



**DISCIPLINE  
OF THE  
BETHEL  
METHODIST  
CHURCH**

**Revision D**

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## **PREFACE**

Work on the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church began with Discipline Committees at the local level in 1988. At the 1991 Bethel Methodist General Conference, the Board of Discipline Revision was formed. The original issue of the Discipline was approved by the General Conference on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

It is the purpose of the Board of Discipline Revision to develop, and revise, as needed, a discipline specific to the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination. The Board has stayed true to its charter as portions of the latest revision, Revision D, were approved by the General Conferences held on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

The pages contained herein are the result of many prayerful hours of work by the ministers and laymen of the Hill Country, Port Neches, Southlake and Robinson Bethel Methodist Churches, as revised and assimilated by the Board of Discipline Revision. It is the sincere prayer of all who have participated in the writing of this Discipline that it may serve God through the Bethel Methodist Church until our Lord's return.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Discipline Revision, 2009-2010

## LIST OF REVISIONS

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**REVISION D**

April 11, 2008

April 24, 2009

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Revised

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Revised

INTERCHURCH COUNCIL – Composition

Revised

GENERAL CONFERENCE – Composition

Revised

## SECTION 1 -- HISTORICAL STATEMENT

### Chapter 1.

¶1.1 In the mid 1970's, a group of ministers and laymen grew increasingly disturbed by a trend in the Evangelical movement of the Church. The Church appeared to be de-emphasizing the importance of objective, biblical truth in order to accommodate the wishes of men rather than the desire of God to reveal Himself and His will as purely and completely as possible. This trend was typified by a widening tolerance of many different beliefs regarding the nature of God, man, angels, sin, salvation, sanctification and heaven.

¶1.2 The Church is ordered by God to “come to the unity of the faith,” yet it seemed any attempt to clarify or reconcile divergent views on such basic tenets was deemed unnecessary and “divisive.” After a final attempt, it was apparent the trend was irreversible.

¶1.3 On August 16, 1988, five Evangelical Methodist ministers met in Hico, Texas, to seek God's will regarding the Methodist denomination. The five were Reverend Arthur L. Slye, Jr., Reverend Dennis Barrett, Reverend John Swift, Reverend Tim Hicke, and Reverend Jerry Slye. After much discussion and prayer, the five men agreed on three points:

1. God needed and desired a new Methodist denomination which had a clear purpose; a rational, consistent and comprehensive theology in total accord with all revealed truth; and honest, godly leadership.
2. God wanted them to commence immediately with its foundation and organization.
3. It would be named “The Bethel Methodist Church.”

¶1.4 To begin the organization process, an Interchurch Council was founded. Composed of one ministerial representative and two lay representatives from each prospective church, each delegation on the Interchurch Council had a voice in how and when the new denomination would be organized and whether the local church it represented would be willing to join and help build a new denomination. Three churches expressed positive interest. They were located in Irving, Port Neches, and Robinson, Texas.

¶1.5 Each local church voted to become a part of the Bethel Methodist Church and sent a delegation to the Organizational Conference at Irving, Texas. Documents of Incorporation were filed with the State of Texas on February 27, 1989. On Easter weekend, the Organizational Conference was convened. The Bethel Methodist Church was founded by 40 lay and ministerial delegates from three charter churches on March 24, 1989. Reverend Arthur L. Slye was elected the first General Superintendent.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion.

¶1.1 In order that we may maintain our historical connection to early Methodism we include Dr. Adam Clarke's principles as recorded in Volume Six of his commentaries.

#### PRINCIPLES

¶1.2 Which, on carefully reading and studying the sacred writings, I think I find unequivocally revealed there.

1. That there is but one uncreated, unoriginated, infinite, and eternal Being; the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things.
2. That there is in this Infinite Essence a plurality of what are commonly called persons, not separately subsisting, but essentially belonging to the Godhead; which persons are commonly termed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or God, the Logos, and the Holy Spirit: and these are generally named the Trinity, which term, though not found in the New Testament, seems properly enough applied, as we never read of more than three persons in the Godhead.
3. That the sacred Scriptures, or holy books which form the Old and New Testaments, contain a full revelation of the will of God in reference to man; and are alone sufficient for every thing relative to the faith and practice of a Christian; and were given by the inspiration of God.
4. That man was created in righteousness and true holiness, without any moral imperfection or any kind of propensity to sin; but free to stand or fall.
5. That he fell from this state, became morally corrupt in his nature, and transmitted his moral defilement to all his posterity.
6. That, to counteract the evil principle, and bring man into a salvable state, God, from his infinite love, formed the purpose of redeeming man from his lost estate by Christ Jesus, and in the interim sent his Holy Spirit to enlighten, strive with, and convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
7. That in due time the Divine Logos, called afterwards Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour, etc., became incarnated, and sojourned among men, teaching the purest truth, and working the most stupendous and beneficent miracles.
8. That this Divine Person, foretold by the prophets, and described by evangelists and apostles, is really and properly God; having, by the inspired writers, assigned to him every attribute essential to the Deity; being one with him who is called God, Jehovah, etc.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.

9. That he is also perfect man in consequence of his incarnation, and in that man or manhood dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; so that his nature is twofold--- Divine and human, or God manifested in the flesh.
10. That his human nature is derived from the blessed Virgin Mary, through the creative energy of the Holy Ghost; but his Divine nature, because God, infinite and eternal, is uncreated, underived, and unbegotten; which, were it otherwise, he could not be God in any proper sense of the word; but as he is God, the doctrine of the eternal Sonship must be false.
11. That, as he took upon him the nature of man, he died for the whole human race, without respect of persons; equally for all, and for every man.
12. That on the third day after his crucifixion and burial he rose from the dead; and after showing himself many days to his disciples and others, he ascended to heaven, where, as God manifest in the flesh, he continues and shall continue to be the Mediator of the human race, till the consummation of all things.
13. That there is no salvation but through him; and that throughout the Scriptures his passion and death are considered as sacrificial, pardon and salvation being obtained by the shedding of his blood.
14. That no human being since the fall either has or can have merit or worthiness of or by himself, and therefore has nothing to claim from God, but in the way of his mercy through Christ; therefore pardon, and every other blessing promised in the Gospel, have been purchased by his sacrificial death, and are given to men, not on account of any thing they have done or suffered, or can do or suffer, but for his sake, or through his merit alone.
15. That these blessings are received by faith, because not of works, nor of sufferings.
16. That the power to believe, or grace of faith, is the free gift of God, without which none can believe; but that the act of faith, or actually believing, is the act of the soul, under the influence of that power. But this power to believe, like all other gifts of God, may be slighted, not used, or misused; in consequence of which is that declaration, “He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
17. That justification, or the pardon of sin, is an instantaneous act of God’s infinite mercy in behalf of a penitent soul, trusting only in the merits of Jesus Christ; that this act is absolute in respect of all past sin, all being forgiven where any is forgiven.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.

18. That the souls of all believers may be purified from all sin in this life; and that a man may live under the continual influence of the grace of Christ, without sinning against his God, all evil tempers and sinful propensities being destroyed, and his heart filled with pure love both to God and man.
19. That unless a believer live and walk in the spirit of obedience, he will fall from the grace of God, and forfeit all his Christian privileges and rights; in which state of backsliding he may persevere, and, if so, perish everlastingly.
20. That the whole period of human life is a state of probation, in every part of which a sinner may repent and turn to God, and in every part of it a believer may give way to sin and fall from grace; and that this possibility of rising, and liability to falling, are essential to a state of trial or probation.
21. That all the promises and threatenings of the word of God are conditional, as they regard man in reference to his being here and hereafter; and that on this ground alone the sacred writings can be consistently interpreted or rightly understood.
22. That man is a free agent, never being impelled by any necessitating influence either to do evil or good, but has it continually in his power to choose the life or death that is set before him; on which ground he is an accountable being, and answerable for his own actions; and on this ground also he is alone capable of being rewarded or punished.
23. That his free will is a necessary constituent of his rational soul, without which man must be a mere machine, either the sport of blind chance, or the mere patient of an irresistible necessity; and, consequently, not accountable for any acts to which he was irresistibly impelled.
24. That every human being has his freedom of will, with a sufficiency of light and power to direct its operations; and that this powerful light is not inherent in any man's nature, but is graciously bestowed by Him who is the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.
25. That, as Christ has made, by his once offering himself upon the cross, a sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and that, as his gracious Spirit strives with and enlightens all men, thus putting them in a salvable state; therefore every human soul may be saved, if it be not his own fault.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.

26. That Jesus Christ has instituted, and commanded to be perpetuated in his Church, two sacraments; baptism (sprinkling, washing with, or immersion in water) in the name of the holy and ever blessed Trinity, as a sign of the cleansing and regeneration influences of the Holy Ghost, producing a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; and the eucharist, or Lord's Supper, as commemorating the sacrificial death of Christ. That by the first, once administered, all believers may be kept in mind of the foundation on which their salvation is built, and receive grace to enable them to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.
27. That the soul is immaterial and immortal, and can subsist independently of the body.
28. That there will be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; that the souls of both shall be reunited to their respective bodies; and that both will be immortal, and live eternally.
29. That there will be a day of judgment, after which all shall be punished or rewarded, according to the deeds done in the body; the wicked being sent to hell, and the righteous taken into heaven.
30. That these states of reward and punishment shall have no end, forasmuch as the time of probation or trial is for ever terminated, and the succeeding state must necessarily be fixed and unalterable.
31. That the origin of human salvation is found in the infinite philanthropy of God; and that on this principle the unconditional reprobation of any soul is absolutely impossible.
32. The Sacred Writings are a system of pure, unsophisticated reason, proceeding from the immaculate mind of God; in many places, it is true, vastly elevated beyond what the reason of man could have devised or found out, but in no case contrary to human reason; they are addressed, not to the passions, but to the reason of man; every command is urged with reasons of obedience, and every promise and threatening founded on the most evident reason and propriety. The whole, therefore, are to be rationally understood and rationally interpreted. He who would discharge reason from this, its noblest province, is a friend in his heart to the antichristian maxim, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion." Revelation and reason go hand in hand; faith is the servant of the former, and the friend of the latter; while the Spirit of God, which gave the revelation, improves and exalts reason, and gives energy and effect to faith.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.

¶1.3 *To conclude: the doctrines or principles which I have stated above, and defended in this work, I believe to be the truths of God. Those against which I have argued I believe to be either false or unproved. The doctrine which cannot stand the test of rational investigation cannot be true. The doctrines or principles already enumerated have stood this test; and those which shrink from such a test are not doctrines of Divine revelation. We have gone too far when we have said, "Such and such doctrines should not be subjected to rational investigation, being doctrines of pure revelation." I know no such doctrines in the Bible. The doctrines of this book are doctrines of eternal reason, and they are revealed because they are such. Human reason could not have found them out; but when revealed, reason can both apprehend and comprehend them. It sees their perfect harmony among themselves, their agreement with the perfections of the Divine nature, and their sovereign suitableness to the nature and state of man; thus reason approves and applauds. Some men, it is true, cannot reason; and therefore they declaim against reason, and proscribe it in the examination of religious truth.*

¶1.4 *Men may incorporate their doctrines in creeds or articles of faith, and sing them in hymns, and this may be all both useful and edifying if the doctrine be true; but in every question which involves the eternal interests of man, the Holy Scriptures must be appealed to, in union with reason, their great commentator. He who forms his creed or confession of faith without these, may believe anything or nothing, as the cunning of others, or his own caprices, may dictate. Human creeds and confessions of faith have been often put in the place of the Bible, to the disgrace both of revelation and reason. Let those go away, let these be retained, whatever be the consequence. Adam Clarke. Millbrook, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1817.*

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 2. Articles of Faith.

¶2.1 **The Holy Trinity.** The Trinity is easily distinguished in scripture and impossible to separate. To separate the Trinity is to violate the unity of God. To say or suggest that one may have one person of the Trinity apart from the other two is serious error. The moment one believes in separation of the Trinity, he becomes a victim of the heresy of polytheism.

¶2.2 **The Incarnation and Deity of Christ.** “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: ...and his name shall be called... the mighty God, the everlasting Father...” “...the Word was God...the Word was made flesh...” “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” Jesus Christ is the eternal God manifested in true humanity. In his human mission of qualifying to be the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” he never functioned in his deity but solely in his real humanity. His qualifying sinlessness was accomplished solely in his humanity.

¶2.3 **The Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is ever present and active in and through the Church. He convinces the world of sin, regenerates those who repent and believe and guides the Christian into all Truth. He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us.

¶2.4 **The Holy Scriptures.** The Holy Scriptures are the thirty-nine Old Testament and twenty-seven New Testament books of the Christian Bible. They are inspired by God in the sense that by his will and power they were given and are preserved. From all that is stated in these inspired writings, may be produced the full, inerrant and infallible word of God. This produced “word” exceeds in volume and weight the words stated in scripture. Our preferred illustration of this important principle is the acorn and the oak tree. The vital healthy acorn represents the Bible. The flourishing mature oak tree represents the word of God.

¶2.5 **The Eternal Purpose of God.** The purpose of God in eternity is to love and be loved not merely out of programmed necessity but by free moral choice.

¶2.6 **The Moral Nature and Responsibility of God.** The divine nature consists of twelve essential qualities called attributes. In his sovereignty, God may do whatever he will and is not answerable to anything extrinsic to himself. But, he is forever answerable to his own intrinsic nature. He only and always acts in full harmony with each of the essentials of his nature.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 2. Articles of Faith, cont.

