

A SUMMARY OF WESLEYAN BELIEFSⁱ

SUMMARY

Wesleyans believe in one God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Savior of all persons who put their faith in Him alone for eternal life. We believe those who receive new life in Christ are called to be holy in character and conduct, and can only live this way by being filled with the Lord's Spirit. We believe in the Bible and seek to establish our faith and actions on its teachings. We believe God wants people everywhere to know Him and that the purpose of the church is to tell the world about Christ through its worship, witness, and loving deeds.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Faith in the Holy Trinity

We believe in the one living and true God who is both holy and loving. He created and preserves everything, lives eternally and His power, wisdom, and goodness are without limits. We believe in the Trinity; within the divine unity are three co-equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Though three persons, they are one in nature, power and eternity.ⁱⁱ

The Father

We believe that God the Father is the Source of everything that exists, whether matter or spirit. With the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Father made humanity, male and female, in His image. He relates to people as Father, showing how much He loves them. Because of this love, God both seeks and receives people who repent of their sins.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Son of God

We believe in Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God. The Holy Spirit conceived Him and the Virgin Mary gave Him birth, thus, He is both fully God and fully human. He died on the cross and was buried to be a sacrifice both for original sin and for all human transgressions, making those who trust in his atoning death right with God. Christ rose from the dead in His physical body and ascended into heaven where He occupies a place of honor and intercedes for us. One day He will return to earth to judge every person, living and dead.^{iv}

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who has been sent to us by the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit has the same nature, majesty, and glory as the Father and the Son. He is and always will be truly God. It is through the Spirit that we come to experience God's grace. He points out sin and brings new birth to believers. He sets us apart to belong completely to God and actually changes our nature to be like God's. When we die, our glorification will be the Spirit's doing as well. He is always everywhere, assuring, preserving, guiding, and enabling the believer.^v

The Sufficiency and Full Authority of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

We believe that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments form the entirety of Holy Scripture. They are the inspired and infallibly written Word of God. In their original

form, they are completely without any errors and constitute our highest authority. In the process by which these books have come to us no important teaching has been corrupted. Absolutely everything we need to know to become a Christian is found in these pages. If a teaching isn't found in the Bible or can't be proven from the Bible, nobody should have to accept it as a doctrine necessary for salvation. Both the Old and New Testaments point to Christ as the source of eternal life and the only Mediator between God and human beings. What the Scriptures require of us, the Holy Spirit makes possible.^{vi}

God's Purpose for Humanity

We believe that God's whole law is summarized in the two great commandments: to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves. These two laws describe how we ought to live in every aspect of life, reminding us that God is our King and all people are equal before Him. If we live according to these laws, we will fully obey God and treat people as we ought.^{vii}

Marriage and the Family

We believe that every person is created in the image of God and that human sexuality reflects that image in terms of intimate love, communication, fellowship, subordination of the self to the larger whole, and fulfillment. The Bible uses the marriage relationship as the supreme metaphor for His relationship with His covenant people, one God with one people. God's intends for human sexuality to be expressed only in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. This is the only relationship which is divinely designed for the birth and rearing of children and is a covenant union made in the sight of God, taking priority over every other human relationship.^{viii}

Personal Choice

We believe that humanity's creation in the image of God included the ability to choose between right and wrong. This means humans are morally responsible for our choices. But ever since the fall of Adam, people in their own strength have been unable to do the right because of original sin. Original sin is not just following Adam's example, but reflects the corruption of the human nature. Found in every person, this corruption is passed on from parent to child. Original sin leaves us all far from being what God intended us to be. We are, by nature, always inclined to evil. We cannot even call on God or exercise faith to be saved. But through Jesus Christ, God's grace makes possible what we never could or would do on our own. This prevenient grace (i.e. grace which precedes human response) is freely given to every person, enabling all who choose to turn and be saved.^{ix}

The Atonement

We believe that when Jesus offered himself, once and for all, through His sufferings and death on the cross, He provided the perfect redemption and atonement for the sins of the whole world, both for original sin and actual sin. Salvation from sin comes only through His death and resurrection but this salvation is big enough to save anyone who asks. People who are mentally incompetent from birth, or who became mentally incompetent after conversion, or children under the age of accountability are automatically covered by

Jesus' death and resurrection. When children reach the age of accountability, they must personally repent and exercise faith in Christ in order to be saved.^x

Repentance and Faith

We believe that for men and women to appropriate what God's prevenient grace has made possible, they must voluntarily respond in repentance and faith. God gives the ability, but the act is our responsibility. Because the Holy Spirit has pointed out sin in our lives, we repent, willingly changing our mind. Repentance means we turn our back on that sin and long to be made righteous. We are truly sorry for our failures and confess them, paying others back and resolving never to let it happen again. Without this repentance, saving faith is impossible. Faith is the only condition of salvation, the kind of faith that agrees with God about our sinful condition and agrees that the only solution for that condition is found in the gospel. When we exercise faith, we completely and wholeheartedly rely on the saving ability of Jesus Christ and completely trust ourselves to Him as Savior and Lord. We express our experience of saving faith by public acknowledging His Lordship and by identifying with His Church.^{xi}

