

# Bylaws of Trinity on Fifth

## **Article One**

### Name

The name of this corporation is Altoona Methodist Church, Doing Business As (DBA) Trinity on Fifth, located in Altoona, Iowa. This congregation is incorporated under the laws of the State of Iowa and is organized within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986. The DBA name, Trinity on Fifth, will be the name used throughout the bylaws.

## **Article Two**

### Vision and Mission

**Vision:** Trinity on Fifth is a multi-generational church thriving in a modernized historic campus, combining the best of what's old and new, reaching families and beyond by making it easy to know Christ, make friends, build strong families, and impact others—centered around relatable, authentic Bible teaching and a deliberate heart for people.

**Mission:** To make it easy for people to know Christ, grow with friends, and impact the world around them.

## **Article Three**

### Core Beliefs

The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, is the foundation of our faith. We join with Christians around the world in proclaiming both the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Thankful for our Methodist/Wesleyan heritage, we are also guided by Wesley's Twenty-Five Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

- A. **About the Bible** - The Bible is the inspired, authoritative, and trustworthy Word of God to all people. It teaches us what to believe, how to live, and how to be saved from our sins and declares God's plan and purpose for all mankind.
- B. **About God** - There is One True God, the Creator and Sustainer of all life, Who is revealed in three persons of the Trinity as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- C. **About Jesus Christ** - Jesus Christ is coequal with God and the Holy Spirit. He became flesh and was born of a virgin as God's only Son. He lived a sinless life, was crucified, died, and was buried. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven where he reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords, and will return to judge all people at the last day.
- D. **About the Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit is coequal with God and His Son. He is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He provides Christians with guidance in doing what is right and the ability to serve God, accomplish His purposes, understand spiritual truth, and witness to the world.
- E. **About Humanity and Salvation** - All human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception. We were each created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him. However, our sin has separated us from Him. As a result, we are incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through our own efforts. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. Reconciliation with God is available to all through God's grace when we turn from our self-ruled lives and put our faith in Jesus' death and resurrection as sufficient payment for our sin.
- F. **About the Christian Life** - Christians should live for Christ and not for themselves. By obedience to the Word of God, prayer, and daily yielding to the Holy Spirit, every believer should grow in faith and be conformed to the image of Christ, loving God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving their neighbors as themselves.
- G. **About the Church** - The Church is the body of Christ, of which Jesus Christ is the head. The members of the Church are those who have trusted by faith in the finished work of Christ. The purpose of the Church is to glorify God, grow together in faith, serve one another, and impact the world by making Him known.
- H. **About Heaven** - People were created to exist forever, but the earth is not our permanent home. We will either exist eternally with God in heaven through repentance, forgiveness, and salvation or eternally separated from God because of our sin.
- I. **About the Local Church** - We are better together. We gather to worship God, encourage and pray for one another, and serve our community and world. We

also celebrate God's grace through baptism and remember his sacrifice with communion.

- J. **About Marriage & Sexuality** - God created each of us in His image, intentionally male and female. Marriage was ordained by God at creation as the union of one man and one woman. A sexual relationship is only God-honoring within marriage. We uphold God's marriage design as found in the Scriptures, but we also seek to minister to those who suffer the consequences of brokenness. We affirm that we are called to minister to all who fall short of God's standards with love, compassion, and grace.

These Core Beliefs do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Trinity on Fifth's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Administrative Council is the final interpretive authority.

## **Article Four** Membership

All who desire to be members of Trinity on Fifth and who fulfill the expectations of membership will share in all of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of being a member of Trinity on Fifth.

### A. Benefits of Membership

A member of Trinity on Fifth may expect the following:

- a. Opportunities to serve as a leader within the church and beyond.
- b. Documentation of the church's ministry outreaches, achievements, and future goals, including personal giving statements and the church's yearly financial accountability statement.
- c. Opportunities to affirm major decisions of the Administrative Council, the selection of Lead Pastor, and the selection of Administrative Council members.