¶2.7 **The Nature of Created Spirits (The Image of God).** God is a spirit. The image of God in which man is created is spirit. Created spirits possess two inherent and inalienable characteristics: permanent, conscious, active existence and the permanent power to love God by free moral choice. Conversely, this power to love God by free choice is the ability to commit sin.

¶2.8 **God's Work in Time.** God is actively working his perfect plan to remove all sinning from his entire creation once and forever.

¶2.9 **The Inherited Sin Nature.** The death Adam suffered in the garden by disobedience to God was spiritual, not physical. This death was the separation of God's Spirit from the spirit of Adam. This same death is transmitted to every member of the human race. That which is commonly referred to as the sin nature of man is simply the absence of God from the human spirit.

¶2.10 **Four Spiritual Standings.** Every member of the human race living on the earth is presently in one of only four spiritual standings before God. The first is "LOST IN ADAM," which is the absence of God from one's spirit. The second is "CHRISTIAN," which is Christ dwelling in one and that one abiding in Christ. The third is "A BACKSLIDER," a convert who has Christ dwelling in him but he is not abiding in Christ. The fourth is "APOSTATE." One can only come to this standing as a backsliding convert who persists until he exceeds the limits of the elasticity of God's saving grace. He has refused to respond to the patient reproof of the Holy Spirit. He has become guilty of the unpardonable sin or "the sin unto death," which is not a single act but a prolonged series of attitudes and activities contrary to the known will of God. This is the most tragic standing for the reason that it is without remedy.

¶2.11 **Eternal Salvation.** The full salvation of man involves four aspects in a required order. First, we must be saved from sins personally committed. Second, we must be saved from the sin nature inherited from Adam. Thirdly, and most importantly, we must be saved from the committing of sins. In realizing the third part of salvation, the fourth aspect is effected by the purpose and necessity of hell being eliminated.

¶2.12 **Essential Elements of Salvation.** Our Lord speaks of a strait gate and a narrow way which ends in life. By this, and other scriptures, we recognize two essential elements for eternal salvation; these are the conversion experience and the Christian relationship. Because of the natural state of man in sin, the saving relationship remains forever impossible without the conversion experience. The experience allows the relationship, and only in the Christian relationship is full salvation realized.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 2. Articles of Faith, cont.

¶2.13 **The Sacraments.** The two sacraments of the Church are rituals ordained by God as outward and visible symbols of inward and spiritual realities.

1. God’s purpose for the sacraments is to speak symbolically of the two essentials for human salvation.
2. These essentials are “the conversion experience” and “the saving relationship.”
3. A sacrament in no way, or to any degree, adds to or consummates the inward reality.

If we fail to clearly distinguish between the reality and the ritual, confusing the one for the other, we actually negate the saving grace of God from our lives.

¶2.14 **Baptism.** The sacrament of water baptism speaks symbolically of the conversion experience. Conversion to Christ is a cleansing or washing experience. The historical and universal symbol of washing is water. It is our belief from scripture, and therefore our preference, that water baptism be by affusion (sprinkling and pouring).

¶2.15 **The Lord’s Supper.** The element of bread is an emblem representing the incarnation and human life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The juice of the grape is the emblem of blood which represents the suffering and sacrifice of our Lord. Together these two elements of Holy Communion represent the entire purpose and process of the human life and death of Jesus Christ. By partaking of these emblems we are saying that we are the blessed recipients of the saving grace provided by that life and death. The clearest and most concise statement of the reality of communion was spoken by our Lord himself; “he that is eating my flesh and drinking my blood is dwelling in me and I in him,” *John 6:56*. Here we have both a description and the definition of the word “Christian,” mutual indwelling; Christ in you and you in Christ.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 3. General Rules.

¶3.1 There are two essentials for eternal salvation and each is symbolized in the two sacraments of the church. The sacraments speak symbolically of these two essentials for eternal salvation:

1. The spiritual **EXPERIENCE** of receiving Christ into one's spirit, which is realized by faith in a moment of time. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." *Colossians 1:27*.
2. The continuing spiritual **RELATIONSHIP** of following Christ (abiding in Christ) through faith. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." *John 8:31-32*. "Abide in me...I am the vine, ye are the branches...If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch...and they are burned." *John 15:4-6*.

¶3.2 All members of the Bethel Methodist Church should evidence these essential realities in their daily lives. Such evidence includes a strong desire to be free from committing sin, to assemble with other Christians in public worship, to pray, to fast when so led of the Holy Spirit, to give to the financial support of the church through proportional giving and offerings, and to share the knowledge and understanding of God with others.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 4. Founding Principles of the Denomination.

¶4.1 **Purpose.** The purpose of the Bethel Methodist Church is to know and understand God. (*Luke 10:42, Jeremiah 9:23-24*) Our compelling objective is to make Him known and understood. This progressive realization of our purpose compels us to:

1. Seek to establish and maintain ourselves as a “message centered people with a God-centered message.”
2. Make Him known and understood through personal and corporate witness, Christian Mission, Christian Education and Church Extension.

¶4.2 **Church Government.** The Bethel Methodist Church is both congregational and connectional. It is **congregational** in two ways:

1. As to property rights:
  - a. Property rights are vested, with respect to ownership and maintenance, in the local church and held in trust to the local church by the trustees of the local church. In the absence of a Board of Trustees, the duties and responsibilities of officers shall be vested in either the Board of Stewards or the church may authorize one or more members to act in its behalf.
  - b. The General Conference may make provision for the holding of property, other than the above, when mission money or general funds are involved.
2. As to calling a pastor:
  - a. The choice of pastor is vested with the local church for its final authority, subject to the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.

It is **connectional** in that the entire church operates under the Constitution and By-Laws enacted by the General Conference in the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church. All local churches that affiliate with the Bethel Methodist Church shall operate under the Discipline.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 5. Amendments to Constitution.

¶5.1 The Constitution can be amended only by the following procedure:

1. Three-fourths (3/4) quorum majority vote (present and voting) of any General Conference.
2. Ratification by two-thirds (2/3) of the local churches voting. Ratification at the local church level shall be by two-thirds (2/3) of the membership (present and voting) at either an Annual Church Conference or a Special Church Conference.

¶5.2 Proposed amendments to the Constitution may originate in the General Conference, at a local Church Conference or in the Interchurch Council.

## **SECTION 3 – BY-LAWS**

### **Chapter 1. Definition.**

¶1.1 All which follows in the Discipline, not specifically in the Constitution, shall be known as the By-Laws.

¶1.2 The By-Laws can be amended by the General Conference, but must always be in harmony with and not contrary to the Constitution.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 1. Purpose.**

¶1.1 The Christian Church is composed of all believers who have received Christ into their spirit and are trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ for cleansing from all sin unto eternal salvation.

¶1.2 The Bethel Methodist Church is a collection of persons who, by mutual agreement, are like-minded in matters of theology and united in the purpose of knowing and understanding God and causing Him to be known and understood.

¶1.3 In fulfilling this purpose, the local church meets regularly for the worship of God, the preaching and teaching of God's Word and the receiving of the sacraments of baptism and Holy communion. The local congregation is both a spiritual and social family; they share one another's joy and burdens, fellowship together, pray for one another and exhort one another to be more Christ-like. The local church also gives evidence of the knowledge and understanding of God by sharing the gospel in word and example at home and abroad, ministering to community needs and generally applying the teachings of Christ to everyday life.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 2. Membership.

¶2.1 All who have repented of their sins and are trusting in Christ alone for salvation, growing in the knowledge and understanding of God and willing to walk in that light as given by the scriptures and Holy Spirit may be considered for membership in the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶2.2 When, after counseling, prayer and careful consideration, the pastor is satisfied that the candidates are born-again, sufficiently familiar with and supportive of the theology, purpose and program of the Bethel Methodist Church, the pastor may receive them into membership, by administering the vows of the church and presenting them to the congregation.

¶2.3 Members of any Bethel Methodist Church are eligible for membership in another Bethel Methodist congregation by transfer, provided the provisions of ¶2.1 and ¶2.2 are satisfied.

¶2.4 The pastor and/or the Membership Secretary shall keep an accurate record of church membership noting additions, withdrawals and the reason for withdrawal in the roll book.

¶2.5 Any member who joins another church shall be noted as having withdrawn.

¶2.6 Members, who for reason of change of residence or cause other than sickness, have absented themselves for over six or more months, may be removed from the membership roll at the Annual Church Conference. If possible, said persons shall have been contacted by the pastor and/or the Membership Secretary and informed of the pending action.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 3. Church Affiliation.

¶3.1 The local church, acting at its Annual and Special Called Church Conferences, constitutes the basic governmental body of the Bethel Methodist Church. The General Conference and all duly elected officers derive their administrative powers and duties from the local churches acting through their delegates. The local churches act cooperatively at the general level by carrying out the programs and following the Discipline adopted by their delegates at these conferences.

¶3.2 Any local congregation desiring to unite with the Bethel Methodist Church may do so, providing the following requirements are met:

1. The General Superintendent has met with the pastor, board and congregation.
2. The Interchurch Council and the General Superintendent are satisfied that the congregation is in general agreement with the theology, purpose and program of the Bethel Methodist Church.
3. An invitation is extended by the General Superintendent to the local church to affiliate.
4. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of eligible members of the local church present and voting and fully understanding the privileges and responsibilities pertaining thereof, vote to establish formal affiliation with the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶3.3 Ten percent (10%) of all donations to the local church's general fund shall be sent monthly to the treasurer of the Bethel Methodist Church with the following exceptions:

1. Personally designated gifts.
2. Special offerings approved by the Board.

¶3.4 The local church treasurer and pastor shall see that all Conference support has been paid at the end of the fiscal year and report the same to the Annual Church Conference. If there is a shortage, the local church will have thirty days prior to the General Conference to make up the shortfall. If the shortfall is not made up in that time, the local church will not be allowed to seat delegates at the conference except upon recommendation of the General Superintendent and a two-thirds favorable vote of the conference.

¶3.5 No transfer, sale or exchange of real property can be made without a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the eligible members present and voting at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Called Church Conference. Proposal of such action shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference.

¶3.6 The local church may encumber or mortgage church property upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those eligible members present and voting at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Called Church Conference. Proposal of such action shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 3. Church Affiliation, cont.

¶3.7 The local church may disaffiliate or withdraw from the Bethel Methodist Church upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those eligible members present and voting at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Called Church Conference. Proposal of such action shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference. The General Superintendent must be notified of such proposed action at least ninety (90) days prior to such vote.

¶3.8 If, in the course of providence, a group of Bethel Methodists desires to form a new Bethel Methodist church, yet lacks the numbers and support necessary to become self-sufficient, it may petition the Interchurch Council and/or the General Conference in order to obtain a charter as a Bethel Methodist Mission Church. As such, the Mission Church is encouraged to participate in Interchurch Council Meetings and at the General Conference, though without voting privileges.

¶3.9 The Interchurch Council and/or The General Conference may elect to draw from General funds in order to support the Mission Church. The local churches and their membership are encouraged to prayerfully consider how they support the Mission Church.

¶3.10 Once a Mission Church has become self-sufficient, it is by definition a “local church” of the Bethel Methodist Denomination, having satisfied the provisions of ¶3.2. Voting privileges will be extended in accordance with ¶3.3 and ¶3.4.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference.

¶4.1 The pastor and the Board of Stewards, in consultation with the General Superintendent, shall set the date of the Annual Church Conference. Notice of the Annual Church Conference shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference.

¶4.2 A quorum shall be constituted of all eligible members present. Members sixteen years of age and older are eligible to vote. Any member who has been absent for a period of six months prior to the conference except for illness or an absence excused by the Board of Stewards shall forfeit the right to vote, if challenged by an eligible member and upheld by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the conference.

¶4.3 The Annual Church Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶4.4 The following is a suggested order of business. The Annual Church Conference shall:

1. Be called to order by the pastor or Chairman of the Board of Stewards, who shall introduce and turn the meeting over to the General Superintendent. In the event that the General Superintendent is unable to attend the Annual Church Conference, the pastor shall act in his stead.
2. Begin with a short devotional service and prayer.
3. Establish the voting bar.
4. Elect a presiding officer. The General Superintendent (or pastor acting in his stead) may preside over the Annual Church Conference or ask the Local Church to elect its own Conference Chairman. After presiding over the election of the Conference Chairman, the General Superintendent (or pastor acting in his stead) shall relinquish the chair.
5. Elect a Conference Secretary to take minutes of all conference business.
6. Vote on an agenda.
7. Receive written reports from the pastor, Chairman of the Trustees (if applicable), Chairman of the Stewards, Sunday School Superintendent, Treasurer and all committees and auxiliary groups of the church.
8. Read the Nominating Committee Report.
9. Elect all officers, teachers, youth sponsors, boards and committees. All Local Church and Sunday School officers shall be elected either individually or as part of the Nominating Committee report and shall take office immediately upon election. See ¶4.5a through ¶4.5e.
10. Present the budget for the coming year.
11. Conduct any other business that is in keeping with the Discipline. See ¶4.7a through ¶4.7e, pastoral vote for even numbered years.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference, cont.

¶4.5a The Annual Church Conference shall elect the following Boards, Committees and Delegates:

- Board of Stewards
- Delegates to the Interchurch Council
- Finance Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Pastoral Relations Committee

¶4.5b The Annual Church Conference shall elect the following officers:

- Sunday School Superintendent
- Treasurer
- Secretary

¶4.5c The Annual Church Conference may elect the following and any other committees that the Local Church deems necessary:

Advertising and Promotion	Library
Board of Trustees	Missions
Benevolence	Music
Christian Education	Nursery
Communion	Parsonage
Evangelism Outreach	Property Maintenance
Fellowship	Ushers/Welcoming

¶4.5d The Annual Church Conference may elect the following officers:

- Asst. Sunday School Superintendent
- Asst. Treasurer/Financial Secretary
- Historian
- Membership Secretary

¶4.5e The Local Church may organize the following auxiliary groups and others it deems necessary:

- Bethel Methodist Men
- Bethel Methodist Women
- Bethel Methodist Youth Groups

¶4.6 It shall be the duty of the local church secretary and officers to make all records and books of the local church available to the Annual Church Conference.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference, cont.