Justification, Regeneration and Adoption

We believe that at the same moment someone repents of personal sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he or she is justified, regenerated, adopted into the family of God, and assured of personal salvation through the witness of the Holy Spirit. We believe that justification is the judicial act of God in which He counts a person as righteous, grants that person full pardon of all sin, delivers him or her from guilt, and completely releases that person from the penalty of sins committed. Justification comes by the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith alone, not on the basis of works.^{xii}

We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, occurs when the Holy Spirit gives life to our moral nature, making it possible for us to love and obey God. To be regenerated, we must genuinely repent and believe in Jesus Christ. The regenerated are able to serve God with their whole heart and to be delivered from the power of sin which reigns over all the unsaved.^{xiii}

We believe that adoption is when God makes the justified and regenerated believer a full participant in all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a child of God.^{xiv}

Good Works

We believe that although good works cannot save us from our sins or from God's judgment, they are the fruit of faith and follow regeneration. Therefore God is pleased with them and accepts them. They reveal a living faith as surely as fruit reveals the type of tree.^{xv}

Sin After Regeneration

We believe that after we have experienced regeneration, it is possible for us to fall into sin, for in this life there is no level of holiness from which it is impossible to fall. But God's grace is sufficient to keep those who persevere in the faith from falling. By God's

grace anyone who has fallen into sin can find forgiveness and restoration from God, if truly repentant and possessing faith.^{xvi}

Sanctification: Initial, Progressive, Entire

We believe that in sanctification the Holy Spirit sets the child of God apart to belong completely to God, , making it possible for the believer to love God wholeheartedly and to blamelessly obey all God's commandments. Sanctification begins the moment we are justified and regenerated. From that moment we are gradually or progressively sanctified as we walk with God and daily grow in grace and in a more perfect obedience to God. This prepares for the crisis of entire sanctification, brought about in an instant when we present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, through faith in Jesus Christ. In this baptism of Holy Spirit, the human heart is cleansed from all inbred sin. The crisis of entire sanctification allows us to love God and others and empowers us for effective service. It is followed by lifelong growth in grace and the knowledge of Jesus. We continue this life of holiness through faith in the sanctifying blood of Christ and demonstrate it by loving obedience to God's revealed will.^{xvii}

The Gifts of the Spirit

We believe that the Gift of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit himself; He is more to be desired than any gifts He gives. These He wisely distributes to individual members of the Church to help them fulfill their role in the body of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit, although not always identifiable with natural abilities, function through them to build up the whole Church. We don't just use these gifts as we want. They are to be exercised lovingly under the administration of the Lord of the Church. The real value of the gifts of the Spirit is measured by how useful they make us to the Church, not by any ecstasy produced in us.^{xviii}

The Church

We believe that the Christian Church is made up of all who believe in Jesus Christ, its founder and only Head. Its members have renounced the world, the flesh and the devil, and have dedicated themselves to continue the work Christ assigned to His church until He returns. It must preach the pure Word of God, properly administer the sacraments according to Christ's instructions, and live in obedience to all that Christ commands. A local church is a body of believers formally organized on biblical principles, and meeting regularly for evangelism, nurture, fellowship and worship.^{xix}

The Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church. Christ commanded and ordained these as a means of grace when received through faith. They are symbols of our profession of Christian faith and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, God enlivens, strengthens and confirms our faith.

The validity of the sacraments does not reside in any particular mode of administration but rather in obedience to Christ's commands and receiving these divine gifts in faith.

We believe that water baptism was commanded by Jesus to be administered to believers as a symbol of the new covenant of grace. It signifies that we have accepted the benefits of Christ's atonement. By means of this sacrament, believers declare their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.^{xx}

We believe that the Lord's Supper commemorates our redemption through Christ's death and expresses our hope in His victorious return. It is also a sign of the love Christians have for each other. If believers receive the Lord's Supper with faith and a proper and humble spirit, God communicates grace to the heart through it.^{xxi}

The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the certainty of the personal, and imminent, and visible return of Christ inspires holy living and zeal to evangelize the world. At His return Christ will fulfill all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over evil.^{xxii}

The Resurrection of the Dead

We believe that everyone will experience bodily resurrection from the dead at Christ's Second Coming, as guaranteed by His resurrection. The just will experience the resurrection of life, and the unjust the resurrection of damnation. The raised body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable.^{xxiii}

