

SACRAMENTAL REFERENCES
GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH
BOOK OF DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE
2024

PART ONE – DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS

¶ 106. NORMATIVE STANDARDS FOR WESLEYAN WITNESS

1. THE *ARTICLES OF RELIGION* OF THE METHODIST CHURCH.

Article XVI - Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

Article XVII - Of Baptism

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

Article XVIII - Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

Article XIX - Of Both Kinds

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

2. THE *CONFESSION OF FAITH* OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH.

Article VI - The Sacraments

We believe the Sacraments, ordained by Christ, are symbols and pledges of the Christian's profession and of God's love toward us. They are means of grace by which God works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening and confirming our faith in him. Two Sacraments are ordained by Christ our Lord, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith, and is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin, a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus and a mark of Christian discipleship. We believe children are under the atonement of Christ and as heirs of the Kingdom of God are acceptable subjects for Christian Baptism. Children of believing parents through Baptism become the special responsibility of the Church. They should be nurtured and led to personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their Baptism. We believe the Lord's Supper is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another. Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until he comes.

¶ 108. THE *GENERAL RULES* OF THE UNITED SOCIETIES

Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are: The public worship of God. The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded. The Supper of the Lord. Family and private prayer. Searching the Scriptures. Fasting or abstinence.

PART FOUR – THE COMMUNITY OF GOD’S PEOPLE

Section III. Church Membership

¶ **412. THE MEANING OF A SACRAMENT.** A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The sacraments communicate in physical form the Gospel promise that all who come to Christ in repentance and faith receive new life in him. God gives us the sign as a means whereby we receive this grace and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it. The two sacraments ordained by Christ are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion (also called the Lord’s Supper or the Eucharist). We receive the sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ enables us to receive the grace of God through the sacraments, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the sacraments to bear fruit in our lives.

¶ **413. SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY.** During the English Reformation, the church was defined as the community where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered (Methodist Articles of Religion XIII). In keeping with the historic practice of the Christian church, elders are ordained to oversee the sacramental life of the church and thus have full authority and responsibility to preside at celebrations of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Bishops may extend sacramental authority to deacons appointed to the office of pastor in a local church or to another specialized ministry setting for the purpose of celebrating the sacraments. Such sacramental authority for a deacon is limited to the appointed ministry setting and is exercised under the oversight and authority of a presiding elder.

¶ **414. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM.** Through Holy Baptism we are united in Christ’s death in repentance of our sins; raised to new life in him through the power of the resurrection; incorporated into the Body of Christ; and empowered through the work of the Holy Spirit to go on to perfection. Holy Baptism is God’s gracious gift to us, flowing from the once for all work of Christ Jesus, and our pledge to follow as his disciples. The church is commanded to baptize disciples in Christ (Matt. 28:19), and the early church followed this practice (Acts 2:38). Entire households—which presumably would have included infants—were baptized (Acts 10:24, 47-48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16). Including infants in the initiation ritual has a precedent in the covenant membership rite in the Old Testament, in which male infants were circumcised on the eighth day (Gen. 17:9-14). The connection between circumcision and baptism is made explicit in Col. 2:11-12. Methodists historically have practiced infant baptism (Articles of Religion, XVII). As the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church states: “We believe children are under the atonement of Christ and as heirs of the Kingdom of God are acceptable subjects for Christian baptism. Children of believing parents through baptism become the special responsibility of the Church. They should be nurtured and led to personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their baptism” (Article VI). Parents will decide, in consultation with their pastor, when to baptize their children.

¶ **415. THE MODE AND PRACTICE OF BAPTISM.** Holy Baptism may be performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The outward and visible sign of Holy Baptism is water. Candidates are baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). The inward and spiritual grace is death to sin and new birth to righteousness by

faith through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Holy Baptism is administered among a gathered congregation. Those present vow on behalf of Christ's holy church to receive the baptized into the Church universal, to grow together in grace, and to remember the profession made and benefits received in Holy Baptism. Candidates for Holy Baptism, and those presenting candidates unable to answer for themselves, shall be instructed in the Christian faith and the meaning of Holy Baptism. Holy Baptism, as initiation into Christ's holy church, occurs once in a person's life. Holy Communion serves as the regular and continual affirmation of baptismal vows within the church. Through a service of baptismal remembrance and reaffirmation of baptismal vows people can renew the covenant declared at baptism.

