



# Nashville UMC

*Offering Better Life  
Through Christ*

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## Methodism

# 101





# DISCOVERING NASHVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We want you to be informed why Nashville United Methodist Church exists and how we are driven by our vision, purpose, and ministry.

## OUR VISION

**To see people living the better life that God offers everyone through His Son, Jesus Christ, and the ministries of His church**

*“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”  
John 10:10*

*“A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump;  
a God shaped life is a flourishing tree.”  
Proverbs 11:28*

## OUR PURPOSE

**To offer better life through Christ and the ministries of His church**

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”  
John 3:16*

# OUR MINISTRY

**To be intentional in helping people grow in their personal relationship with God through Celebration, Cell Community and Calling**

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*  
*Acts 2:42-47*

## **Getting started at Nashville United Methodist Church**

### **Four things unite us:**

- ◆ Our Salvation (What God has done for us)
- ◆ Our Statement (Why we exist as a church)
- ◆ Our Strategy (How we fulfill our purpose)
- ◆ Our Structure (When and where we fulfill our purpose)

**The first step is . . .**

# OUR SALVATION

## IT ALL BEGINS WITH GOD

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

*John 3:16*

## AT THE CORE OF OUR FAITH IS THE GRACE OF GOD

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith –  
and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God –  
not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

*Ephesians 2:8-9*

## GRACE IS GOD’S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

**G – GOD’S  
R – REDEMPTION  
A – AT  
C – CHRIST’S  
E – EXPENSE**

# HOW GOD'S GRACE WORKS IN OUR LIVES

## PREVENIENT GRACE

Prevenient Grace is the divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes any and all of our conscious impulses. It is God through the Holy Spirit reaching out to us before we ever reach out to Him. The Holy Spirit draws us and encourages us to a point of decision when we may claim God as He has claimed us.

## JUSTIFYING GRACE

We believe God reaches out to everyone in justifying grace with accepting and pardoning love through His Son, Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ we are forgiven of sin and restored to God's favor. This process of justification and new birth is often referred to as conversion. It marks a new beginning and an ongoing process of personal transformation expressing itself as faith working through love. We receive the assurance of our present salvation as the Spirit *"bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God."* 1 John 5:13

## SANCTIFYING GRACE

We hold that the wonder of God's acceptance and pardon does not end God's saving work but continues to nurture our growth through Grace.. Sanctifying Grace (being set apart for God's work in us) draws us to be "habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor" and causes us to continue and to grow in our relationship with God and in our ministry to the world in which we live. (Romans 5:5)

# MARKS AND BENEFITS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

## GOD'S LOVE

*“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8*

## THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE

*“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23*

## FORGIVENESS OF SIN

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us “from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9*

## NEW LIFE

*“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10*

## FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:42*

## DIRECTION AND PURPOSE

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11*

- ◇ ***ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A BETTER LIFE?***
- ◇ ***ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A LIFE THAT HAS MEANING AND PURPOSE?***
- ◇ ***ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A LIFE THAT HAS HOPE AND A GREAT FUTURE?***

Nashville United Methodist Church's heartbeat is a thriving and living relationship with Jesus Christ. It is our desire at Nashville United Methodist that everyone experience God's best for his or her lives. We believe that begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship is foundational for everything else in your life and everything else at the Church.

If you would like to start living this life, it is as easy as A – B – C!

**A – Admit you need God in your life.**

**B – Believe God loves you and that Jesus Christ died for your sin and offers you this better life.**

**C – Connect to God by receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior and allow Him to be the leader of your life.**

**The next step is . . .**

# OUR STATEMENTS

## WHY WE EXIST AS A CHURCH

### WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL MODEL FOR THE CHURCH?

#### **The Great Commandment – Matthew 22:36-40**

*“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?  
Jesus replied, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul  
and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the  
second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets  
hang on these two commandments.”*

#### **The Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20**

*“Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has  
been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them  
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them  
to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to  
the very end of the age.”*

#### **The Great Beginning – Acts 2:38-47**

*“Then Peter said to them, Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name  
of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy  
Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off,  
as many as the Lord our God will call. And with many other words he testified  
and exhorted them saying, Be saved from this perverse generation. Then those  
who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand  
souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine  
and fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon  
every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all  
who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their  
possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So  
continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to  
house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and  
having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those  
who were being saved.”*

# INVOLVEMENT

## CELEBRATION

We come together to worship God, to be encouraged by the teaching of the Scriptures and to celebrate God's Grace in our lives. There are several opportunities for worship at NUMC: Sunday Morning Worship at 8:30 (contemporary) and 11:00 (traditional), Thursday Night Praise & Worship at 6:30, and Sunday Night Youth Worship at 6:15 during the school year. We are intentional about celebrating our heritage and the sacred traditions of the church. We grow through consistent attendance and participation in these times of celebration. Celebration is normally the entrance point into Nashville United Methodist Church UMC.