### B. Qualifications for Membership

To be a member at Trinity on Fifth means that:

- a. I am a baptized follower of Jesus Christ seeking to grow in the community of faith.
- b. I will do my best to follow Jesus Christ by walking in humility, practicing love toward all others, and pursuing a life of biblical integrity.
- c. I will be active in the life of Trinity on Fifth by attending worship and participating in the ministries of the church.
- d. I will consistently pray for the church, its ministries, and its leaders.
- e. I will use my gifts to serve in and to support ministries of the church.
- f. I will faithfully provide financial support for the church and its ministries.
- g. I will make the most of every opportunity to invite others to share in the activities of the church and to warmly welcome and build relationships with those new to the church.
- h. I have completed *Starting Point* class(es) and am at least 18 years old.
- i. I fully embrace the Core Beliefs, Vision, and Mission of Trinity on Fifth and will abide by the church's bylaws.

#### C. Dissolution of a Trinity on Fifth Membership

A membership at Trinity on Fifth may be considered dissolved or revoked for any of the following reasons:

- a. Having submitted a request to the church office to dissolve or transfer membership.
- b. By ceasing to be active within the life of the church in attendance, prayer, service, and giving for a period of one year.
- c. By ceasing to uphold, or live in compliance with, the Core Beliefs of Trinity on Fifth.
- d. Death.

For matters of dissolution other than member request or death, a majority vote of the Administrative Council is required.

### **Article Five** Governance and Leadership

#### A. Administrative Council

The Administrative Council (Council) shall be composed of between nine and twelve members. As the church's governing body, it shall have the authority to make decisions that uphold and further the Core Beliefs, Vision, and Mission of Trinity on Fifth in harmony with the bylaws.

a. Responsibilities of the Administrative Council:

- i. Assist, pray for, and support the Lead Pastor, staff, and ministries.
- ii. Annually elect from within a Council Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- iii. Oversee the official documents of the church.
- iv. Oversee all property matters.
- v. Oversee the finances of the church.
- vi. Oversee salaries and benefit packages for Lead Pastor and staff.
- vii. Search for, interview, and present the Lead Pastor to the membership for a vote of affirmation.
- viii. Oversee mission opportunities for the church.

b. Qualifications of Administrative Council Members:

People serving as members of the Administrative Council must first be members of Trinity on Fifth and meet all qualifications for membership throughout their term on the Council. They must have a strong presence in all aspects of the life of the church.

c. Election of Administrative Council Members:

The Lead Pastor and the Administrative Council shall nominate qualified members to serve on the Administrative Council. After accepting the nomination, members will be elected by a majority vote of the Council. The church membership will affirm this vote at the annual business meeting.

d. Terms of Service for Administrative Council Members:

- i. Administrative Council members are expected to serve a three-year term which may be extended for one additional three-year term. At that point, the Council member cannot be re-elected for a period of one year.

- ii. A Council member's term may be extended beyond six years in extenuating circumstances by majority vote of the Council.
  - iii. A Council member may be removed, by majority vote of the Council, before his/her term expires if he/she no longer meets the qualifications for a member.
  - iv. A mid-term vacancy occurring on the Council may be filled at any regular Council meeting by majority vote of the Council.
- e. Administrative Council Meetings:
- i. Regular Meetings: The Council generally meets on a monthly basis.
  - ii. Special Meetings: The Lead Pastor or any two Council members may call additional meetings as necessary.
  - iii. Notice of all Regular or Special Council meetings must be given to all members of the Council and the Lead Pastor.
  - iv. In order to have a meeting, a quorum, defined as 50%+1, of the total current Council must be present. If this number is not attained, then those present shall adjourn the meeting to a new date with notice given to all Council members. At that later meeting, no minimum number of Council members is necessary.
  - v. The Council will prayerfully seek unanimous decisions. All votes taken will pass with a simple majority.
  - vi. The Pastor(s) will have voice at all meetings, but will not have voting privileges.

## B. Church Officers

The church officers (Council Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer) are elected from among the Administrative Council members by a majority vote of the Administrative Council members.