¶ 416. **BAPTISMAL VOWS.** In faithfulness with early Christian practice as well as the Wesleyan tradition, those wishing to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism within the Global Methodist Church shall first be asked the following questions:

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

I renounce them.

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

I do.

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

I do.

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

I do.

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

I will.

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

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

I (We) will.

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

Will you who witness these vows encourage [these persons] in the faith and do all in your power to support [these persons] in [their] life in Christ?

We will.

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

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

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

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

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

¶ **421. THE MEANING AND MODE OF HOLY COMMUNION.** Like baptism, the sacrament of Holy Communion is a sign of God's grace present through the physical elements, offering the Gospel promise that all who come to Christ in repentance and faith receive new life in him. In Holy Communion also known as the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist (from the Greek word for "thanksgiving"), we are invited into fellowship (koinonia) with the real, spiritual presence of Christ Jesus in the whole of the sacrament; we participate in the communion of saints with the Church universal; and we are given a foretaste of God's eternal banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb. The sacrament may be offered to all who repent of sin and desire to draw near to God and lead a life of obedience to Christ. Holy Communion is normally celebrated in the midst of the congregation, physically gathered to remember and respond to God's mighty acts of salvation revealed in Holy Scripture. Local congregations are urged to ensure regular opportunities for the congregation to commune. John Wesley argued that "it is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as he can" (Sermon, "The Duty of Constant Communion"). This is because Christ commands it and we receive great benefits through it; we receive "the food of our souls." God has given us the Lord's Supper, according to Wesley, "that through this means we may be assisted to attain those blessings which he hath prepared for us; that we may obtain holiness on earth, and everlasting glory in heaven." Thus, believers should partake of Holy Communion as often as they can. Holy Communion recalls Jesus's actions at the Last Supper: he took the bread and cup, gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples. Thus, the Communion liturgy should reflect these actions by including:

- the taking/preparation of the bread and cup;
- a time for repentance and confession of sins, including a pronouncement of pardon for sins;
- thanksgiving for the gifts about to be received;
- the words of institution, which recall Jesus's words at the Last Supper;
- the prayer of invocation, in which the Holy Spirit is invited to make the gifts of bread and wine become for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ;
- the breaking of the bread; and
- the distribution of the elements to all who repent of sin and desire to draw near to God and lead a life of obedience to Christ.

Those who cannot (or choose not to) receive the eucharistic elements for whatever reason are still encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing. The elements of Holy Communion may be taken to those whose condition prevents them from being physically present. We encourage the use of non-alcoholic wine or juice for Holy Communion. Non-alcoholic juice must be offered as an option where wine is used.

PART FIVE – THE MINISTRY OF THE CALLED

¶ 512. SUPPLY PASTOR. 1. Upon approval of a conference board of ministry, a bishop may appoint individuals who are candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a supply pastor within the Global Methodist Church. It shall be the responsibility of the conference board of ministry to assign an elder to provide mentoring to that person.

2. In recognition of the scriptural principle of the “priesthood of all believers,” and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor completes a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church, he or she may preside over the sacraments of baptism and holy communion under the direction of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder. The presiding elder may assign the supply pastor’s candidacy mentor to this role where appropriate. The board of ministry may consider any courses taken in the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training.

3. A supply pastor must be ordained as a deacon within five total years of their appointed service in that role. Candidates for ordination who fail to meet the educational requirements as defined in ¶ 507.3 will be discontinued as supply pastors.

4. Supply pastors are clergy members of the annual conference with full voice, but not vote, on all matters.

