

# NEW ENGLAND ANNUAL CONFERENCE RULES <sup>1</sup>

## PREFACE

These Rules of the New England Annual Conference are in keeping with the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (Par. 604.1, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 1996, hereinafter referred to as the Discipline.) which states, "The Annual Conference for its own government may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the Discipline." This Annual Conference is incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as The New England Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. All references to "Conference" or "Annual Conference" shall mean The New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

## ARTICLE I - ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

- A. Organization.** The organization, composition, character, powers, duties, and business of the Annual Conference shall be in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline.
- B. Rules of Order.** Roberts Rules of Order (Current Edition) shall govern all matters not specifically covered by the current issue of the Discipline and the following Conference Rules.
- C. Conference Policies & Procedures Manual.** Policies, procedures, and ministry descriptions for Conference officers, committees and positions, which complement and expand upon these Rules, shall be maintained by the Conference Secretary and published annually.

## ARTICLE II - CONFERENCE OFFICERS

- A. Conference President.** The Bishop assigned to the New England Annual Conference is the President.
- B. Conference Secretary.** The Conference Secretary shall be nominated by the Leadership Committee, in consultation with the Bishop, and elected as the Secretary-Elect at the last Annual Conference session preceding the General Conference, to take office at the opening of the first Annual Conference following General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.
- C. Conference Statistician.**
  - 1. The Conference Statistician shall be nominated by the Leadership Committee, in consultation with the Bishop, and elected Statistician-Elect at the last Annual Conference session preceding General Conference, to take office at the opening of the first Annual Conference following General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.
  - 2. The Conference Statistician shall report to the Bishop and to the Annual Conference.
- D. Conference Treasurer.** The Conference Treasurer shall be nominated by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the Bishop, and elected at the first Annual Conference following the General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.
- E. Conference Chancellor.**
  - 1. The Conference Chancellor shall be nominated by the Bishop and elected at the first Annual Conference following the General Conference, and shall serve for the quadrennium.
  - 2. She/he shall serve as legal advisor to the Bishop and to the Annual Conference.
- F. Lay Leader**
  - 1. The Conference Lay Leader shall be nominated by the lay persons of the Conference Committee on Leadership after consultation with the District Lay Leaders. The election shall be for a quadrennium and shall be at the first Conference session following General Conference. Nominees must meet the relevant provisions of current issue of Discipline.
  - 2. Associate lay leader(s), to work with the Conference Lay Leader, may be elected by the Conference in the same manner as the Conference Lay Leader. The District Lay Leaders shall be nominated by the lay persons of the

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<sup>1</sup> **RULES: Provisions enacted by the Annual Conference with requirement for mandatory compliance except as waived or suspended by special Annual Conference Action.**

District Committee on Leadership after consultation with the District Superintendent and elected at the District Conference.

- G. Vacancies.** The Bishop shall be authorized to fill any vacancy in a Conference Office arising between Annual Conference sessions, with the exception of the position of the Conference Treasurer which shall be filled by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, until the next Annual Conference when an election can be held.

### ARTICLE III - CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

**A. Members.** The members of the Annual Conference, both clergy and lay, are determined by the Constitution of the United Methodist Church, found in the current issue of the Discipline.

**1. Clergy.** Clergy membership in the Annual Conference shall be as indicated in the current issue of the Discipline.

**2. Laity.** Lay membership and their method of election shall be in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline and our Policies and Procedures.

**3. Equalization.** There shall be a balance between clergy and lay members of Annual Conference in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline. A procedure to reach the required number of lay members shall be adopted by the Annual Conference, published in the Conference Policies & Procedures Manual, and used by the Conference Secretary to achieve equalization.

**B. Attendance.** All members are expected to attend Annual Conference sessions in accordance with the rules of the current issue of the Discipline. Petitions for excuse from attendance must be written and submitted to the Secretary of the Conference. Alternate Lay Members shall notify the Secretary of the Conference of their presence.

**C. Voting.** Lay members shall be expected to vote their conscience on the floor of Annual Conference. Judicial Council Ruling No. 11 prohibits any official body of the local church from ordering or instructing lay or reserve members to vote in any prescribed manner on issues expected to come before the Annual Conference.

