this body are assured you in the days that lie ahead. Together may you build a district that knows its best days spiritually, numerically, and materially as well.

And now, that we may hear publicly your intentions to accept this charge with proper regard for all that is therewith involved, we ask you in the presence of God and of these witnesses, do you accept the office of superintendent of the district, and do you hereby solemnly covenant to discharge your duties to God, to The Wesleyan Church, and to all the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ District, according to *The Discipline* and in the fear of God?

**Answer:** I do, God being my helper.

*(The General Superintendent shall address the other district officers, saying:)*

Do you, as officers representing the \_\_\_\_\_ District, covenant to support the district superintendent and to discharge your several duties to God, to The Wesleyan Church, and to all the members of this district, according to *The Discipline* and in the fear of God?

**Answer:** We do, God being our helper.

*(Then the General Superintendent shall address the district superintendent, saying:)*

As representative of The Wesleyan Church, I charge you with this responsibility and declare you to be formally installed as superintendent of the \_\_\_\_\_ District, entitled to the rights and privileges thereunto pertaining.

*(Then the General Superintendent shall lead in prayer.)*

## E. Installation of General Officials

### 5935. Order of Installation of General Officials.

*(In the parts of the service prior to the actual installation, a Scripture lesson such as 1 Corinthians 12:14–28 shall be read. The person appointed to preside over the service shall be responsible for giving the various charges, and shall address the congregation, saying:)*

According to Acts, chapter 6, the Holy Spirit led the first-century church to select persons for positions of service according to gifts bestowed upon them. So the Holy Spirit has led The Wesleyan Church to choose persons believed to be blameless in heart as well as in life, possessing in measure the qualifications for the offices to which they are called. These persons we now come to set apart as general officials.

*(Then the chair shall address the elected General Superintendent, saying:)*

Will the General Superintendent-elect please stand. \_\_\_\_\_, *Name of elected*, the Church has called you to its most honored and responsible place of leadership, to the office of General Superintendent. This high office is one of great importance and dignity, imposing weighty responsibilities and demanding earnest, arduous, and self-sacrificing labor. In assuming your duties, you become a steward over the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church worldwide.

You have been chosen for the office of General Superintendent because the Church recognizes in you the leadership abilities to carry spiritual and administrative authority in humility that is born of love. Further, you exemplify the high standard for Christian leadership set forth in the Word of God by Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to Titus, when he said, “Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message

as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:7–9).

Do you accept the office of General Superintendent, and promise that you will faithfully endeavor to discharge your duties as set forth in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*?

**Answer:** I do.

Inasmuch as the Church has elected you to this high office, and you have declared your willingness to accept it and your sincere purpose to discharge faithfully your duties as a General Superintendent, you are hereby set apart to this service in the Church.

May faith, courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity be in you and abound, so that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in your leadership of the Church. Amen.

*(Then the General Superintendent shall be seated, and the chair shall address those others elected as general officials, saying:)*

The Church is served by general officials, some elected by this General Conference, and some elected by the General Board.

Will \_\_\_\_\_, elected as Executive Director of the Communication and Administration Division; \_\_\_\_\_, elected as Executive Director of the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division; \_\_\_\_\_, elected as Executive Director of the Education and Clergy Development Division; \_\_\_\_\_, elected as Executive Director of the Global Partners Division; and \_\_\_\_\_, elected as General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer please stand.

The Wesleyan Church has honored you by electing you to stand with the General Superintendent as the general officials of the Church. These are highly esteemed places of leadership. In assuming these offices, you become the recipients of respect and deference from faithful Wesleyans around the world.

In connection with your respective offices, *The Discipline* charges you under the direction of the General Board with the responsibility of the secretarial and corporate affairs of the Church, the development and promotion of the work of spiritual formation, the promotion and administration of the outreach of the Church into new areas of the homeland, the promotion and correlation of the Church’s educational institutions, the administration of a program of worldwide missions, the editorship of the official Church publication, the administration of the financial affairs of the Church, the publication and distribution of materials as resources for the growth of the Church, the communication of the gospel through the written and spoken word, and the promotion of the current and ongoing stewardship of those who make up our fellowship. Your service in these offices

will impose duties which cannot be faithfully performed without self-denial and self-sacrifice. You must spend and be spent for the Church in the spirit of joyful service. Your election to these offices is evidence of the confidence the Church has in you as Christian leaders. May your leadership always inspire such confidence, to the glory of God.

Do you accept the office to which the Church has elected you, and do you promise to discharge your duties as God may help you?

**Answer:** I do.

Inasmuch as the Church has elected you to these high offices, and you have declared your willingness to accept them and your sincere purpose to discharge faithfully your several duties, you are now set apart to this service in the Church.

May you be strong to do God's will and have great joy in your labors. Amen.

*(Then the other general officials shall be seated, and the chair shall address the area representatives of the General Board, saying:)*

Will the area representatives of the General Board please stand.

Having carefully considered the responsibilities and obligations of service as members of the General Board as set forth in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*, will you, with just appreciation of these responsibilities and obligations, accept this service to which you are called?

**Answer:** I will.

Will you promise that, always seeking divine help, you will faithfully serve as a member of the General Board of The Wesleyan Church, assisting to govern and direct its affairs in a manner which will make for peace, purity, and spiritual growth throughout the denomination?

**Answer:** I will.

*(The General Superintendent and other general officials shall stand once again, and the chair shall address them and the area representatives of the General Board collectively, saying:)*

Forasmuch as you have been chosen and have declared your willingness to accept the service to which you have been elected, you are hereby formally recognized as the general officials and General Board of The Wesleyan Church. May you always be worthy of the honor conferred upon you and the trust reposed in you by the Church. And may God, by whose providence you have been set apart to this service, grant that "the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Amen.

*(Then the chair shall address the congregation, saying:)*

Have you, members and representatives of The Wesleyan Church worldwide, seeking the guidance of divine wisdom, chosen the persons who now stand before

you to take charge of your denominational activities and interests as general officials and members of the General Board?

**Answer:** We have.

Will you pledge to honor, encourage, and cooperate with them in all things consistent with the will of God, and will you zealously aid them in the discharge of their official duties?

**Answer:** We will.

*(Then the chair shall address the General Superintendent, other general officials, and area representatives of the General Board, saying:)*

Take to yourselves the office to which you have been called, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Then the chair shall pray:)*

O Lord, we ask that You set apart these Your servants unto the work to which You have called them by the voice of the Church.

Endue them with heavenly vision. Grant to them Your grace that they may serve You well, being full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, administering the work of their office in the fear of the Lord.

Give these Your servants favor and influence throughout Your church. May Your work increase and advance because of Your blessings and their diligence.

Equip these officers for their respective duties and enable them to be faithful in all things, so that when the Great Shepherd shall appear, each may receive a crown of glory that does not fade away.

Through Christ we bring this petition. Amen.

## F. Installation of a College or University President

### 5945. Order of Installation of a College or University President.

*(The General Superintendent, chair of the board of trustees, or other appointed official shall formally and officially install a college/university president at the proper time during the convocation of inauguration. The chair shall address the president, saying:)*

President \_\_\_\_\_, you have been chosen as the leader of \_\_\_\_\_ College/University. The Wesleyan Church is placing under your guidance and leadership not only the physical plant which is about us, the loyal faculty which serves here, but also the sons and daughters from our homes who are to be nurtured in the Christian tradition. They are the foundation both for tomorrow's Church and for your future constituency.

As president of \_\_\_\_\_ College/University, yours is both a priceless heritage and a grave responsibility. You are to be the one to whom

all institutional personnel are responsible. It will be your task to interpret the college/university program to the faculty, the student body, the board of trustees, the constituency, and the general public. Yours is one of many educational institutions which through an unending stream of trained students constantly condition the thought life of our age. The heritage, the doctrines, and the ideals of The Wesleyan Church will be projected to succeeding generations only as you dedicate yourself to their preservation in the present. And if free institutions are to endure in the society of which we are a part, you must carry a flaming torch of democratic idealism.

You have been called to this important task because we have confidence in your leadership, in your ability, in your Christian integrity, and in your consecration to the sacred task before you. We pledge to you our cooperation, our financial support, and our prayers for the days which are ahead.

By the authority vested in me as chair of the board of trustees of \_\_\_\_\_ College/University, I hereby place in your hands the official seal of the institution as the insignia of your authority and declare you formally installed as president of \_\_\_\_\_ College/University.

## Chapter 10

### DEDICATION SERVICES

#### A. Dedication of a Church Building

##### 5950. Order of Dedication of a Church Building.

###### Call to Worship

*(The pastor or other appointed minister shall give the call to worship:)*

“Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name” (Ps. 100:2–4).

###### Invocation

*(Then the pastor or other appointed minister may pray an extemporaneous invocation or use the following:)*

O God, eternal and ever blessed, who delights in the assembling of Your people in the sanctuary; receive us graciously as we come into Your house, and grant that peace and prosperity may be found within its walls, that the glory of God may be the light thereof, and that we may be satisfied with the goodness of Your house; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

###### Hymn

*(Then the congregation shall join in singing a hymn, such as one of the following: “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name,” “O Worship the King,” “The Church’s One Foundation,” “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord.”)*

###### Scripture Reading

*(Then the pastor or other appointed minister shall read a Scripture lesson, such as one of the following: 2 Chron. 6:1–2, 18–21, 40–42; 7:1–4; Ps. 24; Ps. 84; Heb. 10:19–25.)*



### **Sermon**

*(The General Superintendent, the district superintendent, or other appointed minister may be asked to deliver a message on the nature and task of the church.)*

### **Offering**

*(It is much to be desired that all money required for the erection and completion of a house in which to worship God shall be fully provided before the day of dedication; but where this is not done, appeals may be made either just before or following the sermon. No building shall be dedicated to God until approved as financially secure and properly deeded as specified in The Discipline.)*

### **Presentation of Building for Dedication**

*(Then the district superintendent or representative shall stand at the pulpit facing the trustees of the church. The chair of the trustees shall address the district superintendent, saying:)*

On behalf of the trustees, the members, and this congregation, I present you this building to be dedicated to God as a place of worship and of service in His kingdom.

