

**We are the
church.
Together.**

**Why I'm
United Methodist**



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®





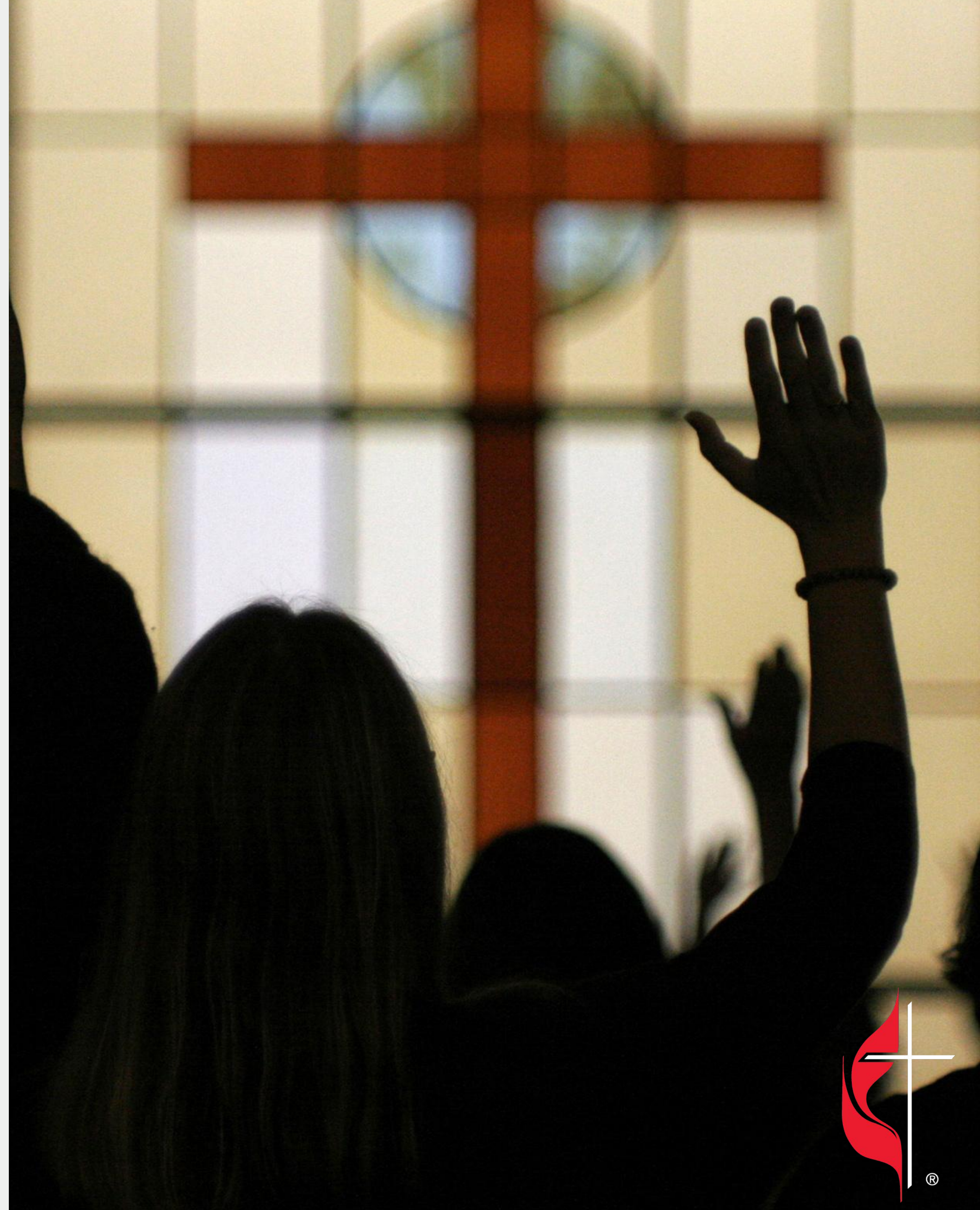
Welcome and Overview

- **Opening prayer**
- **Opening Song**
- **Purpose of our meeting**

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What does The UMC believe?*



*The 2016 Book of Discipline, originally from Wesley's Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church, which was printed in 1808. The first restrictive rule took effect 214 years ago.



