

# Wesleyan Essentials of Christian Faith

## THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS

The "people called Methodists" form a family of churches within the World Methodist Council...

- We claim and cherish our true place in the one holy, catholic and apostolic church.
- Our origins lie in the work of John and Charles Wesley in 18th century England which quickly spread to every corner of the world.
- The purpose of this work and ministry was, and is, to renew the Church and spread scriptural holiness which includes social righteousness throughout the whole earth, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We confess that often we have failed to live up to this high calling, and we repent of the times when our witness has distorted the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Trusting in the grace of God, we engage ourselves anew in God's service.

## OUR BELIEFS

We affirm a vision of the Christian faith, truly evangelical, catholic and reformed, rooted in grace and active in the world.

- Methodists affirm the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary rule of faith and practice and the center of theological reflection.
- Methodists profess the ancient ecumenical creeds, the Apostles' and Nicene Creed.
- Methodists seek to confess, to interpret and to live the apostolic faith, the faith once delivered to the saints. Methodists acknowledge that scriptural reflection is influenced by the processes of reason, tradition and experience, while aware that Scripture is the primary source and criteria of Christian doctrine.
- Methodists rejoice in the loving purpose of God in creation, redemption and consummation offered through grace to the whole world.
- Methodists believe in the centrality of grace; prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying.
- Methodists believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the sufficiency of His atoning work for all humankind. Methodists believe that we "are the friends of all and the enemies of none."

## OUR WORSHIP

We worship and give allegiance to the Triune God.

- In worship, we respond in gratitude and praise for God's mighty acts in creation, in history, in our communities, and in our personal lives.
- In worship, we confess our sin against God and one another and receive God's gracious forgiveness.
- In prayer, we wait in God's presence, offer the searching and longings of our own hearts, for ourselves and in intercession for others, and open ourselves to God's Spirit to comfort, lead, and guide.
- In the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we participate in the mystery of God's presence, redemption and reconciliation.
- In reading, proclaiming and receiving the Gospel, we affirm God's creating and saving power.
- From worship we go into the world to love and serve others and to be instruments of justice and peace in the establishment of God's reign on earth.
- The language and form of worship emerge from the community through obedience to Jesus Christ and the creative power of the Holy Spirit.
- We inherit the treasury of the Wesley's hymns, with a hymnody now enriched from many other sources.

## OUR WITNESS

We proclaim Jesus Christ to the world through word, deed and sign.

- We seek the realization of God's will for the salvation of humankind.
- We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be signs of Christ's presence in our communities and in the world through our preaching, teaching, and in deeds of justice, peace, mercy, and healing as the outworking of faith.
- We witness to God's reign among us now, as proclaimed by Jesus, and look forward to the full realization of the coming Kingdom when every form of evil will be destroyed.
- We seek to understand and respond to the contexts and situations in which we live, so that our witness will have integrity.

## OUR SERVICE

We serve the world in the name of God, believing that our commitment comes to life in our actions, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- As followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who came to serve rather than be served, we go into the world as people of God in Christ Jesus, to serve people, regardless of their economic and social status, race, gender, age, physical and mental ability, sexuality, religion or cultural origin.
- Being "filled with the energy of love," we anchor our service and our life and work in love for our neighbors, including those we perceive as our enemies.
- Since all forms of Christian service are influenced by a given context of community and culture, we seek to express our love in appropriate ways.
- The life of holiness holds together conversion and justice, works of piety and works of mercy.
- Empowered by God, authentic Christian service is based on Scripture, tested in community, affirms life and seeks the shalom of God's reign.
- Recalling the story of the Samaritan (Luke 10:25), we express and claim compassion for all people and accept the call in Christ to "suffer with" the least of these in humility and love.

## OUR COMMON LIFE

We share a commitment to Jesus Christ that manifests itself in a common heart and life, binding believers together in a common fellowship and anticipating solidarity within the human family.

- Having experienced the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a liberating power from all oppression we stand in solidarity with all people who seek freedom, peace and justice.
- Knowing that the love we share in Christ is stronger than our conflicts, broader than our opinions, and deeper than the wounds we inflict on one another, we commit ourselves to participation in our congregations, denominations and the whole Christian family for the purpose of nurture, outreach and witness.
- Remembering our Gospel commitment to "love our neighbors," we will, through dialogue and partnerships for service to the world, endeavor to establish relationships with believers of other religious traditions.

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