

Pastors and Church Leaders Manual



Resources for Leading Local Churches

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Pastors and Church Leaders Manual

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Introduction

Welcome to the new manual authorized by General Conference 2003. This new *Pastors and Church Leaders Manual* replaces the former *Pastor's Handbook of the Free Methodist Church* (Revised Fourth Edition, 1998). Through this manual, we aim to provide a more up-to-date, useful tool to a broader core of leaders in the church. In addition to pastors, lay leaders and consecrated deacons will find it helpful. Rather than providing primarily administrative helps for local church pastors, it is designed to give aid to all Free Methodist leaders with regard to purpose, mission and the implementation of strategy to build the kingdom of God.

Resources available to the contemporary local church leader are unlimited. The current proliferation of materials on church health, church leadership, church growth and spiritual formation is at an all-time high. Access to additional resources on the Internet and through conferences is unprecedented. Lacking, until now, in all of the above was an updated resource targeted uniquely to the Free Methodist family and sensitive to our history, mission and commitments. This manual seeks to fill that void. But it is not an exhaustive resource on all matters pertinent to church leadership. It is simply a denominational supplement, targeted to our own culture and polity.

Since church-related Internet sites change and increase in number and since conferences and seminars are commonly available, this compendium is also available online in order to update quickly information and resources that are associated with the various sections of this book. As changes are authorized, revised pages will be issued.

We give thanks and credit to the Free Methodist Church in Canada for the sharing of excellent segments from *The Manual of the Free Methodist Church in Canada*. With permission, we have copied sometimes a sentence, sometimes a complete paragraph and sometimes an entire topical section. We respect and appreciate that since they have invented the wheel, so to speak, there was no need for us to reinvent the wheel.

The Editors

Section I — Summary Concepts

Preamble to Section I

In the 21st century, the Free Methodist Church in the United States has experienced a great deal of leadership and ministerial change. There has been a natural but very significant turnover in our pastoral team. Hundreds of pastors have retired, transferred, moved into para-church or chaplaincy ministries or simply turned to secular work.

These have been replaced by the greatest influx in our history of new conference ministerial candidates, elders and transfers from other places of ministry. In light of this, we are challenged to transfer our beliefs, our mission, vision, practices and ethos to these new ones. Thus, Section I of this manual is designed as a survey of many critical elements that express our identity, theology and denominational culture.

We share these elements with the hope that those who are long-term among us will be reminded and refreshed in those things that are distinctive about being Free Methodist. We share them also with the hope that those who are newer among us will find many helpful guidelines, guardrails, concepts and perspectives.

A Free Methodist Perspective on Being and Doing Church

1. The Church — Its Characteristics

The church is the body of Christ in the world. The Holy Spirit oversees the life of the church, blesses, assists, prods and holds it strong. We are encouraged by the Word that the “gates of hell” ultimately will not be able to withstand the offensive thrusts of the church.

Yet, the local church is led day by day by people, some of whom are not yet all God intends. Thus, the church can be diverted by cultural and personal pressures and lose its sense of di-

rection. To assist in keeping the church on mission, we list the primary activities of the church. These should mark the ministry of each local church.

Worship

The worship of God is the central activity of God's people, the undergirding reality of all of life. The psalmist said, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1, NRSV). For thousands of years this life of continual worship has been shaped and nourished by special gatherings and by daily, weekly and personal worship in which God is praised and His saving acts recounted.

Evangelism

In worship God invites His people to enter into His own heart for people. Believers are called to share the good news of His love so that more and more people may come to know, love and worship the one true God. The vocation of God's people Israel was to be "a light to the nations ..." (Isaiah 42:6, NRSV). As that calling and vocation are fulfilled in the people of Christ, this call continues: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..." (Matthew 28:19, NRSV). Likewise, there is the parallel call to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength ... [and] love your neighbor as yourself ..." (Mark 12:30-31, NRSV). Evangelism is also at the heart of the life of God's people. Healthy churches seek every way possible to reach people and bring them into the life of the Kingdom.

Fellowship

Those who come to God through trust in Jesus Christ are drawn into a shared life. The biblical term is "fellowship." Fellowship is more than socializing; rather, it is the sharing of our life together under the umbrella of God's grace and love. The call to a deeply shared life together comes from the New Testament and was stressed afresh in early Methodism. It is in the context of this life together that Christians worship God, share His love with the lost, serve the needy and broken, and build each other up toward maturity.

Christian Nurture

Images of growth and development abound in the New

Testament. The Free Methodist Church seeks to help every believer grow up in Christ. The same commission of our Lord, which commands that we go and make disciples of all nations, explains that in addition to baptizing them the church is to teach them to obey everything He commanded. The Christian nurture process seeks to lead people to Christ and to identify with the people of Christ by a pledge of their love and loyalty to Christ and the church, through membership with a local congregation.

The local church then helps believers grow to become fully devoted followers of Christ, equips them with skills they need for ministry, fans the flames of their passions, and enlists them in the worldwide mission of sharing Christ and redeeming the world to Him.

2. The Church — Its Mission

The Free Methodist Church exists to make known to all people everywhere God's call to wholeness through forgiveness and holiness in Jesus Christ, and to invite into membership and to equip for ministry all who respond in faith.

3. The Church — Its Vision

The Free Methodist Church seeks to be a healthy biblical community of holy people multiplying disciples, leaders, groups and churches. Fulfillment of this vision requires every church to be a healthy church with Spirit-filled leaders, who continuously work a plan to fulfill our Expected Outcomes.

4. The Church — Its “Permission-Giving” Environment Non-negotiables

We may not:

- live in violation of the Scriptures.
- live in violation of the Articles of Religion, the Constitution, the Membership Covenant or the mission.

Our pastors may not:

- live in violation of ordination vows.
- lead the church in ways that detract from our mission.

Leadership Initiatives

Placing **mission** ahead of method, our pastors and churches are **free** to strategize and minister in ways that fulfill our *Expected Outcomes*.

5. The Church — Its Expected Outcomes

Please see the booklet “Working Together in the 21st Century” for elaborations of the ideas in segments 2 through 5. It may be ordered from the Board of Bishops office, 1-800-342-5531.

Chapter 15 of Luke’s Gospel reminds us that the Father’s heart passionately seeks those outside the Kingdom. Until the lost in any generation are found, God will attempt to win their faith and loyalty.

It is our expectation, in light of this loving, reaching heart of God, that pastoral and lay leaders will seek to develop every Free Methodist church so that it is characterized by the following outcomes:

- a. Being an **evangelistic congregation**: befriending spiritually lost people; presenting and explaining the gospel in culturally relevant ways; and inviting spiritually lost people to trust Christ as Savior.
- b. Being a **disciple-making congregation**: connecting all who wish to know Christ to groups or cells; nurturing believers toward Christlike, obedient love; enfolding believers, welcoming them into membership; bringing disciples to a life pattern of holy living through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit; and taking and sending disciples into the world to serve.
- c. Being a **reproducing congregation**: developing the next generation of pastoral and lay leaders; establishing cells as core groups for new church plants; and planting new congregations.
- d. Being a **world-mission congregation**: engaging in Free Methodist World Missions; giving vital resources; sending cross-cultural evangelists; and providing diverse support teams.

These emphases have been high priority throughout our history and should continue to be so since they agree with the evangelistic imperative of the Bible.

Benjamin Titus Roberts, the most influential person in the founding of the Free Methodist Church, wrote about the evangelistic impulse in his book *Pungent Truths*, paragraph 149:

The special work of an evangelist is to carry the gospel to the unsaved. It is his mission to go to those who are destitute of the means of grace and offer salvation to the lost. He is what is called in our day a missionary. . . . Everywhere there is need that the masses should be evangelized. In this greatly needed work all preachers should take a part. It was to a bishop that Paul wrote, "Do the work of an evangelist." It was not enough that he looked after the work that was already established. He must plant churches in other places. Brother, look at the masses perishing around you. Go to them, and try to get them saved. "Do the work of an evangelist."

In addition to these four characteristics, which focus the church in an outward-looking mode, there are four others, which provide the foundation of community life. We also expect pastoral and lay leaders to seek to develop these outcomes in each church:

- e. Being a **prayer-saturated congregation**: speaking to God on behalf of a lost world; praying first, acting second; interceding for individuals, rulers and nations to yield to the ultimate victory of Christ; and listening to the Holy Spirit and obeying Him.
- f. Being a **worshiping congregation**: celebrating the saving grace of God in singing; encountering God in prayers; reading and obeying the Word; preaching the Word; and observing the sacraments.
- g. Being a **culture-engaging congregation**: seeking justice for all; showing mercy to the poor; and empowering the disenfranchised.
- h. Being a **purpose-driven congregation**: being on mission with Christ; organizing for essentials only; focusing on mission and vision to shape all ministries; and surrendering to Christ's mandated Great Commandment and Great Commission.

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Section II — Pastoral Identity

The Pastor's "Call" to Christian Ministry

Ordained Free Methodist ministers are called to provide Spirit-filled leadership in the church so as to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. This normally involves the work of preaching and teaching the Word of God, intercessory prayer, the administration of the sacraments and pastoral care. Central to this task is the communication of the gospel and the winning of people to allegiance to Christ.

Free Methodist ministers are called to be leaders of God's people. Leadership requires having vision, daring, moving people to action, and living with the turbulence change brings. Pastoral leadership is rooted in a deep love for Christ and His compassion for human need. God's resources are abundantly available for all who embrace this calling in courageous and radical obedience.

One of the most confusing discussions among clergy and laity alike is over "calling." In recent times, people have spoken about "calling" mostly as it refers to clergy or missionary vocations. Generally speaking, "calling" has been a term reserved for people with leadership gift sets. Such tendency strains the biblical notion of the equality of gifting. It suggests that some are more susceptible to the leading of God toward ministry than others. Or, that some are at least more likely to receive clarity as to their gifting and mission. It also suggests that the "call" is based largely on the subjective encounter with God by the called. Some of this confusion has surfaced due to a misrepresentation of a few texts of Scripture, pointedly Acts 16:6-10 and Ephesians 4:1-13.

In the first text, Paul has been "called" by the Spirit in a vision from one geographic area (Bithynia) to another (Macedonia). This cannot be understood as a parallel to an initial call to lifetime service, since Paul was already called to a ministry among the Gentiles (Acts 9:15, 13:2) and sent out by the church. It is the movement of Paul by the Spirit of the Lord from one place to another. In Ephesians 4 the calling referenced in verses 1 and 4 is a calling to a life rather than a lifestyle or life gift. The gifting referenced

afterward (4:11-13) is not limiting a called ministry to prophets, apostles, pastors, teachers or evangelists.

The danger of restricting the call to certain vocations or to those who have a unique experience with God potentially damages the body of Christ. If Paul were to serve as an example of someone “called” to a unique ministry, a broader perspective of his life informs us more clearly on these matters. The call would be seen, in his case, as a combination of factors that include the following:

1. The Spirit’s Leading

There is no doubt that Paul had a unique and compelling experience with the Spirit of Christ. At Paul’s conversion, a call came very early and very clearly. He knew what he was to do and why God had saved Him. Acts 9:15 records Ananias’ understanding, which Acts 22:21 indicates must have been convincingly communicated to Saul. It was directly the Spirit’s leading, whether by the voice of Jesus or Ananias. But, he did not consider the call complete or to be acted upon at that point. Years transpired while the call was being completed.

2. The Confirmation of the Body

We often forget the crucial importance of the confirmation and witness of God’s people upon the called. Jesus was launched into ministry at His baptism by John and the witness of a large crowd. Who delivered the message about Saul’s mission and call? Christ gave the message of salvation. Ananias delivered the message or confirmed the word of the Lord (Acts 9:15). It was after time spent with the disciples in Damascus that he began to preach (Acts 9:19-20). Barnabas took him to the apostles in Jerusalem. The apostles sent him to Tarsus (Acts 9:30). The church in Antioch commissioned Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2-3). We can never use Paul’s call as an isolated leading of the Spirit without the confirmation of the body. On five levels, God validated, affirmed, restated or directed Paul in his call through others.

3. Gifts and Competencies Complementary to the Call

Paul was persuasive (Acts 9:22). Without such persuasive-

ness and effectiveness, the Damascus disciples, apostles, church in Antioch and Barnabas likely would not have been eager to endorse Paul's ministry. The disciples would have had nothing of it — that is, until they were convinced by hearing of his passion and competencies through communicating the truth in an unwavering way (Acts 9:27).

4. Fruitfulness

Paul's ministry was making a difference. People were saved through his preaching. The apostles would not have been praising God because of him had he not been fruitful in his ministry (Galatians 1:23-24; 2:8-9). The disciples won, leaders developed and churches started by Paul are matters of historic record.

Any discussion of "the call" must consider our connectional polity, Wesleyan heritage, understanding of the equality of all believers, and responsible exegesis of Scripture. The "call" of all believers will contain the four components of the call. Success in ministry is more certain when these components are all present in the lives of the believer.

The church follows the biblical pattern of setting apart particular persons for unique roles as servant leaders in ministry. These women and men who give evidence of the call of God and the church upon their lives are observed, guided and examined by the appropriate leaders as they move toward ordination.

Both gifts and graces characterize those women and men whom the church ultimately ordains. Gifts are special endowments of ability, and graces are those unique dimensions of character and temperament, which both find their source in the enabling Holy Spirit.

In light of the profound implications of the New Testament view of the role of women in the church as revealed in Galatians 3:28 — "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" — we ordain both women and men and view them as having equal status in the ministry of the church.

For a more complete explanation of the historical and biblical rationale for this practice, see "Women in Ministry" — statement adopted by the 1995 General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

Access this and other further resources at
<http://www.freemethodistchurch.org>.
Click on “About Us” and then on “Where We Stand.”

The Kind of Person Who Answers the Call

1. One who is being made new in Christ.

Paul wrote to new Christians that “there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God’s likeness — righteous, holy, and true” (Ephesians 4:23-24, NLT). If one has not moved beyond the old way of life, one cannot be a partner in Christ’s work.

2. One who is living a Spirit-directed life.

“If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives” (Galatians 5:25, NLT). “... Let the Holy Spirit fill and control you” (Ephesians 5:18, NLT). If we are not willing to submit to God, how can we work effectively for God?

3. One who is growing toward maturity as a disciple.

Paul wrote to his young assistant and budding minister, Timothy, “Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity” (1 Timothy 4:12b, NLT).

4. One who is a lifelong learner.

Those who lead others must prepare themselves to do so. Again, Paul wrote to Timothy, “Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, NLT).

5. One who is wholeheartedly dedicated to serving Christ.

Jesus said, “If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters — yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26, NLT).

6. One who loves and can work with people.

“Care for the flock of God entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly ... because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people ... lead them by your good example”

(1 Peter 5:2-3, NLT). Even if you are not naturally high in relational skills, you can learn to love and lead people toward Christ.

7. One who is flexible.

In an increasingly diverse culture the Christian faith must adapt methods and styles to the realities of its culture. Paul’s life modeled it for us: “I become a servant of everyone ... I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ.” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22, NLT).

The Responsibilities of the Call

Elders have a unique role of leadership within the body of Christ. Tradition says that they take responsibility for three primary components of the life of the church: ministering the Word of God (teaching truth and resisting heresy), providing the sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s Supper) and maintaining order (guiding and discipline).

1. Word

The task of the Word applies to the elder in two regards: to teach the apostolic gospel and to protect the church from error. The first concerns such things as preaching, teaching and making disciples and raising up biblically alert leaders, making official statements to the church and the public at large. The second refers to the church’s protection from heresy or from trends that obscure the gospel. Thus, the elder must be theologically orthodox and an able preacher of the gospel.

2. Sacrament

In worship the church gives praise to God, pleads with Him for mercy and receives the grace God mediates to His people. The elder leads the church in its adoration and petition of God and in upholding the sacredness of the Lord’s Supper and baptism as means of grace. The sacramental scope of the elder’s tasks is extended to deep personal piety and intercession for the

church and the world. Thus, elders must be people whose souls are nourished by public and private devotion and who can lead congregations into the renewing presence of Almighty God.

3. Order

Elders lead the church by articulating its vision. Thus, elders must have a deep commitment to the church's mission, insight into the complexities of human nature and skill at guiding others. As leaders of the church, elders give oversight to the pastoral care of the local church. Bishops, on behalf of the church, set apart those persons whom the church has determined are called of God and competent to feed the sheep. The elders comprise the general ministry of the church and help the church practice the Great Commandment and fulfill the Great Commission.

This normally involves equipping the people of God to do God's work and build up the church (Ephesians 4:12). In this regard it also involves intercessory prayer and pastoral care. Such leadership requires having vision, daring, moving people to action and living with the turbulence change brings. Too much order or too little order both tend to quench the freedom in the Holy Spirit, which is always essential in transformational congregations.

Elders may serve as educators, evangelists, cross-cultural workers or chaplains, or in para-church ministries, but most serve as pastors of local churches. Regardless, ordained leadership is rooted in a deep love for Christ and His compassion toward human need. God's resources are abundantly available for all who embrace this task in courageous and radical obedience.

The Consecrated Local Church Deacon: The New Testament clearly provides for deacons who assist with more focused or specialized ministry in the local church. Please see the *Book of Discipline*, ¶s 6600 and 6610 for the more detailed explanations of this elder-supporting role. We believe both elders and deacons are essential for a healthily functioning local church.

Section III — Pastoral Character

Pastoral competence matters little without the foundation of personal character. We recommend the following ideas and urge attention to the development of character.

Key Components of Character

Effective pastors exhibit a profound personal commitment to modeling a life of deepening Christian maturity and responsibility. Before considering the various skills required for vocational ministry, the character and integrity of the pastoral person must first be addressed. Consider the following admonitions:

1. Spiritual Formation

Develop a healthy, joyful walk with God. Make private, family and public prayer a frequent habit. Let prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication and intercession be a daily means of grace. Develop the spiritual discipline of fasting as health permits. Search the Scriptures systematically for personal edification using commentaries and classic Christian literature to enrich your understanding. Meditate on what you read and put into practice what you learn. Avail yourself of every opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper.

2. Family Life

If married, be faithful to your marriage vows (1 Timothy 3:2). Show honor to your spouse, children and parents in keeping with the teaching of Scripture. If you have children, parent them with loving discipline and raise them with appropriate spiritual instruction. Invest time and energy in building a healthy home life.

3. Collegiality

Build healthy, God-honoring relationships with your colleagues in ministry. Seek the counsel of and cultivate a collegial spirit with your fellow pastors. Meet with them periodically for

prayer, sharing concerns and mutual encouragement. Model loyalty to your denomination and its leaders.