### WORSHIP AND LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

#### WHAT IS WORSHIP? Celebrating God's Presence

*"Magnify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together." Psalm 34:3*

*"I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." Psalm 122:1*

We will teach you how to be a worshipper by demonstrating a heart of praise through our corporate Worship Services which are led by Nashville United Methodist Church Music Ministries, by incorporating worship and adoration to God through all of our small groups, and by encouraging you to live a life of worship which is a daily devotion and awareness of giving to God all that you think, do, or say.

#### WHY WORSHIP? God is Worthy to be praised!

*"I will love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in who I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalm 18:1-3*

#### YOUR ROLE

Grow in your relationship with God by practicing the presence of God through a daily life of worship, praise, and devotion.

*"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalm 34:1*

# CELL COMMUNITY

Celebration may be the entrance point for many who come to Nashville United Methodist Church, but we know real life transformation happens within a smaller group called a cell community. This is a group of people who meet together for relationship building, Bible study, life interests, fellowship, making new friends or just hanging out. This can be a group that meets in a home, a discipleship opportunity on the Nashville United Methodist Church campus, or a ministry team that works together through active participation.

## **DISCIPLESHIP** *Teaching them to do*

### **WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP? Educating God's People**

*“To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”  
Ephesians 4:12-13*

We will teach God's word and principles to every participant of Nashville United Methodist Church through our Worship Services, Small Group Bible Studies, and other learning opportunities of the church.

### **WHY?**

We want to offer every person the resources they need to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ that they may have a better life.

### **YOUR ROLE**

Have a personal daily quiet time of prayer and Bible Study and be involved with at least one small group that is focused on Discipleship.

*“Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me . . . I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.” Psalm 119:97-98, 101-105*

## **FELLOWSHIP – Baptizing Them**

**WHAT IS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?** It is an intimate bond with other believers.

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and member of God’s household.” Ephesians 2:19*

We will provide opportunities for fellowship by offering corporate times of fellowship, but encourage you to build relationships through the many different small groups offered here at Nashville United Methodist Church. We offer Bible Study groups, Service Groups, Ministry Groups, and Connection Groups.

### **WHY?**

Fellowship cements the believers to the Lord Jesus and to each other. You were not made to walk this walk alone. We need each other. You cannot be an obedient Christian if you aren’t in fellowship with other believers in some capacity so you may have a better life.

### **YOUR ROLE**

Intentionally seek out fellowship through some type of small group so that you have a person or group of people to help hold you up when times are tough, but also to be a person that can hold others up in their times of trial as well.

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:42*

# CALLING

God has always been a God who calls His people. In the Old Testament, God called young Samuel to be the first prophet of Israel. (1 Samuel 3:8-10) Jesus calls all who believe in Him to service and ministry. We are designed to share life together and to minister to one another within our faith community, and we are called to an even greater service by reaching out to our community and our world. In response to our CALLING we become the loving hands and feet of Jesus Christ to a hurting and hungry world and offer others a better life.

*“And you shall be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the World.”  
Acts 1:8*

We have a worldwide calling at Nashville United Methodist Church that begins at home. Where has God called you?

- ◆ Our Jerusalem: Nashville and surrounding neighborhoods
- ◆ Our Judea: The areas beyond Nashville throughout our state
- ◆ Our Samaria: The nations of the world and places you may not want to go

## **MINISTRY – Love Your Neighbor as Yourself**

**WHAT IS MINISTRY? It is demonstrating God’s love to others.**

*“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the equipping (preparing, perfecting, making fully qualified for service) of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13*

We will provide opportunities for you to serve by using your natural talents, abilities, experiences, and personality as well as providing you with resources to help discover and develop your spiritual gifts so that you may minister to others by offering better life.

