

## Methodists - Who We Are

The people of The United Methodist Church are part of the second largest Protestant denomination in the United States. Our worldwide connection includes approximately 12.8 million members.

The United Methodist Church was formed when the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged in 1968. But we trace our heritage back to the movement begun in 1729 in England by John and Charles Wesley.

Below, you will find a brief list of some of the distinctive characteristics of our denomination. The United Methodist Church is:

- **Global:** Today we speak many languages and live in many countries—with different cultures, ethnic traditions, national histories and understandings of Christian faith and practice.
- **Connectional:** Every United Methodist congregation is interconnected throughout the denomination via a unique, interlocking chain of conferences. The United Methodist Church practices representative democracy in its governance. Conferences elect delegates who are authorized to act and vote.
- **Inclusive:** All persons are welcome to attend our churches and receive Holy Communion, and are eligible to be baptized and become members.
- **Grounded in Scripture:** United Methodist trust free inquiry in matters of Christian doctrine. Our faith is guided by Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. Of paramount importance, however, is Scripture as the witness of God's creating, redeeming and sustaining relationship with God's people.
- **Wesleyan:** The United Methodist Church has a Wesleyan heritage, and as such, places an emphasis on mind and heart (knowledge and vital piety) and putting faith and love into practice (life).
- **Concerned about social justice:** For more than 200 years, The United Methodist Church and its predecessor bodies have expressed concern for God's children everywhere — the poor, the orphaned, the aging, the sick, the oppressed and the imprisoned.
- **Mission-oriented:** Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. In uncomplicated terms, this means we strive to nurture followers of Christ who then reach out and teach others about the love of Jesus.
- **Ecumenical:** United Methodists consider dialogue and missional cooperation between United Methodists and other Christians as a valid witness to the unity of the body of Christ.