

MEMORIAL 4

PROMOTING EGALITARIAN PRACTICE IN THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

Whereas, The Wesleyan Church is an egalitarian denomination, fully acknowledging that women and men are equal in responsibility and authority to serve the Church, with a rich history of ordaining women – including the first woman to be ordained in North America by Wesleyan pastor Luther Lee; and

Whereas, The Wesleyan Church has a position paper, approved by the General Board, related to the subject of women in ministry, but no definitive statement in the *Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* that states the denomination's position on women in ministry, and

Whereas, the lack of a statement in the *Discipline* has the unintended consequence of giving leverage to Wesleyan congregations who wish to prevent women from serving in ministry, claiming the denomination does not have an official position, and

Whereas, a definitive statement in the *Discipline* which includes both women and men for all areas of pastoral service and ministry work provides the foundation for an increase in egalitarian theology among Wesleyan churches,

Resolved that paragraph 675 in the *Discipline* be updated to read as follows:

Discipline 675:

A pastor is a woman or man who is an ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister, who is called by God and appointed by the Church to serve as the spiritual shepherd, teacher, and administrative overseer of the local church; preaching the Word, directing the worship, administering the sacraments and ordinances of the Church; taking the comforts of the gospel to the sin-burdened, the sick, and the distressed; discipling converts, nurturing and instructing believers, equipping and enabling them for their part in ministry; and serving as chief executive officer in the government of the local church (3007).

And, **Resolved** that a new paragraph be added to the *Discipline* as paragraph 3007, using the exact wording in the most recent position paper as approved by the General Board of The Wesleyan Church on Women in Ministry Leadership:

Discipline (New Paragraph) 3007 (referenced in paragraph 675):

3007: The Wesleyan Church affirms that woman is fully equal to man in terms of her responsibility, as directed by the Holy Spirit and authorized by the Church, to preach, teach, lead, govern or serve in any office or ministry of the Church.