### **WHY?**

We believe that every member should be in ministry, so we want to provide our members with the resources and guidance they need to minister to others as they offer better life to a needy world.

*“. . . It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:2-4*

*“Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” II Corinthians 1:3-4*

### **YOUR ROLE**

You have been given natural abilities and have had experiences that have been preparing you for ministry. As a Christian you are to give of yourself just as Jesus gave of Himself. There are places to serve in this church that may take an hour, a month, or several hours a day. You are truly blessed when you give to others. It gives God more room to pour in blessings and gifts. Find out what your giving capacity is and watch God increase your life abundantly! Remember God has a plan and a purpose for your life. He has formed and shaped you uniquely for His purpose. Let us help you find that place. Don’t give up until you are “found”!

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11*

## **EVANGELISM – Go and make disciples . . .**

**WHAT IS EVANGELISM? It is communicating God’s Word.**

*“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.” Acts 20:34*

St. Francis of Assisi said *“Preach the gospel to all you come in contact with and if necessary use words.”*

We will teach intentional lifestyle evangelism to every member of our church through the corporate Worship Services, Bible Studies, and Small Groups.

### **WHY?**

Lost people matter to God and He wants a better life for them.

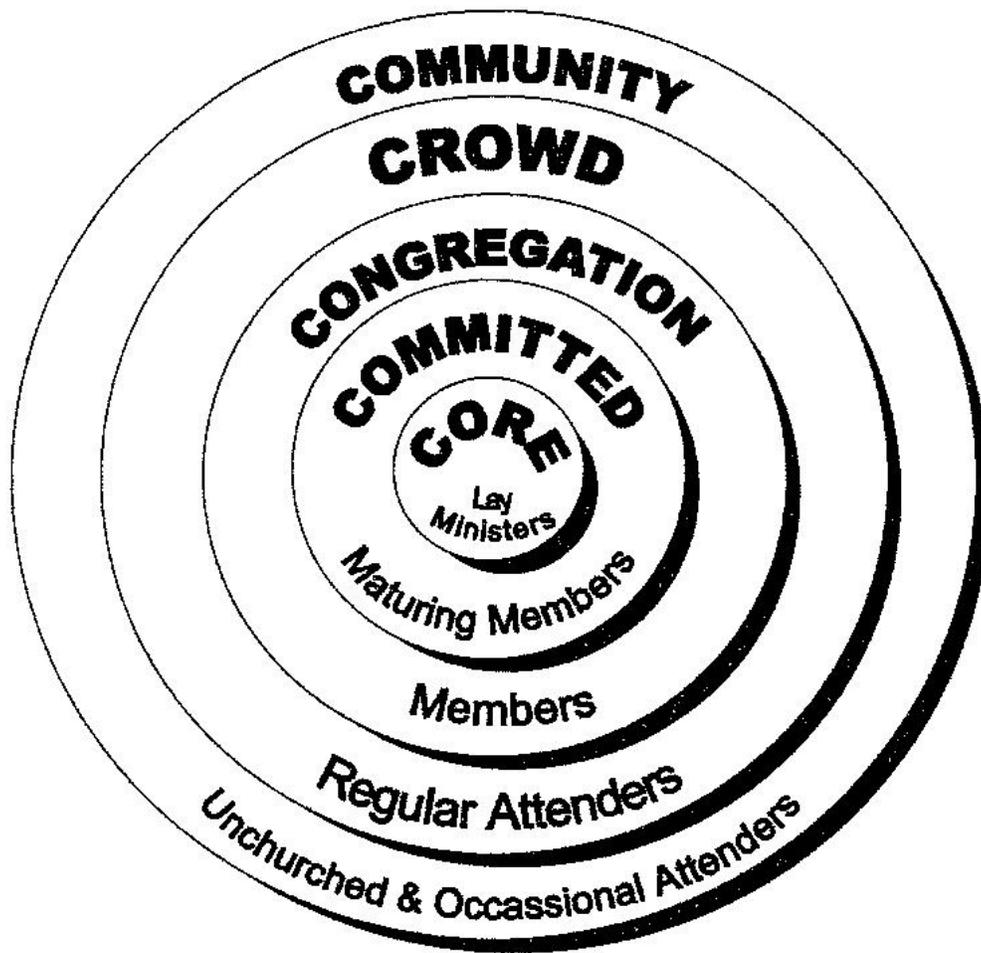
### **YOUR ROLE**

Make sure your own walk with God is a real and accurate reflection of who Jesus is so that people will know that there is a better life through Him.