WHAT DOES THE UMC BELIEVE?

United Methodists believe in the
Triune God —
Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Article I — Faith in the Holy Trinity

- One loving and true God of infinite power, wisdom and goodness
- God in three persons
 - Father
 - Son
 - Holy Ghost

Articles of Religion
Book of Discipline, ¶ 104

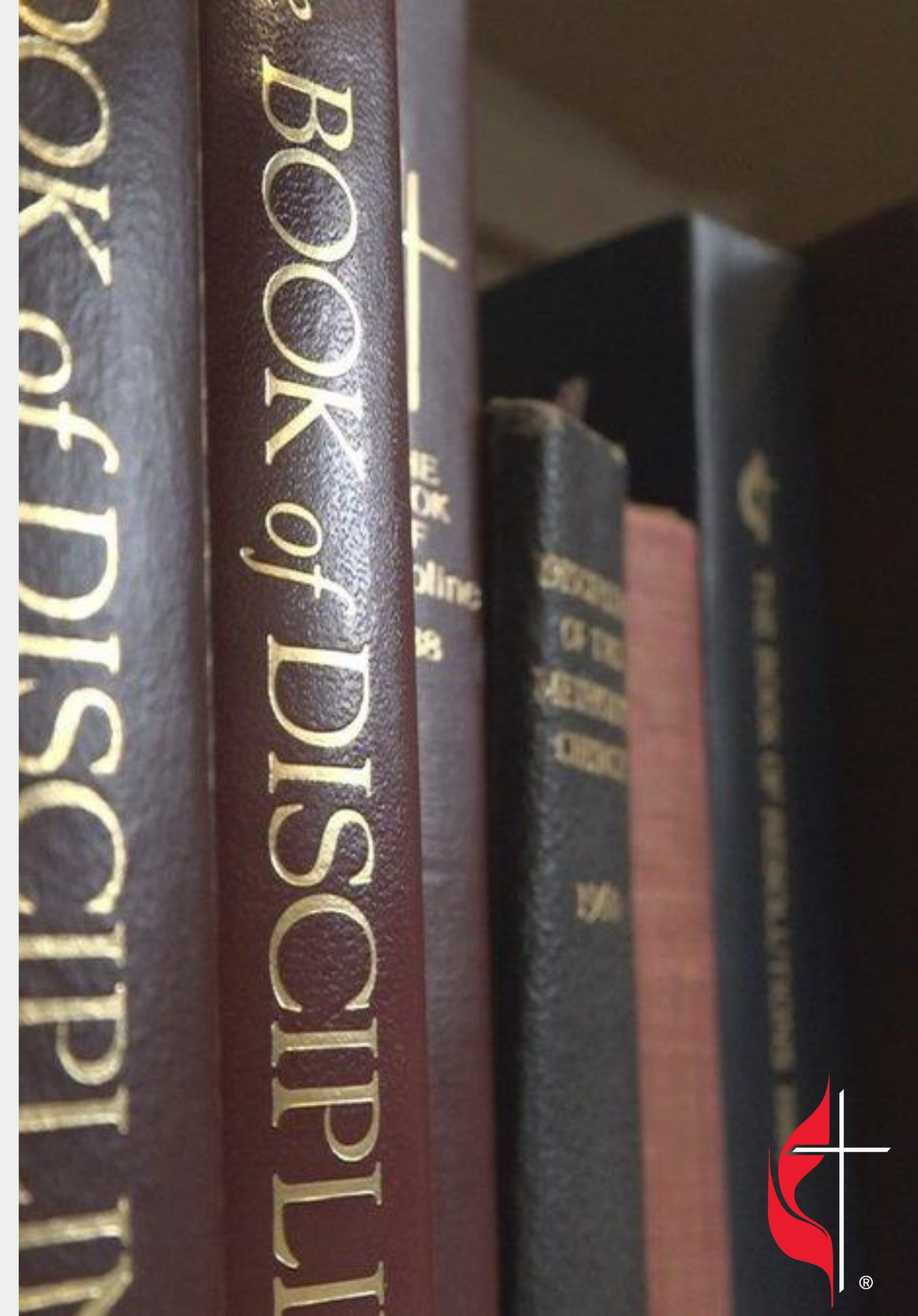


WHAT DOES THE UMC BELIEVE?

