

Preamble

The Methodist Protestant Church has been blessed with a rich heritage of holiness. The desire of this denomination is to maintain this heritage and the faith once delivered unto the saints, particularly the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification as a second work of grace. We purpose to cooperate effectively with other branches of the Church of Jesus Christ in advancing God's kingdom. We therefore set forward the following Articles of Religion as our statements of doctrine and belief:

1. The Holy Trinity

We believe in one living and true God who is eternal, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, Creator and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible and Who is loving, just and holy. Within the unity of this Godhead are three persons of one essential nature, power and eternity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Scripture References: Genesis 1, 17:1; Exodus 3:13-15; 33:19; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 5:16; 6:1-7; 40:18-31; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; John 1:1-3; 4:24; 14:6-27; 17:3; Acts 5:3-4; 17:24-25; 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 2:13-18; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:16-17; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20

2. The Son of God Incarnate

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Word of the Father. Taking man's nature upon Himself, He fully merged both natures of God and man thus becoming the God-man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, died on the cross and was buried in order to reconcile man to God by providing Himself as the perfect sacrifice for both original guilt and the actual sins of men.

On the third day following His death, Jesus arose from the dead and took His body together with all things belonging to the perfection of man's nature, with which He ascended into heaven and is now engaged in intercession on our behalf until He returns to judge all humanity at the last day.

Scripture References: Psalm 16:9-10; Matthew 1:20-25; Matthew 16:15-16; Matthew 16:28; Matthew 27:62-66; Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 10:45; Mark 16:6-7; Luke 1:26-27, 30-35; Luke 24:4-8, 23; John 1: 1, 14, 18; John 3:16-17; John 20:26-29; Acts 1:2-3; Acts 2:22-36; Acts 4:11-12; Acts 10:40; Romans 5:10; Romans 8:3, 32-34; Romans 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3-8, 14; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Galatians 1:4; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:12-22; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:14-16; Hebrews 1:1-5; Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 7:22-28; Hebrews 9:24-28; Hebrews 10:12; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 1:1-3; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:2-3, 14-15

3. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity. He is one with the Father and the Son who are the eternal Godhead. He is equal in deity, majesty and power. He is God effective in Creation, life and the church.

The Holy Spirit is the effective Agent convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers and guiding into all truth. He personally dwells in hearts, assures of salvation and enables the believer. He is poured out on the church providing life and power to the church.

Scripture References: Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; Matthew 28:19; John 7:39; John 14:15-17; John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:5-15; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:33; Acts 5:3-4; Acts 8:29; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 8:9-11, 16; Galatians 3:14; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13; Jude 20

4. The Holy Scriptures - The Bible

We believe in the full and complete inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. By this we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, which are given by divine inspiration. The Holy Scriptures are without error and are absolutely trustworthy. They reveal the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained in them is not to be required as an article of faith.

In both the Old and New Testaments life is offered ultimately through Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and humanity. The New Testament teaches Christians how to fulfill the moral principles of the Old Testament, calling for loving obedience to God made possible by the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit.

By the “Holy Scriptures” we refer specifically to the following named books of the Canon:

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

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

Scripture References: Psalm 19:7; Matthew 5:17-19; Luke 24: 27, 44-47; John 1:45; 5:46; Acts 17:2, 11; Romans 1:2; 15:4, 8; 16:26; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Ephesians 2:15-16; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:10-12, 23; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 22:18-19

5. Sin, Original and Personal

Sin entered the world through the disobedience of our first parents. Death is the result of their sin, which exists in two states, original sin or depravity and actual or personal sin.

Original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation. It is aversive to God, without spiritual life and inclined to evil and that continually. Original sin continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate, until the heart is fully cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Original sin differs from actual sin in that it constitutes an inherited inclination to actual sin. No one is accountable for original sin until its divinely provided remedy is neglected or rejected.

