

THE STANDING RULES

(adopted at the 2016 Annual Conference)

[All paragraph references are to the *2012 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* except as otherwise noted, and these numbers are printed in bold.]

INTRODUCTION

The Alabama-West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church shall be organized and structured according to the mandates of the latest edition of *The Book of Discipline*, and shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church. In keeping with those standards, this conference commits itself to the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race and gender (see ¶**604.1**). The following Standing Rules are adopted by the Alabama-West Florida Conference for its own governance and to fit its specific setting for mission and ministry. The Alabama-West Florida Conference shall follow *Roberts Rules of Order* except where superseded by explicit rules in *The Book of Discipline* or in these Standing Rules.

1. These Standing Rules shall be implemented, applied or amended as follows:
 - A. These rules shall be effective at the end of the annual conference at which they are passed. All rules remain in effect until they are rescinded or amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting on the next day after the proposed amendment has been presented in writing.
 - B. Any proposed changes in the Standing Rules should be received in writing by the chairperson of the Committee on Standing Rules no later than February 1.
 - C. Any of these rules, except Standing Rule (SR) 1D, may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at annual conference.
 - D. A change in the number of districts may not be made later than the first business session of the annual conference.

OFFICERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

2. The conference secretary and the *Journal* editor (nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations, see SR 5B) and the treasurer/statistician and the conference registrar (nominated by the Council on Finance and Administration) shall be elected at the first session of the annual conference following the general conference, with tenure of office to begin on December 1, following their election, and to serve for the succeeding quadrennium.

(¶**603.7** and ¶**619**)

COMMITTEES RELATING TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

3. There shall be a Committee on Standing Rules, composed of the conference secretary, the director of Connectional Ministries (see SR 5A), the conference treasurer, the *Journal* editor and five at-large members including the chairperson. This committee shall be nominated by the Committee on Nominations (see SR 5B),

shall include both lay and clergy, and shall be elected by the annual conference. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

4. There shall be a Committee on Resolutions and Petitions, composed of four clergy and four lay persons, nominated by the Committee on Nominations, which shall consider all petitions addressed to the general, jurisdictional, and annual conferences. After consideration, the committee shall submit the petitions, with its written recommendation and the rationale for each recommendation, to the annual conference for action. Resolutions shall be submitted to the committee by February 15, except in cases where it can be demonstrated by the author of a late petition that the situation which gave rise to making the petition was not apparent until after the deadline for petitions. The committee shall provide copies of all resolutions submitted by February 15 to all voting members present at the conference session. The maker of the late resolution shall supply these copies of his/her resolution if submitted after February 15. No resolution will be received on the last day of the session.

5. A. The leadership, missional and administrative structures of the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall come together at a “common table” or organization known as the “Connecting Our Resources and Empowerment” Team or CORE Team. The means of electing and appointing representatives connected to the CORE Team, which includes boards, committees, councils, commissions and divisions of the Leadership Team, the Mission Team, and the Administrative Team, are spelled out in these Standing Rules (also see SR 24 and following).

B. There shall be a Committee on Nominations, composed of: the resident bishop, who shall be the chairperson; the conference lay leader; the conference secretary, who shall be the secretary of this committee; the director of connectional ministries; the conference treasurer; the conference presidents of United Methodist Men (UMM) and of United Methodist Women (UMW); a United Methodist youth; the eight district lay leaders; the eight district superintendents; the Conference Resource Center program staff; and three at-large members chosen by the bishop with attention given to the need for inclusive representation. This committee shall nominate persons quadrennially to the CORE Team, conference boards, commissions, committees, councils, etc., as listed in these Standing Rules and as needed by other conference institutions (per the bishop’s discretion). Nominations shall be consistent with the most recent *Book of Discipline*, with attention given to inclusiveness, diversity and expertise. The committee shall submit its nominations as early as possible in the annual conference session. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

6. There shall be a Committee on Courtesies and Introductions, composed of three lay and two clergy members, which shall be responsible for presentation of visitors to the conference, and for a report in the closing session expressing appreciation to persons and groups who have rendered special services in the program.

7. There shall be a Committee on the Journal, appointed quadrennially by the bishop, composed of two members, who shall examine the minutes of daily sessions for accuracy and report the findings to the conference.