*“. . . Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick. They’ll end up realizing that they’re the ones who need a bath.” I Peter 3:15-15 from The Message*

# OUR STRATEGY

## HOW WE FULFILL OUR PURPOSE



## WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?

Our Sunday Services and Special Events are designed to present the message of Christ in a way that is relevant to people's every day lives. Refer to the circle diagram on the previous page. The **UNCHURCHED** and **UNCONNECTED** are equivalent to the community and the crowd respectively.

### Five Target Groups To Whom We Minister:

1. **THE COMMUNITY**– persons without a church home who are within our target community
2. **THE CROWD** – first time guests, regular attendees, and our congregation
3. **THE CONGREGATION** – those who have attended Nashville United Methodist Church 101 and have connected to Nashville United Methodist Church through our membership covenant
4. **THE COMMITTED** – those in our congregation who have committed to grow through fellowship, ministry, and discipleship small groups
5. **THE CORE** – servant leaders in the many ministry areas of Nashville United Methodist Church

**How does the Community Become the Core?** It doesn't happen by CHANCE . . . but it can happen by CHOICE.

1. Grace
  - ♦ Receiving God's grace yourself
  - ♦ Giving grace to others
2. Growth
  - ♦ Committing yourself to grow in your relationship with Jesus through your personal prayer and Bible Study
3. Group
  - ♦ Committing yourself to a small group for fellowship, accountability and growth
4. Gifts
  - ♦ Committing to use your natural talents and experiences for God's glory
  - ♦ Committing to discover your Spiritual Gifts and use them for the building up of the Body (the church is the Body of Jesus Christ)
5. Giving
  - ♦ Committing to give to God financially, generously, cheerfully, proportionately, regularly, locally, liberally, anonymously, and expectantly

# OUR STRUCTURE

## WHEN AND WHERE WE FULFILL OUR PURPOSE

### Nashville United Methodist Church's History

**1858** – First Pastor was assigned to Nashville United Methodist Church.

**1917- 1920** – The current church sanctuary was built with the first service held on Easter Sunday, 1918.

**1963** – During the summer of 1963, the new parsonage was sufficiently completed for occupancy by the pastor and his family.

**1973 – 1978** – Cockrell Educational Building was constructed. The weekday school was organized by Bettie Phillips. The Methodist Men's Club was chartered.

**1982-1984** – The Special People were organized.

**1984-1989** – The Bus Garage was constructed. The Cockrell House was purchased and used as Sunday School classes. The After School Care Program began.

**1991-1994** – The first “Hanging of the Greens” Advent Service was held.

**1995-1998** – The Belarusian Mission Program was started. The first pilgrim took the Walk to Emmaus. A Building Committee was organized to start construction of a new fellowship hall.

**1999-2002** – In March of 2000, the New Beginnings worship celebration was launched with an increase of 100+ persons in worship by the end of 2002. Construction of Braswell Hall began in October 2001 and was scheduled to be completed by Christmas of 2002.

**2003–2008** - New church sign was erected. Security team was formed. Website was resigned. Repairs and enhancements made to church office, Braswell Hall A/V equipment and Sanctuary light fixtures and floors.

**2009-2016** - Worship Center Note was paid off. Remodeled Basement, Cockrell Hall, and Church Office. Began Thursday Night Praise & Worship Service and Sunday Night Youth Led Worship service. Hired Associate Pastor, Director of Children & Family Ministries, Welcoming Director, Office Receptionist, and Thursday Night Praise & Worship leader. Purchased Walston property.

Visit [WWW.NASHVILLEUMC.NET/HISTORY](http://WWW.NASHVILLEUMC.NET/HISTORY) for a more detailed listing of events.

# OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

## OUR CORE BELIEFS

### *The Apostles' Creed*

We believe in God the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;

And 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, dead, and buried;  
The third day he rose from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven,  
And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick 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.

