

**Eastern Orthodox Church**

**New Testament Church**

1054 Council of Nicea

**Roman Catholic Church**

1534 Act of Supremacy (Henry VIII)

**Church of England (Anglican/Episcopal)**

1738 Christmas Conference

**Methodist Church**

1901 Topeka Outpouring

**Pentecostal Churches (Assemblies of God)**

1550 London Underground Church

**Congregational Churches (UCC)**

1612 John Smythe

**Baptist Churches**

1517 Protestant Reformation

**Lutheran Church**

1536 Institutes of the Christian Religion (Calvin)

**Presbyterian Church**

1527 Schleithem Confession

**Anabaptist (Mennonite/Quaker)**

1801 Cane Ridge Revival

**Churches of Christ (Disciples of Christ)**

1975 Seeker Church Movement

**Non-denominational Churches**

## CALVINISM (TULIP)

**Total Depravity** – Humanity was created in the image of God but fell from a sinless state through willful disobedience. This 'sinful nature' impacts all of humanity, causing a natural inclination toward sin. We cannot think, will, nor do anything good without the intervention of God. If we are to be saved, it requires the initiative of God to act.

**Unconditional Election** – God has chosen some individuals to save completely apart from any choice or action of the individual. Those not chosen are excluded from eternal life. This choice is God's alone and is pre-determined and predestined.

**\*Limited Atonement** – Christ died only for those certain individuals whom God chose unconditionally for salvation.

**\*Irresistible Grace** – Those whom God has unconditionally elected are also irresistibly drawn to faith. The choice to accept or reject faith are predetermined and cannot be changed or resisted. While God calls all to faith, only those chosen unconditionally can respond and do so with no resistance.

**Perseverance of the Saints** – Those whom God has unconditionally elected will remain so and cannot lose their salvation. Those who appear to be believers but fall away from the faith and die without faith in Christ demonstrate they were not truly among the elect in the first place.

*\*4-pt Calvinists' reject Limited Atonement; 3-pt Calvinists' also reject Irresistible Grace. While not an official stance, many Baptist churches adhere to 3-pt Calvinism.*

## ARMINIANISM/WESLEYAN (FACTS)

**Freed by Grace** – God calls all people to repent and believe the gospel and graciously enables those who hear the gospel to respond positively in faith. God's grace is resistible in that we may accept or reject it. People have the general free will to choose their actions apart from pleasing God and doing good.

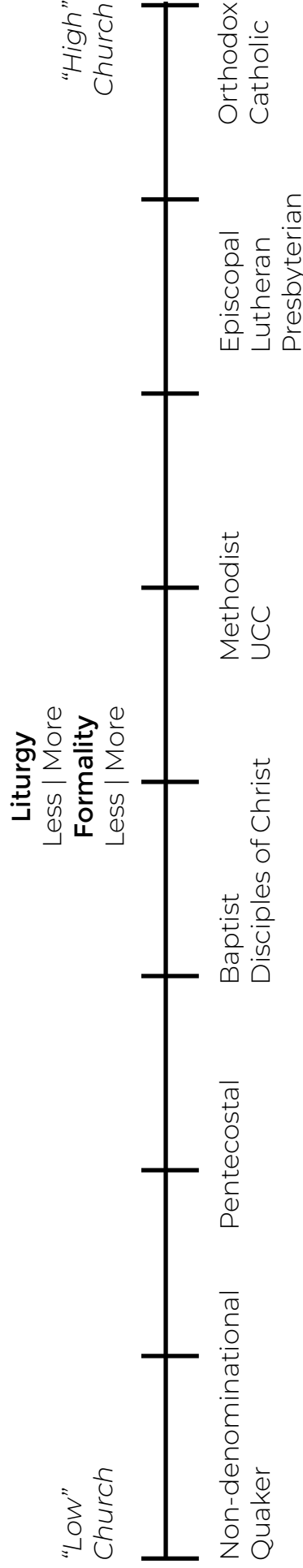
**Atonement for All** – God loves the world and desires for all people to be saved. Therefore, God gave his only Son to die for the sins of the whole world so to provide forgiveness and salvation for all people. The benefits of this salvation are received by grace through faith and are only effective for those who believe.

