

COVENANT OF MERGER BETWEEN GRAND AVENUE UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH AND WESLEY UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH, BOTH OF McALESTER, OK

WHEREAS the Methodist Church has had a significant presence in the lives of the people of McAlester since 1891 when a community church was established where Methodist services were held twice per month.

WHEREAS, from this first community church two Methodist Congregations were born: Mary Phillips Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church South (1894) and Bowman Methodist Episcopal Church (1895; later renamed First Methodist Episcopal Church).

WHEREAS, in 1924 these two pioneering congregations did merge, fifteen years before the denominational union, to form Grand Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South.

WHEREAS, in 1963 Grand Avenue M.E.C.S. did give birth to Wesley M.E.C.S. as a missionary church for outreach to the neighborhoods of south McAlester.

WHEREAS, these two congregations have had as their primary focus a ministry to the people of McAlester with the mission of “making disciples of Jesus Christ.”

WHEREAS, these two congregations do realize that their current facilities are inadequate to provide the kinds of ministry that the community needs, but that together they can combine their resources to better address those needs.

BE IT RESOLVED by the congregations of Grand Avenue United Methodist Church and Wesley United Methodist Church as determined by a vote of the church conference of each charge,

THAT these two congregations shall merge to form one single congregation of The United Methodist Church under the terms set herein:

The date of union shall be **January 1, 2009**, as approved by the McAlester District Board of Church Location, the McAlester District Superintendent, and the Bishop of the Oklahoma Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The name of this new congregation shall be **First United Methodist Church of McAlester**.

After due planning and fund raising, a new church facility shall be built on the land formerly occupied by Wesley UMC and the facility and land previously occupied by Grand Avenue UMC shall be sold and the proceeds applied to the new construction.

Until such time as a new facility is constructed, both former church buildings may be used for ministry.

Under the direction and supervision of the financial officers of both former congregations, the real assets of each congregation shall be combined and held in accounts under the name of "First United Methodist Church of McAlester" to be used for the ministry of the new congregation.

At the time of merger, a new slate of officers shall be elected. For the committees of SPRC, Trustees, and Finance, at least one member of each former congregation shall be elected into the 2011 class of each committee.

At the time of merger, a new Operating Budget for the remainder of the fiscal year shall be approved.

The parsonages of both former congregations shall be retained, with the former Grand Avenue parsonage (Tennessee Ave.) designated for the Senior Pastor and the former Wesley parsonage (S. 13<sup>th</sup> St.) designated for any present or future Associate Pastor. Both dwellings shall be under the care of the newly elected Board of Trustees.

The membership records of each former congregation shall be retained as historical documents, and the current membership lists of both congregations shall be merged into one master record.

FURTHERMORE, both congregations see this merger as a family reunion, recognizing the God-given foresight and missionary spirit of previous generations that have allowed Methodism in its many forms to flourish in McAlester over the last 117 years.

We pray God's blessing upon this union.

*Approved by vote of the Charge Conference of Grand Avenue UMC on \_\_\_\_\_*

*Approved by vote of the Charge Conference of Wesley UMC on \_\_\_\_\_*

*Approved by the McAlester District Superintendent on \_\_\_\_\_*