¶4.7a A pastoral vote shall be conducted at each local church's Annual Church Conference held on an even numbered year.

1. In the case of a newly called pastor, a vote shall not be taken unless the pastor has served at least one complete year.
2. The outgoing Pastoral Relations Committee has the authority to delay the required pastoral vote for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days.

¶4.7b Notice of the pastoral vote shall be posted and announced at least two Sundays prior to the conference. Included within this announcement shall be the explanation that:

1. A pastoral vote shall, as a matter of Annual Church Conference business, be conducted at all Bethel Methodist Churches held on even numbered years, noting the exception in ¶4.7a.
2. This pastoral vote is being conducted as a result of business voted on and passed at General Conference.
3. This pastoral vote in no way reflects on the character of the pastor.

¶4.7c The following is the prescribed order of business:

1. The pastoral vote will be the last order of business at the Annual Church Conference and shall be conducted by the General Superintendent or his designated representative.
2. The vote shall be preceded by the General Superintendent, or designated representative, reiterating the explanation as provided in ¶4.7b.
3. The question of the vote shall be, "Do you believe it is God's will for 'Pastor's Name' to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Church of 'Location' at this time?"
4. There will be no discussion on the question at the time of the vote.
5. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot.
6. The vote will be determined by a simple majority. A tie vote is the same as a negative vote.
7. After all ballots have been collected, the votes shall be counted in closed quarters by the following, or their designated representative:
  - a. The General Superintendent.
  - b. The outgoing Chairman of the local church's Board of Stewards.
  - c. The outgoing Chairman of the Pastoral Relations Committee.
8. The pastor shall be called in and given the exact vote count.
9. The General Superintendent, or his designated representative, shall report the exact vote count to the conference.
10. The Annual Church Conference shall be brought to a close.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference, cont.**

¶4.7d The pastor shall have fifteen (15) days after notification to respond to an affirmative vote.

¶4.7e In the event of a negative vote, the newly elected Board of Stewards will convene as soon as practical to begin deliberations concerning the following:

1. What pulpit privileges shall the outgoing pastor be afforded?
2. What severance pay shall be awarded?
3. What policy shall be followed with respect to the outgoing pastor's office and the parsonage?

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 5. Special Church Conference.**

¶5.1 A Special Church Conference may be called by the pastor, Board of Stewards, or the General Superintendent. Notice of the Special Church Conference shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference. In addition, the notification must specify the item(s) of business to be considered.

¶5.2 A quorum shall be constituted of all eligible members present. Any member who has been absent for a period of six months or more prior to the conference except for illness or an absence excused by the Board of Stewards shall forfeit the right to vote, if challenged by an eligible member and upheld by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the conference.

¶5.3 The Special Church Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶5.4 A Special Church Conference may be called for the reasons of:

1. Considering the question of Pastoral Relations. [See Chapter 6.](#)
2. Considering the question of continuing Church Affiliation. [See ¶3.7.](#)
3. Encumbrance of Church property.
4. Amending the budget.
5. Any other business deemed sufficiently urgent by the pastor, Board of Stewards or General Superintendent.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 6. Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations.

¶6.1 A Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations may be called by the pastor, the Board of Stewards or by the General Superintendent. Notice of the Special Church Conference shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference. In addition, the notification must specify the item(s) of business to be considered.

¶6.2 A quorum shall be constituted of all eligible members present. Members sixteen years of age and older are eligible to vote. Any member who has been absent for a period of six months or more prior to the conference except for illness or an absence excused by the Board of Stewards shall forfeit the right to vote, if challenged by an eligible member and upheld by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the conference.

¶6.3 The Special Church Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶6.4 The Special Church Conference may be called for the purpose of calling a pastor or determining whether the current pastoral relations should be continued.

¶6.5 In the event of calling a pastor, the question of the vote should be, "Do you believe it is God's will for 'Candidate's Name' to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Church of 'Location' at this time?" Vote shall be by secret ballot and a two-thirds (2/3) majority shall be required to call the pastor. The pastoral candidate shall have fifteen (15) days after notification to respond to an affirmative vote.

¶6.6 In the event of a vote on the current pastor, the question of the vote should be "Do you believe it is God's will for 'Pastor's Name' to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Church of 'Location' at this time?" Vote shall be by secret ballot and a simple majority shall be required to retain the current pastor. The pastor shall have fifteen (15) days after notification to respond to an affirmative vote. See ¶4.7a through ¶4.7e.

¶6.7 Any Special Church Conference that deals with the call of a new pastor should also include a full discussion of the proposed salary and timetable for the assumption of duties.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 7. Board of Stewards

¶7.1 The Board of Stewards is a representative body elected by and accountable to the local congregation, deriving its powers and functions from the Discipline and the local church. Representing the laity and key committees within the church, the Board of Stewards is the chief governing body in the absence of the church conference. While the Board of Stewards is responsible for executing the business of the local church, certain major items of business must always be brought before either the Annual or a Special Church Conference, including:

1. Hiring of a pastor. [See Chapter 6.](#)
2. Determining Church Affiliation. [See Chapter 3.](#)
3. Encumbrance of Church property.
4. Changing Local Church By-Laws.

Other important items which may be deemed prudent to bring before the entire church include: substantial amendments to the budget; approval of a new building; etc.

¶7.2 The Board of Stewards should be composed of at least three (3) members and not more than eleven (11) members. The following positions, boards and committees should be represented:

1. Church Treasurer.
2. Finance Committee Chairman or representative.
3. Pastoral Relations Committee Chairman or representative.
4. Property Maintenance Committee Chairman or representative.
5. Sunday School Superintendent or representative.

¶7.3 Candidates for Board membership must be members of the church body and at least eighteen (18) years of age. They should demonstrate evidence of discretion, kindness, humility, responsibility and prudence with regard to stewardship of church funds and property and any other qualities consistent with spiritual maturity and Christian leadership.

¶7.4 Board members are elected to one year terms. No Board member, except the Treasurer, may serve for more than three consecutive terms. For the sake of continuity, terms of Board members should be structured so that approximately a third of the Board rotates off each year. All members of the Board of Stewards are eligible to vote, except the Chairman, who may vote only in the case of a tie.

¶7.5 The Stewards shall be elected at the Annual Church Conference. As soon as possible after their election, the Stewards shall organize and elect their Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary and determine the time of their regular monthly meeting.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 7. Board of Stewards, cont.**

¶7.6 The minutes of all meetings of the Stewards shall be kept in a permanent record by the Secretary of the Stewards and shall be available to the Stewards and the pastor. Any member of the local church may review the minutes upon request.

¶7.7 All committees of the church shall work with the Stewards and pastor and report to them when called upon to do so.

¶7.8 The Stewards shall lead the congregation in all spiritual matters by precept and example by: (1) calling on visitors, the sick and the needy; and (2) endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace while nurturing and preserving the unity of the faith among members and especially teachers, youth leaders and those in positions of influence.

¶7.9 It shall be the duty of the Stewards to nominate the succeeding year's Nominating Committee.

¶7.10 If any elected position becomes vacant, the Stewards may fill said vacancy.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 8. Board of Trustees.**

¶8.1 The trustees of the local church shall be composed of three members of the church body of at least twenty-one years of age. Members shall be elected for a term of three years with one trustee being elected each year. Should a vacancy occur, the Board of Stewards shall have the responsibility of filling the vacancy pending the Annual Church Conference.

¶8.2 Each local Bethel Methodist Church should be incorporated under the laws of the state in which it is located. The trustees are the Directors of the corporation.

¶8.3 The trustees are empowered to hold title to all church property, accept bequests and endowments and administer the same in accordance with the wishes of donors and laws of the state. The trustees may transact the sale of church property in accordance with the wishes of the congregation and transact all legal business pertaining to the church. The trustees shall secure a place of safekeeping for all legal papers of the church, including policies, deeds, money deposits, receipts, etc., and be responsible for same. The trustees shall make a written report with regard to church property and legal business to the Annual Church Conference.

¶8.4 The duties of the chairman of the Board of Trustees shall be:

1. Calling meetings.
2. Executing actions taken by trustees.
3. Seeing that all duties of the trustees are implemented.

¶8.5 In the absence of a Board of Trustees, their duties and responsibilities shall be vested in either the Board of Stewards or the church may authorize one or more members to act in its behalf.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers.

¶9.1 Nominations for Annual Committees shall be prepared by the Nominating Committee, posted and announced two Sundays prior to the Annual Church Conference. At the discretion of the local church, this list may or may not include each committee's chairman. This slate of nominees plus any nominations from the floor, shall be voted on at the Annual Church Conference.

¶9.2 The Annual Committees hereby presented shall submit reports to the Annual Church Conference. Where applicable, these committees should also submit budget requests to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

¶9.3 No board or committee shall hold a meeting pertaining to the church without the pastor's prior knowledge, unless the church is without a pastor.

¶9.4 Except where otherwise noted, all of the Annual Committees may be comprised of either members, or members and regular attendees. The individual duties of some of the Annual Committees are as follows:

¶9.5 **Advertising and Promotion.** The Advertising and Promotion Committee shall be responsible for publicizing the activities and special events of the church in the media.

¶9.6 **Assistant Sunday School Superintendent.** See Sunday School Superintendent, ¶9.28.

¶9.7 **Assistant Treasurer.** The Assistant Treasurer shall be a member of the church body and shall assist the Church Treasurer as needed, being authorized to act in the Church Treasurer's absence.

¶9.8 **Benevolence.** The Benevolence Committee, working with the Pastor, is to be aware of and respond to various needs within the church. Also, it is to appraise and consider outside requests from community charities and individuals.

¶9.9 **Board of Stewards.** [See Chapter 7.](#)

¶9.10 **Board of Trustees.** [See Chapter 8.](#)

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

¶9.11 **Christian Education.** The purpose of the Christian Education Committee is to develop and promote a Bethel curriculum for elementary, junior high, senior high and adult Sunday School classes. This committee is coordinated at the general level by the Board of Christian Education.

¶9.12 **Communion.** The Communion Committee shall be responsible for securing elements for communion and preparing them for service in cooperation with the pastor.

¶9.13 **Delegates to the Interchurch Council.** Each church shall elect two members from the church body to represent them as Lay Delegates to the Interchurch Council. At least one alternate should also be elected. Each church's pastor shall also be a delegate to the Interchurch Council.

¶9.14 **Evangelism/Outreach.** See [Missions](#), ¶9.20.

¶9.15 **Fellowship.** The Fellowship Committee is to encourage and arrange frequent social functions, receptions, dinners and special events to aid in unifying the church family. It is also to help new members to become better acquainted.

¶9.16 **Finance.** The Finance Committee shall be composed of members from the church body. Their responsibilities shall be:

1. Solicit budget requests from the various groups and committees in preparing the church budget.
2. Prepare an operating budget and present it to the Board of Stewards and the Annual Church Conference.
3. Consult with the Pastoral Relations Committee to review the Pastor's salary and make recommendations regarding the same either to the Annual Church Conference or a Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations.
4. Inform the Annual Church Conference as to the amount of giving required to meet the budget.
5. Review and/or audit all accounts of the church following the close of the fiscal year and report their findings to the Board of Stewards.
6. Conduct an audit at any time deemed necessary by the Board of Stewards.

¶9.17 **Historian.** The Historian shall record and maintain all information pertinent to the local church.

¶9.18 **Library.** The Library Committee shall be responsible for maintaining and organizing books and other library materials and for promoting their use among the church membership.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

¶9.19 **Local Web Content Committee.** The purpose of the Web Content Committee is to ... A description to be added at the next revision of the Discipline .....

¶9.20 **Membership Secretary.** The purpose of the Membership Secretary is to help the pastor keep an accurate record of church membership noting additions, withdrawals and the reason for withdrawal in the roll book.

¶9.21 **Missions.** The Missions Committee shall be responsible to assist the local church in evangelism, outreach, home and world missions. In addition to keeping the message of missions before the local congregation, the Missions Committee should identify, pursue and promote individual missionaries and missionary organizations which hold theological positions in harmony with those of the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶9.22 **Music.** The Music Committee shall provide for the music of the church by securing a song leader, choir director, organist, pianist and/or other musicians in consultation with the pastor and Board of Stewards. The Music Committee shall see that the music of the church is of the highest quality possible and is consistent with the message.

¶9.23 **Nominating.** The Nominating Committee shall be composed of five members from the church body representing the following: Stewards, Trustees (if applicable), Sunday School, Bethel Methodist Men and Bethel Methodist Women. The Pastor shall chair the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall meet prior to the Annual Church Conference and prepare a slate of officers, youth sponsors, boards and annual committees for consideration by the Conference, although nominations from the floor are always in order. The Sunday School Superintendent along with the Assistant Sunday school Superintendent and Pastor shall nominate the Sunday School teachers. The Board of Stewards shall nominate the Nominating Committee for the succeeding year.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

¶9.24 **Nursery.** The Nursery Committee shall be composed of all mothers of nursery age children and is responsible for the following items:

1. Setting guidelines for the operation of the nursery in concert with the Board of Stewards.
2. Maintaining the church nursery, keeping it safe, clean, comfortable, well supplied and in good repair.
3. Supervising all nursery attendants.