### a. Council Chair

The Council Chair shall:

- i. Work with the Lead Pastor to develop an agenda for the meetings.
- ii. Preside at all meetings of the Council.
- iii. Oversee all contracts authorized by the Council.
- iv. Work closely with the Lead Pastor and staff to guide the church in its mission and vision.

b. Secretary

The Secretary, with the assistance of staff members, shall:

- i. Maintain all church documents including bylaws, amendments to bylaws, and minutes of Council Meetings, the Annual Church Membership Meeting, and Special Church Membership Meetings.

c. Treasurer

The Treasurer, with the assistance of staff members, shall:

- i. Have primary responsibility for church funds, including the formation of an annual financial report to be made available to the members.
- ii. Ensure full and accurate records of all receipts and disbursements of the church are maintained.
- iii. Assist with the establishment of the church's annual budget.
- iv. Oversee all financial filings required by state and federal law and review the church's financial records.
- v. Perform the duties of the Council Chair in the absence or disability of the Council Chair.

C. Administrative Council Structure

Members of the Administrative Council may participate in one of four specialties:

- a. Trustees: Addresses all real estate needs, property issues, construction, repairs, and general upkeep.
- b. Finance: Establishes written financial policies, reviews investment decisions, and provides input to the annual budget.
- c. Staff Parish:
  - i. Determines Lead Pastor and staff salaries and benefits and conducts annual reviews.
  - ii. Serves as search committee for a new Lead Pastor.

- iii. Works with the Lead Pastor to nominate members for election to the Administrative Council.
  - iv. Assists, prays for, supports, and evaluates the various ministries of the church.
- d. Mission: Works with the Lead Pastor and staff to research mission opportunities, assist in planning events and determine the distribution of mission funds.

#### D. The Lead Pastor

As the overseer of the church, the Lead Pastor is expressly authorized to serve in all manners deemed necessary and proper to fulfill his/her spiritual and administrative roles.

a. Responsibilities of the Lead Pastor:

- i. Lead the congregation, the church staff, and all church ministries in accordance with the Core Beliefs, Vision, and Mission of Trinity on Fifth and in harmony with the bylaws.
- ii. Teach and preach the Bible.
- iii. Provide direction, oversight, and leadership for discipleship.
- iv. Ensure the care, nurture, and encouragement of the congregation.

b. Calling a Lead Pastor:

Upon the retirement, resignation, death, or dismissal of the Lead Pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who embraces the Core Beliefs, Vision, and Mission of Trinity on Fifth and will abide by the church's bylaws.

- i. The Staff Parish members of the Administrative Council serve as the search committee for a new Lead Pastor.
- ii. Other church members may be included on the search committee.
- iii. The interview process shall include, at a minimum, a background check, a credit check, a reference check, and the filling out of a detailed application. These documents should be used to help determine how the candidate fits with the congregation and staff.
- iv. Upon a majority vote of the search committee, the candidate shall be announced to the Administrative Council, after which the candidate must preach at least one regularly scheduled church



service and be available for a church-wide question/answer session prior to being voted upon at a designated Administrative Council meeting.

- v. After a majority vote by the Administrative Council, the candidate must be affirmed by a majority vote at a Church Membership Meeting.

c. Terms of Service:

- i. The relationship between the Lead 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.
- ii. In the event of a conflict, the Administrative Council members assigned to Staff Parish will discuss the matter privately with the Lead Pastor and seek resolution. When deemed necessary, a majority vote of the Council members present shall be required to remove the Lead Pastor from office.

## **Article Six**

### Church Membership Meetings

A. Annual Church Membership Meeting

- a. The Lead Pastor, staff, and Administrative Council will conduct an annual church membership meeting to celebrate God's blessings, share ministry goals for the upcoming year, present financial reports, and affirm new Council members.
- b. This meeting is open to all current church members. Public notice of the meeting shall be given through the regular means of communication for two weeks immediately preceding the meeting.

B. Special Church Membership Meetings: The Council may call a special church membership meeting by giving notice through the regular means of communication for one week immediately preceding the meeting.

C. Voting

- a. Voting at any church membership meeting is limited to members who are physically present at the meeting. Absentee and proxy voting are not permitted.
- b. A majority vote of all members present is needed for affirmation of decisions presented by the Administrative Council.