### ARTICLE IV - CONFERENCE REPORTS

**A. Reporting Responsibility.** As an expression of its accountability to the Annual Conference, each agency of the Annual Conference shall report annually to the Annual Conference in a manner to be prescribed in the Conference Policies & Procedures Manual.

**B. Pre-Conference Reports & Resolutions.** Pre-Conference Reports shall be considered preliminary in nature. Local churches are encouraged to discuss the contents; however, they shall not instruct their lay members as noted in Article III.

**C. Resolutions and Reports** submitted to NEC requiring action by the Annual Conference will be reviewed by the Agenda Committee before publication of the Pre-Conference Book based on the following criteria:

1. Does the Resolution set out the action taken to present this matter for consideration? The petition should set out:
  - a. What body is submitting the resolution
  - b. The number of members present and voting on the petition's submission;
  - c. The number of "yeas" and the number of "nays", the number of members abstaining and the number of members absent.
2. Will the Resolution proposed conflict with, or create a conflict, with the Book of Discipline, or with an Annual Conference Rule or policy? Areas of perceived conflict shall be explored and justified in the petition.
3. Does the proposal impact the work in progress by another New England Conference entity? If yes, the submitting group shall notify all parties for possible consultation which may lead to a revised or substitute resolution. The Agenda Committee may recommend a consultation to clarify or improve the resolution. The results of that process should accompany the proposed Resolution for publication.
4. The Agenda Committee will assign a petition complying with criteria above, to one of the following categories:
  - a. The 100s category contains repeating and ongoing resolutions;

- b. The 200s category contains proposed Resolutions which involve new significant change for the New England Conference or where explanatory information may be needed for clarity of purpose.
- c. The 300s category contains items related to the General Conference.

5. The Agenda Committee will then submit their work to the Conference Secretary for publication.

**D. Reports during Conference Session**

- 1. **Timeliness.** To be eligible for action by the Conference, any report or resolution by a Conference agency, District, local church/es, or individual/s, not included in the Pre Conference Reports booklet, must be in writing and placed in the hands of the members twenty four (24) hours before being considered.
- 2. **Minority Reports.** Minority reports of committees, adopted with a view to their being offered as substitutes for majority reports, shall likewise conform to the above rule.

**E. Conference Journal**

- 1. The printed Minutes of the Annual Conference sessions shall be the official report of the Annual Conference and shall be printed in the Conference Journal.
- 2. All information which the Secretary is authorized to publish in the Minutes shall be submitted to her/him within fifteen (15) days of the close of adjournment of the Conference.

**ARTICLE V - THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION**

- A. Time.** The time of the Annual Conference shall be fixed by the Bishop.
- B. Organization.** The Annual Conference Sessions Team shall be responsible for selecting the location, ordering worship, and carrying out such other duties as outlined in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
- C. Agenda.** Subject to amendment by the Conference, the Agenda Committee, working in conjunction with the Conference President, shall be responsible for preparing the official agenda of the Annual Conference and for adjusting the agenda during the Annual Conference to make the best use of available time. The Agenda Committee will be made up of the Conference Secretary, the Sessions Agenda Chair or designee, the Conference Lay Leader, the Conference Parliamentarian and the Director of Connectional Ministries. The Sessions Team may appoint up to an additional three at large members. The meetings of the Agenda Committee may be conducted in person or electronically.
- D. Voting Area.** The Voting Area of the Conference shall be fixed by the Conference upon recommendation of the Conference Sessions Team Chair, in consultation with the Conference Secretary. The bounds of the Conference shall be clearly defined and voting members shall be seated within those bounds.
- E. Offerings.** Offerings will be received during the session only on recommendation of the Annual Conference Sessions Team and the vote of the Conference.
- F. Distribution of Materials on the Floor of Conference**
  - 1. Materials regarding pending action may be distributed only with permission of the Conference Sessions Team Chair and the Conference Secretary.
  - 2. Other material which may be of interest to the Conference may be placed in a convenient location, designated by the Conference Sessions Team Chair, upon recommendation by the Conference Secretary.
  - 3. All material properly distributed on the floor of Annual Conference shall contain the name of the individual and/or organization that assumes responsibility for its origin.