Additionally, the Nursery Committee should submit a recommendation regarding the salary of any employee under its charge to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

¶9.25 **Parsonage.** The Parsonage Committee shall be responsible for insuring that the parsonage is safe, well maintained and adequately furnished.

¶9.26 **Pastoral Relations.** The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be composed of five members from the church body elected at the Annual Church Conference and representing the following: Stewards, Trustees (if applicable), Sunday School, Bethel Methodist Men and Bethel Methodist Women. The Pastoral Relations Committee is responsible for filling the pulpit in the Pastor's absence and for conducting a search for a new Pastor when necessary. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall assist the Pastor in his various responsibilities and act as both a liaison and advocate on behalf of both the Pastor and individual church members. Additionally, the Pastoral Relations Committee should submit a recommendation regarding the Pastor's salary to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

¶9.27 **Property Maintenance.** The Property Maintenance Committee shall be responsible for:

1. Maintaining the church's physical property, keeping it clean, comfortable and in good repair.
2. Supervising all janitorial, lawn care and other workers employed to care for church and parsonage property.
3. Submitting a recommendation regarding the salary of any employee under its charge to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

¶9.28 **Secretary.** The Church Secretary shall be responsible for making and keeping accurate records of church proceedings such as Annual and Special Church Conferences. The secretary shall also correspond in an official capacity when necessary.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

¶9.29 **Sunday School Superintendent.** The Sunday School Superintendent and the Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall be members of the church body and shall be responsible for:

1. Securing and supervising teachers, filling vacancies in emergencies and working with the Pastor and Stewards to fill vacancies permanently. In concert with the Pastor, they shall nominate teachers for all Sunday School classes. This slate of nominees shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the Annual Church Conference and may be appended to the Nominating Committee's report or presented to the Annual Church Conference by the Sunday School Superintendent.
2. Building up teachers with continued training and proper encouragement.
3. Securing and maintaining proper literature and supplies for all classes.
4. Maintaining attendance and offering records from Sunday School classes.

The Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall have the power to appoint representatives to help them carry out the above duties.

¶9.30 **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be a member of the church body. The duties of the church treasurer are as follows:

1. To receive and record all tithes, offerings and other funds coming to the church.
2. To deposit all funds in their proper accounts.
3. To pay all bills approved by the Board of Stewards.
4. To keep accurate records of all regular and designated gifts and compile annual reports for individual donors.
5. To report the church's financial condition monthly to the Board of Stewards and post a monthly financial report.
6. To report the church's financial condition at the Annual Church Conference and to post an annual financial report.
7. To assist the Finance Committee in drawing up the operating budget for the coming year.

¶9.31 **Ushers/Welcoming.** The Ushers/Welcoming Committee shall:

1. Greet people as they arrive for church and see that they are comfortably seated.
2. Receive the offering.
3. Direct people in the Lord's Supper.
4. Distribute bulletins and other church literature.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 10. Auxiliary Groups.

¶10.1 The local church may organize the following auxiliary groups and others as it deems necessary. Within these groups, the following officers, and any others believed appropriate, may be elected: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

#### ¶10.2 **The Bethel Methodist Men:**

The official men's organization of the Bethel Methodist Church shall be known as The Bethel Methodist Men.

It is composed of men, both members and non-members united by the common purpose of service to God and the Bethel Methodist Church.

Its purpose is to work in cooperation with the pastor to develop the spiritual life of men in the church by: Conducting Bible studies and prayer meetings as well as spiritual and social functions for both men and boys in the local church.

Other goals may include: instructing the young men of the church in church citizenship, stewardship and leadership by precept and example; and being attentive and responsive to the needs of groups, committees and individuals in the local church.

#### ¶10.3 **The Bethel Methodist Women:**

The official women's organization of the Bethel Methodist Church shall be known as The Bethel Methodist Women.

It is composed of women, both members and non-members united by the common purpose of service to God and the Bethel Methodist Church.

Its purpose is to unite the women of the Bethel Methodist Church in a continued, organized effort to develop Christian living and service by: promoting a wider knowledge and interest in both home and world missions; supporting and encouraging the Christian education of young people; and conducting Bible studies and prayer meetings as well as spiritual and social functions for both women and girls in the local church.

#### ¶10.4 **The Bethel Methodist Youth:**

The official youth organization of the Bethel Methodist Church shall be known as The Bethel Methodist Youth.

It is composed of youth, both members and non-members of Primary (3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades), Junior High, High School and College age.

Its purpose is to provide a spiritual and social environment apart from the influences of the world.

Activities shall include an appropriate balance of spiritual and social functions such as regular Bible studies, training in Christian service and leadership in the church, positive peer

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 10. Auxiliary Groups, cont.**

influence, spiritual enrichment, afterglows, youth camps and retreats, and other activities deemed appropriate by the youth leaders/sponsors, pastor and Board of Stewards. The Bethel Methodist Youth should also take advantage of opportunities to be of service to the local church by being attentive and responsive to the needs of groups and individuals within the church family. This may include participation in regular church services, assistance in Vacation Bible School, Sunday School classes, nursery and other areas of church life.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 11. Church Staff**

¶11.1 Ministers to be employed in such capacities as assistant pastors, ministers of Christian education, youth ministers, ministers of music, etc. shall be under the authority of the pastor. Each staff position must be created by the favorable vote of the congregation, upon recommendation of the pastor and the Board of Stewards. Salaries will be approved by the congregation at the Annual or Special Church Conference. Potential staff members will be interviewed by the pastor and the Board of Stewards. The duties, services and continued employment shall be determined by the pastor and the Board of Stewards. Upon change of the pastor, all other ministerial staff members will present their resignations to the next pastor in order that he shall have the freedom to construct his own ministerial staff.

¶11.2 Non-ministerial employees such as custodians, secretaries, nursery workers, etc., shall be hired by the Board of Stewards in consultation with the pastor. Such employees' duties, salaries, and continued employment shall be determined by the Board of Stewards and the pastor.

## **SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Chapter 1. Purpose.**

¶1.1 The purpose of the Interchurch Council is to serve as a liaison between the local churches and the Denomination. Providing a forum in which the local churches may communicate one with another, the Interchurch Council is the chief governing body in the absence of the General Conference.

## SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL

### Chapter 2. Responsibility.

¶2.1 It is the responsibility of the Interchurch Council to conduct the official business of the Denomination in the absence of the General Conference. Official business shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Giving direction to General Conference Officers, Boards, and Committees.
2. Proposing policy and making recommendations to the local churches and the General Conference.
3. Receiving reports from General Conference Officers, Boards, and Committees.
4. Disseminating information to the Denomination regarding any action taken by General Conference Officers, Boards, Committees, or the Interchurch Council.
5. Electing an Interchurch Council Secretary. The secretary does not have to be a voting member.
6. Nominating the succeeding Nominating Committee to be voted on at the next General Conference. These nominations should be made at the last meeting of the calendar year.
7. Initiating proceedings for ethical questions concerning General Conference Officers. This may include the appointing of a Conference Investigation Committee. [See SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION: ¶2.1.](#)

¶2.2 While the Interchurch Council is responsible for executing the business of the Denomination, certain major items of business must always be brought before the denomination. This shall be accomplished by either a General or Special General Conference and includes such items as:

1. Election of a new General Superintendent.
2. Encumbrance of Denomination property.
3. Changing Denominational By-Laws.
4. Amending the Discipline.
5. Other important items which may be deemed prudent to bring before the Denomination.

## SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL

### Chapter 3. Composition.

¶3.1 The makeup of the Interchurch Council is such that each local church is equally represented. The voting membership of the Interchurch Council is comprised of:

1. Two (2) lay delegates from each local church. The two delegates and at least one alternate delegate shall be elected at each local church's Annual Church Conference. If a local church is without a pastor, it may be represented by three (3) lay delegates. The election of lay delegates does not need to be ratified at the General level.
2. The senior pastor from each local church.
3. The General Superintendent.
4. The Director of Administration.
5. The Conference Treasurer.
6. The Chairman, or person acting in his stead, votes only in case of a tie. The Chairman is elected at the General Conference and must be a lay member of the Denomination.
  - a. If the Chairman is unable to attend an Interchurch Council meeting, the Vice-chairman shall act in his stead. The Vice-Chairman is elected at the General Conference and must be a lay member of the Denomination. If the Vice-Chairman is a lay delegate, an alternate from his local church may serve in his stead.
  - b. If both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are unable to attend an Interchurch Council meeting, the Chairman shall appoint an Acting Chairman from the voting membership and alternates of the Interchurch Council. The Acting Chairman must be a lay member of the Denomination. If the Acting Chairman is a lay delegate, an alternate from his local church may serve in his stead.
7. Additionally, voting privileges are extended to our founding General Superintendent, Reverend Arthur L. Slye, Jr.

## SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL

### Chapter 4. Interchurch Council Meetings.

¶4.1 Interchurch Council meetings shall be held quarterly. Dates and locations for Council meetings should be arranged by the Director of Administration and approved by the Council. Meeting dates for the upcoming calendar year should be approved at the last Council meeting of the current calendar year.

¶4.2 Two conditions must be satisfied before official business can be transacted at an Interchurch Council meeting:

1. A quorum must be present. A simple majority of the total voting membership shall constitute a quorum.
2. The quorum must be composed of a majority of lay delegates.

¶4.3 The Interchurch Council shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶4.4 The following is a suggested order of business. The Interchurch Council shall:

1. Be called to order by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Acting Chairman. See ¶3.1, Item 6.
2. Inquire of any prayer needs.
3. Have a season of prayer.
4. Establish the voting membership present. The voting membership present shall be recorded in the minutes.
5. Adopt an agenda.
6. Consider and approve the minutes of the previous Interchurch Council meeting.
7. Consider and approve the written report from the Conference Treasurer.
8. Receive written and/or oral reports from the pastors, committees, and boards.
9. Receive a written report from the Director of Administration.
10. Receive a written report from the General Superintendent.
11. Review old business.
12. Discuss new business.
13. Have closing prayer and adjourn.

¶4.5 All written reports shall be given to the secretary after each meeting. It should be the responsibility of the secretary to compile and maintain the minutes and reports presented and approved at each meeting. These records shall be made available to the denomination.

## **SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

### **Chapter 1. Composition.**

¶1.1 The General Conference shall be held once a year, the time and place being determined at the previous General Conference or by the Interchurch Council.

¶1.2 The voting body of the General Conference shall be composed of the General Superintendent, the Director of Administration, and up to a maximum of fifteen (15) delegates from each local church. Members eighteen (18) years of age and older are eligible to serve as delegates.

¶1.3 A quorum shall be defined as those present and eligible to vote with lay representation being in the majority.

¶1.4 The General Conference Treasurer shall gather information and shall publish a list of churches who have paid in full their Conference Support obligation for the past fiscal year. Only these churches may seat delegates at the General Conference. Delegates of churches which have not fulfilled their Conference Support obligation by thirty (30) days before General Conference can be seated only upon recommendation of the General Superintendent and upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by said Conference.

¶1.5 Additionally, voting privileges are extended to our founding General Superintendent, Reverend Arthur L. Slye, Jr.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 2. Elections.

¶2.1 During the first day’s business session, the Nominating Committee and Interchurch Council shall present a slate of Officers, Boards, and Committees for consideration by the General Conference. (The Interchurch Council shall nominate the succeeding Nominating Committee). This slate, plus any nominations from the floor, shall be voted on during the second day’s business session. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted up until the time of election. See ¶4.12.

¶2.2 The General Conference shall elect the following Boards and Committees:

Board of Christian Education .....	See ¶4.1.
Board of Church Extension .....	See ¶4.2.
Board of Discipline Revision .....	See ¶4.3.
Board of Finance .....	See ¶4.4.
Board of Ministerial Relations .....	See ¶4.5.
Board of Theological Research .....	See ¶4.6.
Board of World Missions .....	See ¶4.7.
Board of Youth Activities .....	See ¶4.8.
Archivist Committee .....	See ¶4.9.
Forms & Publications Committee .....	See ¶4.10.
Minutes Committee .....	See ¶4.11.
Nominating Committee .....	See ¶4.12.
Web Content Committee .....	See ¶4.13.

¶2.3 The General Conference shall elect the following officers:

Director of Administration .....	See ¶4.14.
Director of Finance .....	See ¶4.15.
General Superintendent .....	See ¶2.4, ¶2.5 & ¶4.16.
Interchurch Council Chairman & Vice-Chairman .....	See ¶4.17.
Treasure .....	See ¶4.18.

¶2.4 The General Superintendent shall be voted on at the General Conference held on even numbered years.

1. The question of the vote shall be, “Do you believe it is God’s will for ‘Candidate’s Name’ to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Denomination at this time?”

## **SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

### **Chapter 2. Elections, cont.**

¶2.5 In the event of succession of the General Superintendent, voluntary or otherwise, the following action shall be taken:

1. Two committees shall be formed:
  - a. The Lay Committee – composed of all elected lay-representatives to the Interchurch Council.
  - b. The Ministers’ Committee – composed of all ordained Elders and active Pastors in the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Each committee shall meet separately at least 60 days prior to the General Conference to discuss eligible candidates and to select one name to be placed on the General Conference Nominating Committee Report.
3. The Nominating Committee shall also nominate an eligible candidate in accordance with provisions of the Discipline.
4. If each committee nominates a different candidate, three names will be placed in nomination prior to the General Conference.
5. Notwithstanding the above, Conference delegates may make additional nominations for General Superintendent from the floor.

