

Memorial 1

ADJUSTMENT OF MISSION DESIGNATION

Whereas, individual churches throughout history have taken on a variety of shapes and sizes and the Lord has used them to advance His Kingdom,

Whereas, intentionally smaller expressions of church have been an effective model of ministry globally,

Whereas, The Wesleyan Church within the United States has seen an increase in intentionally smaller church plants in the past decade,

Whereas, Intentionally smaller church expressions are demonstrating evangelistic and mission effectiveness;

Whereas, Many smaller expressions of the church intend to multiply into other intentionally small churches rather than building toward a traditional larger church model,

Whereas, the Articles of Religion state “A local church is a body of believers formally organized on gospel principles, meeting regularly for the purposes of evangelism, nurture, fellowship, and worship” (240);

Whereas, The Discipline does not currently make space for intentionally small churches to be called churches as the Developing Church is “eventually intended to become an established church” (510), a component of establishment is 25 in membership (518:1), which precludes many smaller models.

Whereas, the Mission designation does not use the word church (537);

Whereas, a group of people can meet the standards of the Articles of Religion to be a church, but still not be considered a church by our Discipline, resulting in a disconnect between our polity and our ecclesiology,

Whereas, the Mission designation was only used once in the last six years by a district reporting a new work,

Resolved, that the designation Mission (537) be updated as follows:

5. Mission

537. A special evangelistic, rescue, pioneering church work, or missionary work which cannot appropriately be organized as a developing church shall may be carried on as a mission. A mission may be conducted by an established church subject to the approval of the district board of administration (655:14), by a district (1180:22; 1233:26) or by the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division. It shall not maintain a membership roll nor receive members. A mission shall have no local boards, officers, or committees except such as are appointed by the mission director or pastor, are amenable to the mission director or pastor, and can be replaced at the discretion of the mission director or pastor.

Coming to you recommended by the Regional Board of Administration.