United Methodists believe in the virgin birth and the full divinity of Christ

Article II — The Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

- The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father
- Took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin
- One Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men

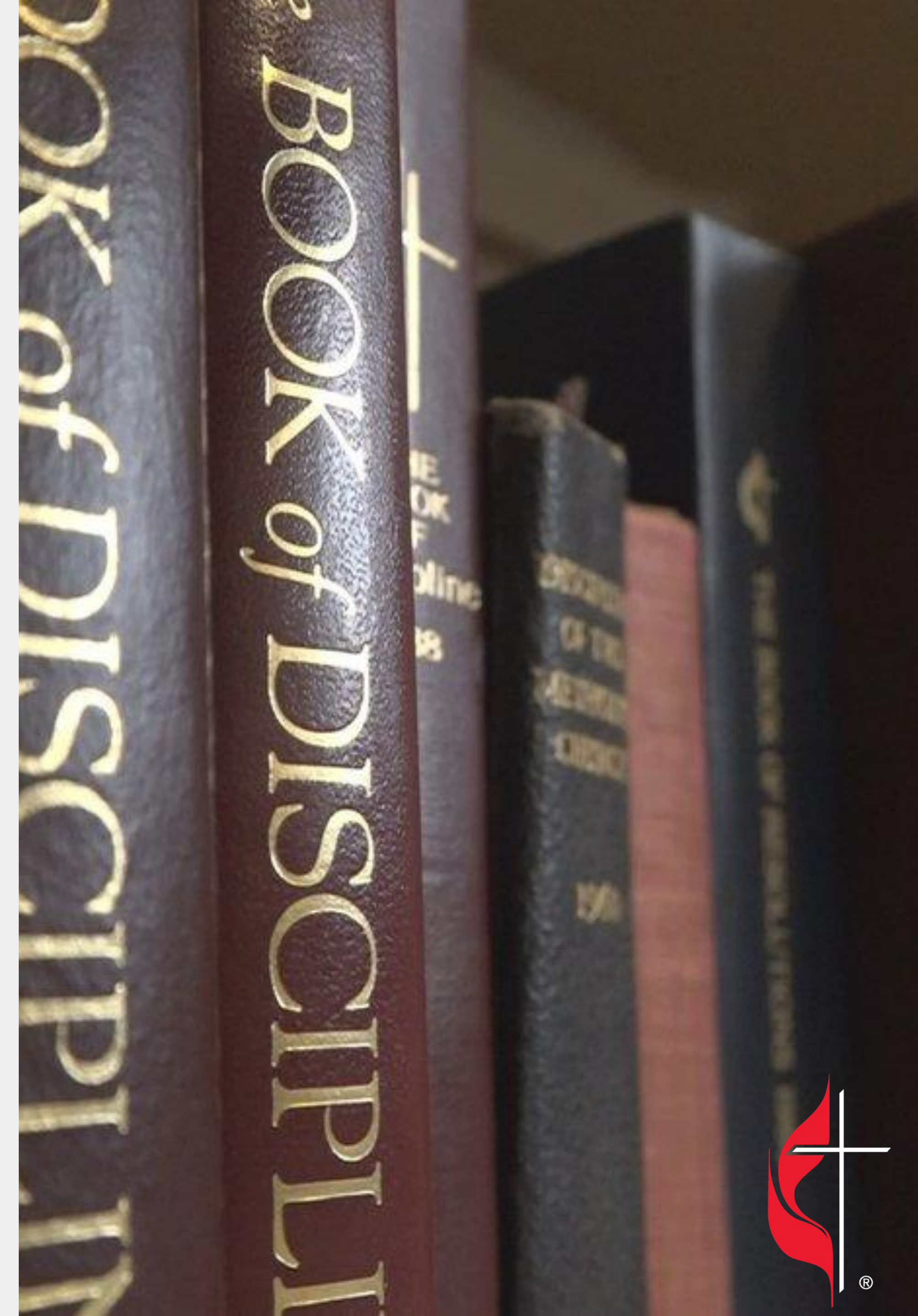


WHAT DOES THE UMC BELIEVE?