4. Use of Time

Cultivate self-discipline and seek the fruit of God's Spirit, particularly self-control. Seek to live an orderly and balanced life, managing your time and energies well. Resist both laziness and workaholicism.

5. Personal Health

Pursue and apply the practices of healthy living, especially with regard to food, rest and exercise. Set an example in this regard to those you lead.

6. Conversation

Listen patiently. Communicate clearly, stating your ideas with tact and kindness. Speak evil of no one and carefully guard your words of criticism or complaint. Keep confidences with appropriate care. Cultivate an appropriate sense of humor.

7. Financial Management

Manage your money wisely, keeping debts within bounds. Be wise in the way you spend and invest your financial assets. Do not borrow money from parishioners. Tithe to your local congregation as the starting point for a larger pattern of generous giving. Take good care of that which you have purchased, received or been provided.

8. Public Decorum

As a church leader and public figure it is important to remember the need for appropriate personal dignity and decorum, especially when in the public eye. Do your best not to bring embarrassment upon yourself and/or church. Propriety in demeanor, dress, language and attitude is essential, if one is to have respect from and authority with those you lead.

9. Personal and Professional Ethics

Keep your ordination vows and determine to model a lifestyle that is above reproach. Guard your heart and mind against inap-

appropriate sexual attractions. Be particularly discreet in your dealing with members of the opposite gender, not allowing yourself to be placed in compromising or embarrassing situations.

Give appropriate respect to those in authority over you. Cooperate willingly with your superintendent and bishops. Honor the work of your predecessors. It is neither wise nor appropriate to return to a previous appointment to conduct weddings, baptisms or funerals or to provide other pastoral ministry without invitation or approval from the current pastor(s) to do so. It is also wise to honor the work of your successor(s).

Periodically, a minister experiences discontent with persons, procedures, polity or practice. Occasionally a pastor shares his/her complaints, leading to dissension and sometimes division. We deem it to be unethical for a pastor to leave and take parishioners for the purpose of starting another church in the immediate region. Ordained leaders who foster division in the body of Christ in this manner dishonor their own ordination vows.

See the *Book of Discipline*, ¶15500.D: “The unauthorized founding of or the unauthorized assumption of a leadership role in an independent congregation by a Free Methodist minister is equivalent to joining another denomination. All rights and privileges of the minister cease and his/her credentials must be deposited with the secretary of the conference.”

Character According to Scripture

1 Timothy 3:2-10: *Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested;*

and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons (NIV).

Titus 1:6-9: *An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it (NIV).*

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Leading Through Pastoral Care

Healthy pastoral leadership assures that the congregation is cared for, particularly in times of crisis. Not all pastoral care need involve the direct contact of the pastor, but effective pastors find creative ways to ensure that a full range of pastoral care is given through visits, phone calls, notes, etc. from a variety of staff and/or volunteer persons.

Give care and attention to the bereaved, sick, elderly, confined and distressed. Moments of personal crisis or transition such as the birth of a child, marriage, the bestowment of honors, accident and death require special attention from you or an appropriate representative.

Make provision for the pastoral counseling of those seeking guidance. Ensure that any counseling you offer personally takes place in a professional manner and in an appropriate setting. Know the limits of your own counseling competencies and capacities and make responsible referrals as appropriate.

Assure that believing newcomers, new believers, children and teens are encouraged to join the church in membership. Provide regular, careful instruction for prospective members and frequent opportunities to receive them into membership.

What biblical essentials are assigned to this role?

1. Modeling and Vision-Casting

Hebrews 13:7 describes those in authority over the people of God as “leaders,” as those who speak the Word of God, teaching what is in accord with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1), and holding firmly to the “trustworthy message” (Titus 1:9).

These elders lead as a prophetic and visionary voice, speaking the Word of God and expressing the nature and heart of God. Biblical leaders also lead as servants of the church without lording it over the people (1 Peter 5:3, Mark 10:42). It is inherent in the very nature of sheep to graze and to wait for a leader. Without leadership, the people of God tend to meander and flounder.

When it comes to fulfilling the mission of the church (to make disciples of all people everywhere) and the vision of the church (to be a healthy biblical community of holy people, multiplying ...), sheep will not usually accomplish God’s desired ends without visionary leadership.

The pastor “gets out front” and inspires the people of God to do what Christ wants: make disciples. Paul wrote, “elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching” (1 Timothy 5:17). Notice the direct connection in his mind between directing and preaching/teaching. Hebrews 13:17 admonishes followers to obey their leaders, submitting to their God-given authority.

2. Nurturing and Healing the Wounded and Broken

- The elder is called to manage or take care of God’s church (1 Timothy 3:5).
- Sometimes this implies “straighten[ing] out what was left unfinished” (Titus 1:5).
- Sometimes this implies caring for and serving the flock (1 Peter 5:2) to bring healing, rest and hope.
- Sometimes this implies guarding the flock from wrong teaching by refuting those who oppose the message (Titus 1:9).
- Sometimes it implies correcting, rebuking or encouraging (2 Timothy 4:2).
- But the greatest motivational tool in the pastor’s arsenal is authentic love (note John 21:15-17, where Jesus reinstated Peter).

3. Equipping and Training

The pastor is not called to do the work of ministry alone, but to prepare, equip and train God’s people to do the ministry. Therefore, a pastor must develop complementary, self-directed teams of workers.

Ephesians 4:11-16 calls each member to be equipped to serve, rising to maturity, to the full measure of perfection found in Christ. Each member is called to do his or her part. A pastor focuses on relationships and vision-casting more than methods, systems, programs and procedures. The pastor seeks to be effective, not just efficient.

For additional insight or study see also: the *Book of Discipline*, ¶5300 — The Ordained Ministry and ¶8400 — Ordination of Elders.

4. Confidentiality

(Statement approved by the Board of Administration, April 2005, for consideration in 2007 *Book of Discipline*, Chapter 7.)

The Right to Confidentiality

All people have a right to safe, respectful, confidential spiritual care. This care of individuals is central to the Christian life, but the care of the church as a whole is also our concern. In addition to bringing redemptive forgiveness and healing to the individual, we have an obligation to create healthy communities within our churches, conferences and general conferences, helping to prevent the damage unhealthiness can cause. As individuals become healthy and whole through God's work in their lives, they become ministers of healing and reconciliation in the lives of others, keeping confidences and being open in their church life. Seeking to continually improve both individuals and churches through monitoring and correcting unhealthy behaviors is an ongoing responsibility, while seeking to do no harm in our efforts to bring about healing and wholeness to both individuals and churches. Being open, honest and trustworthy is vital in the spiritual life.

Confidentiality

The confidential care of personal information is a necessary aspect of spiritual care and congregational life. The responsibility to treat personal information confidentially extends not only to ordained pastors, but also to all persons working within the organizational and institutional life of the church. The need for confidentiality exists in two general areas: spiritual care and personnel matters.

Confidentiality in Spiritual Care

In providing spiritual care, our ministers and laity maintain a relationship of trust and confidentiality, holding in confidence all information revealed to them, whether it is formally or informally shared. If a person gives express consent to reveal confidential information, our ministers and laity may, but are not required to, reveal this information.

Confessional Confidences

Ordained elders and pastors have a responsibility to keep confessional confidences inviolate, breaking this confidentiality only if the risk of imminent bodily harm to any person is present.

The exception to this confessional confidentiality includes any confession of sexual abuse happening to a child.

Confessions of an Elder

The confessions of an ordained elder to another elder are an inviolate confidence, unless the conduct is both ongoing and unrepentant. The abuse of position by any elder that continues to take advantage of any person within their care is not a confidential confession, but a request to be helped to stop this abuse and removed from the temptations and responsibilities of the position until repentance and healing occurs.

Confidentiality in Personnel Matters

Respecting the privacy of church personnel requires confidentiality in personnel matters. This confidentiality extends not only to the discussions required in the interviewing, approving, appointing, supervising, disciplining and dismissing of personnel, but also to all records pertaining to these matters.

Confidentiality in Financial Matters

The requirement that all financial records be public includes all salary and compensation figures of paid personnel.

The Appeal of a Personnel Decision

The appeal of a personnel decision by a committee or board assigned with this responsibility is not confidential. The decision to appeal a decision requires the information on which the decisions were made to be made public at the appeal. All appeals are held in open session.

Leading Through Mentoring Other Leaders

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Leading Through Free Methodist World Missions (FMWM)

Who We Are — How We Can Serve You

Our Mission

To serve Free Methodists as together we make disciples of
Jesus Christ among the peoples of the world.

Our Vision

Multitudes becoming disciples of Jesus Christ as Free Meth-

odists plant hundreds of healthy reproducing churches around the world.

- Every local church sending ... to the ends of the earth
- Every disciple ministering ... in God's chosen place
- Every missionary supported ... financially, emotionally and spiritually
- Every ministry interconnected ... for maximum Kingdom impact

Our Core Values

- We fully support the mission, vision and values of the Free Methodist Church.
- We are committed to every Free Methodist's privilege to give radically, pray fervently and serve sacrificially in the global mission.
- We are committed to developing indigenous, culturally relevant, reproducing, missionary-sending churches.
- We are committed to full obedience to Jesus Christ, disregarding personal comfort and security.
- We believe fully devoted disciples of Christ develop best in healthy local congregations; therefore, we seek to plant churches through evangelism, leadership development, and ministries of compassion and community transformation.

Our Strategy

Free Methodist World Missions will ...

Mobilize the North American Free Methodist Church for mission through ...

Intercessory Prayer	Global Vision
Resource Empowerment	Missionary Deployment

Make disciples of Jesus Christ among the peoples of the world through ...

Intentional Evangelism	Compassionate Ministries
Leadership Development	Servant Partnerships
Urban Priorities	Unreached People Groups Initiatives

This is a marvelous moment in which to be a Free Methodist leader with a heart for the world. The Free Methodist family worldwide is approaching 1 million members — without counting adherents in creative access countries that cannot officially join. Almost nine out of 10 Free Methodists in the world now

live outside of the United States. The world church is growing rapidly — experiencing a 40 percent decadal growth rate for each of the last six decades. In fact, we have already grown more than 40 percent since the year 2000.

The challenge of being a world Christian is also great, sometimes overwhelming. One of five people on planet Earth does not have enough to eat, an adequate place to live, clean water to drink, or the basics of education. A similar number — often the same people — will live and die never having had a reasonable opportunity to say “yes” to Jesus. We face the huge challenge of knowing how to share the information and resources — spiritual and material — we have received. We face the challenge of how to make disciples not only in our own neighborhoods, but also in the neighborhoods of the global village in which we live.

Many of our people want to be world Christians. Missions presents one of the greatest opportunities to lead our churches with passion, generosity and purpose. We do this as we first understand the biblical basis for world missions and then organize our community of faith to be a global local church.

World Missions from God’s View — A Biblical Theology of World Missions

The Global Local Church

Every local church can touch the world with the love of Jesus — living out the full implications of the promise of our Lord: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Global local churches will exhibit these characteristics:

- **A basic understanding of what God is doing in the world through global outreach efforts**

Awareness of God’s work in the world will energize the life of the church and motivate individuals to become involved in Kingdom work.

- **Globally focused prayer that permeates all of its worship events**

Through television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the World Wide Web and a multitude of other means, we are daily presented with the critical needs of the global family.

Worshippers will quickly relate to worship that reaches out in prayer to a needy world.

- **Annual giving that reflects its commitment to world evangelization**

Every congregation is encouraged to make faith commitments for world missions, designating them for the support of either specific missionaries or countries. Some congregations also dedicate a specific percentage of their offerings to be used for world missions efforts.

- **A coordinated strategy that touches the church's own neighborhood, its city, its Samaria and the ends of the earth**

Every congregation can touch both its own community and the ends of the earth. Sometimes a need in a local ethnic community will network with an opportunity within the worldwide Free Methodist family.

- **Strategic partnerships that give ownership to the global vision of its people**

Supporting specific missionaries and adopting country shares for a particular country are two of the best ways to build ongoing partnerships between a local church in North America and the Free Methodist family in another part of the world. VISA (Volunteers in Service Abroad) ministry teams, VISA short-term missionaries and Extra Mile projects can enrich this relationship and expand our Lord's kingdom.

- **An annual celebration of its global impact**

Some churches make this an annual Sunday. Others make it a weekend or weeklong emphasis.

- **A local team that coordinates the church's world missions efforts**

This passionate small group assists the pastor and local board of administration in casting vision for world evangelization and coordinating the local church's world missions efforts.

Imperatives for World Evangelism

The Lord of the harvest sent His only Son into the world to save the whole world. A great invitation is extended to us to join Him in proclaiming the good news. Our participation at individual,

local church and national church levels can be based upon a number of missional imperatives:

- The glory of God (Psalm 96:3, 7-8)
- The Great Commission and the Great Commandment (Matthew 28:19-20, Matthew 22:37-38)
- Our identity as witnesses (Acts 1:8, Isaiah 43:8-13)
- The responsibility of privileges and possessions (Luke 12:48b)
- Our being blessed to be a blessing (Genesis 12, Psalm 67)
- Incredible, growing need and unprecedented opportunity

How to Mobilize Your Local Church for World Mission

Several key elements are important to mobilize your local church for world mission: build awareness, give radically, pray fervently, serve cross-culturally and provide leadership.

Build Awareness

Many resources are available to help your congregation build missions awareness:

1. *World Mission People* magazine
2. *Global Good News, a Theology of Mission for Free Methodist World Missions* (Contact FMWM or see www.fmwm.org for a copy.)
3. FMWM Web sites: www.fmwm.org, www.fmexpeditions.org and www.childcareministries.org
4. FMWM annual theme packet sent to every church with DVD, CD resource, banks and posters
5. FMWM e-publications such as *Missionlift*, *Missions Today*
6. *Missions Alive!* children's curriculum
7. Missionary biographies, other missions books, missions periodicals. (To access FMWM resources, go to www.fmwm.org or call 1-800-342-5531.)

Hold a missions conference, including some of these options: missions speaker, parade of nations, prayer breakfast, workshops, banquet, drama, special music, booths featuring crafts and foods from different nations, and learning centers for children.

Give Radically

God will give us the resources we need to the degree that He can trust us with His mission — to make disciples of *all* nations. As we contribute our part toward world evangelism, we can ex-

pect His blessing on our efforts locally. If we cannot physically go or if God has specifically called us to stay, we can still influence the international expansion of the Kingdom by giving to world missions.

Pray Fervently

1. Take time in public services and small groups to pray for missionaries, for global needs and for the lost in your neighborhood, in your city, in your country and around the world.
2. We are motivated to pray for people we care about. Seek to develop personal relationships with the missionaries supported by your conference or church. Give regular updates about these missionaries as a part of church services. Include excerpts from missionary letters in worship bulletins or church newsletters.
3. Use resources available through FMWM to help you pray: missionary prayer cards, missionary prayer directory, *World Mission People* magazine prayer calendar, weekly Missions Hotline prayer update, missionary bulletin inserts and FMWM Web site: www.fmwm.org. Other helpful resources include *Operation World* by Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk and *Window on the World* by Daphne Spraggett.
4. Participate in prayer events, such as prayer concerts, Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church and World Day of Prayer (resources for World Day of Prayer available at www.fmwm.org/pray).

Serve Cross-culturally

Each pastor and missions leader, in addition to other individuals, is encouraged to experience Free Methodist World Missions through short-term ministry abroad. A person may get involved with VISA Ministries through:

- VISA assignments — opportunities for adults and families
- VISA teams — opportunities for churches and conferences
- IMPACT Teams — opportunities for youth in conjunction with Free Methodist World Missions
- VISA University — opportunities for missions training

You can find out more about available opportunities and training by going to www.FMExpeditions.org or calling 1-800-342-5531.

Provide Leadership

1. Set the example for your congregation in missions involvement by praying, giving and serving through cross-cultural ministry.
2. Preach and teach on the biblical basis for missions.
3. Form a missions team to assist the church in obeying the Great Commission and provide missions leadership in the church.
4. Designate a local missions mobilizer to champion the cause of missions and missionaries supported by the church.
5. Determine a strategy for the church's involvement in local and world evangelization.

Mobilizer Network

The heart of FMWM support comes through a network of mobilizers — missions-minded people on the conference and local levels. Each conference and each local church is asked to designate a person to fill this role. These missions mobilizers may be clergy or laity.

Responsibilities of Conference Missions Mobilizer:

1. Coordinating conference-level missions programming, including coordinating major events and scheduling missionaries
2. Emphasizing priority of missionary and country shares support in the conference budgetary process
3. Assisting conference missionaries in raising prayer and financial support
4. Coordinating conference VISA Ministries trips
5. Maintaining a list of local missions mobilizers and providing their contact information to FMWM
6. Promoting increased missions awareness and giving throughout the conference

Responsibilities of Local Missions Mobilizer:

1. Communicating FMWM and missionary news to the congregation on a regular basis
2. Directing the local church missions program toward conference and denominational objectives
3. Promoting increased missions awareness and giving in the local church

Local Church Support for FMWM

Free Methodist World Missions is a \$10 million organization with operations all over the world. About 40 percent of the total giving supports International Child Care Ministries, and the remaining 60 percent is used for the broad category “world missions.”

Local churches are encouraged to send missions giving through conference channels, but may also send these funds directly to Free Methodist World Missions. Conferences and churches are encouraged to designate missions giving to specific missionary and/or country support.

Missionary Support

Missionaries are supported through individual, local church and conference commitments. The missionary support package includes (1) wages, housing, taxes, insurance and pension (72 percent of package), (2) travel and field expenses (17 percent), (3) Missionary Kid (MK) education and college grants (4 percent), (4) home assignment expenses (3 percent), (5) education, training and promotion (2 percent), and (6) administration (2 percent).

Country Shares

The Missions Executive Leadership Team (MELT) meets on an annual basis to determine the priority budget needs for each overseas field. These budgets reflect the total amount of assistance that is needed to carry on that country’s vital ministries in the areas of church planting/evangelism, leadership development, compassion/community transformation and national church assistance. Individuals, local churches or conferences are encouraged to support the annual ministry budgets of specific fields by sponsoring country shares (usually in \$1,000 amounts).

Other designated giving makes it possible to meet needs outside of the regular budget:

1. Extra Mile Projects

Many fields have projects important to ongoing ministry but lower in priority than items included as a part of the budget. Browse the *Give* pages of the FMWM Web site, for a project list.

2. Operation Hope

Operation Hope is an emergency relief/development program.

Operation Hope is for Free Methodists who are committed to help as emergencies and community transformation opportunities arise in countries served by Free Methodist World Missions.

