

BYLAWS of Due West Methodist, Inc.

ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE

- A. Name: This congregation of believers shall be known as Due West Methodist Church. The church is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Georgia.

- B. Purpose: This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world.

ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

- A. The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the statement of faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members, staff, and volunteers. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the statement of faith. All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or leased by this church, or engaged in by any member of the church staff (volunteer or paid), and all decisions of the administration of this church shall not conflict with the statement of faith. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the statement of faith, the pastor and Administrative Board, on behalf of the church, have the final authority.

- B. Statement of Faith
 - 1. Biblical Authority

The Bible is the source and final authority for our faith. The scriptures - the Old and New Testaments taken together - are the ultimate voice in all matters of faith and practice. No other authority can override the authority of God as revealed in the scriptures. Likewise, we recognize the sufficiency of the scriptures. The scriptures teach everything that human beings need to know for their salvation.

 - 2. Historic Christian Creeds

With the historic church, we affirm that which "has been believed everywhere, always, and by all." We profess the ecumenical creeds of early Christian church, best summarized in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed (see Addendum 1).

3. Wesleyan Legacy

We celebrate our Wesleyan heritage as expressed in the writings and hymns of John and Charles Wesley. To this end, we affirm our commitment to the statements of "Core Wesleyan Beliefs and Values" (see Addendum 2) and the "Wesleyan Way of Salvation" (see Addendum 3) and to the practical faith as outlined in the "Church Covenant" document (see Addendum 4).

Likewise, we rely on the historic documents of Methodism to guide our faith and mission: John Wesley's *Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church* (see Addendum 5) and the *General Rules of the Methodist Church* (see Addendum 6).

We also look to John Wesley's collection of *Standard Sermons* and his *Notes Upon the New Testament* as instructive for interpreting the scriptures and establishing sound doctrine.

4. Commitment to Life, Community, and Future

In our desire to bear witness to the ancient Christian faith in the modern world, we as a community also commit ourselves to the following:

- a. Sacred Worth of All Persons - We believe that each person should have the right to exercise their religious beliefs. We denounce discrimination or persecution which may target anyone because of their gender, economic status, ethnic or tribal identity, age, or political views. We believe that all persons are of sacred worth, created in the image of God. Therefore, we gladly welcome all who seek to grow in their relationship with God to attend worship services and participate in the church's ministries.
- b. Equality - No person shall be disqualified from becoming a member of a local congregation, holding a leadership position in the church, or becoming an ordained or licensed clergy based on gender, race, color, disability, nationality, national origin, or economic condition. Christ's Church specifically renounces all racial and ethnic discrimination and commits itself to work toward full racial and ethnic equality in the church and in society. In addition, Scripture teaches that men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. Accordingly, the church should treat women and men equally. We believe that both women and men are called to and gifted for ordained and licensed ministry, and both genders can hold leadership roles within Christ's Church.
- c. Marriage and Human Sexuality - We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between one man and one woman. We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for His Children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives:

- d. Divorce and Remarriage - Our first counsel when considering divorce is always to exhaust every avenue of reconciliation. However, when a married couple is estranged beyond reconciliation, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, divorce is a regrettable alternative in the middle of brokenness. Divorce is always less than what God intended for marriage, however, it is not an unforgivable sin. Through the process of healing and restoration, people can be restored to community and to healthy and whole relationships that may include remarriage.
- e. Gender Identity - Based upon the Biblical witness, we believe that God created two genders, male and female. We have sincere empathy for those who struggle with the issue of gender identity, and would desire to help them find healing, consistent with God's best plan and design. We do not believe that encouraging a departure from this plan and design in any way helps the individual, but rather compounds harm. We all need the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us.
- f. Sanctity of Life - We affirm that human life begins at the moment of conception, as the genetic uniqueness of the individual originates in this event, as well as the biological activity of cellular growth and division. Further, we recognize that the spiritual character of humanity, being created in the image of God, makes every detail of the human being impossible to measure scientifically. Human life is of sacred worth to God and therefore to us as well. This belief in the sanctity of human life makes it impossible for us to support or affirm abortion, except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. We unconditionally reject abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, gender selection, or eugenics. We recognize the injury that abortion inflicts on the life of a woman and sympathetically recognize her trauma as a result of this event. We do not condemn persons who have been led to make this choice in the past, but rather desire to be the presence and grace of God to them.
- g. Protection of Children - We believe that children are a blessing from the Lord and we accept our responsibility to both protect and nurture our children, particularly against such abuses as enforced child labor, involuntary conscription, human trafficking, and other such practices in the world. Children must be absolutely protected within the church from any form of abuse or molestation. The church has zero tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses or molests a child.
- h. Human Need for Salvation - The fall of humanity has subjected human beings and society to the powers of sin and death. Since redemption that brings salvation is something which humans cannot earn or achieve for themselves, it is necessary that we receive it as a free gift of God's grace. In affirming the eternal deity of Jesus Christ, his sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, we also confess the necessity of Christ's sacrifice for us. The consequence of an unrepentant and unregenerate life is eternal separation from God. We affirm that God's justifying grace is universally available to all who confess, repent, and place their faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We do not affirm universalist theology which holds that all people will

ultimately receive salvation. We affirm the real consequences of rebellion against God that rejects His loving invitation.

- i. Love and Service - We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal graciously, humbly, gently, and patiently with those who oppose us. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such actions. Following the example of Christ, we commit our lives to a readiness to serve, a willingness to give, and an undying capacity to forgive.

ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP

We recognize that God made all creation and saw that it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and evidence of God's grace to the unity of the Church and to society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons. Due West Methodist Church is to be open, accepting, and supportive to all persons to participate in the spiritual life of the Church and its service to the community and the world.

- A. Qualifications For Membership. Members of the church are those members who were previously members of the Due West United Methodist Church. Those seeking new membership must:
 1. Through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
 2. Attend a pre-membership class led by a member of the pastoral staff or appointee in which they will review the church's statement of faith, bylaws, general practices and policies, and expectations of members.
 3. Be interviewed by the pastor, pastoral staff and/or Administrative Board to ensure they fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders. Pre-membership class req. can be satisfied at the discretion of the pastor(s). The pastor(s) may levy requirements that augment and meet the intent of the class.
 4. Membership will be granted upon the recommendation of the pastor(s) and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:
 - a. By baptism at this or another church;
 - b. By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized; or
 - c. By testimony of faith, having been baptized in another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice.
- B. Privileges of Membership
 1. Only members of at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. Adequate provisions will be made to register, validate, and secure membership votes for the infirm, shut-ins, and medically quarantined prior to the date of voting. There shall be no other proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church may only exercise voting privileges in those areas that are defined and limited by these bylaws. Members may not vote to initiate any church action; rather the

- vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor and the Administrative Board.
2. This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under-shepherd with the counsel of the Administrative Board. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor and Administrative Board shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The Administrative Board shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him/her.
 3. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor or individual designated by the Administrative Board has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor or person designated by the Administrative Board, be treated as a trespasser.
 4. A member may inspect the prepared annual financial statement of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of church and committee meetings, provided he/she shall have made a written request upon the church stating the precise records requesting to be viewed and the reason for the request, and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date. Requests may be denied if such request is deemed to be frivolous by a majority vote of the Administrative Board. Administrative Board meeting minutes and discipline committee meetings, as well as other information involving privacy interests such as, but not limited to, donor records, lists of names and addresses of church members, individual benevolence, individual salaries, health information, background checks, and social security numbers, are exempt from this provision and are not subject to inspection without a court order. The church will not sell the private information of its membership, partners, or attendees. Members may not copy or take digital images or records of any ministry record without authorization from the pastor or chair of the Administrative Board. Members agree that information obtained from any inspection of records will be kept in the strictest confidence.

C. Maintenance of Membership Rolls

The desire of the church is always to maintain, encourage, and grow its membership. To maintain an accurate roll of voting members, an appropriate committee will oversee matters regarding the resignation or dismissal of church membership.

1. Voluntary resignation of church membership. Members are free to surrender their membership at any time. Occasions for voluntary surrender of membership include
 - a. A member unites in membership with another church.
 - b. A member files a lawsuit against the church without following the process of Christian arbitration described in Article 11.
 - c. A member engages in actions, speech, or publications in contravention of the church's "Statement of Faith" that directly threaten the unity of the congregation. Such non-conforming behaviors will be treated by the pastor and the Administrative Board as the member's resignation.
2. Review of the membership rolls. The Membership Committee will annually review the membership rolls to maintain an accurate list of voting members.
 - a. Deceased members. Deceased members will be removed from the roll.
 - b. Non-participating members. Members who have not participated in the worship and activities of the church for the prior 12 months may be considered for removal from

the roll. The infirm, shut-ins, and medically quarantined members are exempt from this review. The Membership committee will make a reasonable effort to contact non-participating members to determine their wishes.

- c. The Administrative Board is responsible for changes to the membership roll. A majority vote of the Administrative Board is required for the removal of non-participating members from the membership roll.

D. **Transfer or Resignation of Membership:** Members not under the disciplinary process of Article 3 section E may request a letter of transfer be sent to another church. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor.

E. **Discipline of A Member**

1. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of an individual in the local church or the body as a whole, he or she is to go to the offending party and seek to restore the offender. Before going, the confronter should first examine him or herself and go with a spirit of humility and the goal of restoration.
2. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter in going again to the offending party. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
3. If the matter is still unresolved after taking the steps outlined in section E.1 and E.2 above, the two members aware of the offense shall, in keeping with Matthew 18, bring the issue before the pastor and the Administrative Board, who are representatives of the church body.
4. If the pastor and Administrative Board agree with the member that the offending conduct is of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of the member or the body as a whole, they shall attempt to meet with the offending brother or sister. If reconciliation is not reached, the pastor and Administrative Board, as representatives of the church body, shall, upon a majority vote of those present at a meeting of the Administrative Board, terminate the offending individual's membership without further notice to him or her. Unless the matter involves an issue of safety or security to the members of the church at large, the specifics of the matter shall not be addressed in a public forum or with the general church membership.
5. The pastor and Administrative Board shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline. If the pastor or a Administrative Board member is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he or she shall not be permitted to vote on his or her own membership termination.
6. For any memberships terminated in accordance with this provision, the pastor may cause a letter to be written informing the prior member of the termination, although he or she is not required to do so.
7. The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

F. **Affiliated Co-Laborer:** Those desiring fellowship, accountability and opportunities for service with this church on a temporary basis but who maintain membership in a like body of believers outside this locality may be granted affiliated co-laborer status with this church. The affiliated co-laborer may be eligible to serve in certain capacities determined by the pastor and Administrative Board and may attend member fellowship events. This affiliation does not, however, grant membership or the rights of membership to the individual(s) so affiliated. Affiliated co-laborers shall not be entitled to hold any office, vote in, or have any say in any church matter, and shall not be counted for quorum purposes. A person wishing to become an affiliated co-laborer with this church must make a request to the pastor

or his designee who will determine if affiliated co-laborer status should be granted to the individual. If the pastor or his designee so determines, the person may be granted co-laborer status upon a majority vote of the Administrative Board.