8. The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall handle expenses of the conference session. There shall be a Conference Administration Fund, the amount to be fixed annually by the Council on Finance and Administration, with assessments for the fund to be allocated annually to individual pastoral charges on the apportioned formula basis. When the Annual Conference makes available lodging for the annual conference session, CFA will establish reasonable fees. When the Annual Conference makes available meals for the annual conference session, CFA will establish reasonable fees. Conference meals for which there is no charge, shall be funded by the Annual Conference Administration Fund. Instructions shall be provided in advance by the conference registrar. The following persons are eligible for this:

- A. The presiding bishop and spouse, all clergy members in full connection and all provisional members;
- B. All clergy being admitted as provisional members and all transferred members from other conferences;
- C. All associate members and local pastors serving pastoral charges;
- D. Local and supply pastors scheduled to receive pastoral appointments;
- E. Spouses and surviving spouses of clergy who receive General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) annuities;
- F. Clergy from other conferences serving within our conference;
- G. Lay members of the conference as specified in SR 14 or duly elected reserve lay members, provided the principal lay members are not in attendance;
- H. Diaconal ministers;
- I. Up to two youth pages selected from each district (lodging expenses to be paid by their district); and
- J. At large lay members, distinguished guests, and those specified in SR 14B.

9. The Annual Conference Session Planning Committee:

A. There shall be an Annual Conference Session Planning Committee, composed of the presiding bishop who shall serve as chairperson, the host district superintendent, the conference secretary, the *Journal* editor who shall serve as secretary of the committee, the conference registrar, the conference treasurer, the chairperson of the Conference Division of Worship, the director of connectional ministries, the conference lay Leader, the host district lay leader, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the chairperson of the Conference Board of Advocacy and Racial Ethnic Ministries, United Methodist youth, and a United Methodist young adult.

B. The Annual Conference Session Planning Committee shall arrange tentatively the program of the annual conference session, and shall submit the program to the opening session for possible amendment and adoption as its agenda. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be included in the program.

C. A period of recognition of retiring clergy shall be held during the conference session, with a suitable program arranged by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

D. A memorial service commemorating each clergyperson or "surviving spouse" or diaconal minister who died since the last annual conference shall be arranged by the Commission on Archives and History. The Commission shall also provide a memoir of the deceased for publication in the *Journal*.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

10. The rules of order of the preceding general conference shall govern parliamentary procedure in this conference in all matters not covered by the standing rules. In order to be recognized to address the conference, each person must identify him/herself as to name and the capacity in which he/she is entitled to speak to the session.

11. Reports and resolutions:

A. All reports and resolutions shall be consistent with the Guidelines for Reports; and shall be placed on the conference agenda by the conference secretary in the order designated by the Annual Conference Session Planning Committee. Proposed resolutions and changes to the conference standing rules shall lie on the conference secretary's desk for at least one business session before being acted upon by the conference.

B. By a two-thirds vote of those present and voting an agenda item may be taken up out of order for consideration.

C. All amendments to reports of boards and agencies as printed in the *Book of Reports* and all motions arising from the floor of the conference shall be made in writing to the conference secretary.

D. At the annual conference session, no materials (handouts, etc.) shall be placed on the pews or seats when the conference is in recess, unless a prior majority vote approves an exception to this rule.

12. In order to expedite the business of the conference, the Consent Agenda Committee, composed of the secretary of the annual conference, the chairperson of the Committee on Standing Rules, the director of connectional ministries, and the *Journal* editor, in consultation with agencies or individuals presenting reports, recommendations or resolutions, may present in the *Book of Reports* a written list of items which shall be known as the Consent Agenda. Items on the Consent Agenda shall be considered as adopted by consent of the annual conference. An individual item may be removed from the Consent Agenda by a written request signed by twelve lay and/or clergy members of the annual conference and presented to the conference secretary prior to the first business session. When a matter has been removed from the Consent Agenda, it shall be placed into the regular agenda at an appropriate time.

13. Election of General and Jurisdictional delegations:

A. Delegates to the general and jurisdictional conferences shall be elected according to stipulations in ¶502.4 and ¶515 respectively of the *Book of Discipline*. In compliance with the 2012 *Book of Discipline* ¶35, all eligible clergy shall be listed on the ballot for General and Jurisdictional Elections. They shall serve in all sessions of these conferences held during the quadrennium. In addition to those delegates funded by the general and jurisdictional conferences, the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall pay the expenses of only one more alternate delegate, lay and clergy, to the general and jurisdictional conferences at the rate paid to the delegates.