3. VISA Ministries Support

Individuals serving through VISA (Volunteers in Service Abroad) Ministries, a Free Methodist short-term missions program, are self-supported.

4. International Child Care Ministries (ICCM) Sponsorship

For \$21 (U.S.) per month, sponsors can help provide food, clothing, education and medical care for needy children in countries around the world.

5. Compelled to Go

Giving to the “Compelled to Go” fund allows individuals to participate in the adventure of sending people God has called into missionary service.

Extended-Term (Career) Missionary

Because the task is urgent and the need is great, FMWM is convinced that every Free Methodist who is called by God and confirmed by the church and our candidate process should have the opportunity to serve abroad. We’re seeking followers who are *grateful* — for one who is forgiven much loves much; *global* — reflecting God’s heart for the entire world; *missional* — sent from Jesus’ presence with the good news, actively involved in mission locally; *balanced* — Spirit-filled and whole; *prayerful* — dependent upon and submitted to the will of the Father; *called* — understands the issues of life stewardship and the investment of time, talents and treasures in the Kingdom. Other foundational characteristics include:

- Love for Jesus Christ and His missionary passion
- Adequate skills to complete assigned responsibilities
- A developing servant leader who will empower others
- Positive and flexible attitudes that build team loyalty
- A commitment to grow individually and with others
- Willingness to sacrifice for a great cause

How to Guide Potential Candidates Toward Global Service

Free Methodist World Missions recognizes the important role pastors have in exploring missionary service with members of

their congregations. A pastor's heart runs deep for the people who are in their care, and when one of the members goes through the missionary candidacy process, we depend on their pastor to shepherd them.

Information about the FMWM missionary candidacy process can be found on this Web site: www.FMExpeditions.org. You may also feel free to call 1-800-342-5531 as questions arise.

So how does a minister sensitively and effectively pastor those special people who are sensing a call to missionary service? Like FMWM, the pastor's goal should be to help each person find God's best place for them to serve.

Cheer from the sidelines; don't push. Your support and enthusiasm are vital for the potential missionary candidate, but be sure that you allow them to proceed at their own pace, not overwhelming them with too much help. Their action and initiative are often a key test of whether they are serious about following through with their intention to serve on the mission field.

Qualms should not be squelched. If you have reservations about the missionary candidate's ability to serve, it's important that any issues be addressed early in the process. FMWM is committed to redirecting people into other forms of service as appropriate. If this should happen to one of your church members, FMWM counts on your wisdom and guidance to help them understand that just because missionary service may not be right for them, or may not be right at this time, they can still make significant contributions to the kingdom of God and the spread of the gospel.

Encourage and support them through the long process. Work with them one-on-one and encourage them as they progress through the missionary candidate process. They will need to be supported spiritually and emotionally. It takes much resolve to successfully transition to ministry in another culture and setting.

"Connect the dots." As appropriate, serve as a facilitator in connecting the missionary candidate with conference resources. Initially, the missionary candidate will need church and conference recommendations, and later will have need for funding and prayer support.

Tighten up the nuts and bolts. Help the missionary candidate consider what kind of work they might do on the mission

field and suggest ways they might be better prepared. Dig deep when looking at their strengths and weaknesses and help them fill in the gaps. For example, if their training does not include a formal Bible education or computer literacy, use your pastoral role to encourage further study and suggest resources. If they lack strong interpersonal communication skills, their ability to communicate their vision and inspire others will be hindered. Helping them become more confident with public speaking and setting them up for success will be a tremendous blessing to their ministry.

Recognize the process is deliberate; it may seem slow. Understand and help the missionary candidate realize that becoming a missionary is a significant step, and getting to the field may take longer than they initially thought. FMWM's process is thorough and deliberate. It is designed to bring a sense of confirmation and affirmation to all involved in the placement process. FMWM seeks the Lord's direction for placing missionaries and strives to place them in positions that will complement their gifts and abilities and will further advance the Kingdom.

Understand good stewardship is a priority. FMWM desires to be a good steward of our resources, which are given sacrificially, and exercises great care when it comes to making an eternal investment. If we were to send an unqualified and/or ill-prepared person to the field, it would be financially irresponsible and could prove devastating to the missionary, the mission field and the church.

Capitalize on the momentum. Build on the excitement a new missionary creates in your church, and channel that energy to raise missions awareness. If the missionary candidate goes to the field, your church will serve an important role as their "home base." Encourage the personalization of missions by fostering a spirit of "supporting one of your own." Promote a deeper relationship between your church family and the missionary while they are preparing to go, while they are on the field, and when they return home. E-mails, phone calls and letters of encouragement are lifelines to the missionary.

Utilize the expertise of VISA Ministries. VISA Ministries can help individuals, churches and conferences connect with missionaries through short-term missions (for individuals, families

and teams serving two weeks to two years overseas) and plug in to ministry. Exploring short-term missions can be a great impetus for further involvement in missions, and FMWM desires that missionary candidates have some kind of short-term missions experience before committing to extended-term service. The majority of our career missionaries have served through VISA.

Anticipate the many transitions. A missionary candidate goes through numerous mental and emotional transitions as they prepare for ministry overseas. Once they've been approved, they will likely need assistance in crossing cultures. They will need to be conscientious about their emotional and physical health; live on a very limited budget; learn a new language; communicate their prayer concerns and financial needs with their supporters; minister in ways that will be new and may stretch them; and keep spiritually fit, maintaining a vital and fresh relationship with God.

How to Schedule a Free Methodist Missionary Speaker

1. Missionaries on home assignment are responsible to do their own scheduling (with the exception of family camps). You may communicate directly with missionaries supported by your conference or church to work towards a confirmation date.
2. When a missionary speaker supported by your conference or church is not available, make all requests directly to the FMWM Communications Office.
3. After the date and speaker are set, the FMWM Communications Office will send confirmation, promotional materials and missionary contact information.
4. When a missionary supported by your church or conference visits, he/she will be seeking individuals who will become prayer and financial supporters and names of individuals who may be sensing God's tug toward short-term or extended-term (career) missionary service.
5. Travel expenses are included as a part of the missionary's support package; additional offerings to cover such expenses are not expected of a church from a supporting conference. A love offering may be accepted by the missionary.

6. When a missionary who is not supported by the conference/church visits, rather than raising personal support, they will offer other ways for the congregation to respond financially to the worldwide need.

International Child Care Ministries

International Child Care Ministries (ICCM), the Free Methodist World Missions child sponsorship program, provides an education, daily meal, school uniform and medical care for needy children. Approximately 20,000 children from 30 countries are sponsored. ICCM offers other ways to care for special needs that are not met by the regular sponsorship of a child: Haiti Food Fund, India Hostels, Burundi Food Fund, Rice for India and other special projects. For more information, see www.childcareministries.org.

VISA Ministries

Under the auspices of Free Methodist World Missions, VISA Ministries mobilizes more than 1,000 volunteers a year. At any given time, there are more than 50 VISA missionaries serving from one to two years in nearly two dozen countries. In any given month, there are as many as 20 people involved in cross-cultural ministry lasting from two to four weeks. Each year VISA Ministries facilitates nearly 100 church- and conference-sponsored teams. Teams typically help with construction projects, medical work, English camps, sports camps and/or evangelism efforts. More information about VISA can be found at www.FMExpeditions.org.

Section V — Membership

1. Clarifying Our “Open Arms” Membership Philosophy

a. We hold firmly to the clear teachings and mandates of the Scriptures. What Scripture prohibits we prohibit unequivocally. Where the Scriptures are silent or tolerant, we will allow our members to come to their own Spirit-guided conclusions, but will appeal to them regularly to consider and adopt our community wisdom (*Book of Discipline*, Chapter 3).

b. We respect, value and promote the community wisdom of the church on lifestyle matters that are not clearly mandated in the Scriptures or unambiguously implied in the Scriptures. We discern the Holy Spirit at work in the history and in the lifestyle reflections of the Free Methodist Church.

We wish to teach and commend our community wisdom in ways that connect biblical principle to faithful reflection on the human condition and our cultural, social, political and personal contexts. We will trust the Holy Spirit to guide us in commending our community wisdom to our people so as to shape them in ways that please God.

c. The nonmandated “prudentials,” found in our community wisdom, as matters of personal conviction, are therefore *disputable matters* (Romans 14:1, NIV), regarding which we must make some allowance for differences of *opinion* (Romans 14:1, NRSV). “Prudentials” are defined as things that relate to or proceed from prudence — the ability to govern or discipline oneself out of respect for Christ and the church by the use of reason, the application of church tradition and personal experience.

These three (reason, tradition, experience) along with Scripture as the most authoritative component of the four, make up what Methodists commonly refer to as the Wesleyan quadrilateral. Using these four, Free Methodists come to sound determinations of acceptable attitudes and actions in a given culture and circumstantial context.

Though “prudentials” represent behaviors that are not specifically prohibited by Scripture, we consider it wise or prudent to set certain behaviors aside. This is in line with Paul’s counsel that even though we may be free to do anything not prohibited by Scripture, not everything is beneficial. Neither is everything constructive (1 Corinthians 10:23, NIV). Neither should we “be mastered by” these things (1 Corinthians 6:12, NIV).

d. We expect pastors to regularly teach the values behind these convictions in membership classes and in pulpit ministry, inviting persons to make these values and convictions their own.

e. We welcome into membership all persons who have found new life in Christ, who embrace our understanding of the Christian life (which means a continual moving toward Christlikeness), who own our mission in the world and who accept our church government.

f. By “embrace our understanding of the Christian life” we mean commit to full conformity to the clear teachings of the moral principles of the Scriptures and to prayerful and conscientious consideration of the church’s wisdom on how best to live a holy life. While a member may draw a different conclusion on a particular matter (see comments on Romans 14:1 to 15:6 below), we would still expect an attitude of respect for our community wisdom as opposed to disparaging attitudes or impugning words.

g. Church members who wish to move into local, conference or denominational leadership are guided to consider leadership level expectations. The *Book of Discipline* makes it clear that those who lead, teach and have public ministry roles and serve as delegates are to be persons who “live consistently within scriptural guidelines (expectations) for leaders” (§6200.E.2.a) and who “agree with and sincerely seek to live out the goals for their maturing life in Christ” (§6200.E.2.c).

A further statement in this regard relative to local church leaders is found in §3460.B: “They must be spiritually mature individuals whose lifestyle shall be in harmony with [among other things] . . . the principles of the Membership Covenant” and our community wisdom. Even though not every member is gifted to lead, we desire that every member would come to share our community wisdom and lifestyle convictions.

Teaching Helps:

Romans 14:1 to 15:6

Here the Apostle Paul taught about the need for both the weak and strong in faith to not only coexist in a local church, but also to thrive in mutual love, respect and submission. He told us that Christians of differing maturity levels will have differences of opinion on disputable lifestyle issues. Remember though that this scripture applies to those attitudes and behaviors that are clearly

- not prohibited by scriptural principles or standards of morality, and
- not against the church universal's traditional application of those principles.

Acts 15:1-30

Among other things, St. Luke's account of the first church council meeting establishes the principle of "community wisdom" based on context. It underscores that specific acceptable or unacceptable behaviors may well vary according to culture and context. One of the overarching principles found in Scripture in this regard is that individual Christians often willfully restrain their behaviors (i.e., not do something that is biblically permissible) so as to not bring disrepute on the church.

2. Membership Care Committee

(*Book of Discipline*, ¶6330; Membership Lists, ¶6110.F, H and I)

The pastor and Membership Care Committee shall maintain accurate records of all adult and youth, active, inactive and former members as follows: (Keep a list of preparatory members also, if the church or conference chooses this option.)

a. Active Members

In order to tend and nurture members on their journey toward Christlikeness, an accurate list must be maintained. The annual review of members will then allow the Membership Care Committee to work with small group and discipleship group leaders, with Sunday school teachers and with the pastor(s) as progress

or regress is noted and relationships for mentoring, caring and supporting are guided.

b. Inactive Members

We always maintain hope that for whatever reason members have been removed from membership, they will one day return to membership. Keeping this list allows us to pray, discern and reach out with loving care. Intentional relationships seasoned with grace could often be inaugurated.

c. Former Members

Those who move away sometimes return. Those who choose another local church sometimes return. Having a formal record of their membership encourages them that they were significant to us. It might facilitate a timely and easy transition back into membership through board of administration approvals.

Membership Discipline and Restoration

See *Book of Discipline* ¶’s 7300, 7310, 7320 and 7330 regarding the authority and responsibility of the Membership Care Committee relative to the discipline and restoration of lay members who live in violation of the membership covenant or have charges brought against them by law enforcement or the civil government.

3. Membership — Entry Level Expectations

In harmony with our mission statement that we “invite into membership and equip for ministry all who respond in faith,” the New Testament model of repentance, faith and baptism shall constitute the primary requirements for membership. This makes membership in the Free Methodist Church as nearly as possible synonymous with entering into the body of Christ. We are open to all whom God has awakened and support them with the healing and equipping power of the Holy Spirit in His church.

a. Maturing Life Goals

The principles of Christian conduct as expressed in Chapter 3 of the *Book of Discipline* (B.O.D.) **are to be the maturing life goals of all** who are invited into membership. (See also ¶6100 and ¶3500.)

b. Provision for Revision of Procedures

Conferences of mission origin as well as ethnic groups in North America who, for cultural reasons, encounter difficulties with membership procedures as outlined in Chapter 3 of the *Book of Discipline* and in the following pastoral procedures (STEPS 1-9) may revise these procedures as long as they do not violate the doctrine or ecclesiology of the Free Methodist Church. Revised procedures shall be sponsored by the Board of Bishops, which shall study them to assure that the constitutional requirements and guarantees of membership are carefully safeguarded prior to submitting them to the Board of Administration for approval. (Approved by the 2003 General Conference and referred to the *Pastors and Church Leaders Manual*.)

4. Membership Development and Pastoral Procedures

The pastor shall guide persons through the following steps in bringing persons to adult membership. When believers come by transfer from other evangelical churches, there may be variations in some procedures, but there should be no shortcuts when it comes to steps four through nine. (We recognize that sometimes people will come to us with membership in other churches where they may not have been baptized yet. So do not assume; rather, ask whether or not they have been baptized.)

STEP 1: Awakening to God, a desire to seek God (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶3120);

STEP 2: Assent to participate in the maturing opportunities offered by the church, such as classes, Bible studies and small groups (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶3230);

STEP 3: Evidence of genuine conversion (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶3130);

Note: According to action of the General Conference, those churches or annual conferences that choose to do so may designate these first three steps as the requirements for Preparatory Membership and may utilize the ritual that follows.

Preparatory Members shall not be continued longer than two years on the membership roll in this relationship without a two-

thirds vote of the local board of administration that circumstances warrant a continuation for a longer period.

STEP 4: Receiving the sacrament of **baptism** following instruction in the essential doctrines and practices of the faith. If baptized in infancy, opportunity should be given for them to give public assent to the baptismal covenant made on their behalf by parents or guardians (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶8040 or Appendix A for this ritual). If the candidate has been baptized previously in another church, seek to **verify** their baptism. We do not require rebaptism; rather, we recognize the baptisms done by duly recognized leaders of other churches, both infant and adult baptisms;

STEP 5: Completing the approved course of **instruction** for prospective members, which clearly teaches the history, theological distinctives and mission of the Free Methodist Church (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶6100 — regarding the purposes of membership preparation);

STEP 6: Acceptance of the Articles of Religion, the Covenant, the goals for Christian conduct (*Book of Discipline*, ¶3300, p. 49 ¶2 — For persons to be able to “adopt” chapter three of the *Discipline* as “an authoritative guide to living an authentic Christian life,” they must be exposed to its content during the course of instruction.), and matters of church government as written in the *Book of Discipline*;

STEP 7: Interview by the pastor and/or membership care committee (*Book of Discipline*, ¶6330 for duties of this committee) to verify the person’s conversion, baptism and willingness to commit to a holy Christian life. See *Book of Discipline*, ¶3160 and ¶3170. See also ¶6320.B.9, which states that the local board of administration may designate the pastors cabinet to serve as the Membership Care Committee;

STEP 8: Approval of each candidate by the local board of administration upon recommendation of the pastor and/or membership care committee; and

STEP 9: Affirmative answers to the questions for membership before a public meeting of the church (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶8800).

Please obtain and utilize our Free Methodist catechism, *Foundations of a Living Faith: The Catechism of the Free Methodist*

Church, and the church membership course text and syllabus *Belonging*, both of which are available from Light and Life Communications at 1-800-348-2513 or www.LLCom.net.

5. Preparatory Membership

A local church or annual conference may designate the first three steps of the membership process as requirements for preparatory membership. The ritual for reception into preparatory membership in Appendix A may be used.

6. Conditions for Preparatory Membership

These three steps are the same first three steps as previously outlined for Adult Membership:

STEP 1: Awakening to God, a desire to seek God (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶3120);

STEP 2: Assent to participate in the maturing opportunities offered by the church, such as classes, Bible studies and small groups (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶3230);

STEP 3: Evidence of genuine **conversion** (see *Book of Discipline*, ¶3130).

Appendix A — Rituals

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

General Directions

Book of Discipline, ¶8100

Let all our ordained pastors exercise due care to see that no person known to be living an immoral life or to be guilty of any disreputable practice be admitted to the Lord's Table among us until satisfactory evidence of repentance and amendment of life has been given.

All persons properly included in the general invitation of our traditional liturgy may be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper among us.

The officiating pastor may select lay assistants in the distribution of the elements. Relative to the distribution of the elements, as opposed to drinking from the chalice, the use of individual Communion cups or intinction is recommended, wherever practicable.

Use of formally prepared wafers of a loaf or precut portions of bread is acceptable, although unleavened bread is closer to the first-century practice.

Alternate rituals may be used. Here are provided our traditional liturgy, an alternate liturgy and a biblical liturgy. You may find other orders of service for the Lord's Supper at <http://www.freemethodistchurch.org/~pclm>.

1. Children at the Lord's Table

Should children be allowed to take Communion? If so allowed, at what age?

The 1979 General Conference affirmed the following ruling by the Board of Bishops:

- We may not forbid Christian parents the privilege of bringing their children with them to partake at the table of the Lord in Holy Communion.

- We exhort pastors, parents and teachers to instruct all children under their care so that there may be a degree of understanding ... consistent with the age and intellectual maturity of the child. There should be careful preparation for that time when, as an accountable believer, the individual may respond to the invitation with a more mature understanding.
- We urge that proper care be always taken to ensure a spirit of reverence in the administration of the sacrament.