- G. Inactive members: For people who live in a different community but want to maintain their ties to Due West, they may be an "inactive member" with the approval of the pastor(s). They are not allowed to exercise the privileges of membership outlined in the bylaws, but they are members. If members living in the community have ceased to be active, they may also be placed in inactive status at the recommendation of the membership committee and the pastor(s) if there is a belief they can be encouraged to become active once again.

ARTICLE 4 OFFICERS

- A. Designation of Corporate Officers: The Administrative Board chair shall serve as president of the corporation; the vice chair of the Administrative Board shall serve as the vice president of the corporation; the secretary of the Administrative Board shall serve as secretary of the corporation; and the Chair of the Finance Committee shall serve as treasurer of the corporation. The fifth officer shall be the senior pastor.
- B. Church Officers: The church officers are pastor(s), Administrative Board members, secretary, treasurer, and any other officers the church deems necessary. The church shall have at least three Administrative Board members.
- C. Eligibility For Church Officers
1. The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the statement of faith set forth in Article 2. All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm in writing their agreement with the statement of faith.
 2. All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the pastor to commence or continue in their offices.
 3. Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position. Affiliated co-laborers with this church are not eligible for such election or appointment. Two exceptions per committee, will be allowed upon recommendation and approval by the Administrative Board. Exceptions will not be granted for committee chairs or members of the Administrative Board.
- D. Election of Church Officers: The annual election of officers, other than the senior and other pastors, by the church membership shall occur no later than the month of June at the annual church business meeting. Officers of the church must be elected by a majority of the eligible membership present at a regular or special church business meeting. The pastor, from time to time as he/she deems appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to a confirmation vote by a majority of the eligible church membership, present and voting at any regular or special church business meeting. Members may submit to the pastor and the Administrative Board nominations for corporate officers. The pastor and the Administrative Board shall then serve as the nominating committee for all general elections of officers. Nominations must be approved by the Administrative Board and a majority of those present at a church-wide meeting.
- E. Terms of Service for Officers
1. The relationship between the senior pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular or special church business meeting by following the procedures outlined in Article 6, provided notice of the meeting is given from the pulpit to the church

- two Sundays prior to the meeting. A majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to remove the pastor from office. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership.
2. Any other Administrative Board member may be removed from office before his term expires for any reason stated or unstated upon motion by any Administrative Board member and an affirmative majority vote of the other Administrative Board members at a duly called meeting of the Administrative Board. No congregational vote is necessary for Administrative Board member removal. This process is intended to protect the personal or private information of any Administrative Board member being removed from office.
 3. A vacancy occurring in any office or on the Administrative Board, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church business Administrative Board meeting by a majority vote of eligible members present.
 4. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed, unless removed for disciplinary reasons.

F. Committee Structure

1. Since we are blessed to have volunteers to fill out various committees of the church, we should list these important committees of our church serving under the direction of the Administrative Board. At this point we have no document describing our church governing structure. The chairs of these committees will be a voting member of the Administrative Board.
2. Nominations Committee on Nominations: Chaired by the senior pastor; made up of the Lay Leader, delegate to conference, 3 members appointed in each class year with a 3-year rotation. This committee nominates the lay leadership.
3. Lay Leader, Represents the laity of the church in worship and on many of our committees, to include Staff Parish Relations Committee, Nominating Committee, Finance Committee and Administrative Board.
4. Delegates to Conference: One delegate for each of our pastors serving Due West. They represent our congregation at denominational meetings.
5. At Large Members of the Administrative Board. 4 members appointed in each class year with a 3-year rotation. The Administrative Board provides guidance and sets policy for the congregation. Designated church staff are ex officio members.
6. Staff Parish Relations Committee: Membership; A Chair, the Lay Leader, one delegate to conference, 3 members appointed in each class year with a 3-year rotation. They are the liaison committee between the congregation and the paid staff. The senior pastor is an ex officio member. The Chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee is also a voting member of the Administrative Board.
7. Finance Committee: Membership; A Chair, the Lay Leader, one delegate to conference, 3 members appointed in each class year with a 3-year rotation. This committee reviews income and expenditures, approve major purchases and recommend the annual budget to the Administrative Board. The senior pastor and business manager are ex officio members. The Chair of the Finance Committee is also a voting member of the Administrative Board.
8. Worship Committee: A Chair, and elected members. There is not a limit to the number who may serve or the tenure of the members. They help to facilitate all the logistical aspects of worship. The senior pastor and office manager are ex officio members. The Chair of the Worship Committee is also a voting member of the Administrative Board.
9. Membership Committee: Chaired by a pastor, this committee includes Lay Leader and at least 3 additional members appointed annually. They help plan our new member class (Due West 101) and review membership rolls.
10. Board of Trustees. A chair and 3 members appointed in each class year with a 3-year rotation. They are responsible for all things regarding our building, grounds and physical

assets. The pastor and Director of Facilities are ex officio members. The Chair of the Board of Trustees is also a voting member of the Administrative Board.