**Conditional Election** – God has chosen to eternally save those who have faith in Jesus Christ. Being eternal, God has the foreknowledge of who will and will not have faith in Jesus and chooses those who accept the gift of faith.

**Total Depravity** – Humanity was created in the image of God but fell from a sinless state through willful disobedience. This 'sinful nature' impacts all of humanity, causing a natural inclination toward sin. We cannot think, will, nor do anything good without the intervention of God. If we are to be saved, it requires the initiative of God to act.

**Security in Christ** – The Holy Spirit empowers all believers to continue in faith. We can know and have assurance of our salvation. Most Arminians believe that just as faith is resistible so too a believer can completely forsake faith and become unsaved. This would require significant action to denounce fully the grace of Christ and reject salvation.

# WORSHIP STYLE SPECTRUM



## IDEAS ON SACRAMENTS

Catholic/Orthodox - Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Penance (confession), Anointing of the sick, Marriage, and Ordination

### Baptism

**Commonly held views** - Baptism is a rite of initiation into faith and into the life of the church.

**Adult/Believers baptism** - Baptism is a celebration of an adult (or child old enough to make a conscious declaration) conversion to the Christian faith and a profession of faith. Typically by complete immersion, but also by pouring in some churches. Some view it as essential to salvation.

**Infant baptism** - Baptism is an initiation into the covenant of Christ, similar to the act of circumcision as an initiation into the Jewish covenant of the Old Testament. A celebration that God's grace is over them before they can consciously respond. A separate opportunity to make a profession of faith is offered at confirmation, where baptized individuals confirm their acceptance of faith.

### Communion

**Commonly held views** - Communion is a celebration of the New Covenant of Jesus offered to believers.

#### 4 Views -

**Memorial view** - Communion is only a time to remember and there is no 'special presence' of God (Baptist)

**Consubstantiation** - The body and blood of Jesus 'coexist' alongside the bread and wine. (Episcopal)

**Transubstantiation** - The bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Jesus when consumed (Catholic)

**Divine Mystery** - God is present in a real and special way that is different than practices like prayer or reading scripture. How exactly God is present is a divine mystery. (Methodist)

# CHURCH ORGANIZATION/LEADERSHIP

## Congregational/Independent

**Property Ownership** - All the church property is owned by the church with no claims by the larger denomination

**Pastoral Credentials/Training** - Each local church determines who is/isn't called and prepared for ministry and ordains them independently of any denominational input or standards.

**Pastoral Leadership** - The church 'calls' a pastor, offering a pastor a position of leadership after a search process. Denominations offer little support in the search and have no say in who the church hires.

**Lay Leadership Structure** - Varies greatly by local congregation. Churches can be owned by a person/family or by an incorporated organization.

## Episcopal

**Property Ownership** - Church property is either owned outright by the denomination or has a trust clause that ensures that it will remain in denominational control.

**Pastoral Credentials/Training** - The denomination sets standards for training and can require extensive processes in order to be ordained. Clergy that are ordained often are guaranteed a position in a church.

**Pastoral Leadership** - The denominational leadership (Bishop) appoints a pastor. While efforts are made to match a pastor to a church, neither the church nor the clergy has ultimate say in who is appointed. Often there is little consultation with the church on what is needed.

**Lay Leadership Structure** - The denomination details a leadership structure that ensures wide representation and transparency. Churches are only owned by either the denomination or by an incorporated organization.

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## Global Methodist Church

**Property Ownership** - All the church property is owned by the church with no claims by the larger denomination

**Pastoral Credentials/Training** - The denomination sets standards for ordination, but they are not as intensive as the UMC. Pastors can be ordained without having to hold a masters degree. Clergy are not guaranteed a position.

**Pastoral Leadership** - The denomination works with the local congregation to identify needs and provide candidates for interview. Pastors are appointed, but there must be agreement between the denominational leadership, the church, and the pastor.

**Lay Leadership Structure** - There is a detailed organization with flexibility to meet local church needs. All churches are owned by incorporated organizations.