## **SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

### **Chapter 3. Special Session.**

¶3.1 A Special Session of the General Conference may be called by the Interchurch Council when deemed advisable. Notice of a Special Conference shall be posted and announced at each local church four Sundays prior to the conference.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers.

¶4.1 **Board of Christian Education.** It is the purpose of the Board of Christian Education to research and develop written theological materials for the promotion of the unity of the faith, by teaching the person, purpose and program of God. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. To research, document and provide written material, audio and visual tapes for the theological information or teaching of scriptural principals.
2. To provide theological materials for the Sunday Schools, Bible studies and outreach of the denomination.
3. To report to local annual church conferences and the General Conference.
4. To follow the scriptural revelation of God as He has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures.

¶4.2 **Board of Church Extension.** It is the purpose of the Board of Church Extension to:

1. Attempt to locate churches whose theology is similar to the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Conduct preliminary investigations of churches which show an interest in the Bethel Methodist Church.
3. Make recommendations to the Interchurch Council.
4. To work with the General Superintendent in finding and establishing new congregations.

¶4.3 **Board of Discipline Revision.** It is the purpose of the Board of Discipline Revision to develop, and revise, as needed, a discipline specific to the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Meet with all members of the Board as soon as possible after the General Conference elections in order to inform members of their responsibilities and to establish objectives for the year.
2. Set meeting dates that seem satisfactory to the members and send out letters informing the Board about dates set.
3. Assign areas of responsibility to individuals or churches so various groups can work on their projects and then come together for a joint discussion and approval meeting.
4. Assign one person to be in charge of taking minutes and accumulating all approved notes.
5. Work with the Interchurch Council to set dates for presentation, modifications and approval.
6. Do whatever is reasonable on revision to complete the revision responsibility.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

¶4.4 **Board of Finance.** The purpose of the Board of Finance is to oversee the financial activities of the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Ensure that an annual financial report is prepared for the General Conference.
2. Ensure that an operating budget is prepared and presented at the General Conference.
3. Maintain copies of all budgets as approved.
4. Ensure all just debts are paid in a timely manner by the treasurer.
5. Ensure all financial records are properly kept.

¶4.5 **Board of Ministerial Relations.** The Board of Ministerial Relations is responsible to supervise the recruitment, training and accreditation of prospective and current ministerial leaders within the Bethel Methodist Church. This overview includes Preachers, Pastors, Evangelists and Associates who exercise regular spiritual responsibility and authority over the local church in general. This does not include Youth Leaders, Sunday School teachers or others who work in specific or particular areas of the church. Anyone who holds and exercises ministerial credentials or who preaches regularly in any Bethel Methodist Church or at denominational functions may be subject to the Board of Ministerial Relations.

The purpose of the Board is to make certain that each local minister is divinely-called and enabled to preach the Gospel and perform all ministerial functions including weddings, funerals, personal counseling, visitation and the proper administration of the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Further, the Board is responsible to protect God's Word from error and corruption, and to protect local congregations from unqualified, incompetent or unethical ministers. The Board may use a course of study, oral or written examinations, investigations, interviews and other means to validate the qualifications of any man who would preach under the auspices of the Bethel Methodist Church.

Ministers are ordained by God alone. When the Board recognizes that this divine act has taken place and an applicant has met various qualifications, it may issue ministerial credentials and conduct a public ordination ceremony. While each church is at liberty to call its own pastor, the Board of Ministerial Relations has the power to grant or suspend ministerial credentials when appropriate. In an emergency, the General Superintendent may act unilaterally to accomplish the stated purpose(s) of the Board, but must seek an overview of any such action(s) by convening the Board as soon as possible. Revocation of credentials is governed by the Judicial Administration Section of the Discipline.

The Board of Ministerial Relations shall be composed of the General Superintendent, who shall be its chairman, each ordained minister (who is actively pastoring a church) and at least one layman.

The Board shall meet at least annually, preferably at the General Conference to conduct any pertinent business and hear informal progress reports from each pastor.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

¶4.6 **Board of Theological Research.** It is the purpose of the Board of Theological Research to both examine and draw conclusions concerning any questions relating to God's Truth and/or the doctrine of the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶4.7 **Board of World Missions.** It is the purpose of the Board of World Missions to carry out the objective of the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Oversee and direct all Bethel Methodist mission programs.
2. Report mission activities to the Interchurch Council and General Conference with recommendations to continue or discontinue support.
3. Research and present to the Interchurch Council and the General Conference any recommended mission programs.
4. Provide spiritual leadership and supervision in the mission field.
5. Take emergency action concerning missionaries with the approval of the General Superintendent.

¶4.8 **Board of Youth Activities.** It is the purpose of the Board of Youth Activities to develop, maintain and improve the general youth program of the Bethel Methodist Church, holding forth the organization's stated purpose of knowing and understanding God as the motivating factor in all youth activities. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Meet with all members of the Board as soon as possible after the General Conference elections in order to inform members of their responsibilities and to establish objectives for the year.
2. Review the budget for the new conference year, the financial status of the current account and the previous year's financial records.
3. Review annual events and dates already established by the previous Board. Recommend changes to the Interchurch Council if needed.
4. Plan and organize all activities and programs of the general youth including youth camp, retreats, seminars, General Conference youth activities, competitions, etc.
5. Encourage and aid in establishing effective local youth programs.
6. Report all activities, plans, goals and finances to the Interchurch Council and the General Conference.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

¶4.9 **Archivist Committee.** The Archivist Committee shall retain the history of the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination in written, pictorial, audio and video form. The responsibilities of the this Committee are as follows:

1. Maintain a copy of all General Conference and Interchurch Council minutes.
2. Maintain a copy of all General Conference and Interchurch Council financial statements.
3. Maintain a copy of all General Conference newsletters and brochures.
4. Take pictures of various denominational activities, such as trips members might take for missionary purposes, General Conference activities, special church services and youth activities.
5. Communicate with the local church historians as needed.

¶4.10 **Forms and Publications Committee.** The purpose of the Forms and Publications Committee is to design and distribute all denominational publications, including Christian Education literature, newsletters, brochures, the denominational directory, etc. Their responsibilities include:

1. Production of all publications (formatting, editing, obtaining final approvals through the final printing phase).
2. Coordinating and distributing publications throughout the denomination.
3. Maintenance of all publications as to reprinting, changes, etc.

¶4.11 **Minutes Committee.** The function of the Minutes Committee is as follows:

1. Record minutes of the General Conference.
2. Submit the minutes of the General Conference at the next Interchurch Council meeting for preliminary approval.
3. Submit minutes approved by the Interchurch Council at the next General Conference for final approval.
4. Present Historian with a copy of the approved minutes.

¶4.12 **Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee shall be composed of one delegate from each local church and chaired by the General Superintendent. The Nominating Committee shall meet prior to the General Conference and prepare a slate of Officers, Boards and Committees for consideration by the Conference, with the exception of the Nominating Committee for the succeeding year, which shall be nominated by the Interchurch Council. These nominations, along with any nominations from the floor, shall then be voted on by the Conference.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

¶4.13 **Web Content Committee.** The purpose of the Web Content Committee is to ...  
A description to be added at the next revision of the Discipline .....

¶4.14 **Director of Administration.** The Director of Administration shall administer the affairs of the church in keeping with the Discipline, the General Conference and the Interchurch Council. The responsibilities of the Director of Administration are as follows:

1. To provide a time and place for the quarterly meetings of the Interchurch Council, changing the time and place of their regular meeting if circumstances require it.
2. To counsel with the General Superintendent, as he may request, concerning all phases of his work, and to coordinate the work of all the officers, boards, committees and auxiliaries of the church.
3. To receive quarterly reports from the General Superintendent, treasurer, local pastors, boards, committees and auxiliaries of the church and any other reports the General Conference and/or Interchurch Council shall require.
4. To keep the record of the minutes of the General Conference, Interchurch Council, and any other special denominational meetings and to maintain these and all reports of the church in a central file.
5. To recommend to the General Conference and the Interchurch Council an annual calendar of events.
6. To appoint such sub-committees as he shall deem wise and to delegate duties and powers to the same.

¶4.15 **Director of Finance.** This position shall be defined and elected as needed.

¶4.16 **General Superintendent.** The duties of the General Superintendent shall be:

1. Theological studying, researching, recording, teaching, and communication.
2. Contacting, qualifying, recruiting, and training the best possible ministers for our churches. (He shall establish and maintain a regular and continuing “Ministerial Training Program.”)
3. Church Extension - Finding, nourishing, and qualifying new congregations to affiliate with our denomination.
4. To be a theological/spiritual “Watchman on The Wall” for the protection and future well-being of God’s work.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

¶4.17 **Interchurch Council Chairman & Vice-Chairman.** The Interchurch Council Chairman is to chair quarterly Interchurch Council meetings in such a way that provides for the spiritual awareness of denominational issues. Further responsibilities include:

1. Schedule and arrange quarterly Interchurch Council meetings.
2. Preside over meetings.
3. Present a written report to the General Conference describing the Interchurch Council's work for the past year.
4. The Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Chairman in the Chairman's absence.

¶4.18 **Treasurer.** The responsibilities of the treasurer are as follows:

1. Receive and record all monies sent to the denominations: Conference Support, Share Support, and love gifts.
2. Pay all bills upon approval by the Interchurch Council.
3. Submit a monthly report to the Interchurch Council.
4. Submit a year-end report to the General Conference.
5. Assist the Board of Finance in forming an operating budget.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 5. Guidelines for Camp Counselors.

¶5.1 **Overview.** Senior camp, junior camp and retreats hold tremendous potential for both God and man. They possess the potential of providing an atmosphere in which the distractions of the world are minimized, affording God an opportunity to communicate to one's heart. As such, it is essential that the utmost care be taken in selecting camp counselors.

¶5.2 **Guidelines.** The following guidelines should be considered:

1. Life experiences as well as spiritual maturity both contribute to qualifying an individual to be a counselor.
2. Relatively new Christians may serve as counselors at camp or retreats provided their number is properly balanced by a majority of mature Christians.
3. It is desirable for an individual to serve as a junior camp counselor prior to serving as a senior camp counselor.

¶5.3 **Eligibility.** The following rules shall be observed:

1. All counselors shall be professed Christians and leading a life consistent with said professions.
2. All counselors shall be 21 years of age or older, except as specified in Item 5.
3. A youth may progress from senior camper to junior camp counselor.
4. For a youth to progress from camper to senior camp counselor, a one camp (two years) separation must ensue.
5. Youth serving as Youth Directors at their local churches are eligible to serve as either junior or senior camp counselors.

¶5.4 **Procedure.** The following procedure should be followed:

1. The local church may elect to post a sign-up sheet for all who would like to be considered for positions as camp counselors.
2. The local church shall create a list of approved potential counselors. The approval process shall be determined at the Local Annual Church Conference.
3. This list will be presented to the Board of Youth Activities at the next General Conference where a master list for the entire denomination will be compiled.
4. Additional names may be submitted to the Board of Youth Activities after General Conference provided the approval process determined in Item 2 has been satisfied.
5. Camp Directors and individuals responsible for retreats will select counselors for the coming year from the master list.
6. If an insufficient number of qualified counselors are available for a scheduled camp or retreat, the event should be cancelled.

¶5.5 **Retreats.** The following rule shall be observed:

1. An elder or a designee approved by the elders must be present at all retreats.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers.

¶1.1 Offenses for which the General Superintendent, an elder, a member on trial or a local preacher may be tried:

1. Willful disobedience to the Vows or the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Unchristian tempers, words or actions.
3. Habitual neglect of duties.
4. Disseminating doctrine contrary to the Bible.
5. Crime or immorality.
6. Maladministration in office.

¶1.2 **Investigation and Trial of General Superintendent.** If the General Superintendent is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶1.1 to the Director of Administration and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. [See Chapter 4.](#)

¶1.3 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Conference Investigation Committee there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall:

1. Prepare and sign the proper charges and specifications and determine the date and location of the formal inquiry and send a copy by certified mail to the accused and to the Interchurch Council.
2. The date of the formal inquiry should be within fifteen (15) days from the time Item 1 is executed.
3. The location of the formal inquiry should be as convenient as possible.
4. Inform all witnesses whose testimony is expected to have bearing on the case as to the date and location of the formal inquiry.

¶1.4 At the formal inquiry, the accused shall have the right to make a statement in his own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. It may suspend the General Superintendent, with pay, pending a trial.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers, cont.

¶1.5 Should a trial be ordered, the Conference Investigation Committee shall, within seven (7) days, set a time and place for said trial and notify the accused by certified mail. The date of the trial shall be no sooner than thirty (30) but no later than forty-five (45) days after the date the trial was ordered. The trial court shall be constituted as follows:

1. The Conference Investigation Committee shall appoint a presiding officer over the court. This individual may be an elder or layman.
2. The presiding officer shall appoint counsel for the conference.
3. The presiding officer shall arrange for a meeting of the accused, his counsel and the counsel for the conference as early as practicable after the trial is ordered, to select the personnel of the trial.
4. The presiding officer shall nominate, as proposed members of the trial court, six (6) elders and laymen from the conference, at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
5. The conference and the defendant shall each have the right of preemptory challenge to the number of four, and of unlimited challenge for cause.
6. The presiding officer shall add other eligible elders or laymen until the required number is selected. By the same method, four (4) alternates shall be selected.