**ARTICLE VI - DECISION-MAKING**

- A. Building Understanding.** Although decisions shall be arrived at by vote of the body, each session may include one or more ways of coming to an understanding and building agreement:
  - 1. Holy listening,
  - 2. Rules of order, and
  - 3. Consensus.
  - 4. Debate
- B. Debate**

1. A member may not address the Conference until recognized by the President. A member may speak but once on a pending matter until all have spoken who desire, and shall not speak more than three (3) minutes without the consent of the Conference. It shall not be in order to "move the previous question" until opportunity for three speeches on each side of the question has been provided.
2. Chairs of Conference agencies or their representatives shall be entitled to three (3) minutes to close debates on reports presented. This right shall not be forfeited by a motion to "move the previous question" or to "lay on the table."
3. In the discussion of a controversial matter, the President shall, so far as possible, recognize speakers alternately to present both sides of the question.

**C. Visitors Addressing the Conference.** Visitors may address the Conference at the invitation of the Bishop.

**D. Motions**

1. **Definition.** Motions are requests for Conference action presented by any member of the Conference during a Plenary Session of the Conference.
2. **Presentation.** All motions, amending or substituting, not included in the Pre Conference Reports booklet, shall be written and presented by the mover on forms provided by the Secretary before a vote on the matter is taken.
3. **Requests for Funds.** A motion or resolution calling for Conference funds not included in a Conference budget must be referred in writing to the proper agency on or before the date established each year for submitting budget requests to the Conference Council on Ministries and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. Any legislation enacted by the Conference requiring the expenditure of funds shall be implemented only after the Conference has enacted enabling legislation naming the source and amount of funding.
4. **Withdrawing a Motion.** When a motion or resolution is moved and seconded, or a report is presented and read by the Secretary, or stated by the President, it shall be deemed in possession of the Conference; but any motion or resolution may be withdrawn by the mover, with the consent of the Conference, at any time before amendment or final action.
5. **Motions Under Consideration.** No new motion or resolution shall be entertained until the one under consideration has been disposed of, which may be done by adoption or rejection unless one of the following motions shall intervene, which shall have precedence in the order in which they are here cited, namely:
  - a. To fix the time at which to adjourn,
  - b. To adjourn,
  - c. To recess,
  - d. To lay on the table,
  - e. To call for the previous question,
  - f. To postpone to a given time,
  - g. To refer to a committee,
  - h. To substitute,
  - i. To amend, and
  - j. To postpone indefinitely.
6. **Reconsideration.** When any motion or resolution shall have been acted upon by the Conference it shall be in order for any member who voted with the prevailing side to move reconsideration. A motion to reconsider shall be decided without debate.
7. **Voting Requirements.** A member who is not within the Voting Area of the Conference at the time when such question is put by the President shall not be allowed to vote on any question, except by leave of the Presiding Officer when such member has been necessarily outside the Voting Area. Every member who is in the Voting Area of the Conference at the time the question is put shall vote, unless excused by the Conference for good reason.
8. **Tabling a Motion.** When a resolution or motion is presented to the Conference, a motion to lay on the table shall not be in order until the member who presented the resolution or motion shall have had three (3) minutes to explain the same.
9. **Substitution.** When a resolution or committee report is properly before the Conference for consideration and action (even if amendments thereto are pending), a substitute therefor may be offered by any member moving that the same be substituted for the resolution or report under consideration. However,