The Judgment of All Persons

We believe the Scriptures reveal God as the Judge of all and that His judgments are based on His total knowledge and eternal justice. The culminating moment of His judgment will be the final meeting of every person before His majestic and powerful throne, where records will be examined and final rewards and punishments administered.^{xxiv}

Destiny

We believe there is a conscious personal existence after death. The final destiny of each person is determined by God's grace and that person's response. How we have responded will be evident in the moral character resulting from our personal and willful choices, not from God's arbitrary decree. Those who choose the salvation God provides through Jesus will live forever in Heaven with its eternal glory, experiencing the blessed presence of Christ. Those who neglect this great salvation will spend eternity in hell, experiencing everlasting misery and separation from God.^{xxv}

COMMUNITY LIFESTYLE STATEMENT

Indiana Wesleyan University, as a college of The Wesleyan Church and the Church Universal, is a community joined together to further academic achievement, personal development and spiritual growth. Together the Community seeks to honor Christ by integrating faith, learning, and living while its member's hearts and lives mature in relationship to Jesus Christ and each other.

Working in a community with others is a sacred privilege and an opportunity to demonstrate God's grace. We, therefore, place great value on the quality of relationship in

our Community and expect those relationships to evidence being dependant and accountable to one another, serving one another in the Community, nation and world, supporting one another, especially those experiencing personal trials, resolving problems through loving confrontation, and restoring relationships that have been hurt.

Faith in God's Word should lead to behavior displaying His authority in our lives and to the relevant demonstration of faith integrated with learning. Scripture teaches that certain attributes such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are to be manifested by members of the Christian Community. By contrast, Scripture condemns such attitudes as greed, jealousy, pride, lust, needless anger, an unforgiving spirit, harmful discrimination, and prejudice. Furthermore, certain behaviors are expressly prohibited by Scripture. These include theft, lying, dishonesty, gossip, slander, profanity, vulgarity, adultery, homosexual behavior, premarital sex, drunkenness, immodesty, and occult practices.

Scripture teaches that all our actions (work, study, play) should be performed to the glory of God. We endeavor, therefore, to be selective in choices of entertainment and recreation, promoting those which strengthen the body of Christ and avoiding those which would diminish sensitivity to Christian responsibility. In violation of the scriptural teaching concerning personal dignity and moral purity, individuals are exploited and degraded by immoral and inhumane action of the pornographic industry. Therefore, possession of such materials is unacceptable behavior.

Since the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit, deserving respect and preservation of its well being, we disapprove of the use of tobacco in any form and the use of alcoholic beverages. Under no circumstances should controlled substances such as marijuana, hallucinogens, depressants, stimulants, cocaine, and narcotics be used, possessed, sold, or distributed on or away from campus unless prescribed by a physician. Members are expected not to abuse the use of legal substances.

Scripture teaches the stewardship of God-given resources. Therefore, we disapprove of gambling (the exchange of money and goods by betting or wagering in its various forms). We recognize that dancing is an issue about which committed Christians disagree, and that discretion and maturity are required if dancing is to be an edifying activity. We therefore covenant together as a community to make decisions about our participation in dancing that reflect our commitment to Christ, our pursuit of holiness, our desire for purity in relationships, our adherence to biblical principles, and gracious sensitivity to others.

ⁱ Paraphrased from the Articles of Religion of The Wesleyan Church which can be found at <http://www.wesleyan.org/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=5B7EE5C4A5BA407D93A6AF61EF94B471&nm=Spiritual+Helps&type=Publishing&mod=Publications%3A%3AArticle&mid=8F3A7027421841978F18BE895F87F791&tier=4&id=5464710074024B8BA82C3E55BD140EF8>

ⁱⁱ For scriptural support of these views see . Gen. 1:1; 17:1; Ex. 3:13-15; 33:20; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:2; Isa. 40:28-29; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; John 1:1-2; 4:24; 16:13; 17:3; Acts 5:3-4; 17:24-25; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; Eph. 2:18; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16-17; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ps. 68:5; Isa. 64:8; Matt. 7:11; John 3:17; Rom. 8:15; 1 Peter 1:17.

^{iv} Ps. 16:8-10; Matt. 1:21, 23; 11:27; 16:28; 27:62-66; 28:5-9, 16:17; Mark 10:45; 15; 16:6-7; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; 24:4-8, 23; John 1:1, 14, 18; 3:16-17; 20:26-29; 21; Acts 1:2-3; 2:24-31; 4:12; 10:40; Rom. 5:10, 18; 8:34; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3-8, 14; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 4:4-5; Eph. 5:2; 1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 2:17; 7:27; 9:14, 28; 10:12; 13:20; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 4:14.

^v Job 33:4; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:6.