### **Acceptance of Building for Dedication**

*(Then the district superintendent shall respond, saying:)*

Dear friends, for countless centuries people have erected buildings for the public worship of God, and have separated these buildings from all unhallowed uses in order to increase their reverence for God and for those places in which they commune with Him. We rejoice that God has put it into the hearts of His people to build this house in this place to the glory of His name. I now accept this building, to be known as the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, to dedicate it and to set it apart for the worship of Almighty God and the service of all people. Let us therefore, as we are assembled, solemnly dedicate this place to its proper and sacred uses.

### Litany of Dedication

*(Then the district superintendent shall cause the congregation to stand and to join in the responsive litany of dedication:)*

**Leader:** To the glory of God the Father, who has called us by His grace; to the honor of His Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us; to the praise of the Holy Spirit, who illumines and sanctifies us;

**Congregation:** We dedicate this house.

**Leader:** For the worship of God in prayer and praise;

**Congregation:** For the preaching of the everlasting gospel;

**Leader:** For the celebration of the holy sacraments;

**All:** We dedicate this house.

**Leader:** For the comfort of all who mourn;

**Congregation:** For strength to those who are tempted;

**Leader:** For light to those who seek the way;

**All:** We dedicate this house.

**Leader:** For the hallowing of family life;

**Congregation:** For teaching and guiding the young;

**Leader:** For the perfecting of the saints;

**All:** We dedicate this house.

**Leader:** For the conversion of sinners;

**Congregation:** For the sanctification of believers;

**Leader:** For the promotion of righteousness; for the extension of the kingdom of God;

**All:** We dedicate this house.

**Leader:** In the unity of the faith; in the bond of Christian brotherhood; in charity and goodwill to all;

**Congregation:** We dedicate this house.

**Leader:** In gratitude for the labors of all who love and serve this church; in loving remembrance of those who have finished their course; in the hope of a blessed immortality through Jesus Christ our Lord;

**Congregation:** We dedicate this house.

**All in Unison:** We now, the people of this church and congregation, surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, grateful for our heritage, aware of the sacrifice of our fathers and mothers in the faith, confessing that apart from us their work cannot be made perfect, do dedicate ourselves anew to the worship and service of Almighty God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Prayer of Dedication**

*(Then the district superintendent shall give an extemporaneous prayer of dedication, or use the following:)*

Almighty God, we are not worthy to offer unto You anything belonging unto us. We humbly acknowledge that “except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” Yet we ask that in Your great goodness You would accept the dedication of this place to Your service. Prosper this our undertaking. Receive the prayers and intercessions of all Your servants who shall call upon You in this house. Give them grace to prepare their hearts to serve You with reverence and godly fear. Affect them with a solemn apprehension of Your divine majesty, and a deep sense of their own unworthiness. May they always approach Your sanctuary with lowliness and devotion. May they always come before You with clean thoughts and pure hearts, with bodies undefiled and minds sanctified. May they always perform a service acceptable to You, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Hymn**

*(Then the congregation shall join in singing a hymn, such as: “Lead On, O King Eternal.”)*

### **Benediction**

*(Then the pastor or other appointed minister shall pronounce the benediction:)*

May You, O Lord our God, make this house Your abiding place from this day forth, and let Your ministers be clothed with salvation, let Your saints rejoice in goodness all their days, as the blessings of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide upon them. Amen.

## **B. Dedication of Parsonage**

### **5975. Order of Dedication of a Parsonage.**

*(At the time appointed for the dedication service, an appropriate hymn may be sung by the congregation or by a soloist or choir. Suitable numbers include: “Happy the Home When God Is There” and “Bless This House.” Then the pastor or other appointed minister shall give an extemporaneous prayer. Then the pastor or other appointed minister shall give a Scripture reading, such as 1 Corinthians 9:7–10, 13–14. Then the district superintendent [1310:14] or representative shall address the congregation, saying:)*

The Scriptures clearly teach that as Aaron was divinely appointed to the priesthood, even so today persons are called to the ministry for the purpose of preaching the Word and otherwise giving aid and comfort to the spiritually needy. In the same divine program it is also “commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). Providing a house for the pastor is a recognition of the minister’s high office and great value to the church. It is a wise provision contributing to proper temporal support. This house about to be dedicated as a pastor’s home has been made possible by the generous gifts of those who are interested in the ministry and the Church such ministry represents.

*(Then the trustees of the church shall come and stand before the district superintendent, and the chair of the trustees shall address the district superintendent, saying:)*

On behalf of the trustees, the members, and this congregation, I present this house to be dedicated to God as the home for the person whom He has appointed to pastor this people.

*(Then the district superintendent may give an appropriate discourse, gratefully commending the people for providing this house and charging the pastor to live here in the fear of God and as a faithful servant of the people. Then the district superintendent shall offer a prayer of dedication, such as the following:)*

O most gracious Lord, we acknowledge that we are not worthy to offer unto You anything belonging to us. Yet we ask that You accept the dedication of this home to Your service, and that You will prosper this our undertaking.

Grant that whoever shall dwell in this house shall be so yielded and dedicated to Your service as “vessels sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, prepared unto every good work,” that their ministry shall be a heavenly benediction to all they meet.

Grant, O Lord, that whoever shall enter this the home of Your ministering servants shall be made to sense Your presence, and as they depart shall be strengthened to walk in Your holy commandments, and that all who minister to the material comforts of Your servants in this home shall be richly rewarded by You.

Grant, O Lord, that all who come to this home for spiritual counsel and comfort shall be made both to perceive and know what things they ought to do, and may have power and strength to fulfill the same.

Grant, O Lord, that whoever shall be joined together in the holy estate of matrimony in this home may faithfully perform and keep the vow and covenant made between them, and may remain in perfect love together all of their lives.

Grant, O Lord, that at the family altar of this home, when prayer with thanksgiving and supplication shall be offered, that they may receive from Your

hand such things as are necessary. Also, that as Your servants study and search Your Word, that divine illumination for life and duty may be given as in Your infinite wisdom You shall see to be most expedient for them.

All of this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Savior. Amen.

*(Then the district superintendent shall address the congregation, saying:)*

I now declare this house duly set apart as the residence of the pastor of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church.

*(Then the district superintendent or other appointed minister shall pronounce the benediction:)*

The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

## PART 11

### FORMS

#### Chapter 1

#### CHURCH LETTERS

##### A. Letter of Membership Transfer

##### **6000. Letter Sent by Church Granting Transfer to Another Wesleyan Church (575–580).**

To the pastor and secretary of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church.

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ is a member in good standing in the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, and being desirous of transferring membership to your church, is hereby transferred and commended to your care and fellowship.

By authority and in behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
(The member's relationship at the church granting the letter continues until the member is duly received by the church to which the member is being transferred.)

**6010. Acknowledgment Sent by Receiving Church (575).**

To the pastor and secretary of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church.

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, for whom you issued a letter of transfer dated the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_, has been duly received by the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_, and we send you this acknowledgment in order that you may complete your record of this transfer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

**6020. Notice Sent to Member Being Transferred.**

We have on this date, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_, issued a letter of transfer of your membership to the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, commending you to its care and fellowship. May the Lord bless you in your new relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

**B. Letter of Recommendation for a Member****6030. Letter Given to Person Desiring to Transfer to Another Denomination (590).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, the bearer, has been up to this date an acceptable member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, and being desirous of removing from said Church, is hereby released and cordially recommended to the Christian confidence of those to whom this certificate may be presented.

By authority and in behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
(It is understood that this letter of recommendation terminates the bearer's membership in The Wesleyan Church immediately.)



**C. Letter of Membership Withdrawal**

**6040. Letter Given to Person Desiring to Withdraw from the Church**  
(592; *Gen. Bd. Policy on Ch. Disc.* 5048).

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, the bearer, has been up to this date a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, and being desirous of withdrawing from said Church, is hereby declared to be withdrawn.

By authority and in behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
(It is understood that this letter of recommendation terminates the bearer's membership in The Wesleyan Church immediately.)

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**D. Member Certificates****6050. Membership Covenant (553)**

In becoming a member of The Wesleyan Church, I affirm the following:

- That I have been born again, having repented of my sins and found personal assurance of salvation through trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior.
- That I have received the sacrament of baptism since becoming a Christian or have personally affirmed the act of others on my behalf when I was baptized as an infant.
- That I will commit to pursue holiness in all things.
- That I accept and agree to abide by the Articles of Religion and the Elementary Principles as my standards of biblical doctrine and personal conduct, and I accept the authority of The Wesleyan Church in matters of Church government.
- That I commit to live out the mission and vision of The Wesleyan Church through a discipling relationship within the local church.
- That I commit myself to support the Church, to live in fellowship with its members, and to seek God's glory in all things.