Actual or personal sin is a voluntary and willful disobedience of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. It is therefore not to be confused with involuntary and inescapable shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures or other deviations from a standard of perfect conduct that are the residual effects of the Fall. However, such innocent effects do not include attitudes or responses contrary to the Spirit of Christ, which may properly be called sins of the Spirit. Personal sin is primarily and essentially a violation of the law of love; and that in relation to Christ sin may be defined as unbelief.

Scripture References:

Original sin: Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:18-25; 5:12-14; 7:1—8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 1:7-8

Personal sin: Matthew 22:36-40 {with 1 John 3:4}; John 8:34-36; 16:8-9; Romans 3:23; 6:15-23; 8:18-24; 14:23; 1 John 1:9—2:4; 3:7-10)

6. Free Will

Humanity's creation in the image of God included the ability to choose between right and wrong. Therefore individuals were made morally responsible for their choices.

By the sin of Adam, humans as the offspring of Adam are corrupted in their very nature so that from birth they are inclined to sin. They are unable by their own strength and works to restore themselves to a right relationship with God and thus merit eternal salvation. God makes it possible for humans to respond to His grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This grace is given freely to all, enabling all who will to turn and be restored to a right relationship with God. By God's grace and help, people are enabled to do good works freely, which are pleasing and acceptable to God.

Scripture References: Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21; Isaiah 65:12; John 3:16; Romans 3:10-12; 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 22:17

7. Atonement – Christ’s Sacrifice

Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood and by His death on the Cross, paid the full price for all human sin for all time. This Atonement is the only ground of salvation, and is sufficient for every individual of Adam’s race. The Atonement is graciously effective for the salvation of the irresponsible and children in innocence. But this atonement is effective for the salvation of those who reach the age of responsibility only when they repent and exercise faith in Christ.

Scripture References: Isaiah 53:5-6, 11; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:46-48; John 1:29; 3:14-17; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 3:21-26; 4:17-25; 5:6-21; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 1:3-4; 3:13-14; Colossians 1:19-23; 1 Timothy 2:3- 6; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:9; 9:11-14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 2:19-25; 1 John 2:1-2

8. Justification, Regeneration, Adoption

Justification is the gracious and judicial act of God by which He grants full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of committed sins, and acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior by faith alone, not on the basis of works.

Regeneration describes a new relationship in Christ in which one does in fact have a new life and a new spiritual nature capable of faith, love and obedience to Christ Jesus as Lord. This new life is received by faith in Jesus Christ, it enables the pardoned sinner to serve God with the will and affections of the heart, and by it the regenerate are delivered from the power of sin which reigns over all the unregenerate.

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

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

Scripture References: Luke 18:14; John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Acts 13:39; 15:11; Romans 1:17; 3:21-26, 28; 4:5-9, 17-25; 5:1, 16-19; 6:4; 7:6; 8:1, 15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 2:16-21; 3:1-14, 26; 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5-7; 2:1, 4-5, 10, 19; 4:24; Philippians 3:3-9; Colossians 2:13, 3:10; Titus 3:4-7; Heb. 10:38; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3-4, 23; 1 John 1:9; 3:1-2, 9; 4:7; 5:1, 9-13, 18

9. Sin after Salvation

Justification and regeneration (salvation) changed the heart of man; not to the point that man cannot sin but that he chooses not to sin. God intends that man turn from sin and not continue to sin.

Nor does salvation remove the possibility that man can sin. In this life there is no height or strength of holiness from which it is impossible to fall. However, by God's grace one who has returned to sin may by true repentance and faith find forgiveness and restoration.

Scripture References: Exodus 20:20; Job 36:10; Isaiah 1:16; Malachi 3:7; Matthew 18:21-22; John 15:4-6; Romans 6:1-2, 15; 1 Timothy 4:1, 16; Hebrews 10:35-39; 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 24-25; 1 John 3:8

10. Entire Sanctification

Entire sanctification is the renewal of our fallen nature by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a crisis action that occurs after regeneration and is immediately preceded by complete consecration of the heart and life of the believer. Sanctification is the act performed by the Holy Spirit that is prompted by our faith in the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse from all sin.