11. Legacy Committee. A Chair, and elected members. There is not a limit to the number who may serve or the tenure of the members. They oversee matters relating to the churches endowments. The pastor is an ex officio member. The Chair of the Legacy Committee is also a voting member of the Administrative Board.
 12. Missions Committee. A Chair, and elected members. There is not a limit to the number who may serve or the tenure of the members. They help oversee the missions outreach of the congregation. The Chair of the Missions Committee is also a voting member of the Administrative Board.
 13. Other members of the Administrative Board: Ministry Leader, Stewardship Chair, College Care Ministry Chair(Reaches out to Due West college students to help maintain their connection to their home church), Adult Education Chair (Helps trace participation in our Sunday school and small groups) , Scouting Representative and Church Treasurer.
- G. Calling a Pastor: Upon the resignation, death, or dismissal of the pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the statement of faith and bylaw provisions of the church and whose life aligns with the qualifications of a pastor as described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The church shall abide by the following guidelines for calling a pastor:
1. The Administrative Board shall select a pulpit committee to consist of all Administrative Board members and up to five other members elected by a majority vote of the Administrative Board. The pulpit committee shall interview potential candidates and will only consider those who completely subscribe to the statement of faith and who have read these bylaws.
 2. The interview process for selecting a pastoral candidate shall include, at a minimum, the following: a background check, a credit check, a reference check, and the filling out of a detailed application that explains the potential candidate's philosophy of ministry as well as the candidate's positions on issues of doctrinal significance.
 3. Upon a majority vote of the pulpit committee, the pulpit committee will formally announce the candidate to the church, after which the candidate must preach at least one regularly scheduled church service and be available for a church-wide question/answer time prior to being voted upon by the church membership.
 4. Notice from the pulpit must be given 2 consecutive Sundays prior to a formal candidate's preaching service(s), and 2 consecutive Sundays prior to the church membership vote.
 5. The candidate must be elected as pastor by a majority vote of members present and qualified to vote. This vote shall be taken by written, secret ballot at a meeting at which the candidate is not present. The pulpit committee will only present for consideration to the membership one candidate at a time, and an up or down vote must be cast prior to consideration of other potential candidates.

ARTICLE 5 DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS

A. The Pastor

1. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God. He or she shall administer the ordinances of the church; act as moderator, or appoint a moderator, at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters; supervise the teaching ministries of the church; and watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of Scripture, the pastor has the final authority.
2. The pastor and Administrative Board, on behalf of the church, shall establish committees and appoint the members of the various committees at the annual church business meeting or, in

the case of a vacancy or newly created committee, at any duly called special meeting. The pastor shall inform all newly elected officers of the functions and responsibilities of their respective offices. He or she shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and shall perform such other duties as generally appertain to the position of pastor. He or she shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he or she exercises the ministry God has given.

3. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place, and the use of the property belonging to the church for any other purposes, are under the control of the pastor, who, with the advice, consent and counsel of the Administrative Board, shall be able to determine the appropriateness of all property use, as well as persons permitted to use the church property.
4. The pastor shall be responsible to fill the pulpit for each regularly scheduled church service as well as any special services. In the event of his absence, he or she (or the chair of the Administrative Board in the case of a vacancy in the office of pastor or where the pastor is temporarily unable to perform his duties) shall be responsible to invite speakers from within the membership or outside the church to preach in a manner consistent with the beliefs articulated in the statement of faith.
5. The pastor and the Administrative Board shall be responsible to establish mandatory safety and security procedures for all ministries and programs. There will be a zero-tolerance policy with regard to abuse of minors, and any reasonable suspicions of child abuse alleged to be perpetrated by staff, volunteers, members or non-members will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement or child abuse prevention authorities. The pastor or his/her designee will be responsible to provide yearly child abuse prevention training for all staff and volunteers.

B. The Administrative Board

1. The Administrative Board shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the church services, and in performing all other work of the church. The Administrative Board is responsible for making preparations to observe church ordinances and shall consider applications for church membership and affiliated co-laborers. The Administrative Board shall consider benevolence needs, disburse the benevolence fund in cooperation with the pastor, and assist the pastor in all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The Administrative Board shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is unavailable or the office of pastor is vacant. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the Administrative Board may appoint a pulpit committee.
2. Following the annual church business meeting, the Administrative Board shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chair and a secretary for the Administrative Board.
3. The pastor and the Administrative Board shall constitute the Administrative Board of directors of the corporation. In addition to the various powers specifically granted the Administrative Board under these bylaws, the Administrative Board has authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the eligible members at a duly called business meeting:
 - a. To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
 - b. To sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or

other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.

- c. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.
 - d. To maintain the duties of loyalty to the church, confidentiality of church information, and fiduciary care regarding church finances, and a spiritual duty to pray for and support the church with their time, talents, and treasures.
4. All powers of the Administrative Board (whether deacons or other appointed group) shall be compatible with the laws of the State of Georgia.
 5. The Administrative Board shall, in conjunction with the pastor, conduct an annual ministry liability and safety review of the following policies and/or topics: child protection, including but not limited to worker screening procedures, child abuse reporting procedures, and worker training on child abuse prevention; building safety; security measures; insurance; financial accountability; transportation; sexual harassment; policies listed in IRS Form 990, including a whistleblower policy, a document retention and destruction policy, and a church financial investment policy (if applicable).
 6. Each Administrative Board member shall review the bylaws annually and shall bring suggested changes to a meeting of the Administrative Board that has been designated for the purpose of reviewing the bylaws.