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Signature

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Date

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Local Church Name

**6052. Certificate of Membership (553.4)**

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has publicly confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and has been received as a member of The Wesleyan Church and locally of the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

**E. Student Membership Certificate****6070. Certificate of Student Membership (564–565)**

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has publicly confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and has been received as a student member of The Wesleyan Church and locally of the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

## Chapter 2

### SERVICE CREDENTIALS

#### A. Ministerial Credentials

##### **6200. Lay Minister's License (3410).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, having been duly examined concerning \_\_\_\_\_ gifts, graces, and usefulness, and being deemed qualified for such service, is hereby licensed according to the usages of The Wesleyan Church as a lay minister, for one year, provided that \_\_\_\_\_ spirit, practice, and teachings are in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*.

By order and on behalf of the local church conference of \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
(This license may be renewed annually, and when so renewed, notation shall be made on the reverse side of this form of the date on which such renewal was ordered, and the same shall be attested by the signature of the pastor and the local church secretary.)

**6220. Lay Minister's Letter of Standing** (3440:3).

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ has been up to this date a lay minister in good standing in the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, and being desirous of transferring \_\_\_\_\_ membership from this church, is granted this letter of standing to recommend \_\_\_\_\_ to whomever it may concern as a person worthy of consideration for license as a lay minister.

By the authority and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

**6240. Certificate of Authorization as a Supply Pastor** (3260).

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ has been appointed on a temporary basis as a supply pastor of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, and is hereby authorized to fill its pulpit, to provide spiritual leadership to the congregation, and to perform such other duties as shall be authorized by the district superintendent.

By the authority and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

**6250. Certificate of Authorization as an Interim Pastor (3261).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ has been appointed on a temporary basis as an interim pastor of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, and is hereby authorized to fill its pulpit, to provide spiritual leadership to the congregation, and to perform such other duties as shall be authorized by the district superintendent.

By the authority and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

**6260. District License (3015:1, 5b; 3033:9).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, having been duly examined concerning \_\_\_\_\_ gifts, graces, and usefulness, and being deemed qualified for such service, is hereby made a \_\_\_\_\_\* according to the usages of The Wesleyan Church, for one year, provided that \_\_\_\_\_ spirit, practice, and ministry are in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*.

By order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

\*Insert the proper term, namely licensed minister or ministerial student. This license may be renewed annually; and when so renewed notation shall be made on the reverse side of this form on which such renewal was ordered, and the same shall be attested by the signature of the district superintendent and the district secretary.

**6280. Commission Certificate for a Minister (3059:1).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, having been judged worthy and well qualified for such a ministry, and having been duly elected by the \_\_\_\_\_ District Conference of The Wesleyan Church, has been set apart this day, by the laying on of hands and prayer, to service as a commissioned minister in The Wesleyan Church so long as \_\_\_\_\_ spirit, practice, and ministry are in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*, and \_\_\_\_\_ is hereby empowered and fully authorized to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to solemnize matrimony, and to feed the flock of Christ, taking oversight thereof, not as lord over God's heritage, but as being an example to the same.

By the order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
General Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

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*(The following may be placed on front or back of certificate:)*

This certificate is valid only when accompanied by a currently dated pocket certificate of standing.

**6300. Certificate of Ordination (3070).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, having been judged worthy and well qualified for such a ministry, and having been duly elected by the \_\_\_\_\_ District Conference of The Wesleyan Church, has been set apart this day, by the laying on of hands and prayer, to the office and work of an ordained minister in The Wesleyan Church so long as \_\_\_\_\_ spirit, practice, and ministry are in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*, and is hereby empowered and fully authorized to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to solemnize matrimony, and to feed the flock of Christ, taking oversight thereof, not as lord over God's heritage, but as being an example to the same.

By order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
General Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary



(The following may be placed on front or back of certificate:)

This certificate is valid only when accompanied by a currently dated pocket certificate of standing.

**6320. Certificate of Validation for Minister Transferring from Another Denomination (3104).**

This certifies that the \_\_\_\_\_ District Conference of The Wesleyan Church, having examined the credentials of \_\_\_\_\_, a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, and having received other testimonials of \_\_\_\_\_ gifts, graces, and usefulness, and being satisfied that \_\_\_\_\_ is a person worthy and well qualified for such a ministry, has this day accepted and recognized \_\_\_\_\_ in due form as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* in The Wesleyan Church, entitled to exercise under its authority all the functions pertaining to a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* so long as \_\_\_\_\_ spirit, practice, and ministry are in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*.

By order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
General Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

\*Insert the proper term, namely ordained minister, commissioned minister, or licensed minister.

**6340. General Evangelist's Certificate (3285).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, having been appointed by the district to the work of evangelism and being recommended by that district as a person qualified for such service to the Church at large, is hereby authorized to exercise the ministry of a general evangelist for one year from the date hereto affixed and is recommended to all whom it may concern for employment as an evangelist.

By order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director of Church  
Multiplication and Discipleship

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Insert the proper term, namely ordained minister or commissioned minister.

(This certificate may be renewed annually; and when so renewed, notation shall be made on the reverse side of this form of the date on which such renewal was ordered, and the same shall be attested by the signature of the district superintendent and the district secretary.)

**B. Special Worker's Credentials****6360. Special Worker's License (3460).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, having been duly examined concerning \_\_\_\_\_ gifts, graces, and usefulness, and being deemed qualified for such service, is hereby made a licensed special worker according to the usages of The Wesleyan Church, and is authorized to serve as a \_\_\_\_\_\* for one year, provided that \_\_\_\_\_ spirit, practice, and service are in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*.

By order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

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District Superintendent

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District Secretary

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\*Insert the proper term, such as director of music, director of spiritual formation, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, or social worker.

(This license may be renewed annually; and when so renewed, notation shall be made on the reverse side of this form of the date on which such renewal was ordered, and the same shall be attested by the signature of the district superintendent and the district secretary.)

**6380. Special Worker's Commission (3470).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ has this day been consecrated according to the usages of The Wesleyan Church to service as a commissioned special worker, having been judged worthy and well qualified for such service, and this commission shall recommend \_\_\_\_\_ to all whom it may concern as a proper person to do the work of a \_\_\_\_\_\* so long as \_\_\_\_\_ spirit, practice, and service are in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*, and \_\_\_\_\_ continues to be actively engaged in such work.

By order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
General Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Insert the proper term, such as director of music, director of spiritual formation, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, or social worker.

**6400. Lay Missionary's Commission (3490).**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ has been appointed by the General Board of The Wesleyan Church to service as a lay missionary under the direction of the \_\_\_\_\_ Division,\* that \_\_\_\_\_ has been consecrated to such service by the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, and that this commission shall remain in effect throughout \_\_\_\_\_ period of service under such appointment and direction as listed on the reverse side of this commission.

By order and on behalf of the district conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

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General Superintendent

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District Superintendent

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District Secretary

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\*Global Partners or Church Multiplication and Discipleship.

(This certificate may be renewed annually; and when so renewed, notation shall be made on the reverse side of this form of the date on which such renewal was ordered, and the same shall be attested by the signature of the district superintendent and the district secretary.)

**C. General Credentials**

**6410. Course of Study Certificate** (3033:3; 3040:2; 3070:3; 3170; 3200; 3470).

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, has completed the Course of Study for \_\_\_\_\_\* authorized in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* and provided by the General Board, or the equivalent of said Course, having satisfactorily passed examination in each subject.

In testimony whereof, we have herewith set our hand, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

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Director of Ministerial Study Course Agency

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Insert the name of the particular Course of Study, namely that of lay minister, pre-ordination, ministers of music, ministers of spiritual formation, special workers, directors of music, directors of Christian education, evangelistic singers, children's workers, spouses in ministry, lay evangelists, or social workers.)

**6420. Recommendation for District License** (3015:1; 3033:4; 3410; 3460).

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, a member with leadership qualifications in good standing of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, is hereby recommended by \_\_\_\_\_ local church conference to the \_\_\_\_\_ District Conference of The Wesleyan Church as having the gifts, graces, usefulness, and other qualifications necessary for district authorization to serve as a \_\_\_\_\_\*.

By order and on behalf of the local church conference of the \_\_\_\_\_ Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Church Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Insert the proper term, namely ministerial student, licensed minister, or licensed special worker. If licensed special worker, add the particular type of service, such as licensed special worker—director of music, director of spiritual formation, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, or social worker.

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**6430. Pocket Certificate of Standing** (3015:5b; 3055:2; 3059:4b; 3089:2).

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ was, on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_, a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* in good standing of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

Valid only for one year, and only when signed by the secretary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Insert the proper term such as ordained minister, commissioned minister, licensed minister, ministerial student, commissioned special worker, or licensed special worker.



**6440. District Letter of Transfer** (3100:1; 3480).

To the superintendent of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church.

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* in good standing in the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, and, having requested a transfer, is hereby transferred and recommended to your district, subject to the action of said district.

By the authority and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

The person for whom the letter is granted shall continue as a member of the district granting the letter until the district receiving the letter replies on form 6450.

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\*Insert the proper term, namely appointed ordained minister, ordained minister on reserve, ordained minister on educational leave, retired ordained minister, ordained minister without appointment, commissioned minister, licensed minister, ministerial student, commissioned special worker, or licensed special worker. If licensed special worker, add the particular type of service, such as licensed special worker—director of music, director of spiritual formation, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, or social worker. If the person being transferred is a licensed minister or licensed special worker, the transfer is not valid unless accompanied by a properly attested statement of standing in the course of study and of the person's service record in the district.

**6450. Acknowledgment of District Letter of Transfer** (3100:1; 3480).

To the superintendent of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church.