**Women in Ordained Ministry** - The GMC ordains anyone who is called, meets the requirements for ordination, and is willing to teach and obey the theology of the denomination. Women have no limitations in the GMC.

## SHARED METHODIST DISTINCTIVES

**Wesleyan heritage** - All Methodists share the heritage of the Methodist movement led by John and Charles Wesley. This includes a rich, shared history of liturgy and hymnody that is used across denominational lines. Many revival movements were started in Methodist churches.

**Theology of Grace** - Wesleyan/Methodists believe in an ongoing, progressive work of God's grace in our lives.

- **Prevenient Grace** - The grace that God offers to us even before we accept Christ. It is what gives us the ability to respond to God's offer of salvation.
- **Justifying Grace** - The grace offered to us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that returns us to a right relationship with God.
- **Sanctifying Grace** - The continuing work of God to shape us into a new creation modelled after Jesus.

**Means of Grace** - The belief that God's grace is offered to us through a number of spiritual practices. God can and does shape us through spiritual disciplines and other practices. God's grace is not just limited to sacraments.

**Entire Sanctification** - The belief that we can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be freed to truly love the Lord with all our hearts, minds, soul, and strength. It is not a perfection of action, but of willful surrender to God.

**Eccumenical relationships** - All Methodist denominations accept the validity of other denominations and willingly work with other churches in ministry. All Christians are welcome to worship and participate in Communion.

**Missions as service** - Mission work is considered an act of service and love. Missions move beyond a sole focus of presenting the gospel to providing for physical needs. Missionaries are often supported by a denominationally related structure and less so by a 'raising individual support' structure. Lay leadership and participation in missions is highly encouraged.

**Biblical study** - Laity are encouraged to read and study the Bible. Scriptural study isn't limited to just ordained clergy and laity are expected to develop their theological understanding. Daily study and prayer are highly encouraged practices.

**Acceptance of Holy Spirit/Spiritual gifts** - The Holy Spirit is considered a full, active person of the Trinity. While more charismatic gifts are not the norm in many Methodist denominations, they are not outright rejected as they are in other denominations. Methodists believe that God provides each believer with unique gifts to serve God and the church.

**Church as community** - Methodist churches across denominations tend to have a much higher connection to the local community and participate regularly in community wide events and often support community resources/activities (Scouting, AA, food pantries, etc.). Church members are encouraged to become involved beyond just attending Sunday worship services. Ministries are designed to help encourage each other to grow in faith.

## GLOBAL METHODIST DISTINCTIVES

**Theological Clarity/Adherence** - The GMC has clearly defined theological beliefs, laid out in the (Transitional) Book of Discipline. Unlike the UMC, churches as well as clergy are held to these theological standards. This ensures that every church will hold to the GMC theology.

**Authority of Scripture** - In the GMC, scripture is the key factor in determining theology. The UMC uses a theological construct called the “Wesley Quadrilateral”. This basically states that scripture, tradition, reason, and experience should be considered when determining theology. The GMC acknowledges the influence that tradition, reason, and experience have in shaping theology, but consider scripture to have a much greater influence.

**Accountable Discipleship** - The GMC takes seriously the idea of social holiness - that our faith, while ours, is only truly lived out in relationship with each other. GMC members are highly encouraged (and in some local churches required) to be involved in a small group of fellow believers who will hold them accountable to spiritual growth practices. This is reminiscent of the early Methodist movement, which used ‘class meetings’ as the membership body of the church.

**Much Thinner Book of Discipline** - The GMC (Transitional) Book of Discipline is a much thinner book than the UMC Book of Discipline. This is due to a flatter organizational structure (see below) as well as to much fewer ‘statements’ and requirements. In addition, there is no separate ‘Book of Resolutions’. The GMC discipline focuses on the doctrines relevant to the denomination as a whole and a basic organizational structure.

**Leaner, Flatter Organizational Structure** - The GMC will not have the highly structured (and expensive) organizational structure of the UMC. There will be no jurisdictions and many of the ministries that were redundantly organized across conferences will be centralized in the denomination (Benefits for clergy, for example). Conferences will have the freedom to organize as they see fit and will not be required to have a heavy staffing structure. “Presiding Elders”, who in most conferences will be pastors serving churches, will replace many of the roles of the former district superintendents.