The following questions will assist parents in deciding when their children are ready to partake of the Lord's Supper:

- Does my child want to participate?
- Does my child have a personal relationship with Jesus?
- Does my child understand the basic meaning of the Lord's Supper?
 - that the bread is a symbol of Jesus' broken body
 - that the juice represents Jesus' blood shed for us
 - that together they remind us that He died in our place because of our sins
 - that Communion is a time set aside to remember what Jesus has done
 - that Communion is a time to let Jesus' Spirit minister to us

Parents whose children can answer "yes" to these questions should feel free to bring their children to the Lord's Table.

2. How to Use the Communion Rituals

The reader will notice, by carefully comparing the traditional and new rituals, a difference in tone. The traditional ritual has a more reflective, sober tone. It suggests our unworthiness, especially in the light of God's holiness, and the astounding sacrifice Christ made in His death.

The new ritual is more Eucharistic and hopeful. It emphasizes the whole plan of salvation, the liberating power of God and the

prospect of heaven. The choice of which ritual to use might be made on the basis of the time in the church year. For example, the traditional ritual would be more appropriate for Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, and the new for Easter or Pentecost Sunday.

However, on occasion Holy Communion should also be observed as a part of Sunday-morning worship. And in this case, preaching ought to be included. Methodist tradition has always placed great emphasis on preaching. But this will mean that, if Communion is included along with the sermon, the sermon will have to be delivered briefly lest the service be unduly long. As a rule this will require that pastors prepare their remarks even more carefully — to make the very best use of time in saying what God wants them to say.

There may be various ways to proceed with the order of worship. The pastor might choose to follow the order that we know to have existed in the second century (Justin Martyr), made up of two parts. This traditional ritual breaks the prayers into two basic categories. The first contains the various requests that the church makes of God (the prayers of the people: confession of sin, petition for the needs of life and intercession on behalf of others). The second contains the Eucharistic prayers proper (praise and adoration of God, thanksgiving for God's provisions made for life, and thanksgiving for salvation). Between the two units of prayer is a proper place for a Communion hymn that brings praise to the God of our salvation.

a. The Ritual of the Word

Hymns

Scripture Lessons

Sermon

Prayers of the People (Confession, Petition, Intercession)

b. The Ritual of the Lord's Supper

The Communion Hymn (Preparation of the Elements)

Eucharistic Prayers

Distribution of the Elements

Benediction

A variation of this, and one that is more in keeping with our traditional practice, would be as follows:

Hymns

Scripture Lessons

Sermon

Preparation for the Lord's Supper

Prayers of the People

Eucharistic Prayers

Distribution of the Elements

Benediction

In cases when time is short, the ritual of the Lord's Supper may be abbreviated. In such cases the minister could choose the following elements from the full ritual:

Invitation

Confession (if not included in the pastoral prayer)

Praise

Thanksgiving

Praise

The Great Thanksgiving

Glory to God

Prayer of Approach

Consecration

Distribution of Elements

Benediction

3. Additional Resources to Insert into Communion Rituals

A. Celebrating the Lord's Supper

(Adapted from *Celtic Daily Prayer* and *Iona Abbey Worship Book*)

The Invitation

The table of the bread and cup is now ready.

It is the table of company with Jesus and all who love Him.

It is the table of sharing with the poor of the world, with whom Jesus identified Himself.

It is the table of communion with the earth, in which Jesus became incarnate.

So come to this table, you who have much faith,

And you who would like to have more;

You who have been here often

And you who have not been for a long time;

You who have tried to follow Jesus,

And you who have failed.

Come! It is Christ who invites us to meet Him here.

The Story

Blessed is Jesus who walks with us the road of our world's suffering, and who is known to us in the breaking of bread. On the night of His arrest Jesus took bread and having blessed it He broke the bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This is my body, given to you."

In the same way He took the cup and having given thanks for it, He poured it out and gave the cup to His disciples, saying, "This cup is the new relationship with God, sealed with my blood. Take this and share it."

The Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Blessed are you Lord God of the universe, our Father for ever and ever; for through Your goodness we have these gifts of bread and the cup, which earth has given and human hands have made. May they become for us the food and drink of eternal life.

Bless the King of all the earth!

Holy, holy, holy Lord.

God of power and might.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Receiving the Lord's Supper

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, in Your tender mercy, send us the Spirit of the Lamb.

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, Bearer of our Sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, Redeemer of the World, give us Your peace.

(Please come forward to one of the servers, take a wafer and dip it in the goblet. If it is difficult for you to come forward, please let the servers know that you desire to be served where you are.)

Blessing

May the everlasting God shield you, east and west and wherever you go. And the blessing of God be upon you.

The blessing of the God of Life.

The blessing of Christ be upon you.

The blessing of the Christ of Love.

The blessing of the Spirit be upon you.

The blessing of the Spirit of Grace.

The blessing of the Trinity be upon you, now and forever.

Amen!

B. Communion Prayer of Thanks

(From The Eastern Rite, adapted from *The Worshiping Church*)

It is proper and right that we should bless you, praise you, give thanks to you, and adore you in all places of your dominion: for you are God inexpressible, incomprehensible, inconceivable; you are from everlasting and are changeless, you, and your Only-begotten Son, and your Holy Spirit.

You have called us into being from nothingness; and when we had fallen away from you, you raised us up again; and you did not cease to do all things until you brought us back to heaven, and endowed us with your kingdom which is to come. For all these things we give thanks to you, and your Only-begotten Son, and your Holy Spirit; for all the things we know about and the things about which we do not know; for all your benefits bestowed upon us, both seen and unseen.

And we give thanks to you for this ministry which you accept at our hands, although there stand before you thousands of archangels and myriads of angels, with the cheru-

bim, and seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed, who soar aloft, borne on their wings, singing the triumphant song, crying, calling aloud, and saying:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD OF HOSTS; HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF YOUR GLORY. HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST. AMEN!

Sections marked with an asterisk may be used when an abbreviated service is desired.*

Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper — The Traditional Ritual

Book of Discipline, ¶8110

***The Invitation**

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbors and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The General Confession

The pastor may pray:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we remember the

wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against You, Your holiness and Your love, and we deserve only Your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge that we are hopeless without Your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life and to honor and praise Your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***The Lord's Prayer**

The pastor may say:

Let us continue our confession as we pray together the prayer Jesus taught His disciples.

(To be prayed in unison)

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen (KJV).

***The Affirmation of Faith**

The pastor may continue the prayer:

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who with great mercy has promised forgiveness to all who turn to You with hearty repentance and true faith, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins, make us strong and faithful in all goodness and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***The Collect**

The pastor may say:

Let us pray for inner cleansing.

(To be prayed in unison)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sanctus

The pastor may say:

It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we honor and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

(In unison)

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts!

Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord, most high. Amen.

Then may be sung or recited:

The Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father

And to the Son

And to the Holy Ghost:

As it was in the beginning,

Is now, and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen. Amen.

The Prayer for Spiritual Communion

The pastor may pray:

We do not come to this Your table, O merciful Lord, with self-confidence and pride, trusting in our own righteousness, but we trust in Your great and many mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under Your table. But You, O Lord, are unchanging in Your mercy and Your nature is love; grant us, therefore, God of mercy, God of grace, so to eat at this Your table that we may receive in spirit and in truth the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of His shed blood, so that we may live and grow in His likeness and, being washed and cleansed through His most precious blood, we may evermore live in Him and He in us. Amen.

***The Prayer of Consecration of the Elements**

The pastor may pray:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by His sacrifice, offered once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, we come now to Your table in obedience to Your Son, Jesus Christ, who in His holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of His precious death until He comes again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we, receiving this bread and this cup, as He commanded and in the memory of His passion and death, may partake of His most blessed body and blood.

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, (*The pastor may take the bread in his/her hand.*) and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

In like manner, after supper He took the cup, (*The pastor may lay hands upon the cups.*) and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” Amen.

The pastor may first receive the communion, both the bread and the cup, and then give of the same to other pastors who may be present to assist in the service. After that the pastor shall give to the congregation the communion, both the bread and the cup.

When the bread is delivered, the pastor may say:

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed upon Him in your heart, by faith with thanksgiving.

When serving the cup the pastor may say:

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

If the consecrated bread or cup are used up before all have been served, the pastor should consecrate more by repeating the prayer of consecration. When all have communed, the pastor shall return to the Lord's table and place upon it the consecrated elements that remain, covering the same with a white linen cloth. The pastor may then offer extemporaneous prayer, or speak briefly of the significance of the service, and conclude with a blessing.

The Benediction

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen.

Service of Holy Communion — The Alternate Ritual

The alternate ritual is the result of extensive study of the different ways Christians have celebrated the Lord's Supper over the centuries. Although we have no documentary evidence of what was said in the ritual prayers for about a century after the New Testament church, from somewhere around the middle of the third century we do have records, and they become increasingly plentiful as time passes.

Our present ritual is a descendent of the one shaped by Archbishop Cranmer in 1662 as the Church of England began to pull itself away from medieval Catholicism. There are many valuable elements in this ritual that the church has long cherished and would not want to lose. This is especially true of the careful attention it gives to the teaching that through the death of Christ we receive the redeeming grace of God. Cranmer was a master writer who phrased this theme in language that could hardly be excelled.

On the other hand Cranmer did not have some of the materials that we now have that help us understand how the early and patristic churches experienced Holy Communion. These materials possess rich, theological importance and should not be neglected.

Almost all of what we have in the revised ritual incorporates elements that are very old. Thus, we are not really offering a new ritual so much as recovering old elements that had been lost. The order of the ritual, the prayers of the people (confession, petition and intercession) followed by the Eucharistic prayers, dates from Justin Martyr in A.D. 165.

The Confession echoes our traditional ritual and the litany of the *Book of Common Prayer* (also by Cranmer).

The Petition echoes the liturgy of St. James (from Antioch of Syria), that dates from the middle of the fourth century.

The Intercession has elements from many liturgies dating all the way from the fourth to the 20th centuries.

The Thanksgiving reflects the influence of the liturgy of St. Mark (from Alexandria in the third century). It has been a fundamental element in all rituals since that time.

The Sanctus is very hard to date but can be taken back as far as Origen of Alexandria in the third century. It has been a fundamental element in all rituals since that time.

The Great Thanksgiving goes back to the liturgy of St. James but also shows the influence of the medieval prayer *Te Deum* (which can be found in the *Book of Common Prayer*). Forms of the Great Thanksgiving can also be found in the *Didache* (around A.D. 125), which is a Christian adaptation of the Jewish table grace, the *berakhah*, that predates the Christian church altogether. The *berakhah* was the prayer that Jesus would have offered when He ate with His disciples or when He blessed the bread and the fish that were distributed to the 5,000 on the mountain.

The Invitation

Minister:

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbors, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking henceforth in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament for your comfort; and humbly bowing make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The General Confession

Minister:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Maker of all things, Judge of all people, who with great mercy has promised forgiveness and deliverance to all who turn to You with

heartily repentance and true faith, we confess that we have sinned against You and are hopeless without Your grace. Have mercy upon us, O merciful Father, have mercy upon us; pardon and deliver us from all our sins:

From blindness of heart and lack of love;

From the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil;

From false doctrine and neglect of Your Word;

From anxiety and lack of trust.

O God, our Savior, keep us this day without sin. Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life, and to honor and praise Your name through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Petition

Minister:

Almighty God, You have so faithfully watched over us, and so graciously helped us; now hear our petitions:

For good health and sound minds,

For strength to earn our bread,

For rest from worry and labor,

For safety in travel, for protection from enemies,

For Christian homes, for a just and strong nation.

Out of Your compassion give us those things that are good and proper for our souls, and protect us by Your might in all our tribulations. Grant us in this world the peace that is from above, and bring us to everlasting life in the world to come, through Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray saying:

People:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us
our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the king-
dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Intercession

Minister:

Almighty God, Who created the world from nothing,
and Who sustains it by Your powerful word, support and
protect us that we may serve You as intercessors in Your
world; and to that end hear our prayers for those in need:

For the sick, the infirm and the dying;

For widows and orphans, the poor and oppressed;

For the lonely, discouraged, bereaved and heartbroken;

For those in bondage to sin, unmindful of God, without
knowledge of the gospel of salvation.

Minister:

We pray too for all Your servants who work honorably in
the cause of our Lord, Jesus Christ:

For homemakers and wage earners,

For teachers and students,

For doctors and nurses and others who serve the sick,

For laborers and executives,

For farmers and city dwellers,

For the aged and the young,

For those who govern and those who are ruled,
To each of these and to all others for whom we should
pray, give wisdom, strength and the power to endure,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(*Here may be sung a Communion hymn.*)

The Dialogue

Minister:

The Lord be with you.

People:

And also with you.

Minister:

Lift up your hearts.

People:

We lift them up to the Lord.

Minister:

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

People:

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Thanksgiving

Minister:

We give You thanks, O Lord God, for all Your goodness
at all times and in all places. You have shielded, rescued,
helped and guided us all our days and brought us to this
hour, letting us once again worship You and seek Your help.

Blessed are You, Lord God, Ruler of all creation; for by
Your goodness we have this bread from the soil and this
fruit from the vine.

Praise

Minister:

It is always right and proper that we should give You thanks and praise, O Lord God, for You alone reign. You judge the world in righteousness and rule over all the nations. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we honor and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

People:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Glory be to You, O Lord, most high. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Minister:

Almighty God, You created us to enjoy Your fellowship; and even when we transgressed Your command, You did not forsake us, but chastened us as a merciful Father;

You called Abraham from the land of his fathers, and freed the children of Israel from bondage and slavery; You gave Your law and sent Your prophets to guide them in Your ways;

At the right time You gave the world Your only Son, Who by His birth of a virgin, and through His temptations and ministry, His suffering and death, His resurrection and ascension, opened to us the way to heaven;

You sent Your Holy Spirit, the Counselor, Who through the apostles and the church, called us to salvation; You

adopted us and daily give us aid in the journey of faith by the same Spirit. Our hearts are full, O God, and in thanksgiving to You we cry, Abba, Father.

Minister:

In confidence that You will bring us to our full inheritance, and give us our place at the heavenly table with Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, we offer thanksgiving, joining our voices with all the church to confess:

People:

Christ has died,
Christ has risen,
Christ will come again.

Glory to God

People:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Prayer of Approach

Minister:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, send the power of Your Holy Spirit upon us, that we may experience anew the suffering, death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. May Your Spirit help us to know, in the breaking of this bread and the drinking of this cup, the presence of Christ Who gave His body and blood for all. And may Your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in service to all the world. Amen.

Words of Consecration

Minister (laying his hand upon the bread):

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

Minister (laying his hand upon the cup):

In like manner, after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Words of Distribution

Minister:

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed upon Him in your heart, by faith with thanksgiving.

Minister:

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ’s blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

Benediction

Minister:

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.
Amen.

Service of Holy Communion — A Biblical Ritual

There may be occasions that call for a celebration of the Lord's Supper in which the ritual is made entirely from scriptural passages.

These suggestions are offered as a guide for the use of the biblical ritual:

1. The biblical ritual may be used as a separate part of a worship service or interspersed throughout an entire order of worship.
2. Appropriate hymns should be selected when the ritual is spread out throughout the entire worship service.
3. The Lord's Prayer may be sung by the congregation as a positive alternative to the unison recital.
4. The invitation to the Communion ritual may be used as a call to worship for the entire worship service.
5. When several tables are served, let the minister speak appropriate words of dismissal to each.

The Lord's Supper: A Biblical Liturgy (TNIV)

The Invitation

Pastor:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to

cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:19-24

The Call to Love

Unison:

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

Mark 12:29c-30; Matthew 22:38-39;

Mark 12:31c; Matthew 22:40

The Good News from Jesus

Pastor:

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” He said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Mark 1:14-15

The Blest Acts and Attitudes

Unison:

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you,
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven,

for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Matthew 5:1-12

The Responsible Community

Pastor:

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16

The Disciples' Prayer

Unison:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in
heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For if you forgive men when they sin against you,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:9-15

The Communion Faith

Pastor:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

The Supper Instituted

Pastor:

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

Luke 22:14-20

The Slain Lamb

Unison:

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

And when He had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
members of every tribe and language
and people and nation.

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests
to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, num-

bering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”

The four living creatures said, “Amen,”
and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Revelation 5:6-14

Pastor:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20

Pastor:

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Jude 24-25

The Love Feast

The “Love Feast” is one of the fascinating yet least understood aspects of the early church rites. It derives from early church practices. For example, Luke writes, “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:46-47a, NIV).

Such a formal activity may also be referenced in Jude 12, where it says, regarding ungodly believers who were apparently still functioning in this particular church, “These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm — shepherds who feed only themselves.”

In early centuries there may have developed particular practices of holding formal love feasts wherein the people would participate in three activities: the washing of each others’ feet (per Jesus at the Last Supper), the sharing of a fellowship meal, and the sharing of the bread and cup of the Lord’s Supper. These practices apparently largely fell out of common usage for centuries. The Moravians (Czech and Slovak) and the Brethren (Germany) were holding love feasts when John Wesley sought out Moravians upon his return to England. He subsequently adapted their love feast to Methodist practice. Here are Wesley’s own words about his use of the love feast in the small group called a “band”:

“In order to increase ... a grateful sense of all God’s mercies, I desired that one evening every three months all men in the band, on a second all the women, would meet, and on a third both men and women together, that we might together ‘eat bread,’ as the ancient Christians did, ‘with gladness and singleness of heart.’ At these love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning) our food is only a little plain cake and water; but we seldom return

from them without being fed not only with the ‘meat which perisheth,’ but with ‘that which endureth to everlasting life.’”

Free Methodists have historically observed the love feast as a stand-alone opportunity (i.e., not connected to foot washing or to the Lord’s Supper). Our service is characterized by the singing of hymns, a devotional challenge regarding one’s love relationship with God, testimonies, extemporaneous prayer and the breaking of bread (symbolizing the meals shared by early Christians) between brothers and sisters during an extended time of sharing, wherein persons ask forgiveness of any against whom they may have sinned, express forgiveness or reconciliation, and pray for one another according to the need.

Reconciliation of the most noble sort is represented in the breaking of bread. The broken bread offered by Jesus to the disciples, including Judas, was a final act of forgiving love on the part of the Master. The breaking of bread is a celebration of the forgiving love of Christ at Calvary and a participation in that love in the fellowship of the reconciled, joy-filled believers. We reintroduce this service as a resource for seeking to maintain singleness of heart through forgiving love, which overcomes petty differences or misunderstandings.

Opening Sentences

Dear friends, let us love one another; for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 John 4:7, 10-12, NIV)

Hymns/Songs

On the theme of God's love, mutual love, grace, forgiveness, reconciliation, etc.

