



RESOURCE GUIDE

Wesleyan Roots

What Makes United Methodism Distinct



Resource Guide for Wesleyan Roots

Want to Learn More?

As you begin to learn more about our Wesleyan Roots in the United Methodist Church, you may find yourself wanting to explore further. For example, you might want to learn how you can use what you have learned to better serve students in the student ministry of your local congregation. Or perhaps you came from a non-Methodist Christian tradition and are fascinated by the differences in what you learned about baptism from your previous denomination and what United Methodists believe. Maybe you are clergy and find yourself intrigued by a point of Wesleyan doctrine that has not previously caught your attention. Or perhaps you serve in an area with pastors who profess Calvinistic Christian thought and you would like to better understand their theological stance. Regardless of your specific interests, a plethora of good material exists to assist you in your quest. Some of it is listed here. It is my hope and prayer that you might grow in grace and wisdom as you are perfected in love by the Holy Spirit.

Marsha Engle Middleton

Resources for Those “Wading In” to Wesleyan Studies:

Abraham, William J. *Wesley for Armchair Theologians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

- Lest anyone think that Professor Abraham had no sense of humor, check out the Wesleyan installment in a fine book series examining Christian faith traditions from A to Z. Easy, delightful read, backed up by legitimate scholarship.

Campbell, Ted. A. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials (Revised Edition)*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011.

- This book surveys the historic teachings of four Methodist denominations including The United Methodist Church. Campbell’s annotations in the margins of the book make it easy to use, and the bibliography and glossary alone make it worth the read.

- Note: Professor Campbell has graciously offered to Wesleyan Roots participants and facilitators access to a number of print, audio, and video resources located on his webpage: <https://tedcampbell.com/united-methodist-basics-downloads/>
- I encourage you to explore the rich content of a generous United Methodist scholar who loves local congregations.

Heath, Elaine A. *Five Means of Grace: Experience God’s Love the Wesleyan Way*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017

- A beautiful little book covering five means of grace, including prayer, searching the scriptures, the Lord’s Supper, fasting, and Christian conferencing.

Job, Ruben P. *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, illustrated edition, 2007.

Joyner, Jr. F. Belton. *Being United Methodist in the Bible Belt: A Theological Survival Guide for youth, Parents, and Other Confused United Methodists*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.

- Practical and accessible, this is a good read whether you live in the “Bible Belt” or not.

The Wesley Study Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press. New Revised Standard Version: 2009. Common English Bible Version: 2012.

- This is a great study Bible overall, and it is especially helpful for Wesleyan Christians as it defines terms and presents information on a large number of Wesleyan concepts.

William H. Willimon. *This We Believe: The Core of Wesleyan Faith and Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010

- Designed as an accompaniment to The Wesley Study Bible, this accessible book can be used for group or individual study.

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Books for Those “Diving Deeply” into Wesleyan Studies:

Abraham, William J. and James E. Kirby, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2009.

- This is a reference work that includes articles from scholars like Jim Kirby, Ted Campbell, Geoffrey Wainwright, Elaine Heath, Kenneth Collins, Sarah Heaner Lancaster, Marjorie Suchocki, William Abraham, Harold Recinos, and Robin Lovin. It is rich in content and a good investment for those wanting a deeper dive.

Carter, Jr. Kenneth H. *Embracing the Wideness: The Shared Convictions of The United Methodist Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.

- This highly readable volume is Bishop Carter's proposal of a way forward among different convictions as United Methodists met for General Conference 2018. It is still worth a read even after the fact.

Campbell, Ted A. *Wesleyan Beliefs: Formal and Popular Expressions of The Core Beliefs of Wesleyan Communities*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, Kingswood Books, 2010.

- Note Campbell's emphasis on Wesleyan communities and how they have interpreted Wesleyan beliefs for themselves. I especially liked Chapter 4, “Beliefs about the ‘Way of Salvation’ After the Wesleys,” and Chapter 7, “Fourteen Core Beliefs of Wesleyan Communities.”
- Note: Professor Campbell has graciously offered Wesleyan Roots participants and facilitators access to a number of print, audio, and video resources located on his webpage. <https://tedcampbell.com/united-methodist-basics-downloads/>
- I encourage you to explore the rich content of a generous United Methodist scholar who loves local congregations.

Rieger, Joerg. *Grace Under Pressure: Negotiating the Heart of the Methodist Traditions*. Nashville: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 2011.

- This thin book poses some huge challenges to the UMC as it calls us back to grace so much at the heart of our history and tradition. It deals with tough issues like capitalism and imperialism, making use of Rieger's precise language to highlight what is at stake for the church.

Thorsen, Don. *Calvin vs Wesley: Bringing Belief in Line with Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2013.

- This rich work should be mandatory reading for United Methodist clergy serving in communities characterized by Calvinistic mores. If you only read one book from this list, please read this one.