United Methodists believe Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven

Article III — The Resurrection of Christ

- Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body
- Ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he returns to judge all men at the last day

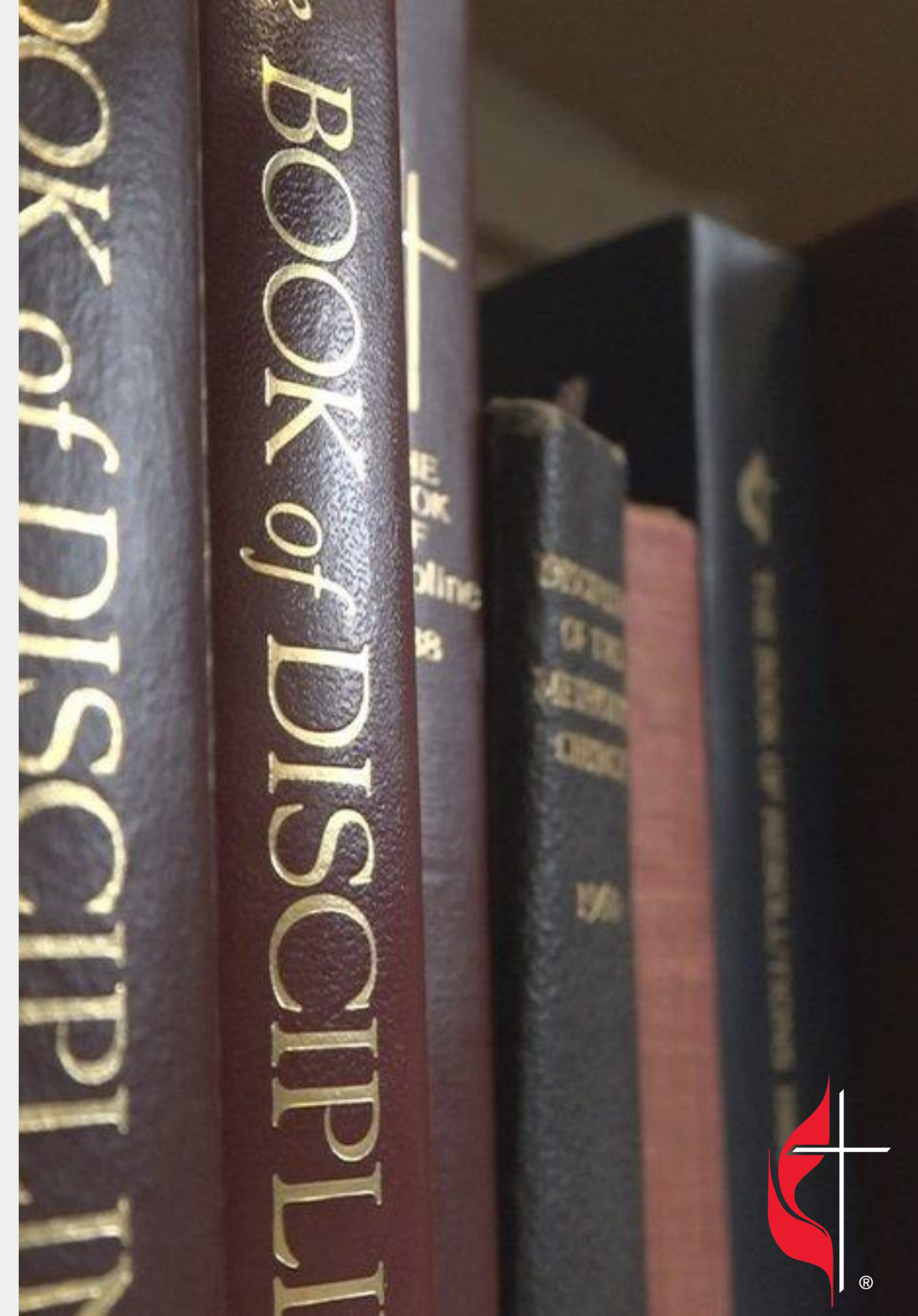


WHAT DOES THE UMC BELIEVE?