The trial court as thus constituted shall have full power to try the accused, and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, to suspend him from the exercise of the function of his office, to depose him from his office, the ministry, or both, to expel him from the church, or, in case of minor offenses, to affix a lesser penalty. Its finding shall be reported to the General Conference for entry in its minutes. The records of the trial, including the testimony, shall be signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the General Conference, together with all the documents in the case, for preservation with the papers of the General Conference, and shall be the basis of any appeal which may be taken to the General Conference Court of Appeals. See Chapter 6.

¶1.6 A General Superintendent, once deposed, shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the time of deposition.

**¶1.7 Investigation and/or Trial of an Elder or Member on Trial.** If an elder or member on trial is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶1.1 to the General Superintendent and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. [See Chapter 4.](#)

¶1.8 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Conference Investigation Committee there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall proceed to ¶1.3, with the following exception:

1. Prepare and sign the proper charges, specifications and notification as to the date and location of the formal inquiry and send a copy by certified mail to the accused, the General Superintendent and to the Interchurch Council. [See ¶1.3, Item 1.](#)

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers, cont.

¶1.9 At the formal inquiry, the accused shall have the right to make a statement in his own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. It may suspend the accused, with pay, from all ministerial services, pending a trial.

¶1.10 Should a trial be ordered, the General Superintendent shall, within seven (7) days, set a time and place for said trial and notify the accused by certified mail. The date of the trial shall be no sooner than thirty (30) but no later than forty-five (45) days after the date the trial was ordered. The trial court shall be constituted as enumerated in ¶1.5, with the following exception:

1. The General Superintendent shall act as or appoint a presiding officer over the court. See ¶1.5, Item 1.

The trial court as thus constituted shall have full power to try the accused, and by a two-thirds (2/3), vote to suspend him from his office, to remove him from his office, the ministry, or both, to expel him from the church, or, in case of minor offenses, to affix a lesser penalty. Its finding shall be reported to the General Conference for entry in its minutes. The records of the trial, including the testimony, shall be signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the General Conference, together with all the documents in the case, for preservation with the papers of the General Conference, and shall be the basis of any appeal which may be taken to the General Conference Court of Appeals. See Chapter 6.

¶1.11 An elder or member on trial, once removed, shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the date of removal.

¶1.12 **Investigation and Trial of a Local Preacher.** If a local preacher is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶1.1 to the General Superintendent and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. See Chapter 4.

¶1.13 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Conference Investigation Committee there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall proceed to ¶1.3, with the following exception:

1. Prepare and sign the proper charges, specifications and notification as to the date and location of the formal inquiry and send a copy by certified mail to the accused, the General Superintendent, the pastor and the Chairman of the Board of Stewards where the local preacher holds his membership. See ¶1.3, Item 1.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers, cont.

¶1.14 At the formal inquiry, the accused shall have the right to make a statement in his own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. It may suspend the accused, with pay, from all ministerial services, pending a trial.

¶1.15 Should a trial be ordered, the General Superintendent shall proceed according to ¶1.10, with the following exception:

1. The presiding officer shall nominate, as proposed members of the trial court, six (6) lay members of the local church who are in good standing and at least twenty-one (21) years of age. See ¶1.5, Item 4.

¶1.16 A local preacher, once removed, shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the date of removal.

¶1.17 The General Conference may restore the credentials of a minister who has been deposed, removed, suspended, or who has withdrawn from The Bethel Methodist Church, providing proper restitution has been made and sufficient proof of his good character be presented to the Conference by the Board of Ministerial Relations.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 2. Investigation and Trial of Lay Members.

¶2.1 Offenses for which a lay member may be tried:

1. Willful disobedience to the Vows or the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Unchristian tempers, words or actions.
3. Crime or immorality.

¶2.2 **Investigation and Trial of Lay Members.** If a lay member of a local church is accused of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶2.1 to the pastor, the pastor shall endeavor to determine the validity of the accusation. If, in the judgment of the pastor there is reasonable ground for the accusation, he shall privately admonish the member, and, if there is an acknowledgment of fault and proper humiliation, the person may be borne with. Failing such, or on further offense, the pastor shall take with him at least two discreet laymen, one of which must be a steward and give further reproof. If the offense be continued, the member shall be brought to trial.

¶2.3 If a lay member of a local church is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶2.1, the charges being signed by at least two (2) parties and presented to the pastor and/or Board of Stewards, the pastor and Board of Stewards shall appoint an Investigating Committee. The Investigating Committee shall be composed of six (6) members of the local church in good standing who are at least twenty-one (21) years of age. The General Superintendent, or his designated representative, shall fix the time and place of the investigation and shall be the presiding officer. Such investigations shall normally be held within thirty (30) days after written charges have been made. The accused and the accusers shall be brought face to face, if possible, and the accused shall have the right of making a statement in his own behalf and of interrogating witnesses, but shall not have the right of presenting witnesses. The Investigating Committee shall then determine, by secret ballot, whether a trial is justified. In the case of a tie, the presiding officer shall cast the deciding vote. If it is determined that a trial is justified, the Investigating Committee shall formulate the charges and order the trial. A copy of the order shall be sent to the General Superintendent, the local pastor, the accused and the parties bringing accusation.

¶2.4 Should a trial be ordered, the General Superintendent shall proceed according to ¶1.10, with the following exception:

1. The presiding officer shall nominate, as proposed members of the trial court, six (6) lay members of the local church who are in good standing and at least twenty-one (21) years of age. See ¶1.5, Items 4. through 6.
2. References to ministerial positions do not apply. See text, ¶1.10.
3. The finding of the trial court shall be reported to the secretary of the local church for permanent record. See text, ¶1.10.

## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 2. Investigation and Trial of Lay Members, cont.**

¶2.5 An expelled member of a local church shall have no privileges of the church without repentance, contrition, and satisfactory restitution to the determination of the pastor and Board of Stewards. In such a case, the individual may be permitted to take the membership vows of the church and be restored to full membership.

¶2.6 No member of a local church who is also a member of the Conference may be tried by a local church trial court, but must be tried by a Conference trial court.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 3. Investigation and Trial of a Local Church.

¶3.1 Offenses for which a local church may be tried:

1. Willful disobedience to the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Disseminating doctrine contrary to the Bible.

¶3.2 **Investigation and Trial of a Local Church.** If a local church is accused of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶3.1 to the Director of Administration and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall act as a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. [See Chapter 4.](#)

¶3.3 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Interchurch Council there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall proceed according to ¶1.3.

¶3.4 At the formal inquiry, the accused local church shall have the right to make a statement in its own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not itself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Interchurch Council determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. A trial may be conducted at either a General Conference or a Special Called General Conference.

¶3.5 Should a trial be ordered, the Interchurch Council shall, within fourteen (14) days, set a time and place for said trial and notify the accused by certified mail. If the General Conference is scheduled within ninety (90) days after the trial was ordered, the trial shall be conducted as the first item of major business at said General Conference. If the General Conference is not scheduled within the aforementioned ninety (90) days, then a Special Called General Conference shall be announced, its only item of business being said trial.

¶3.6 The trial court shall be constituted of all conference delegates, excluding the accused church. The trial court as thus constituted shall have full power to try the accused local church, and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote to suspend or remove it from the Bethel Methodist Church, or, in case of minor offenses, to affix a lesser penalty. Its finding shall be reported in the minutes of the General Conference. The records of the trial, including the testimony, shall be signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the trial court, and shall be placed in the custody of the secretary of the General Conference, together with all the documents in the case, for preservation with the papers of the General Conference, and shall be the basis of any appeal which may be taken to the General Conference Court of Appeals. [See Chapter 6.](#)

## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 3. Investigation and Trial of a Local Church, cont.**

¶3.7 Those that remain members of a local church that has been removed, shall not participate in any functions of the Bethel Methodist Church, such as, the General Conference, Interchurch Council, Youth Activities, lay activities, etc. Furthermore, said local church shall remove all logos and/or signs affiliating them with the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 4. Conference Investigation Committee.

¶4.1 If the General Superintendent, an elder, a member on trial or a local preacher is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶1.1, or a local church is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶3.1, and said accusations are submitted to the proper agents and/or agencies, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee.

¶4.2 The duties of a Conference Investigation Committee shall be as follows:

1. Perform a preliminary investigation.
2. If, as a result of the preliminary investigation, a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee believes there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall initiate a formal inquiry.
3. If, as a result of the formal inquiry, a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one.
4. In cases involving individuals for whom a trial has been ordered, the Conference Investigation Committee has the authority to suspend the accused pending the trial.

The details of the duties of the Conference Investigation Committee are described in greater detail in ¶1.1 through ¶1.17 and ¶3.1 through ¶3.7.

¶4.3 The composition of a Conference Investigation Committee shall be as follows:

1. Three (3) members, representing both laymen and elders, except in the case of an accused local church where the Interchurch Council shall act as a Conference Investigation Committee.
2. The chairman may be an elder or layman and shall be appointed by the Interchurch Council.
3. It may represent from one (1) to three (3) local churches, except in the case of an accused local church in which all churches except the accused shall be represented.
4. Members must certify that they are not personally involved in any dispute with the defendant(s) and that they can perform their investigative duties without bias or respect of persons.

¶4.4 The Chairman of the Conference Investigation Committee shall preside throughout the proceedings, and shall certify and declare the judgment of the Committee.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 5. General Directions.

¶5.1 **Withdrawal Under Charges of Complaint.** When the General Superintendent, an elder, a member on trial, or a local preacher is accused of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶1.1, and he desires to withdraw from the church, he shall be permitted. In so doing, the record shall be plainly marked, “Withdrawn Under Charges.” If written complaints have been filed with the proper agents and/or agencies, and he desires to withdraw from the church, he shall be permitted. In so doing, the record shall be plainly marked, “Withdraw Under Complaints.” In either case, his status shall be the same as if he had been expelled.

¶5.2 When any of the aforementioned is deprived of, or surrenders by withdrawal, his credentials, license, or ordination, the necessary authority shall file them along with the respective records dealing with his case.

¶5.3 **Counsel.** In all cases of trial, the accused shall be entitled to appear, to be represented by counsel of his own selection, and to be heard in oral or written argument. If the defendant has not secured counsel, such counsel shall be appointed by the presiding officer, unless the defendant elects to represent himself. Each counsel shall be allowed one assistant counsel of his own choice.

¶5.4 All notices required in judicial administration shall be in writing, signed by or on behalf of the person or body giving or required to give such notice, and shall be addressed to the person or body to whom it is required to be given. Such notices shall be served at least seven (7) days in advance, and be delivered, in person, to the party or leading officer of the body to whom it is addressed, or by certified mail addressed to the last known residence or address of such party. The fact of the giving of the notice shall affirmatively appear over the signature of the party required to give such notice, and becomes a part of the record in the case.

¶5.5 In all cases of investigation or trial, notice to appear shall be given to such witnesses as either party may name, shall be issued in the name of the church, and be signed by the presiding officer of the trial court. It shall be the duty of all church members to appear and testify when summoned.

¶5.6 As soon as the trial court has convened, the charge shall be read by the presiding officer at which time the accused shall enter his plea which shall be duly recorded. On his neglect or refusal to plead, the plea of “not guilty” shall be entered for him, and the trial shall proceed, provided that the court may adjourn from time to time for sufficient cause, and provided that the accused shall, at all times during the trial, have the liberty to be present to make his defense and produce testimony.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 5. General Directions, cont.

¶5.7 In case the accused person shall refuse or neglect to appear at the time or place set forth for the hearing, the trial court may proceed in his absence.

¶5.8 **Records.** In the trial court, the records shall be accurate and complete. They shall include the proceedings in detail, all the evidence taken stenographically, if possible, and documents admitted, together with the charges and findings, and shall be approved and attested by the presiding officer and secretary.

¶5.9 If, within sixty (60) days after the conviction of any of the aforementioned accused, he (or she) shall make application in writing to the General Superintendent or presiding officer for a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence, and shall submit therewith a written statement of the same, and if it shall appear to the General Superintendent that such evidence is material to the issue involved, he shall grant a new trial. In no case, however, shall a new trial be granted upon newly discovered evidence which could have been obtained for the trial by the exercise of due diligence, or which is merely cumulative in its effect.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 6. Appeals.

¶6.1 The Conference Court of Appeals shall be appointed as needed by the Interchurch Council.

1. It shall be composed of seven (7) members, including at least four (4) lay members.
2. It may represent from three (3) to seven (7) local churches.
3. Members must certify that they are not personally involved in any dispute with the defendant(s) and that they can perform their investigative duties without bias or respect to persons.
4. One member shall be elected chairman.

A quorum of four members of the Court of Appeals shall be necessary in order to function. The Interchurch Council shall fill by appointment any vacancies which may occur in this body. This court shall have jurisdiction to hear and to determine all appeals from the decisions or actions of any Conference trial court.

¶6.2 The Court of Appeals shall determine two questions only:

1. Does the evidence sustain the charge or charges?
2. Were there such errors of procedure or interpretation as to invalidate the verdict?

The questions shall be determined by the records of the trial and the arguments of a representative of the trial court and the counsel of the accused. The court shall in no case hear witnesses nor admit new evidence.

¶6.3 In all cases of appeal, the appellant shall, within thirty (30) days following the decision of a trial court, give notice of intent to appeal to the Interchurch Council, who shall appoint a Court of Appeals per ¶6.1. The appellant shall then furnish the Court of Appeals with a written statement defining the grounds on which his appeal shall be made. The hearing of the court shall be limited to the grounds set forth in said statement. It shall be the duty of the chairman of the Court of Appeals, on receiving a notice of intent to appeal, to fix the time and place within thirty (30) days of receiving notice for consideration of the appeal and to notify all persons involved by certified mail.