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, for whom you issued a letter of transfer as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* dated the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_, has been duly enrolled by the District as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\*, the transfer having been completed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_, and we send you this acknowledgment in order that you may complete your record of the transfer.

By the authority and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

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District Superintendent

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\*Insert the proper term, namely appointed ordained minister, ordained minister on reserve, ordained minister on educational leave, retired ordained minister, ordained minister without appointment, commissioned minister, licensed minister, ministerial student, commissioned special worker, or licensed special worker. If licensed special worker, add the particular type of service, such as licensed special worker—director of music, director of spiritual formation, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, or social worker.

**6460. District Letter of Standing** (3100:3; 3480).

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ has been up to this date a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\* in good standing in the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, and being desirous of removing from The Wesleyan Church, is hereby released and cordially recommended to the Christian confidence of those to whom this letter may be presented.

By the authority and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD \_\_\_\_\_.

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District Superintendent

It is understood that this letter terminates immediately any relationship the bearer may have had to The Wesleyan Church as a minister or special worker.

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\*Insert the proper term, namely ordained minister, commissioned minister, licensed minister, ministerial student, commissioned special worker, or licensed special worker. If licensed special worker, add the particular type of service, such as licensed special worker—director of music, director of spiritual formation, youth director, song evangelist, children's worker, spouse in ministry, lay evangelist, or social worker.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### CHARTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

*Revised and Adopted by The International Conference  
of The Wesleyan Church, January 28, 2019.*

**6500. Preamble.** There shall be an International Conference of The Wesleyan Church for the purpose of promoting worldwide holiness evangelism in keeping with the mission of The Wesleyan Church, coordinating the activities of The Wesleyan Church worldwide, addressing global concerns, promoting closer fellowship and mutual understanding, and providing a means for joint planning and cooperative action among all units and general conferences of The Wesleyan Church. The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall consist of those bodies which have originated in or which have joined with The Wesleyan Church and that adhere to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church and other provisions of its Charter. Provision may also be made for associate members to be received which have not originated in or joined with The Wesleyan Church, but which are in harmony with the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church.

**6502. Organization and Governance.** The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall function through its quadrennial sessions composed of representatives from each General Conference, each Established National/Regional Conference, and mission units functioning under a General Conference missions department. The number of representatives from each unit shall be determined according to the number of members, with due regard to the principle of lay representation. In the interim of International Conference sessions, it shall function through the International Board. The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall be organized and governed in accord with its Charter.

**6504. Article 1. Name.** The name of this organization shall be The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church.

**6505. Article 2. Purpose.** The International Conference shall give spiritual and ecclesiastical oversight to The Wesleyan Church worldwide as outlined in 6745. Article 8. Powers and Duties.

## 6510. Article 3. Membership.

### Membership Categories

(1) The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall make provision for full members and associate members.

(2) **Full Members.** Full members shall be as follows:

(a) They shall consist of those bodies which have originated in or which have joined The Wesleyan Church, and adhere to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church, and subscribe to the Charter and other provisions of The International Conference.

(b) A church body which has not originated in but wishes to join The Wesleyan Church, if it is deemed by The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church to qualify for full standing as a General Conference and if it agrees to adhere to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church, may be received by majority vote of The International Conference.

(c) A church body which has not originated in but wishes to join The Wesleyan Church, if it is deemed by The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church not to qualify for General Conference status, may be directed by The International Conference or the International Board to join a member General Conference.

(3) **Associate Members.** Associate members shall consist of church bodies of comparable General Conference status which have not originated in or joined The Wesleyan Church. An associate member shall be in harmony with the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church, shall subscribe to other provisions of The International Conference, and shall be received by majority vote of The International Conference. Associate members shall have a voice but no vote at The International Conference.

(4) Full and associate members shall meet the financial obligations of membership as determined by The International Conference. Failure to pay membership assessment will put membership status on probation. Members who are on probation will receive no assistance on expenses for The International Conference but will have a voice and no vote.

### Membership Status

**6515.** There shall be three ranks of membership: General Conferences, Established National/Regional Conferences, and mission units.

(1) A General Conference is a body that has full authority over the Church in its assigned territory, in keeping with the provisions of The

International Conference. A General Conference has the right to manage its own internal governance, including revising its *Discipline*, as long as it does not violate the Essentials.

(2) An Established National/Regional Conference is a body which has originated in or joined one of the General Conferences of The Wesleyan Church and which has been authorized by its General Conference and approved by The International Conference to have a defined autonomy on the grounds that the following requirements have been satisfied:

(a) An effective church organization on the local, district, and/or national/regional levels.

(b) Effective programs for the nurture and training of members, new converts, children, young people, and lay workers.

(c) An effective program for ministerial training.

(d) Evidence of responsible stewardship of life and possessions, including the proper management of funds and the provision for the support of its own pastors, workers, and officers.

(e) A defined and operational program of evangelism, church planting, and cross-cultural mission outreach.

(f) The existence of a functioning property-holding body, or more than one such body if required by local laws.

(g) Agreement to adhere to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church.

(h) A Discipline as approved by the founding General Conference.

(i) An Established National/Regional Conference has “defined autonomy,” the right to manage its own internal governance, which includes revising its *Discipline*, (with the exception of membership requirements), as long as it does not violate the Essentials. An Established National/Regional Conference remains in relationship with the General Conference that founded it, and the General Superintendent of the founding conference has a continuing role as mentor/coach and participates in the National/Regional Conference. Proposed changes in the membership requirements of an Established National/Regional Conference must be approved by the International Board. An Established National/Regional Conference may be advanced to the status of a General Conference by The International Conference, upon authorization from the originating/initiating General Conference.

(3) Mission units shall be bodies such as national or regional multi-district conferences, established districts, developing districts, or pioneer districts functioning under a missions department of a General Conference. Church governance and policy is administered through the *Discipline* provisions of said General Conference.

**6516. Criteria for Advancement to Established National/Regional Conference Status.** In addition to the recommendation of the supervising General Conference to the International Board, the following is a checklist of documentation that must accompany any application for advancement of a mission unit or other body to Established National/Regional Conference status. It is to be understood that these criteria will be used for a comprehensive review and composite evaluation of each application. Therefore, it is the overall strength that is being assessed rather than a rigid focus on each criterion. An applicant may request an exception on a specific requirement for cause.

(1) Effective church organization on local, district, and/or national/regional levels demonstrated by:

(a) An organized district or national structure.

(b) A minimum of fifty fully organized or established local churches (not counting preaching points or missions).

(c) A minimum of two thousand full members.

(d) Sufficient number of ordained ministers to support district and/or national/regional levels of administration.

(e) A process for collection of local church statistical data.

(2) Effective program of discipleship and membership training demonstrated by:

(a) Curricula for discipleship, lay leadership, and membership training systems that reflect commitment to Wesleyan-Arminian theology.

(b) Active delivery systems for discipleship, lay leadership, and membership training.

(3) Effective program of ministerial education demonstrated by:

(a) An approved curriculum or standards for ministerial education leading to ordination and reflecting commitment to Wesleyan-Arminian theology.

(b) A delivery system for ministerial education, such as a Bible school, theological institute, college, university, or seminary; a program of ministerial education conducted in cooperation with another denomination or consortium; a non-residential ministerial training program; a properly supervised correspondence or internet-based training program.

(4) Evidence of responsible stewardship demonstrated by:

(a) A self-supporting system for financing the district and/or national/regional administration.

(b) Properly approved annual budgets for district and/or national/regional administration.

(c) Annually audited financial reports for district and/or national/regional conferences.

(5) Defined and operational programs of evangelism, church planting, and mission outreach demonstrated by:

(a) Active missions engagement multiplying disciples across linguistic, cultural, national, and/or geographic boundaries.

(b) A process for annual reporting of conversions and baptisms.

(c) An ongoing strategy and track record of church planting.

(6) Functioning property-holding body (or bodies) per local laws demonstrated by:

(a) Directory information providing the legal name(s) of each such body.

(b) A copy of bylaws or official registration(s) identifying each such body.

(7) Adherence to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church, demonstrated by a covenant of adherence to the Essentials signed by all the members of the highest governing board of the national/regional entity.

(8) A Discipline approved by the supervising General Conference.

**6517. Criteria for Advancement to General Conference Status.** An

Established National/Regional Conference may appeal to The International Conference to be advanced to General Conference status, provided the following conditions have been met and a checklist of documentation accompanies any application for such advancement. It is understood that these criteria will be used for a comprehensive review and composite evaluation of each application. Therefore, it is the overall strength that is being assessed rather than a rigid focus on each criterion. An applicant may request an exception on a specific requirement for cause.

(1) Effective church organization on local, district, and general levels demonstrated by:

(a) An organized district and general conference structure.

(b) A minimum of one hundred fifty fully organized or established churches (not counting preaching points or missions).

(c) A minimum of six thousand full members.

(d) Sufficient number of ordained ministers to support district and general conference levels of administration.

(2) Effective program of discipleship, membership training, and leadership development demonstrated by:

(a) Curricula for discipleship, lay leadership, and membership-training systems that reflect commitment to Wesleyan-Arminian theology.

(b) Active delivery systems for discipleship, lay leadership, and membership training.

(3) Effective program of ministerial education demonstrated by:

(a) An accredited Bible or liberal arts college.



