



ROAD TO HOLY DISCERNMENT

Doing God's will....finding common ground.

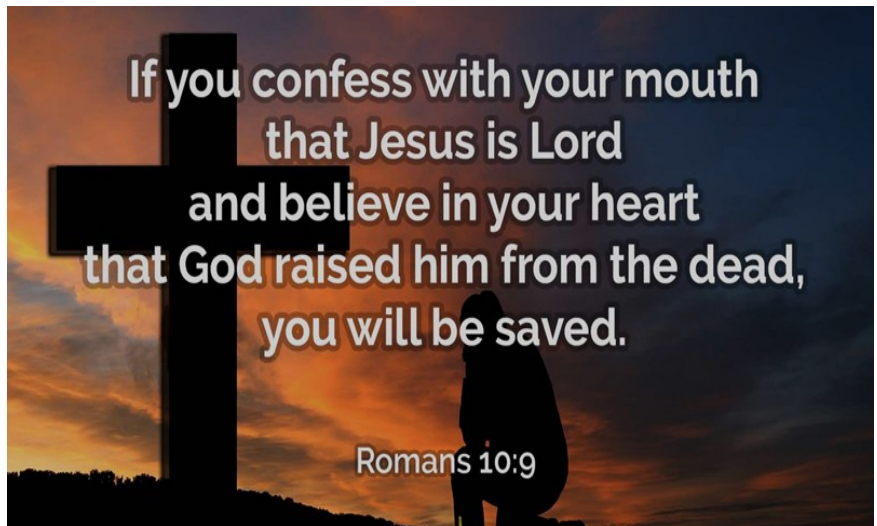
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Volume 9

What We Believe – Doctrinal Standards: Articles of Religion

Lent is often described as a time of preparation and an opportunity to go deeper with God. The Lenten season is therefore a perfect time for us to examine the beliefs of the United Methodist Church, Methodism, and Bethany as we continue to discern where God is leading us as a congregation and as individuals. For this reason, the *Road To Holy Discernment* will focus on our beliefs during the 40 days of Lent through a series of “What We Believe” newsletters.

This newsletter will take a look at the first of two documents that comprise the United Methodist Church doctrinal standards: Articles of Religion.

The United Methodist Church *Articles of Religion* are descended from the summary of beliefs of the Church of England known as the “39 Articles” that were established in 1563. John Wesley edited and abridged the “39 Articles” into the “Articles of Religion” for use by the Methodist movement in America. The *Articles of Religion* were officially adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church when it was formed in 1784.



Per the United Methodist Church, the *Articles of Religion* along with the *Confession of Faith* “provide the foundational framework for United Methodist doctrine. All United Methodists are expected to teach in accordance with the statements of these two documents.”

The *Articles of Religion* contain twenty-five “articles”. Following is a summarized version of these 25 articles. The full version of the *Articles of Religion* along with other UMC doctrinal information is available via the link provided at the end of this newsletter.

Article I – Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

We believe in the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

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

The Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary, is both divine and human, and was crucified in atonement for our sins.

Article III – Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ was resurrected in body, ascended into heaven, and will return to judge all men.

Article IV – Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost is one with the Father and the Son.

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

The Bible contains all things necessary for salvation – if it is not contained in the Bible, then it is not necessary for salvation. The Bible includes all of the books of the Old and New Testament.

Article VI – The Old Testament

The Old and New Testaments do not contradict each other. Christians are not bound by Old Testament rites and ceremonies but are still bound to abide by the moral commandments of the Old Testament.

Article VII – Of Original or Birth Sin

All persons are born with sin – it is in their human nature.

Article VIII – Of Free Will

We may be saved by grace only and we are free to accept or reject this grace.

Article IX – Of Justification of Man

We are justified to God through faith in Christ.

Article X – Of Good Works

Good works are the fruits of faith – they cannot save us but are pleasing to God when they are the result of our faith in Christ.

Article XI – Of Works of Supererogation

Trying to do more than God commands of us in an attempt to gain his favor is irreverent.

Article XII – Of Sin After Justification

The only unpardonable sin is to sin against the Holy Ghost. Once saved, we may sin and still be saved by grace if we are truly repentant however, those that sin and are not repentant will be condemned.