C. Secretary: The Administrative Board secretary, along with assigned staff, shall:

1. Certify and keep at the office of the church the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws; minutes of meetings; the membership roll, baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the church; and shall deliver such documents to his or her successor upon leaving office.
2. Maintain and file minutes of all church business and Administrative Board meetings, including the time and place of holding, the notice given, the names of those present unless a church-wide meeting, and an accurate record of all church business approved at each meeting. A copy of these minutes shall be kept as a permanent record of the church and shall be made available at all reasonable times to the proper person on terms provided by law and pursuant to these bylaws.
3. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
4. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by the chair of the Administrative Board.
5. Serve as the secretary of the corporation and be a member in good standing.

D. Treasurer: The church treasurer, along with any assistant or co-officer, shall:

1. Count, or cause to be counted, along with two other persons so appointed, and record in a permanent record all monies received as church offerings. This shall be done following each church service or day of services.
2. Convey in a timely manner all funds received to the person designated by the Administrative Board for verification and deposit in the bank, including moneys received from outside sources.
3. Maintain a permanent weekly record of individual giving for all donations, offerings, contributions and gifts, and guard the confidentiality of these records. Issue an official receipt to each contributor at the end of the fiscal year.
4. Keep in the church office an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of church funds; make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the church as requested by the pastor and the Administrative Board, and for annual, quarterly or

- otherwise special or regular business meetings; and deliver such records to his or her successor upon leaving office.
5. Serve as treasurer of the corporation and be a member in good standing.
- E. Trustees: The Administrative Board will establish a Board of Trustees to oversee all real estate needs including legal issues, construction, repairs, and general upkeep. This board will elect its chairperson and secretary.
- F. Duties Of All Officers
1. All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church business meeting and shall surrender all records in their possession to the church secretary at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.
 2. Any officer who neglects his or her duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from office, at the discretion of the pastor, and another may be appointed by the pastor to serve the un-expired term.

ARTICLE 6

CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS AND MEETINGS OF THE Administrative Board

- A. Annual Church Business Meeting
1. The annual church business meeting, for the election of officers and the transaction of other business, shall be held no later than the month of June. A quorum shall consist of the eligible members present. Public notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.
 2. The pastor or other church officer chosen by a majority of the Administrative Board shall serve as moderator of church business meetings. In the event of a conflict of interest, the Administrative Board may substitute a moderator.
 3. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his/her sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his/her decision is final and controlling.
 4. For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his/her sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers (or children, if circumstances so warrant) to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. If the moderator determines that compliance with his/her order of removal is unsatisfactory, he/she may, in his/her sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises and treat the person as a trespasser.
 5. Church business meetings, including the annual church business meeting and special meetings, may be held by electronic video means for the transaction of any business normally conducted during in-person church business meetings. A quorum shall be those eligible voting members attending the virtual meeting, and voting shall be conducted by any means deemed acceptable by the Administrative Board. Notice of business meetings and other notice required by these bylaws shall be provided by email, the church website, social media site, text message, and/or other methods deemed by the Administrative Board to be most likely to reach church members at least 2 weeks before the meeting. Such notice satisfies "notice from the pulpit" when that method of notice is otherwise required by these bylaws. Attendance at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
 6. The fiscal year of the church shall begin July 1st and end June 30th.

- B. Church Special Business Meetings: The pastor or the Administrative Board may call a special church business meeting by giving notice from the pulpit to the church of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or for the discipline or removal of the pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Article 4 Section F.
- C. Voting: Voting at any church business meeting is limited to eligible members in good standing with the church who are physically present at the meeting; an exception to this in-person vote requirement exists if the church is meeting electronically as permitted by Article 6, Section A.5 of these bylaws. Absentee voting is not permitted, and any member who is undergoing church discipline at the time of a vote is not permitted to vote. A majority vote of those eligible members attending the meeting, whether in person or electronically, will constitute the requisite number of votes for passage of amendments and motions, whether by the Administrative Board voting at a Administrative Board meeting or by the members voting in a church business meeting.
- D. Motions: Members who desire that a certain motion be made or subject matter be discussed during an annual, regular, or special business meeting must file a written recommendation with the pastor and Administrative Board two weeks prior to the meeting, who will then consider the proposal and proceed according to their conscience and what they understand to be in the best interests of the church. All other motions will be presented by the pastor and/or chair of the Administrative Board (or other moderator if the office of pastor is vacant) unless the pastor and/or the Administrative Board has delegated authority to another member and/or officer to raise certain motions. No motions will be made from the floor.
- E. Meetings of the Administrative Board
1. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Administrative Board shall be held at such time and place as the Administrative Board determines.
 2. Special Meetings. The pastor or any two Administrative Board members may call a special meeting of the Administrative Board at any time, and nothing contained in this article shall be construed as limiting, fixing, or affecting the time or date when a meeting called by action of the Administrative Board may be held.
 3. Notice of Meetings
 - a. Requirement of Notice: Notice shall not be required for regularly scheduled meetings of the Administrative Board unless there has been a change to the time, date, or location of such regularly scheduled meetings, in which case notice shall be given in accordance with this section of the bylaws. Notice shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of this section for all special meetings of the Administrative Board.
 - b. Method of Notice: Notice shall be sent to each Administrative Board member for special meetings by means of the Administrative Board secretary's chosen method of communication, whether by postal mail, phone, or email at each Administrative Board member's address or phone number as it appears in the records of the church or as supplied by the Administrative Board member to the Administrative Board secretary for the purpose of notice. Notice shall be given by or at the direction of the chair or the pastor. In the event the pastor or chair refuses to give notice, any Administrative Board member may give notice of any meeting. The Administrative Board secretary is responsible to verify that notice is provided.
 - c. Content of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
 4. Time of Notice: Notice of any special meeting shall be delivered by the person charged with giving notice, not less than two days before the date of the meeting.

