

# „What we believe“

Theological foundations of the „Community Covenant“ of the United Methodist Church of Germany for reference and Bible study. The Scriptures in the margins are for further reflection and prayerful meditation.



**Gemeinschaftsbund**  
der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche



## 1. The Word of God

We believe the Word of God is source and foundation of our life. In Jesus Christ, the incarnated Word of God, God spoke to us once and forever. This speaking of God and his history with us are witnessed in the Bible. Even today God speaks his redeeming word to us on the foundation of the Bible.

Joh 1,1,14;  
Heb 1,1f  
Rom 1,2;  
Heb 1,1



## 2. The Bible

We believe Holy Scripture, Old and New Testament, is the Word of God. It was written by men under the guidance and the empowering of the Holy Spirit and therefore is God's Word in the form of men's word. Therefore the Bible wants to be interpreted first and foremost by itself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Tradition, experience and reason are useful helpers as long as the primacy of Scripture is preserved.

2 Tim 3,16  
see Lk 1,1-4  
2 Pet 1,20f



## 3. God, the father

We believe the God of the Bible is the one and only God. He is the almighty creator and perfecter of the visible and invisible world and our merciful and heavenly father in Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ he revealed himself and His love towards mankind most clearly.

Dtn 6,4;  
Ps 86,10;  
Is 45,5;  
1 Cor 8,4,6  
Mt 6,6-9;  
Rom 8,15



## 4. Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus Christ to be the incarnated Son of God. Therefore he is truly God and truly man. To his person God bound all salvation of humankind. Through his death for us and his resurrection he obtained forgiveness and overcame sin and death to institute new and eternal life in the fellowship with God. Jesus is the one man who truly lived according to the word and will of God. Therefore he is the everlasting example and power for our life as his disciples.

Joh 1,1,14;  
Heb 1,1f  
Rom 1,2;  
Heb 1,1  
Joh 3,16; 14,6;  
Acts 4,12;  
Rom 1,16  
Rom 4,24f; 8,1-4;  
1 Cor 15,54f;  
2 Cor 5,14f.21



## 5. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit to be God himself at work in the world and particularly in us humans. Without Him we are not able to recognize who Jesus truly is nor believe in him. The Holy Spirit enables us to follow Jesus and bear witness to him in word and deed. He equips us with his gifts even today for the upbuilding of the church and the ministry to the world.

1 Cor 2,10f; 12,3;  
Eph 1,17f; 3,4f  
Acts 1,8  
Acts 10,44ff;  
Rom 15,18f  
1 Cor 12-14



## 6. Salvation of man

We believe the salvation of man lies in his having peace with God through his faith in Jesus Christ. That means life before and with the living God in being filled with the richness of his spiritual gifts (particularly peace, joy, assurance of salvation, charismata) in forgiveness and in freedom of the deadly power of sin to become whole and holy in body and soul. This belief is challenged again and again and is imperiled by human shortcomings and weaknesses. Therefore we trust in the gracious work of our God who will reach his goal with us.

Rom 5,1f; 6,3-11;  
1 Joh 5,11f;  
Joh 20,31  
Acts 26,18;  
Rom 8,1f  
Mk 1,34; 3,14f;  
Rom 15,18f  
1 Cor 10,6-12  
Phil 2,12f;  
Col 2,6f



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### 7. Salvation and Sanctification

We believe our salvation is founded in the accepting love of God prevailing unconditional towards us as sinners. Through the Holy Spirit God initiates faith in Jesus Christ in us as conversion and renewal of the heart becoming a new creation and born again persons. This is marked in our life as conversion resp. a decision to live with and for Christ including a continuous turning to him. Through the Holy Spirit God enables us to live according to his word and will. In this way the new life takes shape in everyday practice. This is our sanctification. On this path we are continuously growing in faith, hope, and love with the goal of being completely united with Christ and being shaped by his love.

Röm 3,23f  
Röm 5,8ff  
1 Thess 1,9f  
Röm 5,5  
2 Kor 5,17  
Joh 3,3-8;  
Tit 3,4-7;  
1 Petr 1,3  
Röm 8,4;  
1 Kor 1,30;  
Röm 12,1f;  
Gal 5,25;  
Eph 2,10;  
1 Thess 4,3- 7  
1 Kor 13,13  
Eph 4,13-15



### 8. Prayer

We believe prayer to the Triune God is the most important source of power and inspiration of a Christian life. In prayer we are made aware of being sons and daughters of God, we experience the work of the Holy Spirit, who transforms our imperfect speech into words in accordance to Gods will. Jesus´ s praying serves as pattern and model to our praying: his prayer-life including worship, thanksgiving, requests and intercession, as well as the Lords Prayer and his instructions for supplications and praying for our enemies.

Röm 8,15;  
Gal 4,6  
Röm 8,26f  
Mk 1,35; 14,35f  
Mt 11,25f  
Joh 11,41  
Mk 14,36  
Lk 22,32  
Mt 6,9-13  
Mt 6,7f; 7,7- 11  
Mt 5,44f



### 9. Sexuality and Marriage

We believe God created human beings in the mutual assignment of both sexes as man and woman and that the Creator assigned sexual union in marriage as a holistic lifelong bond between man and woman. Therefore we affirm "sexual relations only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage". Therefore we do not believe that homosexuality is a "good gift" of the Creator and cannot affirm benediction/wedding of same-sex couples. Likewise, we do not agree with the often intended reinterpretation of marriage as a covenant between two people. Nor can we affirm the ordination of persons living openly in homosexual relationships.

See BOD (Book of Discipline) until 2020: Social Principles 161 G and Art. 341

Gen 1,27f  
Gen 2,24;  
Mk 10,6-9



### 10. Church and Congregation

We believe the church is the communion of saints who believe in Jesus Christ and are united to one another by the Holy Spirit. As such a spiritual entity the true church is invisible. However it appears visibly as a community of people who follow Jesus, standing in his mission and fulfilling his mandate. The basic form of this community is the local church. The basic mission of the local church is to live reconciliation and fellowship made possible through Jesus including thereby persons of different cultural settings.

Eph 1,1  
1 Kor 12,13  
Joh 20,21;  
Apg 1,8  
Mt 28,19f  
Eph 2,14ff  
1 Kor 9,19-22

Gen 12,3;  
Jes 49,6;  
1 Tim 2,4  
1 Thess 1,9f  
Röm 5,8-10  
Joh 14,6;  
Apg 4,12;  
Röm 11,26f;  
2 Kor 5,18-21;  
Phil 2,10f;  
Kol 1,19f  
Mt 28,19f;  
Apg 1,8  
1 Kor 12,2f;  
1 Thess 1,2-5



### 11. Religions

We believe God, as creator of the world, wants the salvation of all people – regardless of their religion or attitude towards him. As the one and only God (cf Art. 3 above) who revealed himself comprehensively in Jesus Christ, he alone can give salvation and life. Therefore salvation is possible only through Jesus Christ. This is the reason why we are called to a worldwide witness for Jesus hoping the Holy Spirit will awaken faith in Christ in the people we witness to. With Romans 9-11 we trust Gods promises for Israel which have their beginning and final goal in Jesus Christ.

Mt 5,13f; 28,19f;  
Apg 1,8; 4,20  
Mt 22,37-40



### 12. Mission and Evangelism

We believe public proclamation of Jesus Christ in word and deed is a foundational characteristic of Christian life and of the church. Therefore we see our task in passing on the gospel leading people into the discipleship of Jesus which expresses itself in perfect love for God and towards people. The call to repentance and acceptance of forgiveness of sins have a special significance because this is how a person comes into the new relationship with God. (cf Art. 6 above).