Article XIII – Of the Church

The church of Christ is any congregation of believers where the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.

Article XIV – Of Purgatory

Refutes Roman Catholic doctrine concerning purgatory, veneration of images, and praying to saints.

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

Church services, prayer, and sacraments should be offered in the language that is understood by the members of the congregation (i.e. no foreign languages such as Latin).

Article XVI – Of the Sacraments

There are two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The sacraments should be received by those that have faith in Christ and are repentant.

Article XVII – Of Baptism

Baptism is a sign of rebirth and regeneration that is available to all persons including infants and young children.

Article XVIII – Of the Lord's Supper

The bread and wine offered during the Lord's Supper represent the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner. No transubstantiation (change of bread and wine into actual body and blood of Christ) occurs. The Lord's Supper is available to all.

Article XIX – Of Both Kinds

The cup of the Lord (wine) is to be offered during the Lord's Supper to both clergy and lay people. *Note: this article was in response to an older Catholic practice of offering only the bread but no wine to lay people during communion.*

Article XX – Of the One Oblation of Christ, Finished Upon the Cross

Christ's death on the cross satisfies all sins (original and actual).

Article XXI – Of the Marriage of Ministers

Ministers may be single or married.

Article XXII – Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

Methodist churches are not required to follow a set format, rite, or ceremony.

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

Church members and clergy should follow all the laws and regulations of the US and individual states as prescribed by the constitution of the US and their respective states.

Article XXIV – Of Christian Men's Goods

Christians may own private property and that property may not be claimed by others. However, Christians should share with the poor in accordance with Christian values of charity.

Article XXV – Of a Christian Man's Oath

Christ prohibits vain and rash swearing of an oath but swearing an oath for just purposes is not forbidden.

The link below will take you to a website where you can read pages 47 – 91 of the 2016 Book of Discipline (BOD). These pages contain Part III of the BOD which includes:

- Our Doctrinal Heritage (Paragraph 102) - Includes Wesleyan belief of Grace: Prevenient, Justifying, Sanctifying
- Our Doctrinal History (Paragraph 103)
- Our Doctrinal Standards and General Rules (Paragraph 104) - Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, General Rules,
- Our Theological Task (Paragraph 105).

SOURCE

https://issuu.com/abingdonpress/docs/doctrinal_standards_and_our_theological_task

BETHANY UNITY PRAYER

Gracious Heavenly Father,

We come to You, acknowledging that Bethany is Your church. You have brought together people who love You and Your church with a desire to serve together in Your Kingdome. Give us a spirit of humility, gentleness, and patience. Help us be united in thought and purpose. WE seek the Holy Spirit to enable us to see our sin and suffering caused by our division. Unite us in seeking Your perfect will for Bethany.

In Your Holy Name we pray.

Amen



Remember the Unity Prayer for our church during the period of discernment. Unity stands for peace in the presence of conflict; for love in the presence of hatred; for forgiveness in the presence of injury. Each of us must independently pray for God's will to determine the future of Bethany.

ALSO THE HAND OF GOD CAME ON JUDAH TO GIVE THEM ONE HEART, TO DO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE KING AND OF THE PRINCES BY YAHWEH'S WORD.
-2 CHRONICLES 30:12 WEB

Remember Lenten services each Wednesday night at 6:15 pm in Spell Chapel. What a perfect time to pray for God's guidance as we seek to do his will.

MISSIONS POSSIBLE
MARCH 4th-10th

The logo consists of a blue square on the left containing a white cross. The words "HANDS! RISE UP! THIS MATTER IS IN OUR" are arranged in a circular path around the cross. Below the cross, the text "RALLY IN SERVICE EVERYONE!" and "Ezra 10:4" is written. To the right of the blue square, the words "MISSIONS POSSIBLE" and "MARCH 4th-10th" are written in bold blue text.

Even though the church is in a period of discernment related to the future of our congregation, the missions of the church continue. Be a part of Missions Week by serving in whatever way you can.

The Discernment Steering Committee has met with two churches to learn about their discernment process. These meetings have been very informative.