United Methodists believe in the continuing movement of the Holy Spirit

Article IV — The Holy Ghost

- The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

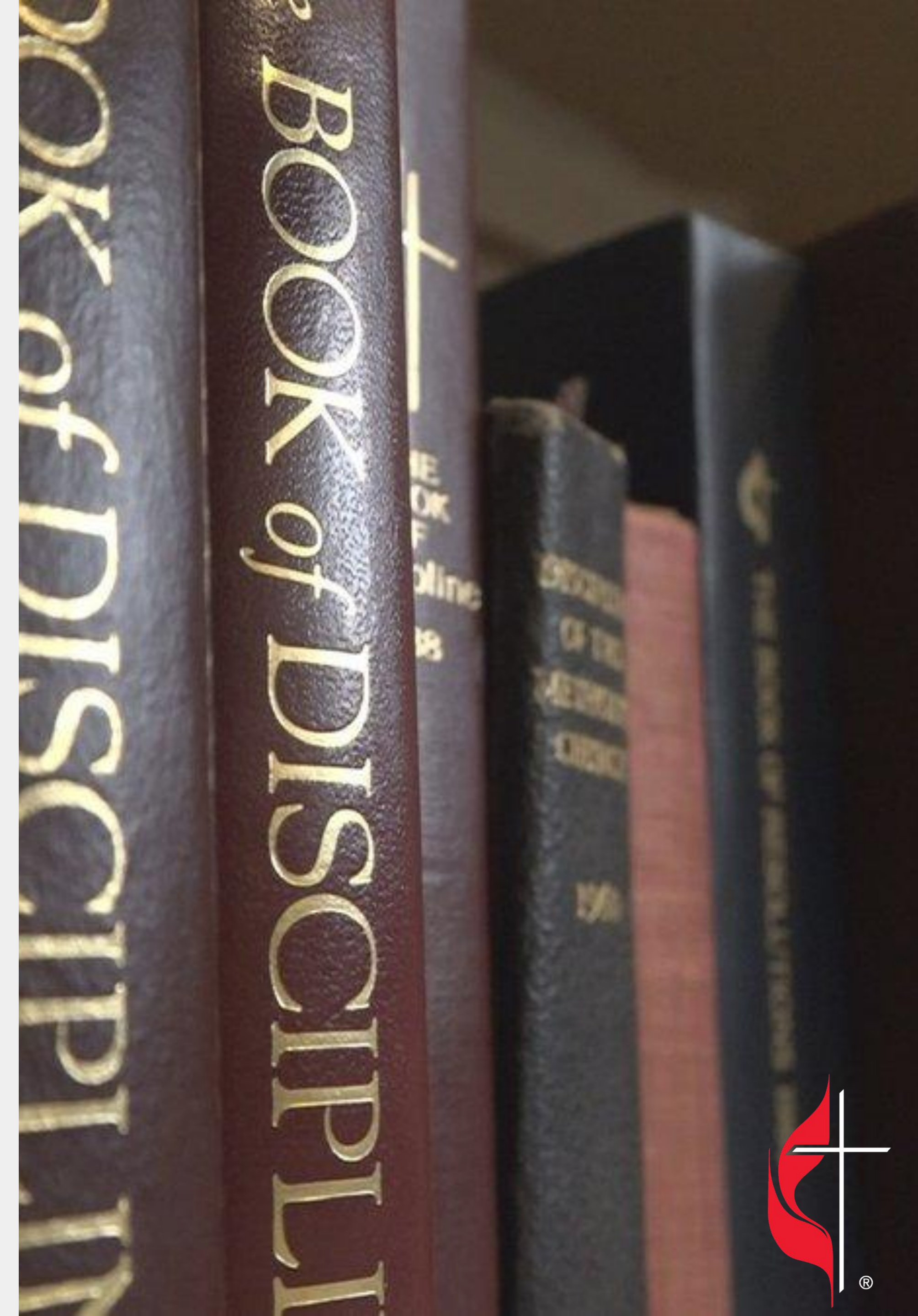


WHAT DOES THE UMC BELIEVE?