# VALUE STATEMENTS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

## WHAT WE PRACTICE

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church is the book of law for our church and explains our constitution, doctrine, general rules, and social principles. It is the product of 200 years of the General Conferences of the denominations that now form The United Methodist Church.

The Discipline is the instrument for setting forth the laws, plans, polity, and process by which United Methodists govern themselves and remains constant. Each General Conference amends, perfects, clarifies, and adds its own contribution The Discipline. We do not see The Discipline as sacrosanct or infallible, but we do consider it a document suitable to our heritage. It is the most current statement of how United Methodists agree to live their lives together. It reflects our understanding of the Church and of what is expected of its laity and clergy as they seek to be effective witnesses in the world as a part of the whole body of Christ.

## THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS SUMMARIZE SOME OF THE MOST ASKED ABOUT TOPICS:

### The Scriptures

*“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right.” II Timothy 3:16*

We believe the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, reveals the Word of God so far as necessary for our salvation. It is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. What is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be taught as essential to salvation.

## **Priesthood of every believer**

*“Christ loves us, and by his death he has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve God . . .” Revelation 1:6*

*“You are . . . the King’s priests . . . God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God..” I Peter 2:9*

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full-time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayers and Bible reading.

## **Tithing and Stewardship**

*“A tithe of everything you produce belongs to the Lord. It is holy to the Lord.” Leviticus 26:30*

At Nashville United Methodist Church we practice faithful stewardship by tithing and proportionate giving for the support of Christ’s body, the Church, as God commands.

## **Baptism**

*“For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ . . .” Colossians 2:12*

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.

## **Telling others about Christ**

*“. . . Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” I Peter 3:15*

It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with those God brings us into contact with. We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church thereby offering them better life.

## **Spirit – Led Living**

*I am the vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; but apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5*

We believe that the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God's power within us. So we seek to practice a daily dependence on God's Spirit to enable us to do what is right.

## **Unity**

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! Psalm 133:1-2*

Jesus said that the world would know that we were His disciples by the love that we have for one another (John 13:35). All United Methodists are summoned and sent by Christ to live and work together in mutual interdependence and to be guided by the Spirit into the truth that frees and the love that reconciles.

*If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. Matthew 18:15-17*

# **CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

## **The Family**

We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity. We understand the family as encompassing a wider range of options than that of the two-generational unit of parents and children (the nuclear family), including the extended family, families with adopted children, single parents, stepfamilies, and couples without children. We affirm shared responsibility for parenting by men and women and encourage social, economic, and religious efforts to maintain and strengthen relationships within families in order that every member may be assisted toward complete personhood.

## **Human Sexuality**

We recognize that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are only clearly affirmed within the marriage bond. We believe that sexual relations where one or both partners are exploitative, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families, and the social order.

Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

## **Abortion**

The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion. But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and the well-being of the mother, for whom devastating damage may result from an unacceptable pregnancy. We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection. We commit our Church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth.

## **Alcohol and Other Drugs**

We affirm our long-standing support of abstinence from alcohol as a faithful witness to God's liberating and redeeming love for persons. We support abstinence from the use of any illegal drugs.

# BRIEF HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

## THE APOSTOLIC ERA 30AD – 400 AD

### The Apostolic Fathers

Beginning the second century after the death of the Apostles, leadership passed to a group called “Apostolic Fathers.” They established church polity, administrative procedures, worship, and liturgy and wrote defenses of the Gospel. Some of their names were Clement of Rome, Paipas, Iraenaus, and Tertullian.

### The Apostles’ Creed

First mentioned in 390 AD, the creed was a body of teachings delineating the essence of the Christian faith. It was the first recognized creed of the church.

### Constantine The Great 280 AD – 337 AD

Constantine was the Roman emperor who issued the Edict of Milan (312 AD) giving Christianity legal status in Rome. In 397 AD, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

## THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES 400 AD – 1500 AD

### 476 The fall of Rome; (753 BC – 476 AD) beginning of the “Dark Ages”

The Church in Rome became the most dominant and influential church in Europe. It claimed the Apostle Peter had passed on his authority to the bishops of Rome. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the bishop of Rome was named the “Pope” meaning father.

### 622 Muhammad launched a new religion called “Islam.”

This movement took control of North Africa, moved into Europe and Spain, and challenged Christianity on its own soil. Islam is the world’s second largest religion.