5. Waiver of Notice: An Administrative Board member may waive notice of a meeting of the Administrative Board by written statement, and attendance by the Administrative Board member at the meeting without protest shall be deemed waiver of notice.
6. Quorum. A quorum for meetings shall consist of a majority of the Administrative Board. If a quorum is not attained, then those present shall adjourn the meeting to a new date properly noticed to all Administrative Board members for not more than ten days thereafter, at that later-noticed meeting a quorum shall consist of those Administrative Board members then present.
7. Roles. At every meeting of the Administrative Board, the chair, or in his absence, the officer designated by the chair or in the absence of a designation, the person (who shall be one of the officers, if any is present) chosen by a majority of the Administrative Board members present, shall act as chair and/or moderator, and shall conduct the meeting in an orderly manner as determined by the chair. The secretary of the Administrative Board shall act as secretary of all meetings and shall take accurate minutes of Administrative Board meetings and promptly deliver such minutes to the church secretary. In the absence of the Administrative Board secretary, the chair may appoint another person to act as Administrative Board secretary of the meeting.
8. Participation in Meetings. Any one or more Administrative Board members may participate in a meeting of the Administrative Board by means of a conference telephone, web-based conference, or similar communications equipment or device, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participating by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting for purposes of determining if a quorum is present.

ARTICLE 7 EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

- A. Purpose: The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Great Commission, this church shall establish and maintain an educational program (either a Sunday School and/or a weekday educational program) for the purposes of winning souls to Christ and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living. To this end, the church shall engage in educational ministries.
- B. Church Participation: All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the pastor and Administrative Board, on behalf of the church, may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interests of the church.
- C. Agreement with Statement of Faith: All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church and shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the statement of faith of the church and the inerrant Word of God. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or who expresses disagreement with the statement of faith or who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the statement of the faith, whether in or out of the classroom.

ARTICLE 8 COMMITTEES

- A. Committees: The pastor and Administrative Board, on behalf of the church, may designate or form any committees and may appoint members and/or chairpersons of said committees as considered by the pastor and Administrative Board to be in the best interests of the church. These committees may be standing or temporary (special) committees.
- B. Actions of Committees: Committees have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. Their primary function is to research and recommend. Committees shall make available upon request all records and materials to the pastor and Administrative Board, who shall have the right to overrule any plans or decisions made by the committee. Each committee shall have a secretary who keeps and timely submit minutes of each meeting to the pastor(s) and church office to be filed with church records. If deemed appropriate by the pastor(s) and Administrative Board, the committee secretary, in conjunction with the chair, will submit an annual report to the church of the decisions and plans of the committee. Minutes from committee meetings will be made available upon request at the discretion of the chair.

**ARTICLE 9
DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

The church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. If the church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the church will attempt to honor the designation; however, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the Administrative Board with recommendation from the finance committee. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 1.

**ARTICLE 10
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this conflict-of-interest policy is to protect the church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Definitions

- 1. Interested Person: Any director, officer, or member of a committee with governing Administrative Board-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest.
- 2. Financial interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
 - a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement;
 - b. A compensation arrangement with the church or with any individual or entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement; or
 - c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
 - d. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Administrative Board of directors decides that a conflict of interest exists.
- 3. Compensation: Direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

4. Administrative Board: The Administrative Board of directors of the church. The pastor and Administrative Board will determine procedures for determining a possible conflict of interest.

B. Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Administrative Board and, if applicable, members of committees with governing Administrative Board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. Determining whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he or she shall leave the Administrative Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Administrative Board or committee members (as applicable) shall decide, by a majority vote, if a conflict of interest exists.
3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
 - a. The chair of the Administrative Board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - b. After exercising due diligence, the Administrative Board or committee shall determine whether the church can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - c. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Administrative Board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
4. Violations of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy
 - a. If the Administrative Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
 - b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Administrative Board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.
5. Records of Proceedings
 - a. The minutes of the Administrative Board shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Administrative Board or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
 - b. The minutes of the Administrative Board also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.
6. Compensation

- a. A voting member of the Administrative Board or any committee who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
 - b. A voting member of the Administrative Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church, either individually or collectively, are not prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.
- 7. Annual Statements: Each director, officer, and member of a committee with governing Administrative Board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy; has read and understands the policy; has agreed to comply with the policy; and understands the organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.
- 8. Periodic Reviews: To ensure the organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:
 - a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
 - b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or an excess benefit transaction.
- 9. Use of Outside Experts: When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for above, the organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Administrative Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

**ARTICLE 11
BINDING CHRISTIAN ARBITRATION**

- A. Submission To Arbitration: Members of the church must agree to submit to binding Christian arbitration on any legal matters within the church that cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.
- B. Arbitration Procedures: The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the Administrative Board. If the Administrative Board has not adopted procedures, the church will use arbitration procedures provided by the National Center for Life and Liberty. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

**ARTICLE 12
TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS**

- A. Private Inurement: No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I hereof.