- B. In the election of delegates, the presiding bishop shall appoint four teams of tellers (two clergy teams and two lay teams), each team consisting of one representative from each district, one of whom shall serve as head teller.
- C. In the election of these delegates, the ballots shall be furnished to the conference by the conference secretary at the time of voting. No vote shall be valid unless cast on the ballot designated by the presiding bishop.
- D. One year prior to an electing annual conference, the Board of Laity shall make plans and policies regarding the lay elections, and give guidance to laity regarding the process of caucusing, nominating and electing the lay delegation. Following the opening session of the electing annual conference, the laity, in their orientation session, will give opportunity for any persons seeking election (whose name has not been put in nomination in advance) to provide a single printed profile sheet for distribution.
- E. A general code of ethical standards will be demonstrated by every candidate, lay and clergy. Every individual's right to exercise his/her voting or political expression should be consistent with the *Social Principles of The United Methodist Church*.
- F. Endorsements of candidates will be made only by individuals and/or local churches, or the district electing caucus.

14. Annual Conference lay members:

- A. Lay members to the annual conference shall be elected yearly in the charge conferences. One youth member to the annual conference (age 12-17) (expenses to be paid by their district) and one young adult member (age 18-30) shall be selected from each district. The conference secretary (if lay), the conference lay leader, the director of conference lay servant ministries, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, a United Methodist youth, the conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), a United Methodist young adult, active deaconesses and home missionaries under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, district lay leaders, and diaconal ministers, shall be lay members to the annual conference. (For churches with more than one clergyperson under appointment, see ¶32 of the *Book of Discipline*.)
- B. In compliance with the disciplinary requirement (¶32) to keep lay representation in the annual conference session equal to that of clergy, the conference secretary shall ascertain whether the upcoming session will be in balance with respect to lay and clergy membership as of January 1 each year. If additional lay members are needed, the conference secretary shall add them using the following guidelines:
- (1) The first eight shall be the district presidents of United Methodist Women. In the event that fewer than eight are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.
 - (2) The second eight shall be the district presidents of the United Methodist Men. In the event that fewer than eight are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.
 - (3) Next, the secretary shall name an additional youth and young adult from each district. In the event that fewer than sixteen are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.

- (4) Next the secretary shall name full-time lay workers on the professional staff of the Conference Resource Center.
- (5) Next the secretary shall name the lay members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
- (6) Next the secretary shall name lay members of the general and jurisdictional delegations (including alternates) in the order of their election.
- (7) Next the secretary shall name lay persons who are chairpersons of CORE Team boards, commissions, councils, etc., in the order listed in the CORE organizational document, and the at-large members of the CORE Team.
- (8) Next the secretary shall name lay members of the Council on Finance and Administration.
- (9) The remainder shall be at-large members divided among the eight districts and selected by each district. In the event that there is a remainder of less than eight, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.
- (10) If a person is selected by the above process who is already a member of annual conference as the delegate from his/her church/charge, he or she may serve in the new capacity and thus empower the church's alternate delegate to attend as the voting representative of the charge. The district superintendent and district lay leader of each district may assist in this process in conjunction with their district's orientation session in preparation for the annual conference.

15. The Conference *Journal* and *Book of Reports*:

The publication and distribution of The Annual Conference *Journal* and the *Book of Reports* shall be supervised by the Editorial Committee, chaired by the *Journal* editor and composed of the conference secretary, the director of ministerial services, the treasurer/statistician, and the director of connectional ministries. The *Journal* editor shall be responsible for preparation of the *Book of Reports* and its distribution either in printed or electronic form to all eligible persons. Materials and reports to be included in the *Book of Reports* shall be in the hands of the *Journal* editor NO LATER THAN the last Monday in February. The *Book of Reports* shall contain instructions for ordering the *Journal*. The Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the cost of each *Journal* including mailing. All names, addresses, reports, resolutions, and/or other materials to be included in the *Journal* of the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall be in the hands of the conference secretary no later than ten working days after the close of annual conference.