Devotional Message or Challenge from the Scriptures **Silent Meditation**

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24, NIV)

Guided Reflection and Prayer

Guide participants to pray and listen to the Spirit regarding any offense or division that might exist between themselves and others. Use the kneeling rails for prayer, or have them kneel at their chair or pew. This is time for introspection and inquiry of the Lord.

(*Please see below other reflective questions that may be used from time to time).

The leader asks the following (and other) kinds of questions, pausing after each:

1. Am I willing to know myself and accept responsibility for what I am and for what I do, or do I blame others?
2. Am I honest, or do I profess principles in public that I do not practice in private?
3. Am I more severe in my judgment of others than I am in judgment of myself?
4. Am I making demands of others that I do not make of myself?

5. Am I listening to others so I may understand them, or do I think only of my own thoughts when others speak?
6. Am I gracious and courteous toward all my family, my associates and the strangers whom I meet?
7. Am I forgiving toward all who have wronged me or spoken unkindly, remembering that God forgives even more through Christ Jesus my Lord?
8. Am I doing all in my power to keep peace and unity with the fellowship of Christian believers?
9. Am I ready to ask forgiveness of any I have wronged, humbling myself that Jesus Christ may be exalted in the congregation?
10. Am I willing to be known by others and to love my Christian brothers and sisters when I know them?

Prayer

The leader begins, but then invites extemporaneous prayer by others.

Distribute the Bread

Each participant is given a large enough piece of bread to allow them to go to several others and offer them a portion of their bread as a sign of their desire for peace, continued communion, reconciliation or to pray for or with them.

Song: “Bind Us Together,” “Make Me a Servant” or “Jesus, Thine All Victorious Love”

Following the singing, let the people move out to mingle with

all others, to take from each other the offered bread, and to speak to one another in love, request, appreciation, forgiveness, etc., quietly and sincerely.

Song: “We Are One in the Spirit” (or one of similar tone and intent)

When the time of sharing ends, let ushers gather the leftover bread. Let the people stand to sing. They may form a circle and clasp hands if convenient and appropriate.

Song: “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

Benediction

Go forth to love God and your neighbor in all you do. Go to live as witnesses to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow His teachings through acts of kindness, justice, worship and devotion. May the Holy Spirit pour into your heart God’s love, through Jesus Christ, who said, “By this [everyone] will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35, NIV).

*Alternate Questions for Love Feast Guided Reflection:

1. How do I use my leisure time? Is it pleasing to the Lord?
2. What are the things at which I tend to laugh? Am I demeaning others when I do?
3. Do I ever try to create the impression in others that I am a better person than I am?
4. Do I pass along to other persons that which was told to me in confidence?
5. Am I a slave to faddish dress, overeating or sexual fantasizing?

6. Do I take time to have daily personal devotions?
7. Do I insist on doing some things about which my conscience is a bit uneasy?
8. Am I jealous, critical, irritable, touchy or hard to please?
9. How do I treat those who are unkind or unreasonable toward me?
10. Am I quick to acknowledge a fault and ask forgiveness?
11. Is there anybody whom I dislike, disregard or hold resentment against?
12. Do I enjoy taking time to pray and be alone with God?

A Service of Prayer for the Healing of Human Hurts

Prepare the congregation in advance.

1. Preach on the healing miracles of Jesus.
2. Recruit prayer support from the intercessory groups in the church.
3. Explain the purpose and nature of the service of prayer for the healing of human hurts.
4. Assure the people that every request will be kept in strict confidence.

Prepare yourself and several others who will assist you in praying at the altar.

1. Remember that the moments with each seeker at the altar are for prayer only. If counseling is needed, suggest that it be arranged at another time.
2. Prepare your hearts through fasting and prayer the previous week and during a time of prayer and meditation immediately preceding the service.
3. Prepare the order of service to include appropriate music, a brief meditation (perhaps on a healing miracle of Jesus), and a testimony of healing from one of your people.

Prepare the people to come to the service ready to write on their prayer cards a specific concern of their own or a burden they carry for another. Encourage them to be honest in describing in a few words the deepest concerns of their own lives — physical, emotional or spiritual.

After hymns and Scripture readings* that magnify the love of God and the healing ministry of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, ask the people to come forward and kneel opposite you and the others who assist you, presenting their cards with explicit needs indicated. Spend a few moments in faith-filled prayer with them. Allow them to remain in quiet meditation until they wish to return to their places.

As music plays quietly in the background, people will come

to share with you burdens and hurts of which you had no knowledge.

It may be appropriate to ask for personal testimonies following if time allows.

You may wish to print prayer cards and folders with appropriate scripture and readings using the following suggestion:

*Suggested Readings: Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalms 46:1-3, 10-11; Luke 4:16-21; John 5:1-8; Romans 8:26-27; Hebrews 7:23-28 and 10:19-23.

Prayer Card

Name _____

Personal need _____

My prayer burden for another

A Service of Prayer for the Healing of Human Hurts

“Many followed him,
and he healed all their sick. . . .”
(Matthew 12:15b).

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

Each of us carries a burden for a friend. Many of us have burdens of our own that are too heavy to bear. There are broken places in either body, mind or spirit that only Christ can heal.

Our risen Lord stands among His people in a service such as this, welcoming you to come with your burden, with your hurt, and let Him touch you with His healing love.

As you come to share your need with God and with one of the intercessors at the altar, your Christian friends will be praying for you.

We invite each of you to become a part of a caring, praying congregation. During this hour let the creative work of the Holy Spirit bring to you a new realization that Christ is carrying the heaviest part of your burden for someone else.

Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:29-30, NIV).

Service of Infant Baptism

Book of Discipline, ¶8010

The pastor coming to the font, which is to be filled with pure water, shall say:

Dear friends in Christ: God, through Moses, made covenant with Israel, saying to the people, “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

In the days of the New Covenant, Christ Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14) and on the Day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter declared, regarding the salvation given through Christ, “The promise is to you and to your children” (Acts 2:39).

It is therefore our privilege to present our children to the Lord and our duty to raise them in His ways. These parents now bring *this child* to offer *him/her* in dedication and to pledge in the presence of this congregation to bring *him/her* up in the Lord’s discipline and instruction.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who has made saving covenant with Your people and who, out of Your loving-kindness, has ordained that they should live before You in families; we thank You that it is our privilege to dedicate our children to You, in steadfast hope that they will cleave to Your covenant and live to Your glory. We entreat You for *this child* that *he/she* may be delivered from

the power of sin and Satan and be set apart to You by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for these parents that they may be given divine aid, so that both by instruction and example they may lead *this child* in the way of everlasting life, and so all may come in unity together to Your eternal kingdom. We pray for this congregation, that we may faithfully discharge our duties to both parents and child, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Questions to parents:

1. Do you, in the presence of God and this church, solemnly dedicate this child to the Lord?

Answer: We/I do.

2. Do you, so far as you are able on *his/her* behalf, renounce the devil and his works, the lure of the world and the sinful desires of fallen humanity, so that in the training of *this child* you will not be led by them and so that so far as you are able, you will keep *this child* from following them?

Answer: We/I do.

3. Will you faithfully strive by word and example to lead *this child* to personal faith in Christ?

Answer: We/I will.

4. Do you accept the authority of the Old and New Testaments?

Answer: We/I do.

5. Out of them, will you diligently teach *this child* the commandments and promises of the Most High God, raising *him/her* in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

Answer: We/I will.

The pastor will say:

Let us acknowledge our duty to strengthen this family with prayers and encouragement, thus aiding the parent(s) and child to fulfill all that has here been promised. The congregation will affirm this by standing.

The pastor shall take the child, and say:

Name this child.

_____, I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray: O God, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, grant that this child may increase in wisdom and stature, growing in divine and human favor. So guide and uphold these parents that they may lead this child into that life of faith in Jesus Christ whose mark in this world is righteousness and in the world to come, everlasting bliss. May he/she be brought early to affirm in faith all that has here been pledged on his/her behalf, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction: “Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen” (Jude 24, 25, RSV).

In the place of the second prayer, the pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer, which will include the petitions set forth in the printed prayer.

Service of Infant Dedication

Book of Discipline, ¶8020

The pastor shall say:

Dear friends in Christ: God, through Moses made covenant with Israel, saying to the people, “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

In the days of the New Covenant, Christ Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14) and on the Day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter declared, regarding the salvation given through Christ, “The promise is to you and to your children” (Acts 2:39).

It is therefore our privilege to present our children to the Lord and our duty to raise them in His ways. These parents now bring *this child* to offer *him/her* in dedication and to pledge in the presence of this congregation to bring *him/her* up in the Lord’s discipline and instruction.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who has made saving covenant with Your people and who, out of Your loving-kindness, has ordained that they should live before You in families; we thank You that it is our privilege to dedicate our children to You, in steadfast hope that they will cleave to Your covenant and live to Your glory. We entreat You for *this child* that *he/she* may be delivered from the power of sin and Satan and be set apart to You by the

power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for these parents that they may be given divine aid, so that both by instruction and example they may lead *this child* in the way of everlasting life, and so all may come in unity together to Your eternal kingdom. We pray for this congregation, that we may faithfully discharge our duties to both parents and child, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Questions to parents:

1. Do you, in the presence of God and this church, solemnly dedicate *this child* to the Lord?

Answer: We/I do.

2. Will you endeavor to live a life before *this child* that will give witness to your faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: We/I will.

3. Do you accept the authority of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God?

Answer: We/I do.

4. Out of them, will you endeavor diligently to teach *this child* the commandments and promises of the Most High God, so that your child may early come to personal faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: We/I will.

Then the pastor will say:

Let us acknowledge our duty to support this family with our prayers and encouragement, thereby aiding the parent(s) and child to fulfill all that has here been promised. The congregation will affirm this by standing.

The pastor shall then take the child in his arms and say:

Name this child.

Even as Joseph and Mary brought Jesus in the time of His infancy to the temple to present Him to God, so now, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we present

_____ in an act of dedication to God, with a prayer that at an early age in life *he/she* may experience His justifying and sanctifying grace. Amen.

Here the pastor shall pray an extemporaneous prayer on behalf of the parents and their child.

Service of Baptism for Children Under Twelve

Book of Discipline, ¶8030

In place of the questions asked to parents or guardians in ¶8010, the pastor may ask the following questions to candidates for baptism who are under 12 years of age.

Questions to candidate:

1. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and do you desire to be baptized in His name?

Answer: I do.

2. Do you intend by this act to testify to all the world that you are a Christian and will be a loyal follower of Christ?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you believe in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

Answer: I do.

4. Trusting God to help you, will you resist temptation always and keep from doing those things that you know to be sinful or displeasing to God?

Answer: I will.

5. Will you attend church services and do those things you know a Christian should do?

Answer: I will.

The Affirmation of Baptismal Vows

Book of Discipline, ¶8040

Because we baptize infants, it is important to provide the opportunity for youth to affirm their acceptance of the vows taken on their behalf when they were infants. This provides a similar kind of checkpoint on the journey of faith as that which is commonly called “confirmation” in other churches. Though we do not have a formal confirmation procedure, we do strongly suggest that prior to use of this ritual, the individual be guided to review our catechism (available at LLCust+Serv@freemethodistchurch.org) as a means of confirming the specifics of his or her faith.

This ritual allows for the spiritual anchor to be set once children have experienced the benefits of the promises made by their parents and have established their own acceptance of Jesus as their own source of salvation. Please note that in preparation for answering the questions, the individual should be guided to review the Infant Baptism ritual and questions.

Rebaptism?

We are not Anabaptist in our theology in that we do not require rebaptism by immersing, pouring or sprinkling once a person comes to age of accountability. We do practice infant baptism. But, we acknowledge that at the request of the individual, rebaptism is unofficially and occasionally practiced among us. We do not endorse or condemn such practices, believing that individual consciences should be allowed to guide such decisions.

We direct you to <http://www.freemethodistchurch.org/~pclm> for a statement regarding our rationale for providing either infant baptism or infant dedication at the request of parent(s) or guardian(s).

The pastor shall say:

Dearly beloved, in your infancy your parents presented you at the altar of the church for the Sacrament of Baptism. That service was one of both dedication and consecration. Your parents dedicated you to the Lord and took vows on your behalf. They promised to teach you from the Word of God and to train you in the way that you should go.

God in His goodness has brought you to years of responsibility, and you now desire to acknowledge before God and His church the covenant then made on your behalf, to profess your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to consecrate yourself to Him, and thereby to bind yourself anew to His service.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, “Whoever publicly acknowledges me I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32, TNIV).

Let us repeat the words of the Apostles’ Creed (together).

The Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker 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, dead and buried; He descended into Hades; the third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall 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.

Questions:

1. Do you believe these things?

Answer: All these things I firmly believe.

2. Do you promise with the aid of the Holy Spirit to be Christ's faithful disciple to your life's end?

Answer: I do.

3. Have you read and considered the vows taken for you in baptism, and do you affirm them with a humble and contrite heart, putting your whole trust in the mercy of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

Answer: I do.

4. Do you promise to make diligent use of the means of grace, to share faithfully in the worship and service of the church, to give of your substance as the Lord may prosper you, and to give your whole heart to the service of Christ and His kingdom throughout the world?

Answer: I do.

Service of Baptism for Adults

(This gender neutral alternate version of the ritual from *The Manual of the Free Methodist Church in Canada* is provided for your consideration.)

The pastor shall say:

Dear friends in Christ, our faith declares that by the sin of Adam, humanity as the offspring of Adam is corrupted in its very nature, so that from birth we are inclined to sin; and that new life and a right relationship with God are possible only through the redemptive acts of God in Christ Jesus. Believing these declarations to be true, and in obedience to the command of Christ, (*this person has/these persons have*) come to make public confession that (*his/her/their*) sins have been washed away, and by means of baptism with water, to give sign of that inward washing and new life in Christ which are now (*his/hers/theirs*) by faith. We therefore implore you to pray that through this means of grace (*he/she/they*) may be further moved to keep covenant with God and so may ever experience the constant washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Then the minister shall say:

Let us pray. Almighty and Everlasting God, whose covenant is firm and whose promises are always to be trusted, we call upon You for *this person* that, (*he/she*), coming to (*his/her*) baptism, may by this act give clear witness that (*he/she*) has received Your inner washing through faith in the cleansing blood of Your Son, Jesus Christ. May (*he/she*) ever rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of

Your Spirit, the fellowship of the church and the assurance of resurrection to glory in the world to come.

Then shall the people stand, and the minister shall say:

Christ Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20, RSV).

You, who present yourself for water baptism, have heard this congregation’s prayers that God will continue His loving favor toward you and bring you to His eternal kingdom. And God, Who keeps covenant, has promised by His only Son, Who offered Himself up for our redemption, to grant you these gracious favors. You must now promise, in the presence of this congregation, to keep covenant with Him, renouncing the life of sin, believing His Holy Word and obediently keeping His commandments.

Then shall the minister ask each candidate these questions, to be answered individually:

1. Do you have the inward witness that your sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord?

Answer: I have.

2. Do you renounce the devil and his works, the lure of this ungodly world and the sinful desires of fallen humanity, so that you will not follow nor be led by them?

Answer: I do.

*Let us repeat the words of the Apostles' Creed (together):
The Apostles' Creed:*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker 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, dead and buried; He descended into Hades; the third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall 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.

3. Do you believe these things?

Answer: All these things I firmly believe.

4. Is it your desire to be baptized into the Christian faith?

Answer: It is my desire.

5. In the fellowship of the church, will you obediently do God's will and walk in His holy commandments all the days of your life?

Answer: I will endeavor to do so, the Lord being my helper.

Then shall the persons be baptized by sprinkling, pouring or immersion as they shall desire. The minister shall say:

I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Then shall the minister use the following prayer, or substitute an extemporaneous one with the same requests:

God, our Father, who gives to all who repent and believe the gospel the right to be called children of God, may Your grace ever be effectual in this, *Your child*. And may (*he/she*) enjoy the greater baptism of the Holy Spirit so that all sinful inclinations may be conquered by Your power, and every Christian virtue may live and grow in (*him/her*). Grant to (*him/her*) a place of service in the fellowship of Your church and may (*his/her*) witness in the world bring glory to Your holy name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Here may follow a benediction if the service is ending.

Consecration of Deacons

Book of Discipline, ¶8500

The service may be either a special service with appropriate music and preparation, or as a part of a Sunday worship service.

The pastor or designee shall present to the superintendent the one who is (those who are) to be consecrated, saying:

Superintendent _____ (name), I present to you _____ (name or names) to be consecrated deacon in the _____ (name of church), a Free Methodist congregation.

The superintendent shall say to the pastor:

Have you diligently examined *this person/these persons*, whom you present to us, to be capable and qualified? *Has he/she/ Have they* prepared *himself/herself/themselves* educationally and spiritually, so that *his/her/their* life and ministry will bring honor to God and edify His church?

The senior pastor shall respond:

He has/She has/They have been so examined and we believe *him/her/them* to be a *person/persons* God has called to be a consecrated *deacon/deacons* in this church.

The superintendent shall say to the congregation:

Dear Friends in Christ: We purpose, God willing, to consecrate as a deacon *this person/these persons* who *stands/stand* before you. *He has/She has/They have* been examined and *has/have* been found to be a *person/persons* called by God to this ministry and suited for the same. We ask you, people of God, to declare your assent to the consecration of *this person/these persons*.

Do you trust that *he is/she is/they are* worthy, by God's grace, to be consecrated?

People: We do. Thanks be to God.

Superintendent:

Will you uphold *him/her/them* in *his/her/their* ministry?

People: With God's help, we will.

Superintendent:

Let us stand together as we pray in unison the prayer our Lord taught us to pray:

People: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Superintendent:

You may be seated.

Superintendent continues in prayer with The Collect:

Let us pray: Almighty God, who appointed ministers in Your church and inspired Your apostles to consecrate as deacon Your first martyr, Stephen, with others; look with mercy upon *this, Your servant/these, Your servants*, whom You have called to the same order and administration; may *he/she/they* be replenished with the truth of Your doctrine and adorned with blamelessness of life, so that both by word and good example, *he/she/they* may serve You faithfully; so may Your name be glorified and Your church built up, through the mer-

its of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The superintendent may assign readers:

Mark 10:42-45 (NRSV)

“So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’”

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (NRSV)

“Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 4:10-11 (TNIV)

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If you speak, you should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If you serve, you should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

The superintendent shall then say to the candidate(s):

My brother/sister/brothers and sisters you are to be consecrated to the ministry of deacon in this church. God has called you to represent to the church the ministry of servanthood in the world, a ministry to which all Christians are called in baptism, but to which you are called in a special way. You are to be a co-worker with your pastor(s) (and other deacons), serving this congregation in the area of your gifting and calling. In the name of Jesus Christ you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the oppressed. You are to interpret to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world. At all times, by your life and teaching you are to show Christ’s people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ.