**Article Seven**  
Conflict of Interest

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the church's interest when considering entering into a transaction or arrangement that may benefit a member of the Administrative Council. This policy is intended to supplement, but not to replace, any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.
- B. Whenever an Administrative Council member has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the Council:
  - a. The affected person shall fully disclose the nature of the interest.
  - b. The affected person shall leave the meeting during discussion and voting on the matter.
  - c. Any transaction or vote involving a potential conflict of interest shall be approved only when a majority of disinterested Council members determine that it is in the best interest of the church to do so.
  - d. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention, and rationale for approval.

**Article Eight**  
Tax-Exemption Provisions

Trinity on Fifth is recognized as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization by the United States Internal Revenue Service.

- A. Private Benefit: No part of the net earnings of the church shall benefit or be distributable to its Lead Pastor, members, or other private persons, except that the Administrative Council shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable

compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in advancement of the purposes set forth in Articles Two and Three.

- B. Political Involvement: To the extent prohibited by law, the church shall not participate in, or intervene in, any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
- C. Dissolution: Upon dissolution of the church, the Administrative Council shall, after paying all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organizations operated exclusively for religious purposes. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's Core Beliefs set forth in Article Three.
- D. Nondiscrimination Policy: The church shall not discriminate against employees or members, applicants for employment or membership, or others on the basis of race, color, nationality, age, or ethnic origin. However, as a religious organization, it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment, membership or any other relationship with persons whose lifestyle, words, actions, or otherwise do not align with the church's Core Beliefs or other policies of the church.

## **Article Nine**

### Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Administrative Council at a regular meeting. Proposed amendments must be made available to the Administrative Council for review two weeks prior to the vote. After a majority vote by the Administrative Council, the amendment is to be affirmed by a majority vote at a Church Membership Meeting. Amendments become effective immediately after being affirmed by the Church Membership, unless designated with a specific date in the motion.

These bylaws were adopted by a unanimous vote of the Council members present on September 30, 2024.

## **Guiding Creeds and Statements of Faith as referenced in Article Three**

### **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. \* universal

### **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

### **THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH**

Thirty-nine Articles of Religion were finalized in 1571 to define the doctrine of the Church of England. When Methodism emerged as a church, independent of the Church of England two centuries later, John Wesley abbreviated the formulation to 24 Articles. An additional article dealing with the duty of Christians to civil authority was added by the Methodist Episcopal Church when it was formed in 1784. The Articles were officially adopted by the General Conference of 1808, when the first Restrictive Rule was also implemented, and revised by the Uniting Conference of 1939 when three Methodist communions within America became one. The Twenty-Five Articles are as follows:

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 may be 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.

## **THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH**

In 1809, the Evangelical Association adopted a German translation of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Articles of Religion, adding an article on the last judgement from the

Augsburg Confession. These were reduced to twenty-one in 1816, omitting polemical articles against Roman Catholics and Anabaptists, and later condensed to nineteen. In 1815, the United Brethren in Christ adopted a Confession of Faith based on an 1814 Confession and 1789 Lehre by Philip William Otterbein. A more comprehensive Confession was composed in 1889, including an article on sanctification reflecting the influence of the Heidelberg Catechism. The 1946 conference that formed the Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted both the Confession of Faith of the United Brethren in Christ and the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Church. In 1962 a new Confession of Faith was completed, including articles on "Sanctification and Christian Perfection"(Article XI) and "The Judgement and Future State" (Article XII). This was adopted in the 1968 merger with the Methodist Church that produced the United Methodist Church.

#### Article I - God

We believe in the one true, holy and living God, Eternal Spirit, who is Creator, Sovereign and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. He is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness and love, and rules with gracious regard for the well-being and salvation of men, to the glory of his name. We believe the one God reveals himself as the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable, eternally one in essence and power.

#### Article II - Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, in whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united. He is the eternal Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father, born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. As ministering Servant he lived, suffered and died on the cross. He was buried, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to be with the Father, from whence he shall return. He is eternal Savior and Mediator, who intercedes for us, and by him all men will be judged.

#### Article III - The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from and is one in being with the Father and the Son. He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He leads men through faithful response to the gospel into the fellowship of the Church. He comforts, sustains and empowers the faithful and guides them into all truth.

#### Article IV - The Holy Bible

We believe the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, reveals the Word of God so far as it is necessary for our salvation. It is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be made an article of faith nor is it to be taught as essential to salvation.