16. Board Memberships and Trusteeships:

A. With the exception of the Board of Ordained Ministry, no person may serve on more than one quadrennial agency of this conference at the same time. Except as provided by the *Book of Discipline*, one's term on a quadrennial agency shall not exceed eight years within any twelve consecutive years. Elected membership on non-quadrennial agencies is limited to no more than eight of any twelve consecutive years, with the exception of the Board of Laity. For the sake of administrative and program continuity, this standing rule shall not apply where existing constitutions require the retiring chair to continue to serve for a period not to exceed two years. The quadrennial agencies are: the Conference Board of Global Ministries, the Board of Discipleship, the Board of Church and Society, the Board of Congregational Development, the Town and Country Commission, the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, the Board of Advocacy and Ethnic Ministries, the Board of

Ordained Ministry, the Commission on Equitable Compensation, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the Council on Finance and Administration, and the at-large members on the CORE Team.

B. Persons may be enlisted to assist boards and agencies for specific task force responsibilities.

C. No person shall serve on more than one board of trustees or board of directors of institutions or agencies related to this annual conference at the same time. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to mean that persons may not serve concurrently on boards of trustees or directors and as members of quadrennial boards and agencies or ex-officio trustees or directors, where disciplinary provisions apply.

D. Persons who fail to attend and participate in the meetings and programs expected of their elected position for one year without legitimate excuse shall be replaced. The person chosen by the Committee on Nominations to fill the unexpired term may also be elected to serve an additional quadrennium.

E. No person shall serve more than nine consecutive years (three terms) as a trustee of any agency or institution related to this annual conference, nor shall this person be eligible for election again to that board for three years.

17. Organizational stipulations for boards and agencies:

A. All conference program boards, commissions, divisions, and committees, except as provided by the *Book of Discipline*, shall begin their tenure immediately upon election at annual conference.

B. Every year the Conference Committee on Nominations shall complete its work four weeks before the date set for the regular conference session, in order to inform nominees of their selection and anticipated confirmation.

18. There shall be eight districts in this annual conference.

19. A district conference shall be held annually in each district of this annual conference, with its program year starting in January. The voting membership of the district conference shall be consistent with the directives of the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*, (§658-659).

20. Each district shall have a District Committee on Nominations composed of the district superintendent as chairperson, and with a membership of three clergy and four lay persons, elected annually. No member may serve for more than three consecutive years with the exception of the district superintendent. The District Committee on Nominations may submit to the district conference the names of one clergy and one lay person for election for each district work area and age-level ministry, and such other persons as are needed for membership to the District Council on Ministries or District CORE Team. Persons to be nominated shall be consulted by their district superintendent prior to the submission of their names. The District Committee on Nominations may fill vacancies with replacements to take office immediately. Such persons shall be confirmed at the next meeting of the district conference (§659.1).

21. Neither a district superintendent nor a paid staff person of the annual conference shall serve as an elected member on a quadrennial board, commission, or committee, except as specifically provided by the *Book of Discipline*. Vacancies occurring by appointment of members of boards, divisions, commissions and committees to the district superintendency shall be filled by the conference session when such appointments are made.

22. In the allocation of askings on the formula basis, the financial strength of the church shall NOT include monies expended for the following items:

- A. Principal and interest on capital indebtedness.
- B. Buildings and capital improvements.
- C. General Advance Specials and World Service Special Gifts.
- D. Conference Advance Specials.
- E. Remittances by United Methodist Women to the conference treasurer.
- F. Remittances to any authorized conference capital fund campaign.
- G. Remittances to the Birmingham-Southern College Scholarship Fund and/or capital gifts.
- H. Remittances to Huntingdon College Scholarship Fund and/or capital gifts.
- I. Children's Home White Christmas Offering and Homes for the Aging/Fountain of Love offering.
- J. Special Day Offerings of the General Church: (One Great Hour of Sharing, etc.)
- K. All apportioned funds from the General Church, the conference and the districts.
- L. Benevolences paid directly by the local church.
- M. Direct billing for pension and health benefits.

23. The treasurer of the annual conference shall make the final settlement regarding apportionments, and disburse all funds to the annual conference boards, commissions and committees or treasurers after the close of the fiscal year, following the guidelines of zero-based budgeting.