United Methodists believe the Holy Scriptures “contain all things necessary”

Article V — The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

- The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation
- In Holy Scripture are the canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the church



Our foundational beliefs cannot change

THE RESTRICTIVE RULES OF THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE STATE:

¶ 17. Article I. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

¶ 18. Article II. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Confession of Faith.

¶ 21. Article V. The General Conference shall not revoke or change the General Rules of Our United Societies.



Our Structure - Democracy and Representation

- The United Methodist Church does not have a central headquarters or a single executive leader. Duties are divided among bodies that include the General Conference, the Council of Bishops and the Judicial Council. These entities are established by our Constitution to be part of our structure. Each plays a significant role in the life of the church and provides checks and balances on the others.
- The primary body of of the United Methodist Church is the Annual Conference. Every church is represented in its governance.
- All of our governing bodies are designed to ensure maximum involvement and representation from throughout the United States and the worldwide connection.





The church of yesterday, today and tomorrow

- The UMC continues to be a thriving denomination making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- The Constitution of The United Methodist Church protects both the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith as doctrinal standards that shall not be revoked, altered, or changed.
- To change the Constitution requires a supermajority of the General Conference and supermajority of the Annual and Central Conferences of The UMC.



The Apostles Creed

The Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith remain our foundation. The Apostles Creed expresses many of these commitments.

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And 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;
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick 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.**



**Who are we as
United
Methodists?**



LIVING THE GOSPEL

The United Methodist Church is founded on a Wesleyan theology of grace, anchored in Scripture, and based in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the continuing movement of the Holy Spirit.

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles.
Acts 2:42-43





LIVING THE GOSPEL - GOD'S GRACE

- At the heart of Wesleyan/United Methodist theology and practice is a profound understanding and vital experience of grace.
- John Wesley defined grace as God's "bounty, or favour: his free, undeserved favour, ... man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that 'formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul,' and stamped on that soul the image of God, and 'put all things under his feet.' ... For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand."
- The Book of Discipline defines grace as "the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit."



LIVING THE GOSPEL - THE BIBLE

- The UMC believes in the authority and primacy of the Scripture.
- The Holy Bible is the primary source for Christian living and the standard for Christian doctrine. The Bible as found in the Old and New Testaments is the foundation and for what we believe and practice as United Methodists. It reveals the Word of God and “superior to all human authority.” (John Wesley)
- Tradition, reason and experience function as lenses for our interpretation of the Bible. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral helps us grasp God’s Word with greater clarity and understanding.



LIVING THE GOSPEL

Discuss:

- How are God's grace, Scripture, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the continuing movement of the Holy Spirit part of your daily life of faith?
- How do you see God's grace, scripture, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the continuing movement of the Holy Spirit manifest in your church?



MAKING DISCIPLES

First and foremost, we are dedicated to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in the tradition of John Wesley.

Jesus came near and spoke to them, “I’ve received all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, **go 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 obey everything that I’ve commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age.”
Matthew 28:18-20



MAKING DISCIPLES

The Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church

The mission of the (United Methodist) Church is to **make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world**. Local churches and extension ministries of the Church provide the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs.
(*Book of Discipline* ¶120)



MAKING DISCIPLES

A few of the ways United Methodists make disciples:

- Spoken creeds (The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds) and our Christology taught in many ways
- Worshipping God through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness



MAKING DISCIPLES

A few of the ways United Methodists make disciples:

- The Wesleyan hymns contained in The United Methodist Hymnal
- Disciplined engagement with scripture at all ages



MAKING DISCIPLES

A few of the ways United Methodists make disciples:

- Works of piety, mercy and justice locally and around the world
- The sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist and other means of grace
- Small group accountability and support



WE ARE MAKING DISCIPLES!

**The ministries of our church make a difference in our community,
in our state, in our nation, and in our world.**



MAKING DISCIPLES

Discuss:

- What do you think The United Methodist Church means by “the transformation of the world”? Why is that important?
- Our mission statement concludes by affirming the role of the local church as “the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs.” How is your congregation making disciples of Jesus Christ?



