

# FREE METHODIST CHURCH USA

## History & Polity of the Free Methodist Church

Instructor: Chris Hill

March 28, 2026– Zoom video conference

May 1 - 2 - Pleasantville Camp

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** This course will help the participants understand the origins, development, and governance of the FMC.

I. **COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Upon satisfactory completion of the course participants will be able to:

- A. Display a working knowledge of church history leading to the development of the Free Methodist Church, including:
  - Identification of the historical and theological developments that set the stage for the Wesleyan Movement
  - Identification of the key events of John Wesley's life and ministry
  - Identification of key events leading to the birth and development of the FMC
- B. Display a working knowledge of the **Book of Discipline** of the Free Methodist Church, including:
  - Identification and explanation of the Articles of Religion
  - Explanation of the polity and organization of the Free Methodist Church
  - Identification of the distinct characteristics of the Free Methodist Church
- C. Personally integrate the history and polity of the Free Methodist Church into his / her ministry context.

## II. COURSE TEXTS

***John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples:*** by D. Michael Henderson, 191 pages (Also published as "A Model for Making Disciples: John Wesley's Class Meeting"). Kindle edition is also available. Available on Amazon

***B.T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists*** by Howard A. Snyder and Abridged by Daniel V. Runyon, 2011, 248 pages ISBN: 0-89367-299-8  
ISBN: 978-0-89367-299-7 (available from [www.freemethodistbooks.com](http://www.freemethodistbooks.com))

***2023 Book of Discipline: FMC-USA*** – [www.freemethodistbooks.com](http://www.freemethodistbooks.com)

***You Are the Church: Covenant Membership...*** - [www.freemethodistbooks.com](http://www.freemethodistbooks.com)

**Free Methodist Brochures & Handouts:** (provided by instructor)

- Leading in the Free Methodist Church
- The FMC USA Vision Frame

### III. Course Requirements:

#### A. Class Participation: All three sessions are required

Saturday	March 28, 2026	9:00 – Noon – Zoom Video Conference
Friday	May 1, 2026	6:00 – 9:30 PM – Pleasantville Camp
Saturday	May 2, 2026	8:30 AM – 3:00 PM – Pleasantville Camp

#### B. Course Assignments

1. Submit a reflection paper on your call to ministry and what it means to you to live out that call as part of the Free Methodist Church. This should be emailed to the instructor by the Friday before the first session. You will be asked to share this during the Zoom Video Conference on Saturday to help the group get to know one another.
2. Complete the following three online assignments:
  - a. Post a reflection on your reading of John Wesley's Class Meeting by midnight on Wednesday April 8. On Thursday or Friday, April 9 or 10 share observations on at least three of your fellow classmates' posts. Here is the link for where to post this assignment: <https://www.keystonefmc.org/2019/09/25/fm-history-polity-assignment-1/>
  - b. Post a reflection on your reading of B.T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists by midnight on Wednesday April 15. On Thursday or Friday, April 16 or 17 share observations on at least three of your fellow classmates' posts. Here is the link for where to post this assignment: <https://www.keystonefmc.org/2019/09/25/fm-history-polity-assignment-2/>
  - c. Post a reflection based on your reading of the first three chapters of the 2023 Free Methodist Book of Discipline by midnight on Wednesday April 22. On Thursday or Friday, April 23 or 24, share observations on at least three of your fellow classmates' posts. Here is the link for where to post this assignment: <https://www.keystonefmc.org/2019/09/25/fm-history-polity-assignment-3/>
3. **Project:** The student will have the option of choosing between the following final projects. These projects are due to the instructor by May 22. You can submit them in hard copy or as data files. Make sure that you keep a copy of your project as you will only receive a feedback sheet.
  - a. Develop a small group curriculum on the Free Methodist Church. While similar to a membership class the focus of this material would not be to invite into membership, it could be that persons who have been members of your church for many years would take the class. (Sometimes recent members have a greater understanding of the FMC than its older members.) The project should include a copy of the class outline/teaching notes, student handouts and a copy of multi-media materials produced for the class. **The project should be such that it could be given to someone to teach the class.**
  - b. Develop a small group curriculum or sermon series based on an aspect of our historical distinctives. This project could focus on the "branding" of the Free Methodist Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> century based on its DNA from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The project should include a copy of the class outline/teaching notes, student handouts and a copy of multi-media materials produced for the class/congregation., **The project should be such that it could be given to someone to teach/preach.**