### 1054 First major split in the Church

Trouble between the western church (Rome) and the eastern church (Constantinople) led to the first major split in the church. In 1054 AD,

the favor and the Christian church split into two groups – the Roman Catholic (meaning the church owed its allegiance to the Pope) and the Orthodox (meaning “true” or “correct”).

### **1095 The Crusades began**

From 1095 AD – 1291 AD, this 200 year campaign to expel the Muslims from the Holy Land was carried out.

## **THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION 1500 -1650**

The Reformation, the effort to “reform” the Roman Catholic Church, was the second great split in the church. The seeds of discontent that led to protests (protest-ants) against the church were as follows:

1. The Papal System – power of the Pope
2. Corruption of the clergy – positions used for personal gain
3. The Church’s Oppression – Spanish Inquisition; 1478 imprisoned, tortured, and thousands executed

### **THE MAJOR PLAYERS**

#### **Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)**

Luther was a giant figure in the church and a brilliant biblical scholar, writer, and man of prayer. The event that formally ignited the Reformation occurred when Martin Luther posted his famous ninety-five “theses” on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. His teachings stressed the supremacy of Scripture, justification by faith, the centrality of Christ, and the priesthood of all believers.

#### **John Calvin (1509 – 1564)**

The other giant figure of the Reformation was the Frenchman John Calvin. Calvin’s great contribution to the Reformation was the Institutes of the Christian Religion, an orderly and systematic presentation of Reformation theology.

**Reformation Theology** – The major tenets of the Reformation thought which underlie Protestant theology today are as follows:

1. God addresses men and women through His Word. The Catholic Church put itself between the Bible and the people. One of the great advances of the Reformation was the translation of the Bible into German, French, English and other languages to be read by the people.

2. Salvation is by grace alone. The Catholic Church held itself to be the exclusive channel through which God's salvation was made available.
3. Reformation theology rejected the church's teachings regarding the Pope, indulgences, purgatory, the worship of saints, and the adoration of Mary.

## **THE FOURFOLD REFORMATION**

1. Lutheranism – based on the teachings of Luther. (The Lutheran Church)
2. Calvinism – based on the teachings of Calvin; Calvin emphasized the sovereignty of God while Luther taught justification by faith. (Reformed Churches, Presbyterians)
3. The English Reformation – 1534 King Henry VIII breaks with the Roman church and begins the Anglican Church
4. The Radical Reformation – believed the Reformation had not gone far enough; most were English. They wanted a simple, less liturgical form of worship.
  - ◆ Baptists – baptized by immersion only
  - ◆ Separatists – Puritans who separated from the Church of England
  - ◆ Quakers – believers should “quake” before God
  - ◆ Methodists – followers of Anglican Pastor John Wesley who “lived” according to the method of life laid down in the Bible”

# THE METHODIST MOVEMENT

## 1700 – PRESENT

The lives of and ministries of John Wesley (1703 – 1791) and his brother Charles (1701 – 1788) mark the origin of the Wesleyan movement. Both John and Charles were Church of England missionaries to the colony of Georgia, arriving in March, 1736. It was their only occasion to visit America. Their mission was far from an unqualified success, and both returned to England disillusioned and discouraged.

Both of the Wesley brothers had transforming religious experiences in May 1738. In the years following, the Wesleys succeeded in leading a lively renewal movement in the Church of England. As the Methodist movement grew, it became apparent their ministry would spread to the American colonies.

Organized Methodism in America began as a lay movement led by Robert Strawbridge, Philip Embury, Barbara Heck, and Captain Tomas Webb. John Wesley sent two of his lay preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore to America in 1769. Two years later Richard Wright and Francis Asbury were dispatched to under gird the growing American Methodist societies.

The first conference of Methodist preachers in the colonies was held in Philadelphia in 1773. In December 1784, the famous Christmas Conference of preachers was held in Baltimore at Lovely Lane Chapel to chart the future course of the movement in America. In the years following the Christmas Conference, The Methodist Episcopal Church published its first Discipline (1785), adopted a quadrennial General Conference, drafted a Constitution, refined its structure, established a publishing house, and become an ardent proponent of revivalism and the camp meeting.