With the cleansing of the heart, the Holy Spirit fills the heart with a desire for service to and love for God. This desire leads the sanctified believer to live a holy life that is pleasing to God. The desire of the believer is to love God with his entire being and his neighbor as himself.

The crisis act of sanctification is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit who performs the act. He also empowers the believer to testify to others of the grace and love of God both by word of mouth and by living a holy life before them.

The crisis act of cleansing is followed by a lifetime of growing in the grace of sanctification and holiness, which empowers and enables the follower to become more like Christ daily. This growth leads to the maturity of the Christian. The believer may lose the grace and position of sanctification without this continued growth.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart purity," "the baptism with the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," and "Christian holiness."

Scripture References: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; John 7:37-39; 14:15-23; 17:6-20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; Romans 6:11-13, 19; 8:1-4, 8-14; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-25; Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:17-18, 25-27; Philippians 3:10-15; Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 4:9-11; 10:10-17; 12:1-2; 13:12; 1 John 1:7, 9

"Christian perfection," "perfect love": Deuteronomy 30:6; Matthew 5:43-48; 22:37-40; Romans 12:9-21; 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 13; Philippians 3:10-15; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 4:17-18

“Heart purity”: Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:8-9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3

“Baptism with the Holy Spirit”: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9

“Fullness of the blessing”: Romans 15:29

“Christian holiness”: Matthew 5:1—7:29; John 15:1-11; Romans 12:1—15:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:17—5:20; Philippians 1:9-11; 3:12-15; Colossians 2:20—3:17; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7-8; 5:23; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; Hebrews 10:19-25; 12:14; 13:20-21; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Peter 1:1-11; 3:18; Jude 20-21

11. Good Works

Good works are fruits of faith that follow justification. They cannot save us from our sins nor can they endure the severity of God’s judgments. Nevertheless, good works are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ. They spring out of a true and lively faith, so that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

Scripture References: Matthew 5:16; 7:16-20; John 15:8; Romans 3:20; 4:2, 4, 6; Galatians 2:16; 5:6; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:11; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Titus 2:14; 3:5; James 2:18, 22; 1 Peter 2:9, 12

12. The Church

The visible Church of Christ is a community of believers that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord. The pure Word of God is preached and the ordinances properly administered according to Christ’s command as these believers unite in fellowship. Each member lives in obedience to all that Christ commands and supports their church in attendance as well as their tithes and offerings.

The church carries out the commission given by Jesus Christ to carry His Gospel to the world. The visible church is here to demonstrate the love, mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to this lost and dying world.

A local church is a body of believers formally organized on gospel principles, meeting regularly for the purposes of evangelism, nurture, fellowship and worship. God calls the Church to live under His rule anticipating the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture References: Jeremiah 31:33; Matthew 16:13-19, 24; 18:15-20; 28:19-20; John 17:14-26; 20:21-23; Acts 1:7-8; 2:32-47; 9:31; 12:5; 13:1; 14:23; 20:28; Romans 2:28-29; 10:9-15; 11:13-32; 12:1-8; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:5-9; 7:17; 11:1, 17-33; 12:12-31; 14:26-40; 2 Corinthians 5:11—6:1; Galatians 5:6, 13-14; 6:1-5, 15; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:1-17; 5:25-27; Philippians 2:1-16; Colossians 1:18, 24; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:19-25; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 13; 2:4-12, 21; 4:1-2, 10-11; 1 John 4:17; Jude 24; Revelation 5:9-10

13. The Language of Worship

According to the Word of God and the custom of the early church, public worship and prayer and the administration of the sacraments should be in a language understood by the people.

The Apostle Paul places the strongest emphasis upon rational and intelligible speech in worship. We cannot approve of practices which plainly violate these scriptural principles.