¶6.4 Appeals, properly taken, shall be heard by the Court of Appeals, unless it shall appear to the said court that the appellant has forfeited his right to appeal by misconduct, such as result to abide by the findings of the Conference Investigation Committee or of the trial court, or by withdrawal from the church, or by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal. The right of appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate court.

¶6.5 An appeal shall not affect a suspension of the decision or action of a trial court. The finding of the trial court must stand until it is modified or reversed by the appellate court.

## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 6. Appeals, cont.**

¶6.6 The Court of Appeals may refuse to admit an appeal as lacking proper grounds. It may reverse, in whole or in part, the findings of the trial court, or it may remand the case back to the trial court for a new trial. It may determine what penalty, not higher than that affixed at the trial, may be imposed. If no such modification or reversal is made by the appellate court, the judgment of the trial court shall stand. The appellate court shall not take remedial action because of errors of procedure or interpretation by the trial court which did not affect the verdict.

## **SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY**

### **Chapter 1. The Call to Preach.**

¶1.1 Any man who professes to be called by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel and desires to pursue ordination in the Bethel Methodist Church should be examined by the Board of Ministerial Relations. The following questions should be used as a guide when considering such a candidate:

1. Have they received and are they following Christ by faith?
2. Have they the abilities that accompany the call to preach? Do they have a clear understanding of the things of God revealed in scripture? Do they speak clearly and accurately? Is God's calling evident to others?

These we receive as sufficient evidence that they are called of God to preach the Gospel of Christ and may be admitted to a course of study prescribed by the Board of Ministerial Relations leading to full ordination.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 2. The Matter and Manner of Preaching.

¶2.1 This section is Section XI of the 1804 Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

**Question One:** What is the best general method of preaching?

**Answer One:** To convince, to offer Christ, to invite, to build up, and to do this in some measure in every sermon.

**Question Two:** What is the most effectual way of preaching Christ?

**Answer Two:** The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach Him in all His offices, and to declare His law, as well as His Gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches (See John 15).

**Question Three:** Are there any smaller advices which might be of use to us?

**Answer Three:** Perhaps these:

1. Be sure never to disappoint a congregation.
2. Begin at the time appointed.
3. Let your whole deportment be serious, weighty, and solemn.
4. Always suit your subject to your audience.
5. Choose the plainest text you can.
6. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand.
7. Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.
8. It is recommended to the yearly Conferences to caution and restrict our preachers from improper publications.
9. Do not usually pray extempore above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission.
10. Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of Scripture, and let young preachers often exhort without taking a text.
11. Always avail yourself of the great festivals by preaching on the occasion.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 3. The Preacher in Charge.

¶3.1 The pastoral duties include:

1. To preach the unsearchable riches of Christ through the Gospel.
2. To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform the marriage ceremony and to bury the dead. Unordained pastors or local preachers serving pastoral charges may administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, and perform the marriage ceremony where the laws of the state permit, within the bounds of their pastoral charge, as long as they are in good standing and their local preacher's license is up-to-date. Only preachers who renew their license annually have this privilege.
3. To preach and teach the biblical principles of Christianity.
4. To preach on the doctrinal distinctives of the Bethel Methodist Church.
5. To preach on the importance of Christian education and to urge all parents to train their children in public and private worship.
6. To charge God's people with the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of Christian Character and Conduct.
7. To conduct regular services, prayer meetings, bible studies and special services. The preacher in charge of a church as pastor is not required to secure consent before holding services in any church on his charge.
8. To present the missionary program of the church and urge its support by all the people in the church.
9. To instruct candidates for membership in the church in the doctrines, rules, and regulations of the church, to receive persons into membership and to grant letters of transfer on request.
10. To visit from house to house in order to give pastoral guidance and help to members of the church and others in need of spiritual help through Christ.
11. Upon consultation with the board of stewards, to obtain evangelists, missionaries, and Bible lecturers for a series of meetings such as he thinks best for the spiritual welfare of the church at large in keeping with the Discipline.
12. To have oversight of the local preachers in his pastoral charge, and to arrange opportunities where their talents can glorify God. He shall also encourage the young men under his charge to be aware of the possibilities of God's call to pastoral ministry.

¶3.2 The administrative duties of the pastor include:

1. To administer all the provisions of the Discipline in his church and see that the ordinances and regulations of the church are duly observed.
2. To make a written report to the General Conference and the local annual conference of the work of the local church, plans for the future, and other items of interest.
3. To be amenable to the General Conference for the exercising of his office. To be amenable to the General Superintendent for the exercising of his office.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 3. The Preacher in Charge, cont.

#### ¶3.2 The administrative duties of the pastor, cont.

4. To attend the meetings of the board of stewards and work with them, providing inspiration and leadership in carrying out the program and business of the local church. The pastor may call the stewards into special session whenever it is deemed necessary for the welfare of the church.
5. To explain the importance and value of the Conference Support, and urge its support by all the people in his charge.
6. To keep a membership record for the church in which shall be noted the name and time of reception and/or removal of each member of the church.
7. To keep an up-to-date working file of the membership of the church which shall be ready to assist with addresses, etc., for visitation, evangelism, finance campaigns, and shall be kept up-to-date for a new pastor or general superintendent.
8. To see that the people are supplied with all of our literature and other theologically sound materials.

#### ¶3.3 The pastor's report to the local church conference may include the following:

1. The spiritual condition of the church or churches in his charge.
2. The names of all who have been received into the church, indicating the method of reception; and of all who have died, transferred, withdrawn, or been expelled during the conference year.
3. The enrollment, attendance, and spiritual condition of the Sunday Schools within the charge, including noteworthy events, weekday meetings of children, youth, and adults, as well as fellowship meetings of the church.
4. Pastoral work done with children.
5. Pastoral calls.
6. The Conference Support relationship to the conference.
7. Plans for future work.
8. Other items worthy of record.

#### ¶3.4 Annual tenure of service:

The pastor, when it becomes known to him that he is to leave a church, shall give at least thirty (30) days notice of his proposed move.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 4. The General Superintendent.

#### ¶4.1 Qualifications:

1. An ordained elder of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Shall have had acceptable pastoral experience.
3. Proven theological insight and communication.

#### ¶4.2 Duties:

1. See SECTION 5 – INTERCHURCH COUNCIL: ¶3.1 and ¶4.4, Item 10.
2. See SECTION 6 – GENERAL CONFERENCE: ¶1.2, ¶1.4, ¶4.5, ¶4.7, ¶4.12, ¶4.14 and ¶4.16.
3. To preach and to oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the general church. The General Superintendent shall cooperate with and respect the administrative roles of other General officers, the Interchurch Council and the local pastors.
4. The recruiting of ministers.
5. To promote the evangelistic activities of the church.
6. To establish regular and continuing ministerial training programs.
7. To discharge such other duties as the Discipline may direct.
8. To act as a pastor to the ministers of the denomination and candidates for the ministry.
9. To establish and organize new congregations whenever possible, according to the Discipline.
10. To supervise the work of all preachers in the denomination.
11. To report the names and addresses of all local preachers to the secretary of the General Conference for insertion in the minutes; to report the names and addresses of all who have been licensed to preach during the year; and to report all candidates for the ministry to the Board of Ministerial Relations.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 5. Ministerial Relations.

¶5.1 **Admission on Trial.** A candidate for admission on trial into the Annual Conference shall have completed prescribed studies. He shall be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and receive a favorable vote of the General Conference.

¶5.2 It is recommended that all candidates for the ministry complete a bachelor's degree or its equivalent.

¶5.3 A candidate who is admitted on trial is actually on trial for two years. His character, competency, and preaching must prove to be advantageous. Before he can be admitted for full ordination, a candidate on trial may be discontinued without any reflection on his character. He is a member of the conference without voting privileges.

¶5.4 **Elder's Orders.** A candidate for full ordination, as an elder, shall have been employed at least two years in the active ministry and shall have completed prescribed studies. He shall be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and a favorable vote of General Conference.

¶5.5 The General Superintendent, or his appointed representative, shall call the class to be admitted into full connection, and receive them into conference membership after asking the following questions of the Discipline. (Here follow the questions which every Bethel Methodist preacher from the beginning has been required to answer upon becoming a full member of the conference. These questions were formulated by John Wesley and have been little changed throughout the years.)

1. Have you faith in Christ?
2. Are you going on to perfection?
3. Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?
4. Are you groaning after it?
5. Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and His work?
6. Do you know the general rules of our church?
7. Will you keep them?
8. Have you studied the doctrines of the Bethel Methodist Church?
9. After full examination, do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?
10. Will you preach and maintain them?
11. Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity?
12. Do you approve our church government and polity?
13. Will you support and maintain them?
14. Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
15. Will you visit from house to house?
16. Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both in precept and example?
17. Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 5. Ministerial Relations, cont.

18. Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
19. Will you observe the following directions:
  - a. Be diligent. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at one place than is strictly necessary.
  - b. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time.
  - c. Do not mend our rules, but keep them, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

This examination of the ministers and the passing of their characters should be business of the same session. Then they are entitled to the floor and a vote.

¶5.6 Upon election by majority vote of the General Conference, the candidate for admission into full connection as an elder immediately becomes a full member of the General Conference. He will then receive ordination by the laying on of hands at the time set by the General Superintendent.

¶5.7 **Receiving Ministers from Other Churches.** Ministers from other churches who are ordained and desire to unite with us as traveling preachers may be admitted into the General Conference as elders by transfer. They must be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and the General Superintendent. They must also have read the Discipline carefully and shall have passed the examination required by the Course of Study Committee. They shall give evidence of their agreement with The Bethel Methodist Church in matters of doctrine and policy, and hold no credentials in any other church.

¶5.8 Ministers from other churches who desire to unite with us as local preachers may be received by transfer, in cases of emergency, by the General Conference upon giving satisfactory evidence to the Board of Ministerial Relations that they are suitable persons. They must be recommended by the General Superintendent.

¶5.9 **Supernumerary Preachers.** A supernumerary preacher is one who is so disabled by affliction as to be unable to preach constantly, but who is willing to do any work in the ministry he may be able to perform. A supernumerary relation shall not be granted by a General Conference except on the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶5.10 **Superannuated Preachers.** A superannuated preacher is one who has retired from active service. A superannuated relation shall not be granted by a General Conference except on the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 6. Termination of Ministerial Relationship.

¶6.1 **By Transfer.** When a minister in good standing desires to transfer to another denomination, his credentials must be surrendered to the conference for the following inscription to be plainly written across them.

\_\_\_\_\_ has this day been honorably transferred by the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference from the ministry of The Bethel Methodist Church after \_\_\_\_\_ years of service.

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent.  
\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary.

This may be done at any time, provided the minister's character is in the clear.

¶6.2 **Withdrawal.** When a minister desires to withdraw his ministerial relation from the General Conference, he may do so upon request to the General Superintendent and the General Board of Ministerial Relations. The General Superintendent shall notify the Director of Administration and the next General Conference Session. Ministers leaving or absenting themselves from the session of the General Conference in protest or lack of sympathy and harmony with the policy and proceedings of such conference, when publicly stated, shall be judged, by vote of the conference, as having withdrawn. Ministers uniting with, or receiving credentials from other denominations, except by transfer, shall be considered as having withdrawn.

¶6.3 **Withdrawal Under Complaints.** See SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION: ¶ 5.1.

¶6.4 **Voluntary Location.** When a minister in good standing desires to discontinue regular ministerial and evangelistic work he may do so, upon request, provided his credentials are surrendered to the conference for the following inscription to be plainly written across them:

\_\_\_\_\_ has this day been honorably dismissed by the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference from the ministry of The Bethel Methodist Church after \_\_\_\_\_ years of service, who avowedly intends to discontinue regular ministerial, evangelistic, or missionary work.

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent.  
\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 6. Termination of Ministerial Relationship, cont.

¶6.5 **Involuntary Location/Located Without Consent.** The General Conference may locate without consent a ministerial member for any cause listed in [SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION: ¶ 1.1](#). The General Superintendent shall submit his reasons for considering a minister's involuntary location in writing to the Board of Ministerial Relations, and shall notify in writing the individual involved prior to the General Conference session at which the proposed action is to be considered. The Board of Ministerial Relations shall submit its recommendations to the General Conference which may locate without consent the ministerial member which deprives him of the right to exercise the ministerial office. The records (minutes and pastoral record) shall indicate such action under [SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION: ¶ 1.15](#).

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 1. Order of Worship**

¶1.1 True worship is an attitude or act of recognition of the superior position of God in relation to all others.

¶1.2 Let the service of worship begin at the time appointed. Let the people enter the sanctuary in a prayerful and respectful manner.

Prelude

Call to Worship

Welcome/Announcements

Hymn

Pastoral Prayer

Hymn

The Apostle's Creed (as worded in the membership vows)

Gloria Patria

Scripture of Responsive Reading

Offering

Doxology

Special music

Message from God's Word

Hymn

Benediction

Postlude

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 2. Calls to Worship

¶2.1 ...the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.  
*Habakkuk 2:20.*

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. *Psalm 122:1.*

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. *Psalm 118:24.*

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. *Psalm 27:14.*

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. *James 4:8.*

...the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. Surely the Lord is in this place...this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.  
*Habakkuk 2:20; Genesis 28:16,17.*

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.  
*Psalm 33:8*

O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. *Psalm 95:6,7.*

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!  
*Psalm 107:1,8.*

My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. *Psalm 84:2.*

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth, My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. *Psalm 124:8; 121:2.*

...the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. *John 4:23,24.*

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 3. The Sacraments.

¶3.1 The two sacraments of the Church are rituals ordained by God as outward and visible symbols of inward and spiritual realities.