BELONGING AND INCLUSION

**All people belong and will be loved in The United Methodist Church.
All will be heard, respected and engaged.**

There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for **all of you are one in Christ Jesus.**

Galatians 3:28





BELONGING AND INCLUSION

- The UMC Book of Discipline has NOT changed regarding homosexuality.
- Pastoral authority regarding all matters relating to the order of the local church and congregational consultation before appointments continues to be practiced.
- The earliest any disciplinary changes could be made is 2024 which is when the next General Conference is scheduled. Our worldwide delegates will assemble in 2024 to consider potential legislation. What happens during General Conference is both unpredictable and hypothetical.
- The UMC continues to believe that “ALL people are of sacred worth.” This belief has been in the *Book of Discipline* since 1972. ALL are one in Christ.





BELONGING AND INCLUSION

The UMC is a big tent where all are welcome.

The people called United Methodists are diverse, including age, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religious background, religious training, ability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and socio-economic status.





BELONGING AND INCLUSION

On any given situation or issue, United Methodists agree to disagree. **To agree to disagree is a Wesleyan value:**

“No man can choose for or prescribe to another. Everyone must follow the dictates of his own conscience in sympathy and sincerity. He must be fully persuaded in his own mind and then act according to the best light he has...Every wise man will allow other the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him... he bears with those who differ with him...‘Tis certain, as long as we know in part, all men will not see all things alike. It is the unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding that we be of several minds, in religion as in common life. **Though we may not think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart though we are not of one mind?**”

- John Wesley





BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Baptismal Covenant I (United Methodist Hymnal, 35)

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons now before you in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ.

We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their trust of God, and be found faithful in their service to others.

We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.





BELONGING AND INCLUSION

You have a place in The UMC!

“ALL of our members, clergy, local churches, and annual conferences will continue to have a home in the future United Methodist Church, whether they consider themselves liberal, evangelical, progressive, traditionalist, middle of the road, conservative, centrist, or something else.”

**- A Narrative for the Continuing United Methodist Church,
Council of Bishops**



BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Discuss:

- How does your United Methodist Church help people to truly belong?
- How do you include others who may or may not be like you?



INFLUENCE, CONNECTION & IMPACT

With more than 12 million members across the globe, we are a powerful connection, living and sharing the grace of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Someone might claim, “You have faith and I have action.” But how can I see your faith apart from your actions? Instead, **I’ll show you my faith by putting it into practice in faithful action.**
James 2:18

Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you **will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
Acts 1:7



INFLUENCE, CONNECTION & IMPACT

Since the early days of the Oxford “Holy Club,” Methodists have found missions as an expression of our faith.

We reach out to neighbors near and far, offering the love of Jesus in word and deed.



INFLUENCE, CONNECTION & IMPACT

The United Methodist Church
is a global church

- 12 million members
- 43,000 congregations
- 4 continents (North America, Africa, Asia and Europe)
- Serving in mission in more than 100 countries



INFLUENCE, CONNECTION & IMPACT

Discuss:

- How does your United Methodist congregation serve in mission?
- How do you participate in the mission work of The United Methodist Church?



EXPERIENCE OF GOD THROUGH THE UMC

We embrace a Church where we experience our triune God in personal and community relationships, transforming our own lives, the lives around us, and the entire world.

You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. This salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed. It's not something you did that you can be proud of. Instead, **we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things.** God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

Ephesians 2:8-10



EXPERIENCE OF GOD THROUGH THE UMC

Each one of us has a story of how we have experienced
God's grace through this church.



EXPERIENCE OF GOD THROUGH THE UMC

Discuss:

- Why is it important to remember who we were before we met Jesus?
- What difference has The UMC made in your life and the lives of those you love?
- As those who have received grace, how might we share it?



Why are you United Methodist?

Share your story!

The full story of The UMC reflects all of our interwoven experiences.

Consider our common beliefs, history, mission and ministry.

#BeUMC



**Find more resources at
ngumc.org/BeUMC**

#BeUMC



Q & A