**Term-limited Bishops** - Bishops will serve for a limited term and then will retire with title only. There are not ‘bishops for life’ in the GMC. Bishops are expected to take a greater role in leadership of the church rather than the organizational management role over a conference(s) that UMC bishops have.

**Connectional Giving Instead of Apportionments** - Giving to support the conference and denomination will be determined by a percentage of the church’s giving and will be much lower than the billed apportioned support of the UMC. This is more in line with the biblical concept of a tithe. Each church will calculate their own giving level and churches will be able to apply for a reduction when they experience hardship. The giving percentage is capped at a maximum of 1.5% for the denomination and 5% for the conference.

**No Trust Clause** - Individual churches are owned completely by their congregations and are not held captive to the denomination by a trust clause. Churches that wish to leave the denomination can do so by a congregational vote. The GMC is a body of the called, not the constrained.

### **Annual Conference Focus on Training and Worship**

- While worship has always been a part of Annual Conference (the yearly meeting of member churches of a region of the church), the UMC annual conference has been primarily a business meeting. The lighter structure of the GMC will require much less 'business', freeing the GMC Annual Conference to spend more time in worship and an opportunity to offer training workshops.

**More Clergy/Church Cooperation** - With a much greater theological alignment among the clergy and churches, the GMC will see more cooperation between churches in shared ministry. Theologically conservative clergy who were silenced or side-lined in the UMC are much more active and providing leadership. Theological diversity will not be a factor in determining leadership and design of shared worship services.

**Easier Path to Ordination** - Those seeking to serve the church as clergy will no longer be required to earn a master's degree. A series of classes, tests, and interviews will make the steps to becoming a pastor easier and with little financial strain.

**Church Planting/Evangelical Mindset** - The GMC is dedicated to starting new faith communities. Churches are encouraged to support new churches in the area and look for opportunities to launch new congregations. Camps and children's ministries are focused on sharing the gospel and guiding people into a life with Christ.

**True Global Unity** - The GMC is committed to full partnership with churches across the globe. The structure of the UMC limits the influence of non-US conferences in the leadership of the denomination. There is limited representation of international leaders on boards and agencies. It is expected that the UMC will re-structure to allow the US church to adopt more progressive stances.

**More Direct Missional Opportunities** - The GMC will have a less organizationally focused missions program and will rely more on endorsement and direct connection. Missionaries will continue to be supported denominationally, but response to disaster will move from a denominationally organized effort to a locally supported one. This means that, in face of a disaster, the GMC will identify a local church or ministry through which it will encourage giving and participation. This will allow for a quicker and more nimble response to disaster.

**An Up-to-date Technological Approach** - The GMC will take greater advantage of technology in the management of the church. Conference meetings, connective giving, and denominational resources will use more digital options. This will reduce the overall costs to the denomination and give greater opportunity for participation.

**A Fresh Expression of Faith** - The start of the GMC provides an opportunity for pastors and churches to re-examine their practices and passions. Many churches are re-branding and taking the opportunity to make changes in the expectations and practices of the church. There is a 're-awakening' and revival among the clergy in particular, with many expressing new energy and passion for ministry.

# Sources for more information about Wesleyan Theology and the GMC

*Understanding Wesleyan Theology*

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/quick-guide-christian-denominations/>

<http://evangelicalarminians.org/an-outline-of-the-facts-of-arminianism-vs-the-tulip-of-calvinism/>

Why I Am Not a Calvinist, book by Jerry L. Walls, Joseph R. Dongell, ISBN 978-0830832491

Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Timelines, ISBN 978-1496566587

The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations, ISBN 978-0736952910

*GMC Resources*

Eastern Texas Conference [etxgmc.org](http://etxgmc.org)

Global Methodist Church [globalmethodist.org](http://globalmethodist.org)

Available here:

GMC (Transitional) Book of Discipline

GMC Catechism

Wesley Covenant Association [wesleycovenant.org](http://wesleycovenant.org)

Available here - UMC/GMC comparison chart

<https://wesleycovenant.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/A-Comprehensive-Comparison-Chart.pdf>