## Article V - The Church

We believe the Christian Church is the community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. We believe it is one, holy, apostolic and catholic. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by men divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers and the redemption of the world.

## Article VI - The Sacraments

We believe the Sacraments, ordained by Christ, are symbols and pledges of the Christian's profession and of God's love toward us. They are means of grace by which God works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening and confirming our faith in him. Two Sacraments are ordained by Christ our Lord, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith, and is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin, a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus and a mark of Christian discipleship.

We believe children are under the atonement of Christ and as heirs of the Kingdom of God are acceptable subjects for Christian Baptism. Children of believing parents through Baptism become the special responsibility of the Church. They should be nurtured and led to personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their Baptism.

We believe the Lord's Supper is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another. Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until he comes.

## Article VII - Sin and Free Will

We believe man is fallen from righteousness and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is destitute of holiness and inclined to evil. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. In his own strength, without divine grace, man cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God. We believe, however, man influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit is responsible in freedom to exercise his will for good.

## Article VIII - Reconciliation Through Christ

We believe God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The offering Christ freely made on the cross is the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, redeeming man from all sin, so that no other satisfaction is required.

## Article IX - Justification and Regeneration

We believe we are never accounted righteous before God through our works or merit, but that penitent sinners are justified or accounted righteous before God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe regeneration is the renewal of man in righteousness through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life. By this new birth the believer becomes reconciled to God and is enabled to serve him with the will and the affections. We believe, although we have experienced regeneration, it is possible to depart from grace and fall into sin; and we may even then, by the grace of God, be renewed in righteousness.

## Article X - Good Works

We believe good works are the necessary fruits of faith and follow regeneration but they do not have the virtue to remove our sins or to avert divine judgment. We believe good works, pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, spring from a true and living faith, for through and by them faith is made evident.

## Article XI - Sanctification and Christian Perfection

We believe sanctification is the work of God's grace through the Word and the Spirit, by which those who have been born again are cleansed from sin in their thoughts, words and acts, and are enabled to live in accordance with God's will, and to strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as one's self. Through faith in Jesus Christ this gracious gift may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God.

We believe this experience does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes common to man, nor from the possibilities of further sin. The Christian must continue on guard against spiritual pride and seek to gain victory over every temptation to sin. He must respond wholly to the will of God so that sin will lose its power over him; and the world, the flesh, and the devil are put under his feet. Thus he rules over these enemies with watchfulness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Article XII - The Judgment and the Future State

We believe all men stand under the righteous judgment of Jesus Christ, both now and in the last day. We believe in the resurrection of the dead; the righteous to life eternal and the wicked to endless condemnation.

#### Article XIII - Public Worship

We believe divine worship is the duty and privilege of man who, in the presence of God, bows in adoration, humility and dedication. We believe divine worship is essential to the life of the Church, and that the assembling of the people of God for such worship is necessary to Christian fellowship and spiritual growth.

We believe the order of public worship need not be the same in all places but may be modified by the church according to circumstances and the needs of men. It should be in a language and form understood by the people, consistent with the Holy Scriptures to the edification of all, and in accordance with the order and Discipline of the Church.

#### Article XIV - The Lord's Day

We believe the Lord's Day is divinely ordained for private and public worship, for rest from unnecessary work, and should be devoted to spiritual improvement, Christian fellowship and service. It is commemorative of our Lord's resurrection and is an emblem of our eternal rest. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian Church, and important to the welfare of the civil community.

#### Article XV - The Christian and Property

We believe God is the owner of all things and that the individual holding of property is lawful and is a sacred trust under God. Private property is to be used for the manifestation of Christian love and liberality, and to support the Church's mission in the world. All forms of property, whether private, corporate or public, are to be held in solemn trust and used responsibly for human good under the sovereignty of God.

#### Article XVI - Civil Government

We believe civil government derives its just powers from the sovereign God. As Christians we recognize the governments under whose protection we reside and believe such governments should be based on, and be responsible for, the recognition of human rights under God. We believe war and bloodshed are contrary to the gospel and spirit of Christ. We believe it is the duty of Christian citizens to give moral strength and purpose to their respective governments through sober, righteous and godly living.