- (b) An approved curriculum and standards for ministerial education leading to ordination and reflecting commitment to Wesleyan-Arminian theology.
- (4) Evidence of responsible stewardship demonstrated by:
  - (a) A self-supporting system for financing each of the districts and the General Conference administration.
  - (b) Properly approved annual budgets for each district and the General Conference administration.
  - (c) A General Conference budget committee.
  - (d) Annual externally audited financial reports for the districts and for the General Conference.
- (5) Defined and operational programs of evangelism, church planting, education, spiritual formation, cross-cultural mission outreach demonstrated by:
  - (a) An operational cross-cultural outreach strategy.
  - (b) A ministry in other countries beyond the nation or region defined by the General Conference.
  - (c) A process for annual reporting of conversions and baptisms.
  - (d) An ongoing strategy and record of accomplishment of church planting.
- (6) Functioning property holding body (or bodies) per local, area, and national laws, demonstrated by:
  - (a) Directory information providing the legal name(s) of each such body.
  - (b) A copy of bylaws or official registration(s) identifying each such body.
- (7) Adherence to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church, demonstrated by a covenant of adherence to the Essentials signed by all the members of the governing body of the General Conference.
- (8) A discipline that has been approved by the originating General Conference with required subsequent approvals by The International Conference.

## THE ESSENTIALS

### **6520. Article 4. The Essentials of The Wesleyan Church.**

(1) **Statement of Definition and Purpose.** The Essentials of The Wesleyan Church consist of a historic statement of faith and practice. Each general conference of The Wesleyan Church must subscribe to the Essentials. While each general conference is free to express its beliefs and practices in the terms most meaningful to its immediate mission and culture, it shall not in its Constitution,

Articles of Religion, or Discipline contravene or contradict any provision of the Essentials.

(2) **Statement of Faith.**

**Articles of Religion**

*1. Faith in the Holy Trinity*

**6530.** We believe in the one living and true God, both holy and loving, eternal, unlimited in power, wisdom, and goodness, the creator and preserver of all things. Within this unity there are three persons of one essential nature, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**Gen. 1:1; 17:1; Ex. 3:13–15; 33:20; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:2; Isa. 40:28–29; Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19; John 1:1–2; 4:24; 16:13; 17:3; Acts 5:3–4; 17:24–25; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; Eph. 2:18; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16–17; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20.**

*2. The Father*

**6540.** We believe the Father is the source of all that exists, whether of matter or spirit. With the Son and the Holy Spirit, He made man, male and female, in His image. By intention He relates to people as Father, thereby forever declaring His goodwill toward them. In love, He both seeks and receives penitent sinners.

**Ps. 68:5; Isa. 64:8; Matt. 7:11; John 3:17; Rom. 8:15; 1 Peter 1:17.**

*3. The Son of God*

**6550.** We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, truly God and truly man. He died on the cross and was buried, to be a sacrifice both for original sin and for all human transgressions, and to reconcile us to God. Christ rose bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and there intercedes for us at the Father's right hand until He returns to judge all humanity at the last day.

**Ps. 16:8–10; Matt. 1:21, 23; 11:27; 16:28; 27:62–66; 28:5–9, 16–17; Mark 10:45; 15; 16:6–7; Luke 1:26–27, 31, 35; 24:4–8, 22–23; John 1:1, 14, 18; 3:16–17; 20:26–29; 21; Acts 1:1–3; 2:24–31; 4:12; 10:40; Rom. 5:10, 18; 8:34; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3–8, 14; 2 Cor. 5:18–19; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 4:4–5; Eph. 5:1–2; 1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 2:17; 7:27; 9:14, 28; 10:12; 13:20; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 4:14.**

#### *4. The Holy Spirit*

**6560.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is of the same essential nature, majesty, and glory, as the Father and the Son, truly and eternally God. He is the administrator of grace to all, and is particularly the effective agent in conviction for sin, in regeneration, in sanctification, and in glorification. He is ever present, assuring, preserving, guiding, and enabling the believer.

**Job 33:4; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16–17; 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 5:3–4; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:6.**

#### *5. The Sufficiency and Full Authority of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation*

**6570.** We believe that the books of the Old and New Testaments constitute the Holy Scriptures. They are the inspired and infallibly written Word of God, fully inerrant in their original manuscripts and superior to all human authority, and have been transmitted to the present without corruption of any essential doctrine. We believe that they contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man or woman that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. Both in the Old and New Testaments life is offered ultimately through Christ, who is the only mediator between God and humanity. The New Testament teaches Christians how to fulfill the moral principles of the Old Testament, calling for loving obedience to God made possible by the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit.

The canonical books of the Old Testament are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra,

Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The canonical books of the New Testament are:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

**Ps. 19:7; Matt. 5:17–19; 22:37–40; Luke 24:27, 44;  
John 1:45; 5:46; 17:17; Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 1:2; 15:4, 8;  
16:26; 2 Cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:8; Eph. 2:14–16; 1 Tim. 2:5;  
2 Tim. 3:15–17; Heb. 4:12; 10:1; 11:39; James 1:21;  
1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:19–21; 1 John 2:3–7; Rev. 22:18–19.**

#### *6. God's Purpose for Humanity*

**6580.** We believe that the two great commandments which require us to love the Lord our God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves, summarize the divine law as it is revealed in the Scriptures. They are the perfect measure and norm of human duty, both for the ordering and directing of families and nations, and all other social bodies, and for individual acts, by which we are required to acknowledge God as our only Supreme Ruler, and all persons as created by Him, equal in all natural rights. Therefore all persons should so order all their individual, social, and political acts as to give to God entire and absolute obedience, and to assure to all the enjoyment of every natural right, as well as to promote the fulfillment of each in the possession and exercise of such rights.

**Lev. 19:18, 34; Deut. 1:16–17; Job 31:13–14; Jer. 21:12; 22:3; Micah 6:8; Matt. 5:44–48; 7:12; Mark 12:28–31; Luke 6:27–29, 35; John 13:34–35; Acts 10:34–35; 17:26; Rom. 12:9; 13:1, 7–8, 10; Gal. 5:14; 6:10; Titus 3:1; James 2:8; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 2:5; 4:12–13; 2 John 6.**

#### *7. Marriage and the Family*

**6590.** We believe that every person is created in the image of God, that human sexuality reflects that image in terms of intimate love, communication,

fellowship, subordination of the self to the larger whole, and fulfillment. God's Word makes use of the marriage relationship as the supreme metaphor for His relationship with His covenant people and for revealing the truth that that relationship is of one God with one people. Therefore God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed only in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. This is the only relationship which is divinely designed for the birth and rearing of children and is a covenant union made in the sight of God, taking priority over every other human relationship.

**Gen. 1:27–28; 2:18, 20, 23–24; Isa. 54:4–8; 62:5b; Jer. 3:14; Ezek. 16:3ff.; Hosea 2; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4–6; Mark 10:9; John 2:1–2, 11; 1 Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:23–32; 1 Tim. 5:14; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 19:7–8.**

#### *8. Personal Choice*

**6600.** We believe that humanity's creation in the image of God included ability to choose between right and wrong. Thus individuals were made morally responsible for their choices. But since the fall of Adam, people are unable in their own strength to do the right. This is due to original sin, which is not simply the following of Adam's example, but rather the corruption of the nature of each mortal, and is reproduced naturally in Adam's descendants. Because of it, humans are very far gone from original righteousness, and by nature are continually inclined to evil. They cannot of themselves even call upon God or exercise faith for salvation. But through Jesus Christ the prevenient grace of God makes possible what humans in self-effort cannot do. It is bestowed freely upon all, enabling all who will to turn and be saved.

**Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; 1 Kings 20:40; Ps. 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21–23; Luke 16:15; John 7:17; Rom. 3:10–12; 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1–3; 1 Tim. 2:5; Titus 3:5; Heb. 11:6; Rev. 22:17.**

#### *9. The Atonement*

**6610.** We believe that Christ's offering of Himself, once and for all, through His sufferings and meritorious death on the cross, provides the perfect redemption and atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual. There is

no other ground of salvation from sin but that alone. This atonement is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. It is unconditionally effective in the salvation of those mentally incompetent from birth, of those converted persons who have become mentally incompetent, and of children under the age of accountability. But it is effective for the salvation of those who reach the age of accountability only when they repent and exercise faith in Christ.

**Isa. 52:13—53:12; Luke 24:46—47; John 3:16; Acts 3:18; 4:12; Rom. 3:20, 24—26; 5:8—11, 13, 18—20; 7:7; 8:34; 1 Cor. 6:11; 15:22; Gal. 2:16; 3:2—3; Eph. 1:7; 2:13, 16; 1 Tim. 2:5—6; Heb. 7:23—27; 9:11—15, 24—28; 10:14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.**

### *10. Repentance and Faith*

**6620.** We believe that for men and women to appropriate what God's prevenient grace has made possible, they must voluntarily respond in repentance and faith. The ability comes from God, but the act is the individual's.

Repentance is prompted by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. It involves a willful change of mind that renounces sin and longs for righteousness, a godly sorrow for and a confession of past sins, proper restitution for wrongdoings, and a resolution to reform the life. Repentance is the precondition for saving faith, and without it saving faith is impossible. Faith, in turn, is the only condition of salvation. It begins in the agreement of the mind and the consent of the will to the truth of the gospel, but issues in a complete reliance by the whole person in the saving ability of Jesus Christ and a complete trusting of oneself to Him as Savior and Lord. Saving faith is expressed in a public acknowledgment of His lordship and an identification with His church.

**Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3; 24:47; John 3:16; 17:20; 20:31; Acts 5:31; 10:43; 11:18; 16:31; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 1:16; 2:4; 10:8—10, 17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8; 4:4—6; Phil. 3:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 11:6; 12:2; 1 Peter 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9.**

### *11. Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption*

**6630.** We believe that when one repents of personal sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that at the same moment that person is justified, regenerated,

adopted into the family of God, and assured of personal salvation through the witness of the Spirit.

We believe that we are accounted righteous before God only on the basis of the merit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, being justified by faith alone, and not on the basis of our own works.

We believe that regeneration is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the pardoned sinner becomes a child of God. This new life is received through faith in Jesus Christ, and by it the regenerate are delivered from the power of sin which reigns over all the unregenerate, so that they love God and through grace serve Him with the will and affections of the heart, receiving the Spirit of adoption.

**Justification:** Hab. 2:4; Acts 13:38–39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:2–5; 5:1–2; Gal. 3:6–14; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 10:38.

**Regeneration:** John 1:12–13; 3:3, 5–8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:5, 10, 19; 4:24; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3–4; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1.

**Adoption:** Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5, 7; Eph. 1:5.

**Witness of the Spirit:** Rom. 8:16–17; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 2:3; 3:14, 18–19.

### *12. Good Works*

**6640.** We believe that although good works cannot save us from our sins or from God's judgment, they are the fruit of faith and follow after regeneration. Therefore they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and by them a living faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

**Matt. 5:16; 7:16–20; John 15:8; Rom. 3:20; 4:2, 4, 6; Gal. 2:16; 5:6; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:3; Titus 2:14; 3:5; James 2:18, 22; 1 Peter 2:9, 12.**

### *13. Sin After Regeneration*

**6650.** We believe that after we have experienced regeneration, it is possible to fall into sin, for in this life there is no such height or strength of holiness from which it is impossible to fall. But by the grace of God one who has fallen into sin may by true repentance and faith find forgiveness and restoration.

**Mal. 3:7; Matt. 18:21–22; John 15:4–6; 1 Tim. 4:1, 16;  
Heb. 10:35–39; 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 24–25.**

*14. Sanctification: Initial, Progressive, Entire*

**6655.** We believe that sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is separated from sin unto God and is enabled to love God with all the heart and to walk in all His holy commandments blameless. Sanctification is initiated at the moment of justification and regeneration. From that moment there is a gradual or progressive sanctification as the believer walks with God and daily grows in grace and in a more perfect obedience to God. This prepares for the crisis of entire sanctification which is wrought instantaneously when believers present themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, being effected by the baptism with the Holy Spirit who cleanses the heart from all inbred sin. The crisis of entire sanctification perfects the believer in love and empowers that person for effective service. It is followed by lifelong growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The life of holiness continues through faith in the sanctifying blood of Christ and evidences itself by loving obedience to God's revealed will.

**Gen. 17:1; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 130:8; Isa. 6:1–6; Ezek. 36:25–29; Matt. 5:8, 48; Luke 1:74–75; 3:16–17; 24:49; John 17:1–26; Acts 1:4–5, 8; 2:1–4; 15:8–9; 26:18; Rom. 8:3–4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:13, 24; 5:25–27; 1 Thess. 3:10, 12–13; 4:3, 7–8; 5:23–24; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 10:14; 12:14; 13:12; James 3:17–18; 4:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 1:7, 9; 3:8–9; 4:17–18; Jude 24.**

*15. The Gifts of the Spirit*

**6670.** We believe that the gift of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit Himself, and He is to be desired more than the gifts of the Spirit which He in His wise counsel bestows upon individual members of the church to enable them properly to fulfill their function as members of the body of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit, although not always identifiable with natural abilities, function through them for the edification of the whole church. These gifts are to be exercised in love under the administration of the Lord of the church, not through human volition. The



relative value of the gifts of the Spirit is to be tested by their usefulness in the church and not by the ecstasy produced in the ones receiving them.

**Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:38–39; 8:19–20; 10:45; 11:17; Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:1–14:40; Eph. 4:7–8, 11–16; Heb. 2:4; 13:20–21; 1 Peter 4:8–11.**

### *16. The Church*

**6680.** We believe that the Christian church is the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ, who is the founder and only head of the church. The church includes both those believers who have gone to be with the Lord and those who remain on the earth, having renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil, and having dedicated themselves to the work which Christ committed unto His church until He comes. The church on earth is to preach the pure Word of God, properly administer the sacraments according to Christ's instructions, and live in obedience to all that Christ commands. A local church is a body of believers formally organized on gospel principles, meeting regularly for the purposes of evangelism, nurture, fellowship, and worship. The Wesleyan Church is a denomination consisting of those members within district conferences and local churches who, as members of the body of Christ, hold the faith set forth in these Articles of Religion and acknowledge the ecclesiastical authority of its governing bodies.

**Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:41–47; 9:31; 11:22; 12:5; 14:23; 15:22; 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:28; 16:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:22–23; 2:19–22; 3:9–10, 21; 5:22–33; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23; James 5:14.**

### *17. The Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper*

**6690.** We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ and ordained as a means of grace when received through faith. They are tokens of our profession of Christian faith and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, He works within us to quicken, strengthen, and confirm our faith.

We believe that water baptism is a sacrament of the church, commanded by our Lord and administered to believers. It is a symbol of the new covenant

of grace and signifies acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ. By means of this sacrament, believers declare their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

**Matt. 3:13–17; 28:19; Mark 1:9–11; John 3:5, 22, 26; 4:1–2; Acts 2:38–39, 41; 8:12–17, 36–38; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom 2:28–29; 4:11; 6:3–4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27–29; Col. 2:11–12; Titus 3:5.**

**6700.** We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death and of our hope in His victorious return, as well as a sign of the love that Christians have for each other. To such as receive it humbly, with a proper spirit and by faith, the Lord's Supper is made a means through which God communicates grace to the heart.

**Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; John 6:48–58; 1 Cor. 5:7–8; 10:3–4, 16–17; 11:23–29.**

### *18. The Second Coming of Christ*

**6705.** We believe that the certainty of the personal and imminent return of Christ inspires holy living and zeal for the evangelization of the world. At His return He will fulfill all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over evil.

**Job 19:25–27; Isa. 11:1–12; Zech. 14:1–11; Matt. 24:1–51; 25; 26:64; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 17:22–37; 21:5–36; John 14:1–3; Acts 1:6–11; 1 Cor. 1:7–8; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–11, 23; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2:1–12; Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 9:27–28; James 5:7–8; 2 Peter 3:1–14; 1 John 3:2–3; Rev. 1:7; 19:11–16; 22:6–7, 12, 20.**

### *19. The Resurrection of the Dead*

**6710.** We believe in the bodily resurrection from the dead of all people—of the just unto the resurrection of life, and of the unjust unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of the righteous dead will occur at Christ's second coming, and the resurrection of the wicked will occur at a later time.

The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of the resurrection of those who are in Christ. The raised body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable.

**Job 19:25–27; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 22:30–32; 28:1–20; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 14:14; 24:1–53; John 5:28–29; 11:21–27; 20:1—21:25; Acts 1:3; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:1–58; 2 Cor. 4:14; 5:1–11; 1 Thess. 4:13–17; Rev. 20:4–6, 11–13.**

### *20. The Judgment of All Persons*

**6715.** We believe that the Scriptures reveal God as the judge of all and the acts of His judgment are based on His omniscience and eternal justice. His administration of judgment will culminate in the final meeting of all persons before His throne of great majesty and power, where records will be examined and final rewards and punishments will be administered.

**Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 10:15; 25:31–46; Luke 11:31–32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; 2 Peter 3:7; Rev. 20:11–13.**

### *21. Destiny*

**6720.** We believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that there is a conscious personal existence after death. The final destiny of each person is determined by God's grace and that person's response, evidenced inevitably by a moral character which results from that individual's personal and volitional choices and not from any arbitrary decree of God. Heaven with its eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence is the final abode of those who choose the salvation which God provides through Jesus Christ, but hell with its everlasting misery and separation from God is the final abode of those who neglect this great salvation.

**Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:34–46; Mark 9:43–48; Luke 13:3; John 8:21–23; 14:2–3; 2 Cor. 5:6, 8, 10; Heb. 2:1–3; 9:27–28; 10:26–31; Rev. 20:14–15; 21:1–22:5, 14–15.**

**6725. (3) Statement of Practice.**

(a) Identification with the church. To be identified with an organized church is the blessed privilege and sacred duty of all who are saved from their sins, and are seeking completeness in Christ Jesus. From the church's beginnings in the New Testament age, it has been understood that such identification involves the putting off of the old patterns of conduct and the putting on of the mind of Christ, and a unity of witness and worship.

(b) Biblical principles. In maintaining the Christian concept of a transformed life, The Wesleyan Church intends to relate timeless biblical principles to the conditions of contemporary society in such a way as to respect the integrity of the individual believer, yet maintain the purity of the church and the effectiveness of its witness. This is done in the conviction that there is validity in the concept of the collective Christian conscience as illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit. While variations in culture may require variations in which the transformed life is evident or demonstrated, each General Conference of The Wesleyan Church will be expected to adopt guidelines for its members providing for such evidence and demonstration in conformity with biblical principles.

(c) Worship and language. The Wesleyan Church believes in the miraculous use of languages and the interpretation of languages in its biblical and historical setting. But it is contrary to the Word of God to teach that speaking in an unknown tongue or the gift of tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit or of that entire sanctification which the baptism accomplishes; therefore, only a language readily understood by the congregation is to be used in public worship. The Wesleyan Church believes that the use of an ecstatic prayer language has no clear scriptural sanction, or any pattern of established historical usage in the church; therefore, the use of such a prayer language shall not be promoted among us.