Scripture References: Nehemiah 8:5, 6, 8; Matthew 6:7; 1 Corinthians 14:6-9, 23-25

14. The Sacraments

A sacrament is an outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace given to us by God and established by Jesus Christ. These sacraments are symbols of the work of God in our hearts and pledges of our faithfulness to God. The early church understood the sacraments to be a sacred obligation of loyalty to the Church and to Christ.

The sacraments are symbols of the Christian's profession and a means of grace when received through faith. Through these sacraments God quickens, strengthens and confirms our faith in Him.

Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ.

Scripture References: Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26; Galatians 3:27

15. Baptism

Baptism, a sacrament commanded by our Lord, signifies acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is to be administered to believers who publicly declare their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. By this act they indicate their intent of obedience in holiness and righteousness.

Since baptism is a symbol of the new covenant, young children shall be baptized upon request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training. They shall affirm the vow for themselves before being accepted into church membership.

Scripture References: Matthew 3:1-7; 28:16-20; Acts 2:37-41; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 16:29-34; 19:1-6; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-28; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-22

16. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death and of our hope in His victorious return. To those who rightly, worthily and with faith receive it, 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. The supper is a sign of the love and unity that Christians have among themselves one to another. Therefore, only those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints should be called to participate.

Christ, according to His promise, is present in the sacrament. But His body is given, taken and eaten only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. No change is effected in the element; the bread and wine are not literally the body and blood of Christ. Nor is the body and blood of Christ literally present with the elements. The elements are never to be considered objects of worship. The body of Christ is received and eaten in faith.

Scripture References: Exodus 12:1-14; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; John 6:53-58; John 6:28-58; Acts 2:46; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; 1 Corinthians 10: 3-4, 14-21; 11:23-32 11:23-29.

17. Marriage

Every person is created in God's image. Human sexuality reflects that image in terms of intimate love, communication, fellowship, subordination of the self and fulfillment. God's Word uses the marriage relationship as a symbol of His relationship with His covenant people. Through this relationship God reveals the truth that this relationship is between God and His people.

Therefore God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed only in a monogamous, lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. This is the only relationship which is divinely designed for the birth and rearing of children. This union is a covenant made between one man and one woman in the presence of God that takes priority over every other human relationship.

Scripture References: Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 20, 23-24; Hosea 2; Malachi 2:14; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 19:7-8.

18. General Resurrection, Judgment and Destiny

There will be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, at which time the souls and bodies of men will be reunited to receive together a just reckoning for the deeds done in the body in this life. The resurrected body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable. The Resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of resurrection unto life to those who in this life accepted His free offer of salvation.

Scripture reveals that God will be Judge of all and that judgment is based on His knowledge and eternal justice. The general judgment will take place before God's throne at the end of the world when God will judge all men by Jesus Christ. At this judgment records will be examined and final rewards and punishments will be administered.

Scriptures clearly teach that there is a conscious personal existence after death. Our eternal destiny is determined by our response to God's grace, not by arbitrary decrees of God. For those who trust Him for salvation and obediently follow Jesus as Savior and Lord, there is a heaven of eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence. But for the finally unrepentant there is a hell of eternal suffering and separation from God.

Scripture References: 1 Samuel 2:10; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 9:42-48; Luke 11:31-32; John 5:28-29; 14:3; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:15-16; 14:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 51-57; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14; 5:6-10; Hebrews 2:1-3; 9:27-28; 10:26-31; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:22-27.

19. The Second Coming of Christ

The personal return of Christ is certain and may occur at any moment. This inspires holy living and enthusiasm for the evangelization of the world. At His return He will fulfill all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over evil. The believer's response is joyous expectation, watchfulness, readiness and diligence.

We who are alive at His coming shall not precede them that are asleep in Christ Jesus. If we are abiding in Him, we shall be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air, so that we shall ever be with the Lord.

Scripture References: Matthew 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:26-28; 2 Peter 3:3-15; Revelation 1:7-8; 22:7-20