

# United Methodist Church

## Statement of Faith/Mission Statement

### Basics of Faith

As United Methodists, we have an obligation to bear a faithful Christian witness to Jesus Christ, the living reality at the center of the Church's life and witness. To fulfill this obligation, we reflect critically on our biblical and theological inheritance, striving to express faithfully the witness we make in our own time.

### Our (UCM) Christian Roots

- United Methodists share a common heritage with all Christians. According to our foundational statement of beliefs in The Book of Discipline, we share the following basic affirmations in common with all Christian communities:
  - God, who is one, is revealed in three distinct persons.
  - We believe in the mystery of **salvation through Jesus Christ**. God became human in Jesus of Nazareth; and his life, death and resurrection demonstrates God's redeeming love.
  - The Holy Spirit is God's present activity in our midst. When we sense God's leading, God's challenge, or God's support or comfort, it's the Holy Spirit at work.
  - Genesis 1:27 asserts that we've been made in the image of the Creator. Like God we have the capacity to love and care, to communicate, and to create.
  - The church is the body of Christ, an extension of Christ's life and ministry in the world today.
  - **We believe that the Bible is God's Word and is the primary authority for our faith and practice.**
  - The kingdom or reign of God is both a present reality and future hope.

### History

- **The United Methodist Church (UMC) is a mainline Protestant denomination and a major part of Methodism.**
- The UMC traces its roots back to the revival movement of John and Charles Wesley in England, as well as the Great Awakening in the United States.
- With **12 million members as of 2014**, the UMC is the largest denomination within the wider Methodist movement.

### Theological Distinction

- Assurance - Protestant Christian doctrine that states that the inner witness of the Holy Spirit allows the justified disciple to know that he or she is saved.
- Imparted righteousness - in Methodist theology, is that gracious gift of God given at the moment of the new birth **which enables a Christian disciple to strive for holiness and sanctification.**
- The possibility of entire sanctification - **process of achieving spiritual maturity or perfection.**
- The works of piety – reflections of sanctification. **Examples: frequent reception of sacrament (communion), visiting the sick and those in prison.**
- The primacy of Scripture - which maintains that Scripture is to be the primary authority for the Church, the Bible remains the crucial and normative authority for Christians.
- **Most Methodists teach that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for all of humanity and that salvation is available for all; in theology, this view is known as Arminianism.**

The Wesleyan Church (formerly known as the Wesleyan Methodist Church) states that sanctification has three components: **(Initial)** Sanctification is initiated at the moment of justification and regeneration. **(Progressive)** 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. (Entire) 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.

## **Evangelical**

Definition of Evangelical: of or according to the teaching of the gospel or the Christian religion.

A key outgrowth of this theology is the United Methodist dedication not only to the Evangelical Gospel of repentance and a personal relationship with God, but also to the Social Gospel and a commitment to social justice issues that have included abolition, women's suffrage, labor rights, civil rights, and ministry with the poor.

Declaring the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ offered freely to all who wish to receive it is at the very heart of who we are as United Methodists. - Rev. Taylor Burton-Edwards

## **What you didn't know**

### **Book of Discipline**

- The instrument for setting forth the laws, plan, polity, and process by which UMC govern themselves.
- Published every four years following the meeting of the general conference.
- Each General Conference “amends, perfects, clarifies, and adds its own contribution”.
- The UMC Council of Bishops says the *Discipline* is “considered to all in our constituency and to friends beyond our bounds who would seek to understand what it means to be a United Methodist.”

### **2016 Book of Discipline Statements**

#### **Regarding church membership**

- ¶ 4. Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church: ..... All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.

#### **Regarding the ministry of the ordained**

- ¶ 304.3: The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the UCC.
- ¶ 341.6: Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.

#### **Sources:**

[www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Methodist\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Methodist_Church)

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/9-things-you-should-know-about-the-united-methodist-church/>