- B. Political involvement: No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. To the extent prohibited by law, the church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.
- C. Dissolution: Upon the dissolution of the church, no part of the organization's earnings or assets may inure to the benefit of any of its members; and the Administrative Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the Administrative Board shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.
- D. Nondiscrimination Policy: The church shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, disability, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of the church. This policy statement is not intended to waive the ministerial exception or any other exception or exemption to federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws or regulations.
- E. Limitation of Activities: Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article I.

**ARTICLE 13
AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the eligible members present and voting at any regular church business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment is announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays, and at least fourteen days before the vote is taken. Proposed amendments or changes must be made available to voting members for review at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote to amend the bylaws will be taken. Amendments become effective immediately upon a majority vote approving the same.

These initial bylaws were adopted by a majority vote of the Board members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Administrative Board in which a quorum was present.

November 8th, 2023
Date

Church Secretary

ADDENDUM 1 – HISTORIC CHRISTIAN CREEDS

1. THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead.

On the third day He rose again;

He ascended into heaven,

Is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic* church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

2. THE NICENE CREED (A.D. 381)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,

eternally begotten of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,

begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us and for

our salvation He came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

* universal

ADDENDUM 2 - Core Wesleyan Beliefs and Values

As followers of Jesus in the Wesleyan tradition, these are our core beliefs.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

We believe that church membership in this place expresses your desire to live out your life as a follower of Jesus at Due West Methodist Church. Living out your life as a follower of Jesus is far and away the most important decision. We are glad you are choosing to live it out in community with us. Because we care about you, we want to be clear on our core beliefs and our core values.

CREEDS

Our foundational beliefs are found in both the Nicene and Apostles' Creed. They can be found at the end of this document.

SCRIPTURE

We believe what Methodists have believed since the very beginning. The Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testaments are the only final authority for faith and practice, and they contain everything we need to know for our salvation.

TRINITY

We believe in One God, expressed in three persons. We believe that the same God who created the world (Genesis 1) is the same God who came to earth in the person of Jesus ("I and the Father are one John 10:30) and is the same God who descended on believers of Jesus to empower them to be the church. (Acts 2)

SALVATION JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Because we believe we are all sinners, we believe we all need a Savior. We believe the Savior is Jesus Christ. We believe he lived on earth fully human and fully divine. We believe he gave his life on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven. And we believe he rose again so we could have new life in Him. We believe that while this is offered freely, we must accept it on faith. In faith, we surrender our lives to Jesus not only as Savior, but also as Lord. (For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9) While works can never earn our salvation, we do believe that good work is the natural fruit of our salvation.

GRACE

Grace can be understood as the love and mercy of God offered to us freely. We can never earn it. God freely offers it. It works in our lives in many, many ways. We want people not only to experience the saving grace God offers us in Christ Jesus, but we further expect people to grow in that grace daily. Wesleyan Christians refer to this as "practical divinity". Letting Christ live in you, as you live in Christ.

We believe this grace is at work in our lives at the very beginning of life. ("Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah 1:5) We believe God takes the initiative to reach out to us long before we are aware of it and we call this "Prevenient Grace". We believe it is the grace of God and only the grace of God that offers us forgiveness of our sins. ("But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us" Romans 5:8). When we accept this grace and our sins are forgiven, we enter into new life in Christ. We call this experience, "Justifying Grace".

We believe that from the moment we accept God's offer of grace, we should seek to grow in that grace day by day for the rest of our lives. We believe, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can be changed outwardly and inwardly to reflect the Christ who saves us. (May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 5:23) We call this "Sanctifying Grace."

SACRAMENTS

Holy Baptism is the sacrament that initiates us into the family of God. Holy Communion is the sacrament that sustains and nourishes us in our journey of salvation. In a sacrament, God uses tangible, material things as vehicles or instruments of grace. John Wesley defines a sacrament, in accord with his Anglican tradition, as "an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same."

Holy Communion

We believe the very real presence of Christ is in the elements. It is why we pray, ";Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood."; The Holy Spirit has not only transformative power of the elements but over us. It is a time we remember the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf, confess our sins "before God and one another"; and praise the Lord for His grace. It is also a time we look forward to going forth as the Body of Christ into the world. We believe in an open communion table. All are welcome.

Holy Baptism

We believe baptism is a celebration of God's grace at work in our lives. Since we believe God is at work before we are ever aware of it, even in the lives of infants, we joyfully baptize infants. There is no age where we do not celebrate God's grace. We also believe that baptism incorporates us into the family of God. Because in baptism we are celebrating the work of God, we do not believe in rebaptism. We can often remember and reaffirm our baptism, but we only need to be baptized once. We offer baptism through the sprinkling of water, the pouring of water, or complete submersion in water.

HOLINESS

We believe in holiness, both personal and social. As part of God's sanctifying grace at work in us, we should be growing more and more in the image and likeness of Christ. And while our relationship with Him is deeply personal, it also must have a social component. We believe this is lived out in fellowship with our sisters and brothers, being part of a small group, and being in ministry to those in need around us. John Wesley also called this, "holiness of heart and life." (But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 1 Peter 1:15)

MEANS OF GRACE

We believe that there are certain practices that help us live out our lives as followers of Jesus. These include our two sacraments, but also include practices such as daily prayer, daily study of scripture, regular attendance in public worship, participation in smaller fellowship groups, and acts of service to our community.