**6730. (4) Statement of Relationship.** The unity of The Wesleyan Church worldwide shall be recognized and maintained in the following:

(a) The right of a member or minister to transfer from one unit (General Conference, Established National/Regional Conference, regional/national church) to any other such unit of The Wesleyan Church worldwide, with the understanding that consideration must be given to differences in requirements for licensing and ordination of ministers as provided for in the various Disciplines of units worldwide.

(b) The right of a member or minister to election to office in any unit (as defined in Article 4:4a) of The Wesleyan Church worldwide provided that the qualifications of said office are met, with the understanding that the right to hold such office shall be subject to the transfer of church membership to the unit within which the election occurs and subject to *The Discipline* governing that unit.

(c) The right of any member body which has not reached the status of a fully established general conference to participate with full or partial powers through its duly elected representatives in the respective general conference to which it relates.

### **(This concludes the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church)**

**6735. Article 5. International Conference.** The International Conference shall be comprised of delegates from Wesleyan General Conferences and Established National/Regional Conferences on a ratio of one ministerial and one lay representative for every seven thousand covenant/full members or major portion thereof, up to a maximum of twenty delegates from any General Conference. Established National/Regional Conferences not at the above numerical levels of organization shall be represented at The International Conference by the minister holding the highest Established National/Regional Church office and one lay member, provided that all membership and financial obligations have been met. Mission units under the supervision of a Wesleyan General Conference that have not yet attained Established National/Regional Conference status with more than two thousand covenant/full members shall have one ministerial and one lay representative with votes. Mission units with less than two thousand but more than two hundred full members shall have one ministerial or lay delegate with a vote. Mission units under any General Conference which have less than two hundred members may be represented at The International Conference by one national ministerial or lay representative with voice but no vote. Associate members shall have one representative at The International Conference with voice but no vote. Members of the International Board are voting members of The International Conference.

### **6740. Article 6. Officers.**

(1) The officers of The International Conference shall be the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer. Members of the International Board of General Superintendents shall serve as chair and vice-chair of The International Conference. The Executive Director of Global Partners shall serve as treasurer of The International Conference. The chair, vice-chair, and secretary shall be

elected by The International Conference from among its own members. The officers shall take office at the adjournment of The International Conference session electing them and shall continue in office until the adjournment of the next regular session or until their successors are elected.

(2) The person elected to the office of chair shall not serve successive terms.

(3) A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the International Board.

(4) An executive secretary may be authorized by the International Board, which shall outline his/her duties.

(5) The International Conference may create and fill other offices as needed.

(6) The International Board shall be responsible for overseeing the budget for The International Conference and for planning all necessary details for convening and conducting The International Conference, including meeting notices, meeting site selection, travel instructions for representatives, and other logistics of the meeting.

**6743. Article 7. Meetings and Agenda.** The International Conference shall meet quadrennially. If practicable, it shall be held in conjunction with a meeting of one of the General Conferences. It shall be the responsibility of the International Board of The International Conference to arrange for its meeting, considering the cost of travel, entertainment, and the general interests of the International Wesleyan Church and its associate members. The International Board shall establish the agenda for The International Conference.

**6745. Article 8. Powers and Duties.** With full respect for the authority of the member General Conferences and Established National/Regional Conferences, the powers and duties of The International Conference shall be to:

(1) Promote ministries of evangelism, discipleship, and church multiplication around the world.

(2) Encourage the expansion of mission works from Everywhere to Everywhere to unreached nations and peoples.

(3) Encourage a life of personal and community holiness in Wesleyans worldwide.

(4) Encourage the development of regional meetings and connections to expand the work of evangelism, discipleship, church multiplication, and missions; and to encourage, train, and develop a multiplying kingdom force among lay and clergy.

(5) Charge the International Board to develop a global missions strategy to advance and coordinate the mission from Everywhere to Everywhere; both sending and receiving.

(6) Promote Wesleyan doctrines as set forth in the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church and if necessary, to review member bodies to maintain compliance with the Essentials.

(7) Encourage development of each member body in mission, structure, training, and leadership development.

(8) Approve advancement of a mission unit to an Established National/Regional Conference status upon authorization of its initiating/supervising General Conference.

(9) Approve advancement to General Conference status of an Established National/Regional Conference upon authorization of its initiating/supervising General Conference or to revoke by a two-thirds vote the status of an Established National/Regional Conference that no longer meets the agreed requirements and to refer it back to its initiating/supervising General Conference as a mission unit.

(10) Receive and to process new applications for membership.

(11) Receive from member General Conferences proposed amendments to the Essentials and direct the process for General Conferences to consider and vote on proposed changes and report the results to the member conferences (6765:1). Established National/Regional Conferences and mission units may only submit recommended amendments to the Essentials through their initiating/supervising General Conference, which must also endorse the proposal.

(12) Consider global trends and opportunities to create and communicate positive position statements on issues of global, moral, and social concerns and to promote these statements to the international Wesleyan Church for contextualization and communication.

**6746. Resolutions and Voting.** All legislative proposals intended for consideration by The International Conference, including proposed amendments to the International Charter, shall be designated as “resolutions.” Resolutions may be submitted by any General Conference, the General Board (or equivalent chief governing body) of a member General Conference, an Established National/Regional Conference, the chief governing body of a mission unit entitled to voting representation at The International Conference, the International Board, the International Board of General Superintendents, or any three members of The International Conference. Unless otherwise required by the International Charter, a majority of those members present and voting at The International Conference shall be sufficient to adopt any resolution or other motion.

**6750. Article 9. International Board of The Wesleyan Church.**

(1) **Meetings and Agenda.** The International Board shall meet in an organizing meeting immediately following The International Conference and then again just prior to the next International Conference. The chair of The

International Conference shall be the chair of the International Board. In case of emergency, exigency, or special circumstances, the chair shall have authority to call additional meetings of the International Board in consultation with the International Board of General Superintendents. The International Board may meet by means of telephone or video conferencing, internet conferencing, or other technologically-enabled means. The chair shall establish the agenda for all meetings of the International Board.

(2) **Membership.** Membership of the International Board shall be comprised of one General Superintendent from each General Conference (one of whom shall be elected as chair and another as vice-chair of the International Board and The International Conference), a treasurer (who shall be the Executive Director of Global Partners), a secretary to be elected from among any of its members who do not reside in the North American General Conference, and the highest ranking member of each Established National/Regional Conference. In addition, a board member shall be nominated by area caucuses and elected by the Conference from each of the developing areas where The Wesleyan Church has significant numbers of districts and national churches as determined by the International Board of The Wesleyan Church.

(3) **Purpose.** The purpose of the International Board shall be to fulfill the interim functions, duties, and powers of The International Conference.

(4) **Quorum and Voting.** Unless otherwise required by the International Charter, a majority vote of all eligible members of the International Board shall be sufficient to approve any motion.

(5) **Duties and Powers.** The International Board shall have full authority to act on behalf of The International Conference in the interim of its sessions. It shall fulfill special assignments and transact any and all business referred to it by The International Conference, exercising all the normal duties and powers of The International Conference, except that the International Board may not conduct any business requiring more than a majority vote of The International Conference nor amend any standing rules of The International Conference. The International Board shall set the agenda for The International Conference. It may meet in person or by means of telephone or video conferencing, internet conferencing, or other technologically-enabled means. The International Board shall meet at the call of the chair and the agenda shall be set by the chair.

**6755. Article 10. Finance.** The General Conferences and Established National/Regional Conferences shall assume financial responsibility for sending delegates to The International Conference. Travel expenses for all General Conference, Established National/Regional Conference, and mission unit representatives to The International Conference are to be paid by the



individual bodies. Hotel and meal costs on-site for all International Conference representatives are to be paid by The International Conference. The cost of travel, lodging, and meals for International Board members attending International Board meetings will be paid by The International Conference.

**6760. Article 11. International Board of General Superintendents.** The International Board of General Superintendents shall be comprised of all the General Superintendents of those world units which have achieved General Conference status. The International Board of General Superintendents shall meet at least once per quadrennium, select their own chair, and have provision for additional meetings should the International Board of General Superintendents deem necessary. The International Board of General Superintendents may meet by means of telephone or video conferencing, internet conferencing, or other technologically-enabled means. The chair of the International Board of General Superintendents shall prepare the agenda for its meetings. The purpose of the International Board of General Superintendents is for communication, fellowship, and deepening relationships between senior leaders of the International Church as it relates to the Wesleyan strategy for worldwide evangelism and discipleship.

**6763. Article 12. International Board of Appeals.** The International Board of General Superintendents shall serve as the International Board of Appeals. Its duties shall be to:

(1) Hear and determine any appeals from actions of any fully established General Conference as to its adherence to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church. If the International Board of Appeals shall find a General Conference in violation of the Essentials, that General Conference shall be expected to rescind the violating action. If it does not, the International Board of Appeals shall report its findings and the response to the International Board, which shall have authority to expel the erring General Conference. At the discretion of the International Board of General Superintendents, it may provide for the reorganization of the loyal elements of The Wesleyan Church within the area of that General Conference and for the declaration that the other ministers and members are withdrawn from The Wesleyan Church.

(2) Review the adherence of associate members to the conditions of associate membership and to recommend to the International Board the termination of their membership if violation of these conditions persist.

(3) Adjudicate any problem that may arise between General Conferences involving boundaries or other matters of comity.