So that we may know that you believe *yourself/yourselfs* to be called by God and that you profess the Christian faith, we ask you the following questions:

1. Do you believe you are inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon you the ministry of a deacon in this

church, to serve God, promoting His glory and edifying His people?

Answer: I so believe.

2. Are you persuaded that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and are the inspired and authoritative standard for the church's faith and life?

Answer: I do so believe and am persuaded.

3. Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and do you accept the beliefs and teachings of the Christian faith?

Answer: I do so confess and accept, by the grace of God.

4. Will you be faithful in prayer, in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, continually rekindle the gift of God that is in you?

Answer: I will, with the help of God.

5. Will you apply all diligence to regulate and fashion your own life (and the lives of your family) according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make (both) yourself (and them), as far as you are able, wholesome example(s) of the flock of Christ?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

6. Deacons express their ministry under the guidance and authority of an elder, being faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ as they participate in the life and work of

the church. Will you do this gladly and willingly?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

7. Will you be loyal to the Free Methodist Church, accepting its polity, doctrine and discipline?

Answer: I will, with the help of God.

May God, who has given you the will to do these things, give you grace to perform them, that the work begun in you may be brought to completion. Amen.

Laying on of Hands and Prayer

The superintendent says to the congregation:

As this person is/these persons are consecrated by God and the church for the ministry of deacon, to which we believe he/she/they have been called by the Holy Spirit, let us silently pray for him/her/them as they kneel before God.

The candidates kneel.

The people pray for them in silence.

The superintendent addresses the candidate(s):

My brother/sister/brothers and sisters, from the time of the apostles, persons with suitable gifts and graces have been set apart by the laying on of hands and prayer for a ministry of service in the church of Jesus Christ our Lord. We trust that the Spirit of God has called you to the ministry of deacon. As earnest prayer is made for the fulfillment of the Spirit's gift in you, your church now calls you to receive the laying on of hands as the seal of your vocation by the Spirit.

The superintendent (and other elders, as well as consecrated deacons who may be present), laying hands upon the head of each candidate in turn, shall say:

Take authority to execute the office of a deacon in this congregation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

After all have received the laying on of hands, the superintendent, facing the candidates, with both hands extended over them, says:

Let us pray. We give thanks to You, Lord God, that in Your great love You sent Jesus Christ, Your only begotten, to take the form of a servant for the sake of us all, becoming obedient even to death on the cross. We praise You that You have highly exalted Jesus Christ Your servant Whom You have made to be Lord of all, and that You have taught us, by His word and example, that whoever would be great among us must be servant of all. Increase within the lives of these Your servants the gift of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ Your Son, for the ministry of a deacon in Your church. Give them grace to be faithful to their promises, constant in their discipleship and always ready for the works of loving service. Make them modest and humble, gentle and strong that, having the assurance of faith and rejoicing in hope, they may be rooted and grounded in love. Give them a share in the ministry of Jesus Christ, Who came not to be served but to serve; Who now lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Recognition and a Bible or other gift may be given to each deacon.

The superintendent addresses the deacon:

We now welcome you to your ministry as deacon. You have given assurance of your faith and Christian experience. You have confirmed the vows of your consecration and committed yourself to uphold faithfully the Free Methodist Church. We rejoice that you have been called to serve among us, and pray that the Spirit of God may guide your ministry.

Presenting each deacon with his or her credentials, the superintendent says:

_____ (*name*), we now recognize you as a deacon in the _____ (*name of church*), a Free Methodist congregation.

Benediction

Christian Marriage

Book of Discipline, ¶8200

¶8210 *At the time set, the man and woman to be married shall stand together facing the pastor, the woman on the man's left, and the pastor shall say:*

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and the presence of these witnesses to join together _____ and _____ in holy matrimony. Marriage is an honorable estate, instituted by God in the time of creation for the well-being of mankind. It is safeguarded by the laws of Moses, affirmed by the words of the prophets, and hallowed by the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Marriage is a union close and enduring, a relationship in which a man and a woman forsake all others to become one flesh. This abiding union illustrates the holy relationship between Christ and His church. Marriage is therefore not to be entered into by any lightly, but reverently, soberly and in the fear of God.

Addressing the man and woman, the pastor shall say:

_____ and _____, I charge you both as you stand in the presence of God to remember that covenant love alone will avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. Let Christ, who was loyal to His own unto death, be your example. Let the Apostle Paul be your teacher, who wrote, "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices

in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, RSV). If you keep this steadfast love ever before you and, remaining faithful to each other, resolutely endeavor to fulfill the vows you now will make, God’s blessing will be upon you, and the home you establish will endure through life’s every change.

The pastor shall say to the man, using his Christian name:

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?

The man shall answer: I will.

The pastor shall say to the woman, using her Christian name:

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live?

The woman shall answer: I will.

The pastor shall say:

Who gives _____ to be married to _____?

The father of the woman, or the person who gives her in marriage, shall answer: I do.

The pastor, receiving the hand of the woman from her father or other sponsor, shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and say after him:

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, and thereto I pledge you my faith.

They shall loose their hands, and the woman, with her right hand, shall take the man by his right hand, and shall likewise say after the pastor:

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, and thereto I pledge you my faith.

They again shall loose hands. The groomsman may give to the pastor a ring, which the pastor in turn will give to the groom, who will put it upon the third finger of the woman's left hand and, holding the ring, shall say after the pastor:

This ring I give you in token and pledge of our constant faith and steadfast love.

In case of a double ring ceremony, the pastor shall receive the other ring from the bridesmaid and shall deliver it to the woman to put upon the third finger of the man's left hand. The woman, holding the ring there, shall say after the pastor:

This ring I give you in token and pledge of our constant faith and steadfast love.

The pastor shall say:

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, creator and preserver of all mankind, giver of all spiritual grace, the author of everlasting life: send Your blessing upon this man and this woman whom we bless in Your name; that they, living faithfully together, may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant between them made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to Your laws through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The pastor shall say:

Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have consented together in holy wedlock and have witnessed the same before God and this company and have pledged their faith each to the other and have declared the same by joining hands (and by giving and receiving a ring), therefore, by the authority granted to me as a minister of Jesus Christ, I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together, let not man put asunder. Amen.

The man and woman then kneel, and the pastor shall pray over them an extemporaneous prayer; prepared especially for the two of them.

The man and woman shall stand, and the pastor shall pronounce over them the following benediction:

Go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good. Render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted. Support the weak. Help the afflicted. Show honor to all. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. Amen.

The Funeral Service

Book of Discipline, ¶8310

The pastor may use this order of worship at the church or chapel.

The pastor may use opening sentences, such as:

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26, RSV).

“For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:17-18, RSV).

Invocation:

O Eternal God, our Father, from whom we come and to whom we go, grant us the favor of Your divine presence at this time in our earthly pilgrimage; assure us by Your Spirit that the one we serve, even Jesus, has conquered death and is alive forevermore; enable us to view our temporal lives in the light of the eternal; and so may our spirits grow calm and our vision clear. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

**Hymn by the Congregation, Musicians
or Organist (Optional)**

Obituary and/or Tributes (Optional)

Old Testament Scriptures, such as Psalms 23, 90, 121

New Testament Scriptures, such as John 14:1-6;

1 Corinthians 15:35-49; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

**Hymn by the Congregation, Musicians
or Organist (Optional)**

Meditation

Prayer for the Family and Community

Benediction (*not used if the service is to continue at the graveside*)

The pastor shall at the appropriate time at the cemetery say:

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26, RSV).

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes” (Job 19:25-27a, NIV).

“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Timothy 6:7, NIV).

“The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised” (Job 1:21b, NIV).

This may also be used at the cemetery.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to

prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

“Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:1-6, RSV).

Then shall the pastor say:

Inasmuch as Almighty God, in His wise providence, has taken out of this world our deceased brother (sister, or child), we therefore commit this mortal body to the ground, looking for the general resurrection in the last day and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose Second Coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed, and made like unto His own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

The pastor may pray extemporaneously or use The Collect.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the resurrection and the life, in Whom whosoever believeth shall live though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally, we meekly beseech You, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we may

rest in Him, and at the general resurrection on the last day may be found acceptable in Your sight and receive that blessing which Your well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear You, saying, “Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.” Grant this, we beseech You, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Going Home to Heaven — A Saint's Send-Off with Loved Ones Present

(Songs may be used at the start, during and/or end.)

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psalm 23, KJV).

Almighty God, look on this, your servant, lying in great weakness, and comfort *him/her* with the promise of life everlasting, given in the resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit — Holy Trinity, one God — have mercy on Your servant, _____ . From all evil, from all sin, from all tribulation, good Lord, deliver *him/her*. By Your holy incarnation, by Your cross and passion, by Your precious death and burial, by Your glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, grant _____ a place of refreshment and everlasting blessedness, of joy and gladness, in Your kingdom, with Your saints in light, Jesus,

Lamb of God, bearer of our sins, Redeemer of the world.

Inviting all to pray aloud together:

“Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Deliver Your servant, _____, O Sovereign Lord Christ, from all evil, and set *him/her* free from every bond, that *he/she* may rest with all Your saints in the eternal habitations, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit You live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Depart, O Christian soul, out of this world; in the name of God the Father Almighty who created you, in the name of the Holy Spirit who fills you. May your rest be this day in peace, and your dwelling place in the Paradise of God.

Into Your hands, O wonderful, merciful Savior, we commend Your servant, _____. Acknowledge, we humbly ask You, a sheep of Your own fold, a lamb of Your own flock, a sinner of Your own redeeming. Receive *him/her* into the arms of Your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light! Amen.

Almighty God, our Father in heaven, before whom live all who die in the Lord, receive our *brother/sister*, _____, into the courts of Your heavenly dwelling place. Let *his/her* heart and soul now ring out in joy to You, O Lord, the living God, and the God of those who live. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(There may be sharing by, and/or further prayers offered for, the family.)

(Adapted from *The Book of Common Prayer*, by Thomas J. Ramundo.)

Dedication of Churches

Book of Discipline, ¶8600

Here follow two more contemporary rituals for the dedication of church buildings. The more traditional ritual may be found at <http://www.freemethodistchurch.org/~pclm>.

Ritual A — Dedication of a Church Building or Meeting Hall

Ritual A, which follows immediately, is the dedicatory material only. It may be fleshed out with appropriate hymns and songs, creeds and the Lord's Prayer, Scripture readings and the ministry of the Word, the honoring of those involved in leadership of the building project and an appropriate benediction. You might also consider using portions of Ritual B, which follows, to create your own unique ritual.

Dedicatory Prayer

O eternal God, You are mighty in power and glorious in majesty. The heavens cannot contain Your glory, much less the walls of buildings made with hands, and yet You have been pleased to promise Your special presence wherever two or three of Your faithful gather in Your name. Be present with us today, we pray, as we gather together with all humility and readiness of heart to consecrate this place to the honor of Your great name; separating it from all unhallowed uses and dedicating it to Your service for the reading of Your Holy Word, for proclaiming Your everlasting gospel, for teaching Your people in the ways of righteousness, for celebrating Your matchless grace, for offering Your glorious majesty the sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving, for blessing Your people in Your name, and for all other holy offices. Look with mercy upon us as we seek to

worship You today, and may our worship glorify Your holy name, through Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior.
Amen.

All standing, the bishop (or designee) shall say, the people responding:

To the glory of God the Father,
 who has called us by His grace;
To the honor of His Son, who loved us
 and gave Himself for us;
To the praise of the Holy Spirit,
 who illumines and sanctifies us;

we dedicate this house.

For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry;
For the nurture of our children and our teens;
For the upbuilding of our community;

we dedicate this house.

For the comfort of all who mourn;
For strength for those who are tempted;
For light to those who seek the way;

we dedicate this house.

For the hallowing of family life;
For teaching and guiding the young;
For the perfecting of the saints;

we dedicate this house.

For the conversion of sinners;
For the promotion of righteousness;
For the extension of the kingdom of God;

we dedicate this house.

In the unity of the faith;
In the bond of Christian fellowship;
In charity and goodwill to all;
we dedicate this house.

Ritual B — Dedication of a Church Building or Meeting Hall

Prelude

Responsive Reading of Psalm 24

Pastor: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.

Congregation: Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Pastor: Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle.

Congregation: Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Scripture — Ephesians 3:20-21; Psalms 115:1-13

Choral Number or Other Ministry in Music

Hymn — “The Church’s One Foundation” (or a song about Christ)

Prayer

Welcome by the Pastor

Greetings from Special Guests

Announcements

Children’s Choir (optional)

Hymn — “God of Our Fathers” (or a song of praise)

Offering

Sermon

Hymn — “How Firm a Foundation” (or a song about the Great Commission)

Five Scriptural Values

Leader: Obedience to God’s Word is the highest form of worship.

Congregation: Grant, O Lord, that we may take to heart all the words You have solemnly declared to us this day so that we may command our children to obey carefully all the words of Your law. Your words are not just idle words for us; they are our life. By them we will live long in the community we have come to possess.

In view of God’s mercies, we offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to You, O God, which is our spiritual worship. We will endeavor to not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but will seek to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Then we will be

able to test and approve Your will, Your good, pleasing and perfect will.

The entrance of Your words gives light. We will let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, hiding the Word in our hearts so that we will not sin against You. (Deuteronomy 32:45-47; Romans 12:1-2; Psalms 119:11, 130; Colossians 3:16)

Leader: The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Congregation: Grant, O Lord, that we may find joy in this house of prayer, for Your church is to be called a house of prayer for all nationalities who worship as one.

Teach us to follow the example of the apostles, who all joined together constantly in prayer, along with other believers. When pressures and threats come upon the church, may we again learn from the apostles to raise our voices together in prayer to You. After we have prayed, may we be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak Your Word boldly.

Thank You, Lord, that the prayer of a righteous people is powerful and effective. (Isaiah 56:7; Acts 1:14, 4:24, 31 and James 5:16)

Leader: Every believer is a minister, gifted by God for the benefit of the Kingdom.

Congregation: Grant, O Lord, that we will use whatever gifts we have received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. In Christ, we who are many form one body, and each of us belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the

grace given us. May we develop and use these gifts to prepare Your people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (1 Peter 4:10; Romans 12:5-6; Ephesians 4:12-13)

Leader: God is glorified through the unity of the body of Christ.

Congregation: Grant, O Lord, that all people will know that we are your disciples and that the world might believe that You sent Your Son, because we love one another.

Now that we have purified ourselves by obeying the truth, so that we have genuine mutual love, help us love one another deeply from the heart. Yes, love one another deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Strengthen us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bonds of peace, for Your Word declares that it is good and pleasant when kindred live together in unity. For there, You, O Lord, bestow Your blessings, even life evermore. (John 15:3-5, 17:21; 1 Peter 1:22, 4:8; Ephesians 4:3; Psalms 133:1, 3)

Leader: Lost people are precious to God and to us.

Congregation: Grant, O Lord, that we may care about the souls of men and women with Your compassion, the compassion of You, our Father, of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are lost. There is rejoicing in the presence of Your angels over one sinner who repents.

You, our Father, loved the world so much that You gave Your one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For You did not send Your Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. You are patient with all of us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

O God, that our eyes might be fountains of tears that we would weep day and night for those who do not know You. May we have great sorrow and anguish in our hearts for those in this community and those around the world who have never heard of You. Give us hearts that always care about the salvation of people.

(Luke 19:10, 15:10; John 3:14-17; 2 Peter 3:9; Jeremiah 9:1; Romans 9:2)

Leader and Congregation: As we offer these our church values and prayer requests, we, the pastor and people of the _____ Free Methodist Church, dedicate this church, together with all its facilities, to the praise and service of Almighty God. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Hymn — “To God Be the Glory”

Benediction

(Adapted from a service by the Reverend Harold Bishop and members of First Free Methodist Church, Lawrence, Kansas. Used with permission.)

Preparatory Membership

This ritual other than questions and answers is optional.

Those who are to be received as preparatory members shall be called forward by name, and the pastor, addressing the people, shall say:

Dear friends, that none may be admitted into the Free Methodist Church without instruction, we receive persons who seek fellowship with us into preparatory membership, during which they may be properly instructed, and also give proof, both to themselves and to the church, of the sincerity and depth of their convictions and of the strength and purpose of their desire to lead a new life.

Then addressing the persons seeking admission as preparatory members, the pastor shall say:

Believers in Christ, you have by the grace of God made your decision to follow Christ and to serve Him. Your confidence in so doing is to be based not on any notion of fitness or worthiness in yourselves, but on the gracious promise of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

That the church may know your purpose, you will answer the following questions:

1. Do you have the assurance that God has forgiven your sins through faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: I have.

2. Are you willing to receive membership instruction as offered by our church?

Answer: I am.

3. Have you received Christian baptism?

Answer: Yes or no.

If not, will you receive this sacrament at a duly appointed time?

Answer: Yes.

4. You have been won to Christ. Will you endeavor to win others to Christ and the church?

Answer: I will.

Then shall the pastor say:

On behalf of the Free Methodist Church and in the hope that you will go forward to complete membership therein, I extend to you a cordial welcome.

Then shall the pastor offer extemporaneous prayer.

Youth Membership

Book of Discipline, ¶8820

Ritual other than questions and answers is optional.

Those who are to be received as youth members shall be called forward by name, and the pastor shall say:

Beloved, our Lord Jesus, by His Holy Word, has expressly given to everyone who believes in Him a place in His kingdom and church. Before you are admitted into the church, it becomes my duty to inquire of you as to your purpose of mind and heart.

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ has forgiven your sins and is now your Savior?

Answer: Yes.

2. Have you received Christian baptism? If not, are you willing to be baptized?

Answer: Yes.

3. Will you attend classes of instruction on living the Christian life and serving God through your church?

Answer: Yes.

4. Can the Free Methodist Church count on you? Will you pray for the church, attend regularly, give to your church and help wherever you can?

Answer: Yes.

5. Will you show your friends by the way you live what it means to be a Christian and will you try to win them to Christ?

Answer: Yes.

The pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer. (Optional)

Those to be received as youth members shall kneel, and the pastor, laying his hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:

I receive you into the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church as a youth member. May God confirm you in the faith and fellowship of all true disciples of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Adult Membership

Book of Discipline, ¶18800

Those who are to be received into adult membership shall be called forward by name, and the pastor, addressing the people, shall say:

Into this holy fellowship the persons before you, who have received the sacrament of baptism, who have learned the nature of these privileges and duties, who have been instructed in the teachings and mission of the Free Methodist Church, and who have been approved by the local board of administration, come to be welcomed into membership. We now propose, in the fear of God, to question them as to their faith and purpose, that you may know that they are ready to be admitted into this church.

Addressing those seeking admission, the pastor shall say:

Beloved in the Lord, you have been baptized into Christ and come now to be received into membership in the Free Methodist Church. We rejoice with you in all God's mercies that have brought you to this hour; and we join our prayers with yours as you make this sacred undertaking.

1. Do you have the assurance that God has forgiven your sins through faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: I do.

2. Do you believe the Bible is God's written Word, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit and do you accept its authority for what you must believe and how you must live?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you here resolve, by God's grace, to be Christlike in heart and life, opening yourself fully to the cleansing and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of the Scriptures, and the nurture and fellowship of the church?

Answer: By God's enabling grace, I do resolve.

4. Do you accept the *Book of Discipline of the Free Methodist Church*, with its Articles of Religion, Membership Covenant and its principles for the lives of its members and the governance of the church?

Answer: Trusting God's power to aid me, I do.

5. As a follower of Jesus Christ, will you embrace the mission of the Free Methodist Church within and beyond this congregation and will you join us in giving sacrificially of your time, talents and resources to help us carry out that mission?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

I offer you the right hand of fellowship and welcome you into the Free Methodist Church. May the experience of membership in this body enrich your life and the life of our church; and may your contribution to its life strengthen both you and all of us.

The pastor shall introduce each candidate by name to the congregation and shall continue as follows:

You, my fellow-members of this congregation, have heard the vows of these who have completed the requirements for membership in the Free Methodist Church. Let us now welcome them into our fellowship.

(The method of welcoming shall be left to the discretion of the pastor.)

The pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer.

(Optional) Those to be received into membership shall kneel, and the pastor, laying hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:

_____, I receive you into the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church. May the Lord confirm you in the faith and fellowship of the true disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Those being received shall rise, and the pastor, addressing the candidates, shall say:

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Free Methodist Church and bid you welcome to all its privileges; and in token of our love we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with His people here and with His saints in glory everlasting. May the church be a blessing to you, and may you be a blessing to the church.

The pastor shall say to the congregation:

Friends in Christ, I commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day recognize as members of our church. Do all in your power to strengthen their faith, confirm their hope and perfect them in love.

Membership by Transfer

Book of Discipline, ¶8830

Those who are to be received into membership by transfer shall be called forward by name, and the pastor, addressing the congregation, shall say:

The Free Methodist Church is a welcoming fellowship that provides a home for those committed to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. We count it a privilege to receive these members into our fellowship by transfer. Their letters of transfer read:

*The pastor will read only the first letter in each category of membership in its entirety. The others can be named along with the name of the church from which they are transferring.
The pastor shall lead in an extemporaneous prayer.
The pastor will welcome each new member.*

Members transferring from another evangelical denomination must previously have met the requirements of the *Book of Discipline*, ¶6110.

See Appendix C for suggested content for various kinds of transfer letters.

Local Ministerial Candidate

Book of Discipline, ¶8700

A. Questions for a local ministerial candidate before the local board of administration:

1. When and how did you come to know Christ as Savior and Lord?
2. Describe your life as it relates to the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
3. Describe the call of God in your life to full-time ministry.
4. What preparations and plans are you making in order to follow God's will for your life?
5. What do you see as your primary spiritual gifts?
6. In what ways do you plan to witness and minister as a local ministerial candidate?

B. Questions for a local ministerial candidate before the congregation:

1. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and do you offer yourself in service to Him as a local ministerial candidate in the _____ Free Methodist Church?

Answer: I do.

2. Recognizing that being a local ministerial candidate in this congregation is an important step in confirming the call of God on your life, do you pledge to diligently seek the Lord's will for your life through prayer and study?

Answer: I do.

3. Will you seek and accept the guidance of your pastor and the local board of administration in order to fulfill these goals?

Answer: I will.

C. The pastor will present a certificate to the local ministerial candidate.

Conference Ministerial Candidate

Book of Discipline, ¶8710

This information is provided for your awareness as you prepare a local ministerial candidate for conference ministerial candidate (CMC) status with the annual conference. Please work in conjunction with your conference ministerial education and guidance (MEG) board to accomplish this goal.

At an appropriate time the conference ministerial candidate(s) shall be called before the annual conference or the administrative committee if so authorized by the annual conference, and the chair shall say:

The leaders and members of this annual conference, having observed your Christian life and conduct, feel you are endowed with the gifts of ministerial leadership. The ministerial education and guidance board has carefully inquired into your qualifications and has presented you as a candidate for membership. We offer our words of encouragement and congratulations. We know you take seriously this first step on the road to ordination. We expect you to give yourself diligently in prayer and study in preparation for effective pastoral ministry. That you may fix your eyes more clearly upon your goal we ask you the following questions:

1. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and offer yourself in service to Him as a conference ministerial candidate in the _____ Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church?

Answer: I do.

2. Recognizing that being a conference ministerial candidate in this annual conference is an important step toward full membership and ordination, do you pledge to equip yourself spiritually, morally, and intellectually for the Christian ministry?

Answer: I do.

3. Will you seek and accept the guidance of your superintendent and the ministerial education and guidance board to fulfill these goals?

Answer: I will.

The president of the conference shall present a certificate to the newly received conference ministerial candidate(s).

Special Service

Sample Organization of a New Free Methodist Fellowship

Invocation

Hymn of Praise

Responsive Reading

Prayer

Ministry in Music

Sermon *An appropriate subject is the New Testament view of the church as the body of Christ.*

Ritual for Organization as a Fellowship

The superintendent, or other designated pastor, calls those who have been members of a Free Methodist fellowship or those who wish to form a new fellowship to the front.

Superintendent or Designee: Having faith in Christ and His holy Bible, and having received instruction in the beliefs and organization of the Free Methodist Church of North America, is it your desire to form a fellowship as the first step towards becoming a Free Methodist church?

People: It is by the grace of God.

Superintendent or Designee: What shall be the name of this fellowship?

People (*or the pastor or a representative of the congregation*): This will be known as the _____ (name of fellowship) Free Methodist Fellowship of _____ (city and state).

Superintendent or Designee: I now declare that the _____ (name of fellowship) Free Methodist Fellowship of _____ (city and state) is duly organized and

invite each of you to join by answering the questions contained in the ritual of membership.

The superintendent or designee will then proceed to ask the questions for adult membership according to the Book of Discipline, ¶8800 or the same ritual from this manual. After concluding with the questions, the superintendent or designee may offer an extemporaneous prayer.

Superintendent or Designee:

(Optional) Those being received into membership shall kneel, and the minister, laying hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:

I receive you into membership in the Free Methodist Church. May the Lord confirm you in faith and fellowship as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Those being received shall rise, and the minister, addressing the candidates, shall say:

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Free Methodist Church and charter members of the (name of fellowship) Free Methodist Fellowship. We bid you welcome to all its privileges. In token of our brotherly love we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with His people here and with His saints in glory everlasting. May the church be a blessing to you, and you to the church.

Friends, I commend you, each to the other, to love and care for one another, and to do all in your power to strengthen each other's faith, confirm each other in hope, and perfect each other in love.

Hymn
Benediction

Special Service

Sample Organization of a New Free Methodist Society

Invocation

Hymn of Praise

Responsive Reading

Prayer

Ministry in Music

Sermon *An appropriate subject is the New Testament view of the church as the body of Christ.*

Ritual for Organization as a Society

The superintendent, or other designated pastor, calls those who have been members of a Free Methodist fellowship or those who wish to form a new society to the front.

Superintendent or Designee: Having read the Constitution of the Free Methodist Church of North America contained in the *Book of Discipline* and having familiarized yourselves with the policies and practices of the church contained therein, do you now adopt this *Book of Discipline* as your rule and authority in organizing a new Free Methodist church?

People: With thankful hearts to God, we do.

Superintendent or Designee: What will the society now formed be named?

People (*or the pastor or a representative of the congregation*): This society will be known as the _____ (name of society) Free Methodist Church of _____ (city and state).

Superintendent or Designee: I now declare that the _____ (name of society) Free Methodist Church of

_____ (city and state) is duly organized and invite each of you to join by answering the questions contained in the ritual of membership.

The superintendent or designee will then proceed with the ritual according to the Book of Discipline, ¶8800 or the same ritual from this manual. After concluding with the questions, the superintendent or designee may offer an extemporaneous prayer.

Superintendent or Designee:

(Optional) Those being received into membership shall kneel, and the minister, laying hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:

I receive you into membership in the Free Methodist Church. May the Lord confirm you in faith and fellowship as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Those being received shall rise, and the minister, addressing the candidates, shall say:

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Free Methodist Church and charter members of the (name of society) Free Methodist Society. We bid you welcome to all its privileges. In token of our brotherly love we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with His people here and with His saints in glory everlasting. May the church be a blessing to you, and you to the church.

Friends, I commend you, each to the other, to love and care for one another, and to do all in your power to strengthen each other's faith, confirm each other in hope, and perfect each other in love.

Hymn

Benediction

Appendix B — Ministry Board Options and Suggested Agenda

The 2003 General Conference directed that the following board descriptions, along with the two illustrative agendas that follow, be shifted from the *Book of Discipline* to this manual, to assist local churches that maintain one or more of these boards.

Board of Christian Education

1. The local board of Christian education (CE) may be composed of the director of Christian education, director of children's ministries, director of youth ministries, director of adult ministries, Sunday school leader(s) and others as determined. They shall normally be members of the church. The pastor shall be an ex officio member. Smaller churches may have fewer than five members, but shall work toward the basic age-level structure as ministries are needed and persons are available.

2. The board of Christian education may submit an organizational plan and list of officers needed for the new year to the annual society meeting. (The organizational plan will take into consideration the size of the church and its ministry needs.) The board may submit nominations for the new board of CE to the church nominating committee.

3. Upon authorization by the society the newly elected board shall name all staff personnel for the following: the Sunday school; Christian Life Club; young teen and Free Methodist Youth programs; the variety of adult programs such as those emphasizing family life or those for senior citizens; and other programs, such as vacation Bible school, junior choir and children's church. As an alternative, if a society chooses to elect such personnel, the newly elected board shall present its nominations to the society.

Leaders and teachers in Christian education should be persons who:

- a. have a vital Christian experience;
 - b. are faithful in church attendance and fellowship;
 - c. are diligent in prayer; and
 - d. are in agreement with the doctrinal positions of the church.
4. The responsibilities may include:
- a. to administer all CE programs;
 - b. to coordinate all CE activities;
 - c. to grow the church through CE programs and ministries;
 - d. to implement denominational curricula for all CE endeavors;
 - e. to provide training for CE workers;
 - f. to encourage adherence to denominational doctrine and standards;
 - g. to project, plan and evaluate total CE programs;
 - h. to develop and maintain church library materials;
 - i. to review all Christian education financial programs.

Board of Missions

1. A local board of missions may be composed of the pastor, missions coordinator, representatives of Women's Ministries International and Men's Ministries International, director of Christian education, directors of youth and children's ministries, with two or more members elected at large where practicable.

2. It shall develop a year-round program of missions education and activities in cooperation with Free Methodist World Missions (FMWM).

3. The missions coordinator shall normally serve as chair.

4. The responsibilities may include:

- a. alert the church to missions prayer needs through

- such resources as “Missions Hotline” and Free Methodist *World Mission People* magazine;
- b. promote regular prayer for missionaries and mission initiatives;
 - c. inform the church concerning opportunities for missionary service through VISA (volunteers in service abroad) Ministries and career appointment;
 - d. forward to the department of FMWM the names and addresses of people sensing a call to missionary service;
 - e. coordinate all missions activities and programs for the year; and
 - f. utilize projects and other methods for fundraising.

Board of Evangelism and Church Growth

1. A board of evangelism and church growth may be elected. In smaller churches, the local board of administration may serve this purpose.

2. The duties shall be to:
- a. cooperate with conference evangelism and church growth programs;
 - b. study established patterns of church growth;
 - c. seek practical means with which to apply these principles to the local church;
 - d. prepare growth goals and objectives with time lines to be presented to the local board of administration and the society for approval at the beginning of each conference year;
 - e. submit the above goals and objectives for a quarterly evaluation by the local board of administration, which shall report annually to the society and the conference superintendent;
 - f. develop strategies to sponsor a church-planting

- project in another part of the city or in an adjacent community;
- g. adopt a church-planting project in another area, or share the church facilities to start an ethnic Free Methodist church; and
- h. motivate the people of the church to implement these principles.

Board of Stewards

1. Stewards shall be persons of recognized piety who subscribe to the *Book of Discipline*, support their local church, and have the ability to transact temporary business.
2. The number of stewards shall be not fewer than three, and at least two-thirds of the members shall be adult members of the church.
3. The stewards may be elected at the regular annual society meeting.
4. They shall have the following privileges and responsibilities:
 - a. assisting the society in social ministries by:
 - (1) soliciting help for its needy (and others, within its means);
 - (2) comforting the sick and sorrowing;
 - (3) assisting the aged;
 - (4) initiating the establishment of children’s day-care centers and schools where practicable;
 - (5) seeking support and encouragement for youth preparing for Kingdom service;
 - (6) assisting in the promotion of accredited Free Methodist social institutions.
 - b. preparing the elements for the Lord’s Supper;
 - c. working with approved community agencies to minister to human need, keeping in mind always that all of these services must work toward the ultimate objective, salvation through Jesus Christ; and

- d. performing such other duties as may be assigned by the society.

With the establishment of local church consecrated deacons, the society might choose to have many of these ministry tasks assigned to or guided by such local deacons, according to their calling, gifting and passion.

Local Church Society Annual Meeting

This suggested “Order of Business” was shifted to the *Pastors and Church Leaders Manual* by action of the editors of the 2003 *Book of Discipline*. It comes from earlier *Disciplines* and represents the old paradigm for how Free Methodist churches did their work. In our current permission-giving spirit, we have granted new freedoms to local churches to organize in simpler ways with fewer boards and committees.

Please see the booklet: “Working Together in the 21st Century” or the *Book of Discipline*, ¶s 6050, 6200 and 6250 for more particulars. We doubt that there is a single church that follows this complex and lengthy suggested agenda. Rather, this document illustrates the kinds of administrative issues to which the pastor and lay leaders need to give oversight.

1. Devotions.
2. Seat the secretary (secretary of the local board of administration).
3. Calling of the roll (or taken by inspection of sign-up).
4. Election of tellers.
5. Reception of reports from pastor (state of the church), stewards, trustees, treasurer, ministry leaders.
6. Election of a treasurer. Selection of an auditor.
7. Election of a statistical auditor.
8. Election by ballot of delegates to the annual conference.
9. Election by ballot of reserve delegates to the annual conference.
10. Election by ballot of pastor’s cabinet.

11. Decide the number of stewards; elect.
12. Election by ballot of trustees (See *Book of Discipline* ¶6400). If the board of administration serves as the legal trustees, the local board of administration shall be elected by ballot where civil law requires.
13. Election of local board of administration personnel.
14. Election by ballot of director of Christian education.
15. Election of directors of children's, youth and adult ministries.
16. Election of Christian education personnel (if so decided) or authorize election or appointment by the board of Christian education.
17. Election of a missions coordinator.
18. Election of members-at-large to the board of missions.
19. Election of trial committee (if necessary).
20. Election of a church nominating committee.
21. Decision regarding incorporation (If necessary, see *Book of Discipline* ¶6400).
22. Miscellaneous business.
23. Approval of minutes.
24. Adjournment.

Local Church Board of Administration Meeting

This suggested agenda was shifted to the *Pastors and Church Leaders Manual* by action of the editors of the 2003 *Book of Discipline*. It represents the old paradigm for how Free Methodist churches did their work. In our current permission-giving spirit, we have granted new freedoms to the local board of administration to organize in simpler ways with fewer boards and committees. We doubt that there is a single church that follows our old complex and lengthy suggested agendas.

In fact, we highly recommend that the local board of administration be a policy-making and leadership board that focuses on applying the biblical mission and denominational vision to their church circumstances.

This means that we challenge you to build your agendas off of your decision to make the main thing the main thing, namely, to make disciples who make disciples. This implies that our primary tasks are to win the lost, build the believers, equip the workers and send disciples.

Since there is a tendency for such boards to micromanage administrative details, we wish to remind you to review the *Book of Discipline*, ¶6300.D, which states that this board provides “vision, general oversight, planning and coordination of the ministries of the church. The purpose shall be to stimulate and ensure the furtherance of the congregation’s mission and the spiritual growth and development of the entire body.” In other words, the local board of administration is to be a leadership board, not a management board. Management details and tasks should be delegated to the pastor(s) and lay leaders gifted in these things.

1. Devotions.
2. Election of a secretary.
3. Taking the roll by inspection.
4. Approving the minutes of the previous meeting.
5. Election of a committee on social ministry.
6. Election of a church calendar committee. (pastor’s cabinet, *Book of Discipline* ¶6320.B.8)

7. Evaluation of pastoral leadership and church effectiveness (every three years — see *Book of Discipline* ¶5800.E.3).
8. Inquire:
 - a. Are there any sick?
 - b. What is the status of membership?
 - (1) Have any been received as youth members?
 - (2) Have any been received as preparatory members?
 - (3) Are converts and youth members receiving instruction in Christian living and church membership?
 - (4) Are there any youth members whose terms of training have expired?
 - (5) Have any been received into adult membership?
 - (6) Have any been received into associate membership? (See *Book of Discipline* ¶6130.)
 - (7) Have any died?
 - (8) Have any been otherwise removed?
 - c. Are there any violating our standards of church membership who will not be reprovved?
 - d. Are there any persons to be recommended as local ministerial candidates?
 - e. Are there any persons to be recommended to be licensed as conference ministerial candidates?
 - f. Are there any local ministerial candidate's licenses to be renewed?
 - g. Are there any lay minister's licenses to be granted? to be renewed?
 - h. When, where and how should we begin a church planting project?
 - i. Have any been married or baptized?
 - j. Report of the board of Christian education.
 - k. Treasurer's report:
 - (1) Amount raised as ordered by the conference.
 - (2) Amount raised for pastoral support.
 - (3) Amount raised for United Ministries for Christ.