- a. The motion to substitute may not be considered or put until the original report or resolution is perfected, including consideration of and action on any amendments to it which may have been offered. The Conference may terminate this perfecting process by ordering the previous question on the motion to adopt the report or resolution. If this be done, the vote shall immediately be taken on any amendments to the report or resolution then pending, but the vote shall not be taken on the adoption of the report or resolution or on making the substitution until the substitute is also perfected.
- b. The main question, or report, or resolution, having been perfected, the substitute shall be considered, which consideration may be terminated at any time by ordering the previous question, in which case, after action on any amendments to the substitute then pending, the vote shall be taken on the motion to adopt,
  - (1) if the previous question thereon was ordered as above indicated as being allowable, or
  - (2) if it was ordered later.
- c. In the course of the forgoing perfecting process in the case of either the main question or the substitute, or both, the time to be consumed in presenting, considering and acting on amendments may be limited by action of the Conference. If this be done, the previous question may not be put on the adoption of the report or resolution, or on making the proposed substitution until two members (including the chairperson of the committee presenting the report and the member presenting the substitute, if the pending question originated in a committee) shall have spoken on each side of the proposal to substitute or adopt, as the case may be after the motions to amend, if there be any that have been acted upon, if there be those who desire to speak.
- d. It shall not be in order to offer a substitute for an amendment, but it shall be in order to offer a substitute for a section of a committee report or a resolution which is being considered seriatim.

**E. Voting**

- 1. **Method.** All votes shall be taken either by voice, a show of voting cards or hands, a standing vote, or a written ballot.
- 2. **Count Vote.** A count vote may be ordered on call of any member of the Conference supported by one third of the members present and voting, in which case the members shall rise from their seats and stand until counted
- 3. **Written Ballot.** A written ballot may be ordered on call of any member of the Conference supported by a petition of 10 conference members and delivered to the chair or by a vote of 40 of the members present and voting, in which case the tellers shall deliver and collect ballots from the entire voting membership.
- 4. **Voting Process.** No other business shall be in order when a vote is being taken or when the previous question has been called, until the process is completed, except such as relates to the vote itself, or that which can be appropriately fitted into the time while waiting for the report of the Secretary on a count vote by "yeas" and "nays."
- 5. **Division of the Question.** Before a vote is taken any member shall have the right to call for a division of any question, if it is subject to such division. If no member objects, the division shall be made, but if there is objection, the Chair shall put the question of division to a vote, not waiting for a second.
- 6. **Further Debate.** It shall be in order to move that a vote be taken without further debate on any measure pending before the Conference, except in cases where character and Conference relations are involved; and if the call for a vote is sustained by two thirds majority, the vote shall be taken.

**ARTICLE VII - CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP**

- A. General Responsibility.** The Leadership Committee shall nominate, for election by the Annual Conference for a four-year term, the chairs of all Conference agencies and groups established by the Annual Conference, including the Leadership Committee itself, except where these nominations are governed either by the Discipline or these Rules. All other members of the above Conference agencies and groups shall be appointed in a manner prescribed in the Conference Policies and Procedure Manual.
- B. Specific Responsibilities.** The specific duties of the Leadership Committee shall be defined in its Ministry Description found in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
- C. Members.** In addition to the Chair, elected as prescribed above, members of the Leadership Committee shall be ex officio members or appointed by the group they represent and shall include...

1. Conference Lay Leader or designee,
2. One UMW representative,
3. One UMM representative,
4. One member from each District Leadership Committee, chosen by the Conference Leadership Committee from two names submitted by the District Leadership Committee, so as to increase diversity and inclusiveness,
5. One or two youth,
6. One or two District Superintendents,
7. Conference Secretary,
8. Director of Connectional Ministries,
9. One representative from each of the identified ethnic groups functioning within the Conference structure, and
10. Additional people needed for technical assistance, as identified by the Leadership Committee.

**D. Term.** Members shall serve for four (4) years. Vacancies shall be filled according to the procedures set forth in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.

### **ARTICLE VIII - ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE**

**A. The election shall be held in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline.**

**B. Nominations.** Persons shall have the freedom to vote for any person who is able and eligible, according to the laws of the Church, to serve as a delegate to the General and/or Jurisdictional Conference(s).

**1. Requirements.** Persons whose names are on the ballot must meet the requirements for election established in the current issue of the Discipline.

**2. Biographies.** Nominating biographies for both clergy and laity shall be announced by the Conference Secretary. Submission of a biography by May 1 of the year preceding General Conference, constitutes nomination. Additional nominations may be made from the floor, but no speeches will be permitted. Nominating biographies shall be no more than 100 words with nominations being made by persons of the same class (clergy and laity).