The early 1800's brought the second great awakening among Protestants in America. Through revivals and camp meetings, many people came to Jesus Christ. Circuit riding preachers and lay pastors knit them into a connection of believers. The early years of the nineteenth century were also marked by the spread of Sunday School and became a principle source of prospective

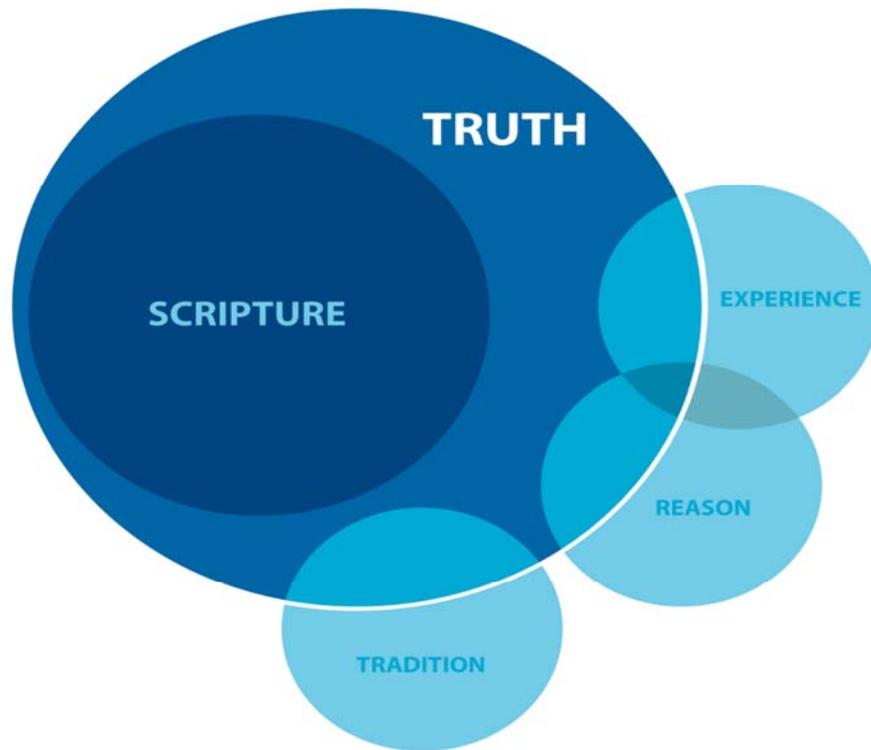
John Wesley was an ardent opponent of slavery, but there were tensions deepening in Methodism over the slavery question as well as in the nation. As our nation was torn in two, so was The Methodist Episcopal Church. A plan of separation was adopted and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South was formed. It would be over a hundred years before the church came back together.

In 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and The Methodist Protestant Church merged to form The Methodist Church with 7.7 million members.

In 1968, The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form The United Methodist Church with approximately 11 million

A NEW LOOK AT  
**THE WESLEYIAN QUADRILATERAL**

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**"Try all things by the written Word, and let all bow down before it. You are in danger every hour if you depart ever so little from Scripture!"**

John Wesley, 1758

*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,  
But he who heeds counsel is wise. Proverbs 12:15*

# UNITED METHODIST CHURCH STRUCTURE



# NASHVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

## WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER OF A LOCAL CHURCH?

The word “church” is used many times in the Bible. It is used only 4 times to mean the universal church. Every other time it is used to mean a local body. (Church at Corinth)

### **The Body of Christ, the Church, The Family of God**

*“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and **members** of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”*  
*Ephesians 2:14-22*

# WE BELIEVE THERE ARE FIVE IMPORTANT BENEFITS TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## **It gives you a place to belong.**

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.” Ephesians 2:19*

## **It provides you a place to support and encourage people in their walk with Christ.**

*“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching” Hebrews 10:24-25*

## **It gives you a place to discover and use your gifts in ministry.**

*“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.” I Corinthians 12:4-5*

## **It gives you leaders to help on your journey.**

*“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” Hebrews 13:7*

## **It gives you the accountability and allegiance you need to grow.**

*“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Ephesians 5:21*



## **What are small groups?**

The primary goal of small groups is to bring together a group of people who are seeking the desire to develop closer relationships with Christ and each other. Small groups are an integral part of the early church structure as explained in Acts. Small groups have the ability to minister closely with other people who want to be more in His image, while reaching out to the lost, the needy, and the ones who need encouragement.