(4) Meet on a regular basis in conjunction with meetings of the International Board of General Superintendents. A special meeting may be called by the chair.

The International Board of Appeals may meet by means of telephone or video conferencing, internet conferencing, or other technologically-enabled means.

**6765. Article 13. Amendments.**

(1) Amendments to the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church in Article 4 must be approved by a two-thirds aggregate vote of all General Conferences who are members of The International Conference (6745:8).

(2) The Charter of The International Conference, other than the Essentials in Article 4, may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at any meeting of The International Conference.

(3) All amendments are subject to review by the International Board of Appeals.

(4) The International Board of Appeals shall supervise the referendum voting on amendments.

**6770. Article 14. We Speak with One Voice.** The Essentials of The Wesleyan Church in Article 4 constitute the central beliefs and core values of The International Conference and must be embraced, supported, and, when necessary, defended by all of its members. However, there is a colorful tapestry of cultural, historic, and geographic distinctions among members of The International Conference in terms of administrative structures, behavioral expectations, and unique customs. Such diversity is a blessing to be celebrated, and confidence should be preserved in the maturity and capacity of each autonomous general conference (6515:1) and each Established National/Regional Conference (in keeping with its “defined autonomy” as provided in 6515:2) to determine matters related to its own cultural practices, preferences, and customs. Each session of The International Conference may consider specific matters that emerge from time to time as critical issues that transcend culture, customs, or preferences, and on which all members of The International Conference must stand together, so as to speak with one voice in regard to such issues. The following statements represent the collective conscience of The International Conference of The Wesleyan Church on such issues and may be amended by a two-thirds vote of all delegates present and voting at any session of The International Conference. Any member body of The International Conference is authorized to propose amendments or additions to these statements, which shall be presented to The International Conference if recommended by the International Board.

(1) **We Speak with One Voice on \_\_\_\_\_.** (*Space reserved.*)

## APPENDIX B

### INTERPRETATIONS OF CHURCH LAW

**6800.** This section contains the official interpretations of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* by the General Superintendent which have been sustained by the General Conference and are therefore in full force and effect as Church law (1935). Each interpretation is identified by the paragraph number of *The Discipline* to which it refers.

Whenever a revision of *The Discipline* makes an interpretation unnecessary or renders it obsolete, the interpretation is to be deleted from *The Discipline* by order of the General Conference (Minutes of the 1976 General Conference, proceeding 276).

## APPENDIX C

### AFFILIATE CHURCHES

**7000.** An independent congregation of the Wesleyan tradition which seeks a less than full relationship with The Wesleyan Church may commit to Articles of Agreement and be recognized and listed as an affiliate church. The district board of administration shall be authorized on behalf of the district conference to develop and agree to the terms of the Articles of Agreement. Such relationships shall exist to encourage fellowship and to include the affiliated body in adult, youth, and children's ministries of The Wesleyan Church and to benefit the affiliated unit through acquaintance with and involvement in Wesleyan institutions of higher education, global outreach ministries, and helpful publications of the denomination. The relationship may be terminated at any time, either by vote of the district board of administration or the ruling body of the affiliate church.

**7005. Membership.** All persons who have met the membership requirements of the independent congregation shall be listed by the district as affiliate members. Any affiliate member who seeks to transfer membership to The Wesleyan Church shall be examined by the pastor and the local board of administration. If it is discovered that the person involved had indeed been previously converted and is fully committed to the doctrines and standards of The Wesleyan Church, said affiliate member may be received by letter into the membership of The Wesleyan Church (570; 578). If the affiliated church elects to become a Wesleyan congregation, the procedures of organization as set forth in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*, paragraph 520, shall be followed.

**7010. Pastors.** The calling of pastors to an affiliated church shall be determined by said church's by-laws and shall not require approval of the Wesleyan district conference. A change of pastor or senior pastor of an affiliate church shall automatically give rise to a review of the affiliate status and shall require a renewal vote by the district board of administration to extend the relationship. In the event the affiliate church seeks to secure the leadership of a Wesleyan minister, that arrangement shall require the consent of the district superintendent and the ratifying vote of a majority of the district board of administration. An ordained minister serving on staff of an affiliate church may be appointed by the district conference as affiliate church pastor (3346).

**7015. Government.** The Wesleyan Church shall not regulate the governance of an affiliate church. However, the district board of administration

shall review the governmental structure of the church seeking affiliate status and shall be satisfied it is founded upon biblical principles prior to authorizing affiliate status. Conversely, any affiliate church desiring to adopt *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* as a governance model for the local church may do so.

**7020. Property and Support Obligations.** As long as the independent unit retains the status of an affiliate church it is not subject to the trust clause and other provisions for holding property as set forth in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*.

It is anticipated that the affiliate church will financially support The Wesleyan Church and its various ministries. The details of such support shall be agreed upon between the affiliate church and the district board of administration.

It is expected that the various agencies of The Wesleyan Church shall have access to the affiliate church for the presentation of their programs and for the solicitation of support in the same manner as with all Wesleyan churches.

**7025. District/General Conference Representation.** Each affiliate church may send the pastor and one lay representative as honorary delegates, having voice but not vote, to the annual district conference. The listed affiliate members shall not be included in the membership count which determines the number of persons a district conference is authorized to elect as General Conference delegates.

**7030. Continuance of Status.** The district board of administration shall be empowered to renew the status of an affiliate church for up to five years from inception of the relationship. If the affiliate church has not begun the process leading to acceptance as an established church by the fifth year, renewal of the affiliate status shall require the annual recommendation of the district board of administration and the annual approving vote of the district conference.

**7035. Use of Name.** The affiliate church may not adopt the name The Wesleyan Church nor utilize such benefits as coming under the denominational umbrella for IRS recognition as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit entity until said unit is received as a developing or established Wesleyan church and conforms to *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* in all matters of governance. It may choose to advertise with such language as “A congregation of the Wesleyan tradition” or “affiliated with The Wesleyan Church.”

**7040.** No two church “joinings” will be characterized by identical circumstances. The district board of administration may modify the following sample agreement to reflect levels of monetary support from the affiliate church or other mutual agreements which detail commitments to a developing unified ministry.

---

**THE WESLEYAN CHURCH  
AFFILIATE CHURCH  
ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH

**AND**

**THE \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT OF**

**THE WESLEYAN CHURCH**

**PREAMBLE**

The \_\_\_\_\_ Church, an independent congregation of the Wesleyan tradition (hereinafter referred to as “church”) and the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church (hereinafter referred to as “district”), upon the signing of these Articles of Agreement do establish and commit to an affiliate relationship between church and district.

**OBJECTIVE**

It is the objective of church and district, as co-laborers, to advance the kingdom of Christ through the encouragement of fellowship, cooperation in varied ministries of evangelism, discipleship, and education, and a sharing of denominational benefits by making available literature, publications, and personnel.

**ARTICLE 1  
STATEMENT OF FAITH**

Both the church and the district affirm the foundation for such affiliate relationship lies in the mutual embrace of and commitment to the following Statement of Faith:

We believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ the Son suffered in our place on the cross, that He died but rose again, that He now sits at the Father’s right hand until He returns to judge every person at the last day.

We believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

We believe that by the grace of God every person has the ability and responsibility to choose between right and wrong, and that those who repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by faith.

We believe that God not only counts the believer as righteous, but that He makes such persons righteous, freeing them from sin's dominion at conversion, purifying their hearts by faith and perfecting them in love at entire sanctification, and providing for their growth in grace at every stage of spiritual life, enabling them through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to live victorious lives.

## **ARTICLE 2 GOVERNANCE**

During the time period the church and district retain the affiliate church relationships, the district superintendent shall be expected to make periodic visits and provide such counsel as the church's pastor and board may welcome. The district board of administration shall annually review the ongoing relationship. The church shall establish its own organizational bylaws and shall be exempt from the property trust clause established for congregations holding full relationships to the denomination. During the period of affiliate relationship, the church may choose to advertise with such language as "a congregation of the Wesleyan tradition" or "affiliated with The Wesleyan Church," but may not assume/use the name The Wesleyan Church.

The affiliate church may send the (senior) pastor and one lay delegate to the annual district conference to enjoy voice but not vote.

## **ARTICLE 3 ADVANCEMENT**

Advancement to full relationship is possible. While no commitment to such is implied by the church or the district in affixing signatures to these Articles of Agreement, mutual approval by both entities can result in the church coming into full relationship with the district and The Wesleyan Church with all rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

**ARTICLE 4  
CONTINUANCE**

Subject to annual review by the district board of administration, the affiliate relationship may be renewed up to five years by said district board of administration. If the affiliate church has not begun a process leading to acceptance as an established church by the end of the fifth year, renewal of the affiliate status shall that year and each successive year require the recommendation of the district board of administration and an approving vote of the district conference. A change in pastoral leadership in the church shall automatically give rise to a review of the relationship and, to renew affiliate status, shall require the consent of the district superintendent and the ratifying vote of a majority of the district board of administration. The relationship may be terminated at any time by either the vote of the district board of administration or the ruling body of the church.

**AGREEMENT**

Sustained by the mutual belief that God in His providences has led together the people of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and the \_\_\_\_\_ District of The Wesleyan Church, and upon the voted authority of the church's ruling body and the district board of administration, the authorized officials herewith affix their signatures to duplicate copies of these Articles of Agreement, thereby evidencing establishment of an affiliate relationship between church and district.

The \_\_\_\_\_ District  
of The Wesleyan Church:

The \_\_\_\_\_ Church:

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair/Vice-Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary



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