**3. Additions.** Voters may write any number of names on a ballot that does not exceed the number of persons to be elected. More names on a ballot than the number of persons to be elected will render the ballot defective.

**C. Voting**

**1. Ballot.** Only the official ballot form (provided by the Secretary of the Conference) will be accepted by the tellers.

Voting Area. All members who wish to exercise their franchise must be seated within the Voting Area of the Conference at the time of the election in which they wish to vote.

**2. Write-In Votes.** Write in votes are valid at any time during the voting process, provided the number of names on the ballot does not exceed the number of persons to be elected.

**D. Delegation Organization.** The General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation shall meet at the seat of the Annual Conference session at which they are elected. They shall be convened by the Bishop or a designee (a person who is not a delegate or reserve delegate). They shall elect, by written ballot without nomination, a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, and a Secretary; the first person to achieve a majority for each office is elected. Lay and clergy shall alternate each quadrennium in eligibility to be chairperson of the delegation. Consideration shall be given to inclusiveness.

**ARTICLE IX - ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOMINATIONS  
FOR EPISCOPAL ELECTIONS**

The Annual Conference, in the session immediately preceding a regular Jurisdictional Conference, shall set aside time for consideration of nominees for Episcopal election. Nominations shall be made in accordance with the current issue of the Discipline.

**ARTICLE X - CONFERENCE STRUCTURE**

**A. Organization.** In order to carry out the New England Annual Conference Vision and Mission -- to equip, connect, and support local, regional, and global ministries, to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve all in his name -- the Conference is organized into Boards, committees, agencies, etc., as needed in this work. The report of the Committee on Leadership lists such groups, and the Conference Policies and Procedures contains descriptions of these.

**B. Leadership**

- 1. Chairpersons.** Chairs, except as otherwise stated in these Rules, shall be nominated by the Leadership Committee and elected at Annual Conference.
- 2. Members of Conference Agencies.** Additional members of Conference agencies and groups shall be recruited, assigned, and elected according to the Ministry Description for each agency found in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
- 3. Inclusiveness.** Consideration in all cases shall be given to inclusiveness.

**ARTICLE XI - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**A. Policies and Procedure Manual.** A Conference Policies and Procedures Manual, maintained by the Conference Secretary, shall include, but not be limited to, policy decisions arising from actions of the Annual Conference or any of its agencies and groups; procedures and practices of Conference agencies and groups of interest to and affecting the larger Conference; written ministry descriptions and expectations of Officers and committees; and structure and standards for the work of the Conference. It also shall reference and point to other types of policies which may be maintained separately, such as these, below.

**B. Financial Policies**

- 1. Administration.** The Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall be the repository for all funds received from local churches, and shall perform the central treasury function for all agencies incorporated under the Annual Conference.
- 2. Budgeting.** CFA shall prepare and recommend to the Annual Conference an annual budget as well as policies, procedures, and timelines for requesting Conference funds, which may be found in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
- 3. Apportionments.** CFA shall recommend an apportionment formula to the Annual Conference with its proposed budget annually.
- 4. Reserve Funds.** Reserve funds shall be maintained in order to facilitate the work of the Annual Conference. A description of all funds created by Conference action shall be listed in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual.
- 5. CFA Authorization To Make Budget Adjustments.** Between annual conference sessions, CFA shall determine a payout of conference funds commensurate with anticipated receipts.

**C. Archival Policies.** The Annual Conference shall maintain, preserve, and itemize historical records, including but not limited to, the records of the Annual Conference and its agencies and of discontinued and abandoned churches.

## ARTICLE XII - SUSPENDING AND AMENDING CONFERENCE RULES

- A. Suspension.** The operation of any of the provisions of these rules of order may be suspended at any time by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting.
- B. Amendments.** These rules may be amended or changed by two thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, provided the proposed change or amendment has been presented to the Annual Conference in writing and referred to the Committee on Rules, which Committee shall report thereon not later than the day following. No amendment shall be offered later than the second day of the Conference session.
- C. Posting.** These rules shall be available online and included in the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual. They also shall be printed in the Conference Journal at least once each quadrennium.