- (4) Report of other money received and disbursed.
- (5) Balance in the treasury.
- l. Are there any claims to be presented?
- m. Is there any unfinished business, or are there any committees to report?
- n. Is there any new business, or are there any committees to be appointed?
- o. Reports of department heads:
 - (1) The president of Women's Ministries International.
 - (2) The president of Men's Ministries International.
 - (3) The board of stewards.
 - (4) The board of trustees.
- p. Are there any vacancies on the board of trustees?
- q. Is the title to the church property secure?
- r. Are the legal documents for this pastoral charge deposited for safekeeping; and if so, where? Are the official records in safekeeping?
- s. Is the church property insured?
- t. Annually at a fall meeting (October, if possible) the pastor, with the aid of the local board of Christian education, shall report in writing the following information concerning members of the congregation, particularly young people who are in college and other educational institutions at home and away from home, and also those in the armed services. It is expected that these reports shall include names and current addresses of those away in school and elsewhere, including names of schools being attended if of collegiate level. The report is expected to be divided according to answers to the following questions:
 - (1) What young people of our church are members of the senior class in the local high school?

- (2) What young people are members of the second year in a local junior college?
 - (3) What people, younger or older, are now away from home in theological seminaries? Give the name of the seminary in each case.
 - (4) What individuals are enrolled in other colleges, universities or graduate schools, or schools of nursing? Give the name of the school in each case.
 - (5) What individuals are now in the armed services, and what are their present addresses?
 - (6) Has the list of seniors in the local high school or second-year students in the local junior college been sent to the admission officer of the area Free Methodist college/university?
 - (7) What is being done to extend and maintain the church's ministry to students away from home/ church in attendance at college and graduate institutions?
 - (8) What is being done to extend and maintain the church's ministry to those individuals in the armed services?
- u. Adoption of the annual budget.
 - v. Reading the minutes.
 - w. Adjournment.

Appendix C — Forms

1. Application for Permission to Mortgage Church Property of the Free Methodist Church

(Please answer all questions to avoid delay)

Society _____

Date _____

Conference _____

1. Who owns or is purchasing the property to be **MORTGAGED**?

2. Has the body owning or purchasing the property authorized the **MORTGAGE**? YES _____ NO _____

In what book of record is the action recorded?

Page _____ Date _____

Please enclose a copy of the minutes.

NOTE: When the electing body so authorizes, the local board of administration or conference committee may authorize the mortgage. (See Book of Discipline, ¶6400.F.)

3. What is the purpose of this **MORTGAGE**?

4. How will the proceeds of the **MORTGAGE** be used? Please be specific. (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.E-F.)

5. Has the local board of administration (or conference administrative committee) approved this plan? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6410.C.) _____

6. Is the title to the property to be **MORTGAGED** a warranty deed? _____

7. Is the property deeded or will the property be deeded to the organization in its corporate name, or to the individual trustees? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.)

8. If the organization is incorporated, give corporate name.

9. Does the deed to the property to be **MORTGAGED** contain the following trust clause: "... in trust for the use and benefit of the membership of the Free Methodist Church of North America ...," etc.? _____ (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.D.) A *Release to Mortgage* cannot be granted unless the trust clause is included in the deed. Please *enclose a copy of the deed*.

10. If new property is **PURCHASED** with the proceeds of **MORTGAGE**, will the title thereto include the trust clause referred to in “9” above? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.D.)

11. If new property is **PURCHASED** with the proceeds, will there be a reverting clause in the title? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.E.) _____. A *Release to Mortgage* cannot be granted if there is or will be a reverting clause in the title.

12. Describe the property to be **MORTGAGED**: Number of lots or acres _____.

Type of building (frame, stone, brick, other).

CHURCH _____

PARSONAGE _____

OTHER _____

Address of property being **MORTGAGED**:

13. Appraised value of property to be **MORTGAGED**:

Amount expected from **MORTGAGE**:

14. Give legal description of property to be **MORTGAGED**, enclosing a copy of the deed. (If the legal description on the deed includes more than the property you wish to **MORTGAGE**, *indicate clearly the portion you want included on the Release to Mortgage.*)

15. List names and addresses of the trustees, if the property to be **MORTGAGED** is held in the names of the trustees.

16. Signatures approving the **MORTGAGE**:

Pastor in Charge: _____

Signature

Print name

Mailing Address:

Phone Number

Conference

Superintendent: _____

Signature

Print name

Mailing Address:

Phone Number

Secretary (of society or
conference): _____

Signature

Print name

Mailing Address:

Phone Number

Board of Directors
The Free Methodist Church of North America
PO Box 535002
Indianapolis, IN 46253-5002

Please send a cover letter if more information is necessary to
clarify your request.

2. Application for Permission to Sell Church Property of the Free Methodist Church

(Please answer all questions to avoid delay)

Society _____

Date _____

Conference _____

1. Who owns or is purchasing the property to be **SOLD**?

2. Has the body owning or purchasing the property authorized the **SALE** of the property? YES _____ NO _____

In what book of record is the action recorded?

Page _____ Date _____

Please enclose a copy of the minutes.

NOTE: When the electing body so authorizes, the local board of administration or conference committee may authorize the sale. (See Book of Discipline, ¶6400.F.)

3. What is the purpose of this **SALE**?

4. How will the proceeds of the **SALE** be used? Please be specific. (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.E-F.)

5. Has the local board of administration (or conference administrative committee) approved this plan? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6410.C.) _____

6. Is the title to the property to be **SOLD** a warranty deed?

7. Is the property deeded or will the property be deeded to the organization in its corporate name, or to the individual trustees? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.)

8. If the organization is incorporated, give corporate name.

9. Does the deed to the property to be **SOLD** contain the following trust clause: “... in trust for the use and benefit of the membership of the Free Methodist Church of North America ...,” etc.? _____ (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.D.) *Release to Sell* cannot be granted unless the trust clause is included in the deed. Please *enclose a copy of the deed*.

10. If new property is **PURCHASED** with the proceeds of **SALE**, will the title thereto include the trust clause referred to in “9” above? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.D.)

11. If new property is **PURCHASED** with the proceeds, will there be a reverting clause in the title? (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6400.E.) _____. A *Release to Sell* cannot be granted if there is or will be a reverting clause in the title.

12. Describe the property to be **SOLD**: Number of lots or acres

Type of building (frame, stone, brick, other).

CHURCH _____

PARSONAGE _____

OTHER _____

Address of property being **SOLD**

13. Appraised value of property to be **SOLD**:

Amount expected from **SALE**:

14. Give legal description of property to be **SOLD**, enclosing a copy of the deed. (If the legal description on the deed includes more than the property you wish to **SELL**, *indicate clearly the portion you want included on the Release to Mortgage.*)

15. List names and addresses of the trustees, if the property to be **SOLD** is held in the names of the trustees.

16. Signatures approving the **SALE**:

Pastor in Charge: _____

Signature

Print name

Mailing Address:

Phone Number

Conference

Superintendent: _____

Signature

Print name

Mailing Address:

Phone Number

Secretary (of society or
conference): _____

Signature

Print name

Mailing Address:

Phone Number

Board of Directors
The Free Methodist Church of North America
PO Box 535002
Indianapolis, IN 46253-5002

Please send a cover letter if more information is necessary to clarify your request.

3. Declaration of Trust (Suggested)

Whenever a piece of property does not have the trust clause set forth in its deed, the local society may adopt the following trust clause and have it duly recorded at the county recorder's office, thus conforming to the provisions of ¶6400 of the *Book of Discipline*.

WHEREAS, the _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, a _____ corporation or society, is the owner of the hereinafter described real property and,

WHEREAS, said Free Methodist Church is a subsidiary of the Free Methodist Church of North America, a California corporation, subject to the rules, regulations, and *Book of Discipline* thereof, and,

WHEREAS, the *Book of Discipline* of said church provides that all real property held by said corporation shall include the following trust clause:

“In trust for the use and benefit of the membership of the Free Methodist Church of North America, incorporated under the name of ‘The Free Methodist Church of North America,’ subject to the *Book of Discipline*, usages, and ministerial appointment of said church as from time to time authorized and declared; and, if sold, the proceeds shall be disposed of and used in accordance with the provisions of said *Book of Discipline*, and of the civil law; and in further trust and confidence that in the houses of worship now erected or that may hereafter be erected on said premises hereby conveyed, the seats shall be forever free; and in further trust and confidence that the said trustees and their successors in office shall permit at all times the ministers who may be duly authorized according to the *Book of Discipline* of the said Free Methodist

Church, to hold religious services in said houses of worship according to said *Book of Discipline*.” And, WHEREAS, the deed to the hereinafter described real property from _____, as grantor, to _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, a _____ corporation, as grantee, dated on the _____ day of _____, 20_____, and recorded as Document No. _____, Book _____, Page _____, of deeds records of _____ County, State of _____, failed to include the foregoing trust,

NOW, THEREFORE, it is declared by the _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, _____, a _____ corporation or society, on the _____ day of _____, 20_____, that the said corporation or society holds the hereinafter described real property subject to the provisions of said trust.

The hereinbefore described real property as the hereinafter described real property is more particularly described as:

(insert legal description)

Done at a duly and regularly called meeting of the corporation or society on the _____ day of _____, 20_____.

We, the undersigned, _____ president, and _____, secretary of the

_____ Free Methodist Church of
_____, _____, a
_____ religious society or corporation,
hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly
adopted at the foregoing meeting and that we were in-
structed and directed to execute this instrument as a decla-
ration of trust and cause the same to be recorded upon the
records of the county recorder of the

County of _____,

State of _____.

_____ President

_____ Secretary

State of _____

County of _____

Before me _____, a notary public, on
this day personally appeared _____ and
_____, known to me to be the persons
whose names are subscribed to the foregoing instrument
and known to me to be the president and secretary respec-
tively of the _____ Free Methodist
Church of _____,

_____, a _____ religious society or corporation, and acknowledged to me that they executed said instrument for the purposes therein expressed and as the act of said corporation or society.

GIVEN under my hand and seal this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Notary Public in and for the above County and State

4. Articles of Incorporation (Suggested)

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF

_____ FREE METHODIST CHURCH

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That we, the undersigned, residents of the State or Province of _____, have this day voluntarily associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming a corporation under the laws of the State or Province of _____.

AND WE HEREBY CERTIFY:

FIRST

The name of the corporation shall be:

_____ FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

SECOND

That the primary purposes for which it is formed are religious, charitable, and educational, and especially:

To conduct religious services, to cultivate social intercourse among its members, and to assist in improving and ameliorating the moral and social conditions of humanity; to purchase, own, sell, or dispose of the same, mortgage and lease real estate and other property as may be necessary for the purposes of this corporation; to receive donations, to receive, manage, take, and hold real and personal property by gift, grant, devise, or bequest, and to sell or dispose of the same, and to do everything necessary, suitable, or

proper for the accomplishment of any of the purposes herein enumerated, or which shall at any time appear conducive or expedient for the protection or benefit of this corporation.

THIRD

That the principal office for the transaction of business of said corporation is to be located in the County _____, State of _____.

FOURTH

That the term for which said corporation is to exist is perpetual.

FIFTH

That it is a corporation which does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit to the members thereof, and therefore there shall be no capital stock.

The property is irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable, or scientific purposes and upon liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of the corporation, ownership will not inure to the benefit of any private person except a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated for religious, scientific, or charitable purposes. The directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or obligations of the corporation.

SIXTH

The ecclesiastical affairs of the corporation shall be subject to the rules, regulation, and *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America, as from time to

time adopted by the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America, insofar as the same do not contravene or conflict with the laws of the state or province of incorporation.

SEVENTH

That the number of directors of said corporation shall be three and that the names and addresses of the persons who are to act in the capacity of directors until the selection of their successors, and who shall be known as trustees, are

Names	Addresses
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

That the number of directors may be changed by a by-law duly adopted or amended by the members, authority for which is hereby expressly conferred.

Editor's Note:

Do not try to use this form without the aid of an attorney of your state or province. If you desire to form a corporation, take this form to an attorney for his or her information.

Following the above will have to be the regular certification either by individual, incorporators, or by the president and secretary of the unincorporated society being incorporated. They must follow the requirements of the local civil law. (JURAT)

5. Bylaws (Suggested)

BYLAWS of

(Corporate name of church)

ARTICLE I

SECTION I:

The members of the _____ shall constitute the members of this corporation.

SECTION II:

The annual meeting of this corporation shall be held at any time within three months prior to the convening of the

(name of the annual conference)

of the Free Methodist Church of North America, and may be called by the pastor or the president of said corporation by giving notice as provided in the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

SECTION III:

Special meetings may be called at any time for any purpose or purposes whatsoever by the president of the corporation or the pastor, pursuant to the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

SECTION IV:

Notice of special meeting may be given as provided in the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

SECTION V:

The entry in the minutes of the notice of any annual or special meeting, if read and approved at such meeting or subsequent meeting, shall be conclusive proof on the question of such notice.

SECTION VI:

When all the members are present at any meeting, however called or notified, and signify their consent thereto by the roll call showing their presence, and those not present consent in writing at the time of such meeting or subsequent thereto, and such consent is made a part of the records of such meeting, the proceedings had at such meeting are valid, irrespective of the manner in which the meeting was called or the place where it was held.

SECTION VII:

At any meeting of the members, those present shall constitute a quorum to transact business.

SECTION VIII:

The pastor of the church, or in his absence his appointee, or the president of the corporation shall preside at all meetings.

SECTION IX:

Any regular or called meeting may adjourn from day to day or from time to time, without further notice until its business is completed.

SECTION X:

The *Book of Discipline*, rules and regulations of the Free Methodist Church of North America, shall at all times

constitute the rules for admission, expulsion, withdrawal, and the disciplining of members of this corporation.

ARTICLE II

Directors or Trustees

SECTION I:

The secular affairs of this corporation shall be exercised and conducted by a board of directors or trustees as directed by the society of the _____.

SECTION II:

The qualifications of all such directors or trustees shall be as provided in the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America, and the Articles of Incorporation.

SECTION III:

Their term of office shall be for one year or until their successors are elected and qualified.

SECTION IV:

Any vacancy occurring in the office of director or trustee shall be filled by an election at a meeting of the membership or society, and any director or trustee so elected shall hold office for the unexpired term.

SECTION V:

Immediately after the annual meeting, the board of directors or trustees shall meet and organize by electing a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, or secretary-treasurer.

SECTION VI:

All meetings of the directors or trustees shall be held as directed from time to time or at the call of the president or pastor.

SECTION VII:

The duties of the several officers shall be as provided in the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America, or as prescribed by the society of the

_____.

ARTICLE III

Amendments

SECTION I:

The bylaws of this corporation may be amended at any annual meeting of the members by a majority vote of those present except as to Article I, Section X. Adopted by resolution of the members of the corporation this

_____ day of _____,

20____.

6. Bequests

Form of bequest of money or other personal property: “I give and bequeath to the Free Methodist Church of North America the sum of _____ dollars, to be used and appropriated by that body to religious, charitable, missionary, or educational purposes.”

Real estate: “I grant and devise (full description of the land).”

Licenses or Recommendations

1. Local Ministerial Candidate's License

This certifies that _____ is authorized to officiate as a LOCAL MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE in the FREE METHODIST CHURCH for one year, provided h_____ spirit and practice are such as become the gospel of Christ, and h_____ teachings correspond with the established doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as held by the Free Methodist Church.

Done by order of the Board of Administration of the

_____ Society,

_____ Conference.

Done at _____ this _____ day

of _____, 20_____

Pastor and/or Chair

Secretary _____

2. Renewal of Local Ministerial Candidate's License

The license of _____ as a LOCAL MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE is hereby renewed for one year, subject to the requirements of the *Book of Discipline*.

Signed by order of the Board of Administration of the _____ Society,

_____ Conference, this

_____ day of _____, 20____

Pastor and/or Chair

Secretary _____

3. Renewal of Lay Minister's License

The denomination replaced the lay ministry category with the consecrated deacon category in 1999. Thus, use of this form would normally only be occasioned by the "grandfathering" or continuance of existing lay ministers, not the establishment of new lay ministers. We have no form for establishing new lay ministers.

This certifies that the license of _____ as a LAY MINISTER in the FREE METHODIST CHURCH is hereby renewed for one year, subject to the requirements of the *Book of Discipline*.

Done by order of the Board of Administration of the _____ Society,
_____ Conference.

Done at _____ this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Pastor and/or Chair

Secretary _____

**4. Recommendation for Status of
Conference Ministerial Candidate**

(See *Book of Discipline*, ¶6500.L.)

This certifies that _____, a local ministerial candidate and member of the

_____ Society of the

_____ Conference, is hereby recommended to the

_____ Conference Ministerial Education and Guidance Board as a suitable person to be approved as a conference ministerial candidate of the FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

Done by order of the Board of Administration of the _____ society, at Conference

this _____ day of _____, 20____

Pastor and/or Chair

Secretary _____

5. Annual Conference — Delegate Credentials

This certifies that _____ was duly
elected to represent the _____

Society at the _____ Annual
Conference to be held at _____

commencing the _____ day of _____,
20_____

Lay Delegate _____

Reserve Delegate _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (Circle one to indicate order of election.)

Done at the Society Meeting held at

_____ on the _____ day of
_____, 20_____.

Chair and/or Pastor

Secretary

Transfers

1. Adult Membership Transfer

This is to certify that _____, an adult member in good standing of the _____ Free Methodist Church, is cordially commended to the Free Methodist Church in _____ or in any other place. When he or she is admitted to another society, membership in this society shall cease. This certificate must be deposited with another Free Methodist church within one year, unless renewed.

Member's date of birth _____ and of baptism _____

Check where appropriate:

Member is:

____ local ministerial candidate

____ consecrated deacon

____ located deacon

____ located elder

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

2. Acknowledgment of Transfer

You are hereby notified that _____ has been duly enrolled as a member of this society _____ upon a certificate issued by the society of which you are the pastor.

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

3. Transfer of Membership to Another Denomination

This is to certify that _____, who wishes to become a member of another evangelical church, is an adult member in good standing of the Free Methodist Church in _____ and is cordially commended to the fellowship of _____ or any other such church with which _____ may desire to unite. His membership in the Free Methodist church ceases when this certificate is given.

Member's date of birth _____ and baptism _____

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

4. Youth Membership Transfer

This is to certify that _____, a youth member in good standing of the _____ Free Methodist church, is cordially commended to the Free Methodist Church in _____ or in any other place. When he or she is admitted to another society, membership in this society shall cease. This certificate must be deposited with another Free Methodist Church within one year, unless renewed.

Member's date of birth _____, and
of baptism _____

Date received to youth membership _____

Member has _____ has not _____ been baptized.

Member has completed instruction classes _____.

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

Appendix D — The Revised Common Lectionary

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