

Basic Course

Lay Speaking Ministries

The United Methodist Book of Discipline

The Book of Discipline has been compiled through 200 years of General Conferences of the denominations that joined together to form the United Methodist Church. It is an instrument through which the polity, plan, process and laws guide and govern United Methodists.

The Book of Discipline is a covenant by which we agree to live our lives together. It contains the history, theological foundations, and doctrinal heritage that affirm who we are as a denomination.

Our distinctive marks of connectionalism, the mission of a global church, and our interaction and cooperation with other Christian entities are described in the pages of this document. It contains a constitution that provides the framework for our work of mission and ministry in the world.

At each General Conference this document is amended, perfected, and clarified by the adoption of petitions submitted by the annual conferences, boards, commissions and agencies, or individual members of the United Methodist Church.

The basic unit of the book is the paragraph (¶) the paragraphs are numbered consecutively within each section. Paragraph numbers may change every 4 years (quadrennium) as the General Conference approves changes or additions to the document.

Remember that *The Book of Discipline* contains more than the laws of the United Methodist Church. It also communicates the tenets and emphases of the Methodist Movement. As with the Holy Bible, it is important to consider the whole to grasp the intent of the individual parts.

The Book of Discipline is much more than a book of rules, it is a way of discipleship, a mirror that reflects our history and helps us understand our heritage.