1. God's purpose for the sacraments is to speak symbolically of the two essentials for human salvation.
2. These essentials are "the conversion experience" and "the saving relationship".
3. A sacrament in no way, or to any degree, adds to or consummates the inward reality.

If we fail to clearly distinguish between the reality and the ritual, confusing the one for the other, we actually negate the saving grace of God from our lives. (*Galatians 5:2,4; Romans 2:28-29*)

#### ¶3.2 BAPTISM.

1. The sacrament of water baptism speaks symbolically of the conversion experience (the new birth).
2. Conversion to Christ is a cleansing or washing experience.
3. The historical and universal symbol of washing is water.
4. It is our belief from scripture that the proper mode of water baptism is by affusion (sprinkling and pouring).

#### **The minister shall use the following:**

"Dearly beloved the sacrament...(use the 1<sup>st</sup> three statements above under Baptism)..."

#### **Then the minister may read the following:**

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." *Acts 2:38-42*

"And in Acts 10:47 Peter asks this important question: 'can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized.'"

#### **Then shall the minister say to the persons to be baptized:**

"Dearly beloved who have come here desiring to receive the sacrament of baptism, the congregation gives thanks to God for your coming, and prays that you shall continue in Christ, that your faith shall not fail. In the sight of this congregation you are making known that you have repented of your sins and have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Please kneel."

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 3. The Sacraments, cont.

#### ¶3.2 BAPTISM, cont.

**Then the minister shall baptize them saying:**

“ \_\_\_\_\_ (Full Name) \_\_\_\_\_, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

#### **Prayer**

#### ¶3.3 COMMUNION -- The Lord's Supper.

1. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper speaks symbolically of the saving relationship which is mutual indwelling (*John 6:56*).
2. By receiving this sacrament we are saying Christ dwells in us and we are dwelling in Him.
3. The Lord's Table should have upon it a clean white cloth. The pure, unfermented juice of the grape shall be used. It is custom to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper kneeling, but if persons so desire, they may receive the elements while seated or standing.
4. The minister may read I Corinthians 11:23-29, 31-32 or other appropriate scripture.
5. Then the minister shall offer prayer which includes confession of our unworthiness and consecration of the elements.
6. Then the minister and those who serve with him shall first receive communion. Then shall the minister instruct the people and invite the communicants to the Lord's table.
7. After serving both elements the minister shall say:

“The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for you. Take and eat this, remembering that He died for you, and feed on Him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.”

“The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you. Drink this, remembering that His blood was shed for you, and be thankful.”

8. When all have communed, the minister shall cover the remaining elements.

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 4. Receiving Persons into the Church.

¶4.1 “Dearly beloved, the church is of God and will continue to the end of this present age for the promotion of His worship and the proper administration of His Truth and sacraments, the maintenance of Christian fellowship and discipline, the edification of believers, and the proclamation of the Gospel to the world. All, of every age and station, stand in need of the means of grace which it alone supplies. The persons before you come professing to have already entered into this Holy Community.”

“These people now come seeking admission into this denomination and this local church. They have been instructed in the purpose, theology, and objective of the Bethel Methodist Church.”

“Dearly beloved, you profess to have a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from your sins, and to be a faithful servant in the Kingdom of God; you seek the fellowship of the people of God, to assist you in working out your salvation; I therefore ask:”

#### **As to repentance:**

**Question:** “Do you renounce Satan and all of his works, the standards and ways of the world, so that you will not follow or be led by them?”

**Answer:** “I renounce them all.”

#### **As to faith:**

**Question:** “Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, that He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, that the third day He rose from the dead; that He ascended into heaven, and is sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead? And do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the one universal Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?”

**Answer:** “All this I steadfastly believe.”

#### **As to obedience:**

**Question:** “Will you then obediently keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

#### **As to service:**

**Question:** “Will you be loyal to the Bethel Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service, as long as it remains faithful to Christ and His Church according to the scriptures?”

**Answer:** “I will.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 4. Receiving Persons into the Church, cont.**

“We rejoice to recognize you as members of this church, and bid you welcome to all of its privileges; and pray that you may continue with His people here, and with His saints in glory forever. Amen.”

#### **Prayer**

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 5. Receiving Persons by Transfer.

¶5.1 “Dearly beloved, the persons before you have been members of the Bethel Methodist Church of \_\_\_\_\_ and are presenting themselves for membership in this church.”

**Question:** “Beloved, you are not a stranger to Bethel Methodism. And as a fellow member of our denominational family, we ask only if you will be loyal to this church and uphold it with your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 6. Wedding Ceremony.

¶6.1 At the time appointed, the qualified persons to be married shall stand together facing the minister, the man at the minister's left hand and the woman at the right, the minister shall say:

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here 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 by 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, to remember that love and loyalty alone will avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. If these solemn vows be kept without violation, and if steadfastly you endeavor to do the will of your heavenly Father, your life will be full of joy, and the home which you are establishing will abide in peace. No other human ties are more tender, no other vows more sacred than those that you now assume.”

#### **Then the minister shall say to the man, using his Christian name:**

**Question:** “ \_\_\_\_ (Man's Name) \_\_\_\_, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?”

**The man shall answer:** “I will.”

#### **Then the minister shall say to the woman, using her Christian name:**

**Question:** “ \_\_\_\_ (Woman's Name) \_\_\_\_, Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?”

**The woman shall answer:** “I will.”

#### **Then may the minister say:**

**Question:** “Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?”

**The Father of the woman, or whosoever giveth her in marriage, shall answer:** “I do.”

#### **Then the minister shall cause the man with his right hand and to take the woman by her right hand, and say after him:**

“ \_\_\_\_\_, take thee \_\_\_\_\_, 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 us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.”

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 6. Wedding Ceremony, cont.

**Then shall they loose their hands and the woman, with her right hand taking the man by his right hand, shall say after the minister:**

“ \_\_\_\_\_, take thee \_\_\_\_\_, 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 us do part, according to God’s holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.”

**Then shall they again loose hands. Then the man may give unto the woman a ring; the minister, taking the ring, shall say:**

“The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love.”

**The minister shall then deliver the ring to the man to put upon the third finger of the woman’s left hand. The man, holding the ring there shall say after the minister:**

“In token and pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring I thee wed: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

**When a second ring is to be given, the woman shall place the ring upon the man’s finger and repeat:**

“In token and pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring I thee wed: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

**Then shall the minister pray:**

“O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life: send Thy blessing upon this man and woman so that they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant now made in Thy presence, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to Thy will. Look graciously upon them, that they may love, honor, and cherish each other, and 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 join their right hands together and with his hand on their united hands 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) a ring; 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 hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Amen.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 7. Funeral Service.**

¶7.1 The funeral service may contain the following:

Prelude

Song

Scripture reading

Obituary

Prayer

Song

Eulogy

Message

Prayer

¶7.2 At the burial:

Scripture reading with brief comments

Prayer

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 8. Dedication of Infants and Children.

#### ¶8.1 The minister shall say:

“In Mark 10:13-16 the scriptures say, ‘and they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.’”

“This act of dedication relates directly to God’s meaning in Proverbs 22:6 ‘train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.’”

“This is the commitment of the parents. Blessed is the child when the substance of this commitment is realized, for then the child can never be comfortable in sin.”

“This congregation is participating in the sense of its responsibility to maintain the kind of church environment essential to assist the parents in fulfilling their commitment.”

“Dearly beloved, for as much as you now present your child for dedication to God, it is your responsibility to live before him the life that becometh the Gospel and to instruct him to regularly worship God both publicly and privately.”

**Question:** “Will you train him up in the way he should go?”

**Answer:** “We will, God being our helper.”

#### **Then the minister shall take the child, saying:**

“ \_\_\_\_\_ (Full Name) \_\_\_\_\_, I dedicate thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

#### **Prayer**

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders.

¶9.1 The ordination service should be conducted at the General Conference.

**The General Superintendent shall read and exhort from the following:**

Ephesians 4:3,7-8,11-15.

John 10:11-13.

John 21:15-17.

Jeremiah 3:15

**The General Superintendent shall call those to be ordained to the altar and introduce them by name.**

“These are they whom we purpose, God willing, to ordain Elders. After examination and observation, we find strong evidence that they are called of God to this highest level of ministerial ordination, and they are persons qualified for this office. But if there be any of you who knows any valid reason any one of them should not be received into this holy ministry, let him come forth in the name of God and show what the impediment is.”

“Brethren, do you see the work of your calling? ‘for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; *till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto the full knowledge of the Son of God – by speaking the truth in love?*’”

“That when you are a *‘good shepherd’* you care for the sheep and will give your life for their eternal salvation. But if you do not really care for the sheep, then you are an hireling and will abandon them in time of danger or difficulty. Your profession here tonight, says you do it for the love of God and His people, *never* as paid employment.”

“Do you see that if you truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall *‘feed’* His lambs and sheep?”

“And that if you are truly called to this holy office, then you are a *‘Pastor/Shepherd’* according to God’s own heart, and you shall *‘feed’* God’s people *with knowledge and understanding?*”

“We expect you have pondered and weighed both the importance and responsibility, as well as the great honor and privilege of this office whereunto you are called of God.”

“And now before this congregation of Christians here assembled, you shall answer plainly to these things which we, in the presence of God, and in the name of His Church, shall require of you.”

**Question:** “Have you experienced the new birth, having received Jesus Christ into your spirit by repentance and faith?”

**Answer:** “Yes, I have.”

**Question:** “Presently, are you in a continuing right relationship with God – walking in the “narrow way” which alone leads to eternal salvation?”

**Answer:** “I am.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders, cont.**

**Question:** “Do you believe by conviction that the Holy Scriptures contain all truth necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Christ? And will you teach nothing as God’s truth but that which you are persuaded may be concluded from the Holy Scriptures and proved thereby?”

**Answer:** “I do so believe and have so determined.”

**Question:** “Will you, with all faithful diligence, seek to recognize, expose and drive away all erroneous teachings contrary to God’s Word?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

**Question:** “Are you aware that Christ has said: ‘One thing is needful?’ And do you understand that the ‘one thing’ is to attain unto the knowledge and understanding of God to the extent He has revealed Himself to His people?”

**Answer:** “Yes, I am aware of His statement, and do so understand His meaning.”

**Question:** “Do you believe God has willed and provided for you, and for all Christians, to be conformed to the moral image of His Son in this present life? And that this moral image is the progressive and ultimate result of the attaining of the true knowledge and understanding of God?”

**Answer:** “Yes, I do so believe.”

**Question:** “Are you convinced by God that He willed the organization and existence of the Bethel Methodist Church?”

**Answer:** “I am so convinced.”

**Question:** “Do you have a basic understanding of the message of The Bethel Methodist Church?”

**Answer:** “I do.”

**Question:** “Do you believe by conviction that our theology is in harmony with God’s written Word?”

**Answer:** “I do so believe.”

**Question:** “Will you, in love, wisdom and courage, preach, teach and maintain the theology of our church?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders, cont.

**Question:** “Do you agree with, and appreciate, the attitude and resolve of our church that all the Bethel Methodist Church shall preach, teach and embrace as God’s truth shall be open to; **QUESTION**, to careful **EXAMINATION**, to proper **CHALLENGE** and to **CHANGE** when found to be somewhat true, but not fully or precisely so? And to **REMOVAL** if it is proven to be error?”

**Answer:** “I strongly agree with, and have deep appreciation for this attitude and resolve of our church.”

**Question:** “Are you knowledgeable of the form of church government, organizational structure and discipline of our church? Do you approve and support all of these?”

**Answer:** “I am knowledgeable, and I do approve and support all of these.”

**Question:** “Do you desire and agree to attend, participate in and contribute to our regular and continuing ministerial training program?”

**Answer:** “Yes I do, as God gives me opportunity.”

**Question:** “Will you, by reason, honesty and humility submit to the authority of those ministers unto whom God, through His people, has committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their admonitions which are within the love and will of God?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

**Question:** “Are you determined, by the grace of God, to bring all the people God shall place under your ministry into the fullest possible knowledge and understanding of God according to the revelation of Himself through the holy scriptures.”

**Answer:** “Yes, I am determined to do so.”

**Question:** “Will you faithfully love the people God shall place under your responsibility by ministering to their needs, according to the will and grace of God, both publicly and privately?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

**Question:** “Will you be diligent in prayer, in studying the Word of God, and in all studies which help in the knowledge and understanding of our Lord?”

**Answer:** “I will, by the help of God.”

**Question:** “Is it your conviction that God has called you, and ordained you, to the office of elder in His Church, and do you understand it to be a full-time and life-long ministry?”

**Answer:** “It is my conviction and I do so understand.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders, cont.**

**Question:** “Are you decided and committed to occupy and exercise this office of elder as God gives you direction, place, and opportunity?”

**Answer:** “I am so decided and committed.”

“May Almighty God, who hath given you this will to do all these things, grant also unto you strength and power to perform the same; that He may accomplish His work which He has begun in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

#### **Prayer by General Superintendent.**

##### **With the Man kneeling:**

The General Superintendent with other selected elders shall lay their hands together upon every one to be ordained. (Each one ordained should hold a Bible in his hands.)

##### **The General Superintendent shall say:**

“We hereby acknowledge and ratify that Almighty God has called and ordained you, giving you authority to preach and teach His Holy Word, to administer the sacraments of His church, and to be His instrument in leading His people into the true knowledge and understanding of Him, unto eternal salvation. The Lord give unto you the power of His Holy Spirit for the work of this office now confirmed unto you by the laying on of our hands. Be a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Ordinances; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**TO BE ADDED AT A LATER DATE**

**INDEX**

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