Original Source Material:

Felton, Gayle Carlton. *By Water and the Spirit: Making Connections for Identity and Ministry*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, Revised 2008.

- Available at the North Texas Conference website at www.ntcmc.org or through Discipleship Resources of the United Methodist Church at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/by-water-and-the-spirit-full-text>. Available in paperback and via Kindle as well.
- This is the official statement on baptism by the United Methodist Church, adopted at General Conference 1996.

Outler, Albert C. *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1974.

- This is a thin, dense, highly important book for Wesleyan clergy to read. It is based on the Fondren Lectures at SMU in 1974. Available via Amazon, at some used bookstores, and at larger libraries.

Felton, Gayle Carlton. *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2005. Available through the UMC Discipleship website.

- <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/this-holy-mystery-a-united-methodist-understanding-of-holy-communion>
- This is the official statement on Holy Communion of the United Methodist Church, adopted by General Conference 2004.

John Wesley's Sermons:

Campbell, Ted A. editor. *A Wesley Reader: Writings of John and Charles Wesley*. Dallas: Tuckapaw Media, 2008.

- This abbreviated anthology of Wesleyan material contains good samples of both John and Charles' writings.

Outler, Albert C. and Richard P. Heitzenrater editors. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1991.

- This classic anthology is still available in paperback or via Kindle.

John Wesley's sermons are also available online at several locations. The Museum of Methodism & John Wesley's House in London provides one such website at <https://www.wesleysheritage.org.uk/exhibits/john-wesleys-sermons/browse-sermons/>

Resources Guide for Wesleyan Roots

John Wesley's Sermons to Accompany Wesleyan Roots Sessions:

Session 1: Distinctively Christian... "Catholic Spirit" #39

Session 2: Grace > Fear... "The Scripture Way of Salvation" #43 and "On Sin in Believers" #13

Session 3: Our Baptismal Covenant... "The Means of Grace" #16

Session 4: Did God Do That? The Dangers of Determinism... "On Divine Providence" #67

Session 5: Reading Glasses: Scripture in Light of Tradition, Experience, and Reason ... "The Witness of the Spirit" #10 and #11

Session 6: Salvation as More of a Journey-in-Progress than an Event ... "The Repentance of Believers" #14 and "Christian Perfection" #40

Session 7: Diverse by Design... "Thoughts upon Slavery"

- Note that this is from a tract by John Wesley and not a sermon). At the time of Wesleyan Roots' publication, it is available as a PDF online, as a paperback, or via Kindle.

Session 8: Meeting God at the Table... "The Duty of Constant Communion" #101

Session 9: Social Holiness in Uncertain Times... "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount" #23 and #24

Session 10: Spiritual Practices for Soul Hungry Christians . . . "The Good Steward" #51

Session 11: Teaching and Learning in the UM Spirit . . . "On the Education of Children" #95

- Note: "Education from a Methodist Perspective" is a secondary source article available on the website of The Methodist Church in Britain. Search at <https://www.methodist.org.uk>

Session 12: God is Not Finished Yet: Living and Leading with Hope in Uncertain Times . . . "The Way of the Kingdom" #7

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Models for Group Facilitation

There are many ways to engage any curriculum. Here are some examples of implementation to help inspire your plan. Think about the members of your group. Would they want more time for discussion in person and be willing to do prep work at home? Would they prefer to be able to just show up and fully participate? Will people attend consistently or drop in and drop out across the 12 sessions? In any model you choose, we recommend the facilitator review all the materials for their session in their own preparation work to lead.

Model 1: Rooted in Discussion Model:

- Distribute video link and participant guide several days before the session
- Participant pre-work, 15 minutes:
- Watch Video
- Read Participant Guide
- Make any initial notes or responses to questions

In Session:

(follow Facilitator Guide, but skip the video)

- Gathering & Prayer
- The Root of... (Session Content overview)
- Scripture
- Questions for Prayerful and Thoughtful discussion
- United Methodist Identity Points
- Closing Prayer

Model 2: Rooted in Presence:

- Provide copies of the Participant Guide as people enter
- Follow the Facilitator's Guide for the session
- Assume that no one has read the Participant Guide prior to discussion

Model 3: The Open Roots Model:

- Gathering and Prayer
- Briefly Summarize today's topic
- Open ended Questions instead of the video
- One open ended question to ponder in the coming week
- United Methodist Identity Points
- Closing Prayer

Model 4: The Deep Roots Model:

Spread out the sessions so that you stay with the same Session topic for more than one week. Engage Resource Guide materials (above) to choose supplemental content for additional weeks spent on one Session topic.

Wesleyan Roots for the whole year:

12 sessions – one per month

First session of each month follows Model 1. The remaining Sundays of that month engage Resource Guide for additional content.

Wesleyan Roots for 24 weeks:

12 sessions – one every other week. One week follows Model 1, the next week engages content from the Resource Guide, then the next week moves on to the next session, etc