BOARDS AND AGENCIES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

24. There shall be a Conference CORE Team, as outlined in the "Plan of Organization for the Alabama-West Florida Conference." Policies or procedures for the CORE Team shall be guided by the most current Book of Discipline. The "Plan of Organization for the Alabama-West Florida Conference" shall be available on the conference website. Other offices, program boards, commissions, etc., as required by the *Discipline* but not a part of the CORE Team, are also authorized. Also see SR 5.

25. There shall be a Golden Cross fund and offering to aid medical needs of conference members/pastors. The chair of Golden Cross shall be nominated by, and shall report to, the CORE Team Division of Missions.

26. There shall be a Conference Policies and Personnel Committee appointed by the Bishop and approved by the CORE Team. The Committee shall establish uniform and equitable policies and procedures in the employment of Conference Resource Center personnel. It shall be the goal of our annual conference that all conference and district offices maintain reasonably consistent and inclusive policies regarding personnel, as is appropriate to each locale.

27. There shall be a Board of Ordained Ministry as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (§635).

28. There shall be a Board of Laity, as described in the *Book of Discipline* (§631), which shall be composed of the conference lay leader, the district lay leaders, the conference president of United Methodist Women (UMW), an additional officer of UMW, the conference president of United Methodist Men (UMM), the conference scouting coordinator, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries (LSM), an additional officer of LSM, a United Methodist youth, and a United Methodist young adults, and the first elected lay delegate to general conference. Additionally, the following shall serve ex-officio: the presiding bishop, one cabinet representative, and the director of connectional ministries.

29. The conference lay leader shall be nominated by the Conference Board of Laity and elected by the annual conference at the time of quadrennial reorganization. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. The conference lay leader may serve no more than two succeeding quadrennia as the conference lay leader. All other officers within the Board of Laity shall be elected by the board. Vacancies in the office of conference lay leader shall be filled by nomination from the board in the interim, and confirmed at the following annual conference.

30. There shall be an Academy for Congregational Excellence, Inc. as authorized by the CORE Team, composed of officers and board members specified in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Academy for Congregational Excellence.

31. There shall be a Commission on Equitable Compensation as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (§625), composed of twelve members, six lay and six clergy, at least one clergy and one lay being from churches with fewer than 200 members. In addition, one superintendent named by the cabinet and a staff person from the fiscal office shall be members.

32. There shall be a Commission on Archives and History as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (§641). Eight members shall be elected by the annual conference at the beginning of each quadrennium for a term of four years. Ex-officio members with vote shall include a representative from Huntingdon College, the conference historian (unless receiving compensation), the president of the AWFC Historical Society, the resident bishop, and the conference secretary. The Archivist shall be an ex-officio member without vote. A chairperson, vice-chairperson, and recording secretary/financial secretary, shall be elected by the commission.

33. There shall be a Board of Pension and Health Benefits as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (§639), composed of eighteen members elected to 8-year terms, arranged in four-year classes to include representatives of both lay and clergy of both sexes. The Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave shall be constituted as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (§652), with efforts made to be inclusive.

34. There shall be an Assembly Grounds Board of Trustees, constituted as authorized by a Corporation Charter from the State of Alabama, record of which can be found on page 112 of the 1958 *Journal* of our Annual Conference, and all amendments thereto. The current Articles of Incorporation and bylaws shall be available on the conference website.

35. There shall be a Council on Finance and Administration as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (§611), composed of eight lay, five clergy members, and the ex-officio members as specified in §612. Unless the following are otherwise reimbursed, the CFA shall pay from the Conference administrative budget the reasonable and relevant expenses (as set or approved by CFA) of: the conference secretary's office; expenses of the Council on Finance and Administration; all expenses of printing, honoraria, and incidental expenses connected with annual conference sessions; expenses of cabinet meetings; expenses of all conference agencies and special committees not participating in the conference benevolence budget; room and board at annual conference of agencies and special committees meeting with the Council on Finance and Administration for the purpose of making budget requests; honoraria of the conference secretary and assistant secretaries for annual conference, the registrar and assistants, the *Journal* editor; all expenses incurred by the *Journal* Editor in preparing/printing the *Book of Reports* and the conference *Journal*.

36. There shall be an Episcopal Residence Committee as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (§638), composed of the chairperson of the Committee on Episcopacy, the president of the Annual Conference Board of Trustees, the president of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, and two at-large representatives selected by the bishop. Efforts shall be made to keep membership inclusive, and at least two members of this committee shall be women.