

Frequently Asked Questions

UMC Book of Discipline

As of Dec 16, 2019

What is the *Book of Discipline*?

The Book of Discipline is the basic law and statement of beliefs of the United Methodist Church and is organized by numbered paragraphs. *The Book of Discipline* is composed of the following parts:

- Constitution of the United Methodist Church (beginning Paragraph 1)
- Doctrinal Standards and our Theological Task (beginning Paragraph 102)
- Ministry of all Christians (beginning Paragraph 120)
- Social Principles (beginning Paragraph 160)
- Organization and Administration sections (beginning Paragraph 201)

How can the *Book of Discipline* be modified?

The Book of Discipline can be changed by the General Conference with a majority vote. However, amendments to the Constitution of the United Methodist Church must receive a 2/3rds vote by the delegates of the General Conference and be ratified by 2/3rds of all the delegates, cumulatively, of all the Annual and Central Conferences worldwide. New Books of Discipline are printed after each General Conference Session. The current *Book of Discipline* is from the 2016 General Conference, although some changes were made at the special-called General Conference in 2019. Those changes go into effect in the US on January 1, 2020.

What are the Doctrinal Standards?

The doctrinal standards are located in Paragraphs 103-104 of the *Book of Discipline*. The standards consist of The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church; The Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church; The Standard Sermons of Wesley; The Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament (by John Wesley); and the General Rules of the United Methodist Church. The Articles of Religion and The Confession of Faith articulate key parts of the historic Christian faith, of which Methodism has always been a part. They are protected in the Constitution from being changed, altered or revoked, or from the General Conference establishing anything that goes against these standards. Wesley's Sermons and Notes provide us with resources that help us understand and dig deeper into different aspects of our doctrine. The General Rules provide practical application of our doctrine for living as a disciple of Jesus.

Where might I read the *Book of Discipline*?

There are several copies of the Book of Discipline in the Bethany library. It can also be ordered online at Amazon. You can also access it free of charge online at:

<https://www.cokesbury.com/book-of-discipline-book-of-resolutions-free-versions>