ADDENDUM 3 - Wesleyan Way of Salvation

1. The gift of grace is available to all persons. Our Father in Heaven is not willing that any should be lost (Matthew 18:14), but that all may come to “the knowledge of truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). With St. Paul, we affirm the proclamation found in Romans 10:9, “That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
2. Grace is the manifestation of God’s love toward fallen creation, to be freely received and freely given. This undeserved gift works to liberate humanity from both the guilt and power of sin, and live as children of God, freed for joyful obedience. In the classic Wesleyan expression, grace works in numerous ways throughout our lives, beginning with the general providence of God toward all.
3. God’s prevenient or preventing grace refers to “the first dawning of grace in the soul,” mitigating the effects of original sin, even before we are aware of our need for God. It prevents the full consequences of humanity’s alienation from God and awakens conscience, giving an initial sense of God and the first inclinations toward life. Received prior to our ability to respond, preventing grace enables genuine response to the continuing work of God’s grace.
4. God’s convincing grace leads us to what the Bible terms “repentance,” awakening in us a desire to “flee the wrath to come” and enabling us to begin to “fear God and work righteousness.”
5. God’s justifying grace works by faith to bring reconciliation to God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, what God does for us. It is pardon for sin and ordinarily results in assurance, “God’s Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God.”
6. God’s sanctifying grace begins with God’s work of regeneration, sometimes referred to as “being born again.” It is God’s work in us as we continually turn to Him and seek to be perfected in His love. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit works to replace sin with the fruit of the Spirit. With John Wesley, we believe that a life of holiness or “entire sanctification” should be the goal of each individual’s journey with God.
7. Our ultimate hope and promise in Christ is glorification, where our souls and bodies are perfectly restored through this grace.

ADDENDUM 4 - Church Covenant

Membership Covenant

I understand that church membership says, "This is where I want to live out my faith in Christ as my Savior and Lord" In other words, membership presupposes faith. Membership says, "I want to live in this place as a follower of Jesus."

I am committed to living out the mission of Due West Methodist Church: "Inviting our community to join us as we gather together, grow in Jesus Christ and go serve."

As a member of Due West Methodist Church, I commit to

Prayer

Daily praying for the church, its leadership and its members.

Inviting our community

Inviting people to join me in worship, as well as warmly welcoming those who visit.

Gathering together

Attending worship regularly unless prevented by health issues or travel.

Supporting the decisions made by the congregation.

Being loving in all of my conversations

Offering to the church a part of the financial blessings I have received from God.

Growing in Jesus Christ

Being involved in a small group for the purposes of growing as a disciple of Jesus.

Representing Christ and His Church in all areas of my life.

Going to serve

Discovering the gifts God has given me to serve the Body of Christ and the world.

Finding a place where I will serve regularly.

Accountability

I agree with the Core Wesleyan Beliefs and Core Values that are central to Due West Methodist Church. I understand that in order to participate in the benefits of membership. I need to be an *active* member. This means that I will live out this covenant.

Leadership Covenant

This Leadership Covenant serves as a solemn agreement with our leaders in their personal journey of living out Due West Methodist Church's mission: "Inviting our community to join us as we gather together, grow in Jesus Christ and go serve."

As a leader at Due West Methodist Church, I commit to:

Pray daily for the church.

Live out the membership covenant to the absolute best of my ability.

Enthusiastically communicate and support all decisions of the church.

Always speak to my sisters and brothers with love and respect.

Represent Christ and His Church in all areas of my life.

ADDENDUM 5 - John Wesley's Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church

Article I - Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and good; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Article II - Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

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

Article III - Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

Article IV - Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

Article V - Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments of whose authority was never any doubt in the church. The names of the canonical books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve Prophets the Less. All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

Article VI - Of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

Article VII - Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Article VIII - Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

Article IX - Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

Article X - Of Good Works

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

Article XI - Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary works — besides, over and above God's commandments — which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly: When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

Article XII - Of Sin After Justification

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Article XIII - Of the Church

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

Article XIV - Of Purgatory

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

Article XV - Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

Article XVI - Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

Article XVII - Of Baptism

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

Article XVIII - Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

Article XIX - Of Both Kinds

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

Article XX - Of the One Oblation of Christ, Finished upon the Cross

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

Article XXI - Of the Marriage of Ministers

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

Article XXII - Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren. Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things maybe done to edification.

Article XXIII - Of the Rulers of the United States of America

The President, the Congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Article XXIV - Of Christian Men's Goods

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

Article XXV - Of a Christian Man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

Of Sanctification (from the Methodist Protestant Discipline)

Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement cleanseth all from sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but are washed from its pollution, saved from its power, and enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in His holy commandments blameless.

Of the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority

It is the duty of all Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country of which are citizens or subjects, or in which they reside, and to use all laudable means to encourage and enjoin obedience to the powers that be.

ADDENDUM 6 - *General Rules of the Methodist Church*

The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies

In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

This was the rise of the United Society, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society is no other than “a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.”

That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class, one of whom is styled the leader. It is his duty:

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order:

(1) to inquire how their souls prosper; (2) to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require; (3) to receive what they are

willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.

2. To meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week, in order: (1) to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly and will not be reprov'd; (2) to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.” But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

Slaveholding; buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.

The giving or taking things on usury—i.e., unlawful interest.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:

The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.

Softness and needless self-indulgence.

Laying up treasure upon earth.

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

It is expected of all who continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly: By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that “we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.”

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord’s sake.

It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are:

The public worship of God.

The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.

The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures.

Fasting or abstinence.

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