The groups are as different as you and I! Groups may be formed because they share common ties, or they may be comprised of people from all different walks of life and faith. Regardless of the makeup of the group, remember that we can all learn something from each other by being actively engaged with each other. If you are not in a group, but wish to join one, our Group Coordinator can find a group that may fit what you are seeking, and put you in contact with that Group Leader.

## **Why should I join a small group?**

Joining a small group provides the space for open discussions about life experiences, sermons, and ways to grow closer to Christ. Through small groups, you will learn how to grow **UP** (*growing closer to Christ*), **IN** (*building relationships with each other*), & **OUT** (*focusing on the world around us*) together. By joining a small group, you are receiving a group of people who have a vested interest in wanting to see you develop your love for Christ as well as people who need your support in the same manner. The closer settings allow for more intimate conversations, confidentiality, and a feeling of “family” as we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

## **What are the groups supposed to do when they meet?**

The main goal is for groups to live life together. You can achieve this through joint prayer, discussions about the sermon, and shared stories and experiences. You can also achieve this by providing support, trust, and love to each other during your meetings. An added benefit of being in a small group is the unique opportunity to reach out into the community and help others, representing what it means to be Christ-like to those who may be unfamiliar with what God can do in your life.

## **When & Where do Small Groups meet?**

The beauty of participating in small groups is the flexibility in scheduling meetings. As a group, you can choose the time and day of your meetings. You can meet anywhere! Your favorite coffee and donut place. The church. Someone's home. A playground so your children can play. It's up to you where you meet.

## **Who will lead the group? Who keeps the group organized?**

Each group will begin with a Group Leader. The Leader is responsible for discipling, encouraging, and growing the group in faith. Yet, as good United Methodists we believe everyone is a Minister and all have the ability to disciple and encourage.

## **What about discipleship partners? How does that work with small groups?**

Discipleship partners are a way to minister to someone one-on-one and develop a close relationship that focuses on growing together in Christ. These partnerships can occur in different ways:

Inviting someone who is unchurched to join you in a one-on-one partnership.

Partnering with one person within your small group.

The Holy Spirit leads you to invite someone from church into a partnership that you may want to get to know better.

By reaching out to people through discipleship partnerships, you may find you are developing new friendships, and can learn from each other's different backgrounds and experiences. You can also invite your one-on-one partners into your small group if they feel ready to join. This is how you can grow your small group, and show people how they can achieve a better life through Christ.

## **WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP?**

1. To profess Jesus Christ as One's Savior and Lord
  - ◆ Know that at some point in your life you have told the Lord that you seek Him only for your salvation.
  - ◆ This is essential because it's the basis for everything we do here; it's what we stand on.
2. To be Baptized as a Symbol of that Confession
  - ◆ If you have ever been baptized, you do not have to do so again.
  - ◆ Sprinkling, pouring, or immersion are accepted and acceptable.
  - ◆ We will baptize on the day of membership if you choose.
3. To profess the Christian Faith as Contained in the Old and New Testaments

## **HOW CAN I JOIN THE NASHVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FAMILY?**

1. Everyone is encouraged to attend the Nashville United Methodist Church 101 class prior to becoming a member of Nashville United Methodist Church.
2. Pray about making the commitments stated in the Membership Covenant and the other information shared in the Nashville United Methodist Church 101 Class.

# NASHVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

## **Prayers**

I will take Responsibility for my Spiritual Life by

- ◆ Developing a daily devotional life,
- ◆ Nurturing my spiritual walk.

## **Presence**

I will get connected to my Spiritual Family by

- ◆ Attending worship regularly,
- ◆ Connecting with a small group.

## **Gifts**

I will give to God's work by

- ◆ Reviewing, renewing or outdoing what I did last year,
- ◆ Giving generously, regularly, cheerfully, and proportionately (if not currently tithing, working towards that as a goal).

## **Service**

I will let God use me by

- ◆ Understanding how God has shaped me for ministry,
- ◆ Finding a place where God can use me.

## **Witness**

I will be a Witness in the church and community

- ◆ Exhibit deeds of service and social change that demonstrate His love,
- ◆ Through my life in the Christian community, exhibit God's power to heal, reconcile and unite.



# Nashville United Methodist Church

*Offering Better Life Through Christ*

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