^{vi} The canonical books of the Old Testament are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The canonical books of the New Testament are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation. Ps. 19:7; Matt. 5:17-19; 22:37-40; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:45; 5:46; 17:17; Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 1:2; 15:4, 8; 16:26; 2 Cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:8; Eph. 2:15-16; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 10:1; 11:39; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:3-7; Rev. 22:18-19.

^{vii} Lev. 19:18, 34; Deut. 1:16-17; Job 31:13-14; Jer. 21:12; 22:3; Micah 6:8; Matt. 5:44-48; 7:12; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:27-29, 35; John 13:34-35; Acts 10:34-35; 17:26; Rom. 12:9; 13:1, 7-8, 10; Gal. 5:14; 6:10; Titus 3:1; James 2:8; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 2:5; 4:12-13; 2 John 6.

^{viii} Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18, 20, 23-24; Isa. 54:4-8; 62:5b; Jer. 3:14; Ezek. 16:3ff.; Hosea 2; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:9; John 2:1-2, 11; 1 Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:23-32; 1 Tim. 5:14; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 19:7-8.

^{ix} Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; 1 Kings 20:40; Ps. 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 16:15; John 7:17; Rom. 3:10-12; 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:5; Titus 3:5; Heb. 11:6; Rev. 22:17.

^x Isa. 52:13—53:12; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16; Acts 3:18; 4:12; Rom. 3:20, 24-26; 5:8-11, 13, 18-20; 7:7; 8:34; 1 Cor. 6:11; 15:22; Gal. 2:16; 3:2-3; Eph. 1:7; 2:13, 16; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 7:23-27; 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

^{xi} Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3; 24:47; John 3:16; 17:20; 20:31; Acts 5:31; 10:43; 11:18; 16:31; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 1:16; 2:4; 10:8-10, 17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8; 4:4-6; Phil. 3:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 11:6; 12:2; 1 Peter 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9.

^{xii} Justification: Hab. 2:4; Acts 13:38-39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:2-5; 5:1-2; Gal. 3:6-14; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 3:9; Heb. 10:38.

^{xiii} Regeneration: John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:5, 10, 19; 4:24; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3-4; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1. Adoption: Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5, 7; Eph. 1:5.

^{xiv} Witness of the Spirit: Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 2:3; 3:14, 18-19.

^{xv} Matt. 5:16; 7:16-20; John 15:8; Rom 3:20; 4:2, 4, 6; Gal. 2:16; 5:6; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:3; Titus 2:14; 3:5; James 2:18, 22; 1 Peter 2:9, 12.

^{xvi} Mal. 3:7; Matt. 18:21-22; John 15:4-6; 1 Tim. 4:1, 16; Heb. 10:35-39; 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 24-25.

^{xvii} Gen. 17:1; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 130:8; Isa. 6:1-6; Ezek. 36:25-29; Matt. 5:8, 48; Luke 1:74-75; 3:16-17; 24:49; John 17:1-26; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; 26:18; Rom. 8:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:13, 24; 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 3:10, 12-13; 4:3, 78; 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 10:14; 12:14; 13:12; James 3:17-18; 4:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 1:7, 9; 3:8-9; 4:17-18; Jude 24.

^{xviii} Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:38-39; 8:19-20; 10:45; 11:17; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:1—14:40; Eph. 4:7-8, 11-16; Heb. 2:4; 13:20-21; 1 Peter 4:8-11.

^{xix} Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:41-47; 9:31; 11:22; 12:5; 14:23; 15:22; 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:28; 16:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:9-10, 21; 5:22-33; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23; James 5:14.

^{xx} Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 3:5, 22, 26; 4:1-2; Acts 2:38-39, 41; 8:12-17, 36-38; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom 2:28-29; 4:11; 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27-29; Col. 2:11-12; Titus 3:5.

^{xxi} Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; John 6:48-58; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; 10:3-4, 16-17; 11:23-29.

^{xxii} Job 19:25-27; Isa. 11:1-12; Zech. 14:1-11; Matt. 24:1-51; 25; 26:64; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 17:22-37; 21:5-36; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:6-11; 1 Cor. 1:7-8; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11, 23; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:1-12; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 9:27-28; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 3:1-14; 1 John 3:2-3; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7, 12, 20.

^{xxiii} Job 19:25-27; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 22:30-32; 28:1-20; Mark 16:18; Luke 14:14; 24:1-53; John 5:28-29; 11:21-27; 20:1—21:25; Acts 1:3; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:1-58; 2 Cor. 4:14; 5:1-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 20:4-6, 11-13.

^{xxiv} Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 10:15; 25:31-46; Luke 11:31-32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; 2 Peter 3:7; Rev. 20:11-13.

^{xxv} Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:34-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 13:3; John 8:21-23; 14:2-3; 2 Cor. 5:6, 8, 10; Heb. 2:1-3; 9:27-28; 10:26-31; Rev. 20:14-15; 21:1—22:5, 14-15.