

STANDING RULES OF ORDER for an Online Annual Conference

I. Rules of Order and Procedure

A. Applicability of these Conference Rules

1. The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall apply to any situation not covered by these rules.
2. If any part of these rules conflicts with the current edition of *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, *The Book of Discipline* shall prevail.
3. These standing rules for the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church shall apply to any online annual conference sessions as scheduled by the bishop and to all called online sessions of the North Carolina Annual Conference until superseded.
4. Preparing proposed rules for the next annual conference, the Rules Committee will: begin with the standing rules from a prior annual conference (in-person rules or online rules); edit those standing rules, with strikethroughs for deletions and bold font for additions, to become the proposed rules; publish the proposed rules with strikethrough deletions and bold-font additions in the Conference Workbook and on the Conference Website, and lock them on the Conference Website at least 30 days before the first day of annual conference; and offer the proposed rules to the annual conference for consideration, possible amendment, and adoption.
5. The terms “North Carolina Annual Conference,” “Annual Conference,” or “Conference” [note the capital letters] refer to The North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. These terms refer to an organization. The term “annual conference” [in lower-case letters] refers to the yearly assembly, usually occupying several days in June, at which the North Carolina Annual Conference gathers to worship God and conduct business. The term *session* refers to one assembly of the North Carolina Annual Conference occurring on any part of one of those days or for a special or called session.
6. These standing rules of The North Carolina Annual Conference shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the annual conference session.
7. The Official Record of the attendees of the Annual Conference shall be the Registrations recorded by the Conference Registrar via the online meeting platform.
8. Persons appearing on the agenda, who are not members of the Annual Conference shall have the right to be granted the privilege of the floor in

conformity with the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

9. The agenda of the Annual Conference shall be one that is published in the Conference Workbook, and which will be online at the annual conference website, and that may be changed from time to time, as needed by the presiding officer.
10. The bar of the online meeting of the annual conference shall be those members of the Annual Conference (as defined by the *Book of Discipline*) who are present (properly logged-in) and voting by electronic means.
11. The annual conference session may begin with a worship service before the Call to Order.

B. Internet Meeting

1. The business of the Annual Conference shall be conducted through use of an Internet meeting service designated by the Conference Secretary.
2. The Conference Secretary shall send by e-mail to every member of the annual conference the dates and times of the meeting and the URL and codes necessary to connect to the designated Internet meeting service.
3. The Internet meeting service shall:
 - a) support electronic voting by those members eligible to vote on the question before the body,
 - b) support visible displays identifying the chair and the speaker,
 - c) provide for all members to be able to hear a person who has the floor,
 - d) provide a method for the member to seek recognition by the chair,
 - e) provide a method for the member to submit motions in writing,
 - f) show or permit the retrieval of the text of reports, and pending motions, and pending resolutions,
 - g) show the results of votes.
4. When attending the annual conference session, members shall:
 - a) maintain Internet access throughout the meeting whenever present, but shall sign out upon any departure before adjournment,
 - b) be responsible for his or her Internet connection, speakers, and microphone (no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection or computer hardware or software prevented participation in the meeting),
 - c) use a desktop or laptop computer for the annual conference (tablets, phones, and call-in by telephone are not supported).

5. Lay members who must be absent shall inform their pastor who must then inform the Conference Secretary no later than June 1 before the annual conference.
6. The chair may direct the muting of a member's connection if it is causing undue interference with the meeting. The chair's decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.
7. Members shall request the floor by typing their reason for rising for recognition into the designated text box in the Internet meeting platform and clicking the submit button.
8. Upon recognition by the chair, the member shall clearly speak his/her name, clergy/laity status, church/charge name, and district before proceeding with debate or other speech.
9. A call for the previous question must be stated in the form of a motion and follow the procedure outlined above.
10. The conference secretary shall make available a conference workbook on the Internet.

C. Motions, Amendments, Reports and Resolutions

1. Main motions presented to the Annual Conference shall be submitted in writing to the Conference Secretary prior to, or immediately following, presentation.
2. Reports and recommendations coming from boards, agencies and committees of the Annual Conference to be included in the online posting shall be sent to the Conference Secretary, in a format acceptable to the Conference Secretary, on or before the deadline set by the Secretary and published in the Annual Conference calendar.
3. Resolutions to be presented to the annual conference, other than those coming from boards, agencies, and committees, shall be submitted to the Conference Secretary and the chairperson of the Committee on Resolutions and Reference and in a format acceptable to the Conference Secretary and the Committee on Resolutions and Reference with the deadline set by the Conference Secretary and the Committee on Resolutions and Reference, but not less than thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the annual conference, to allow time for review by the Conference Secretary, the Committee on Resolutions and Reference, and all members of the Annual Conference. Individuals and non-official organizations may submit only one resolution for consideration. Acceptable resolutions shall have a one thousand (1000) word limit.
4. The Committee on Resolutions and Reference shall schedule all properly presented resolutions for consideration by the annual conference. The

scheduling of resolutions from Conference boards or agencies will not constitute a recommendation for approval, disapproval, or referral. Any resolution coming from a source other than an Annual Conference board or agency will be reviewed by this committee, which shall then recommend to the Annual Conference approval, disapproval, or referral to another board or agency. With each report the Committee on Resolutions and Reference shall state the rationale for the recommendation.

5. A resolution is considered presented to the Annual Conference when it is distributed in official Annual Conference publications and/or on the Conference website after authorization by the Conference Secretary or the Assistant Secretary, and chairperson of the Committee on Resolutions and Reference. The expense for distributed copies shall be borne by the agency or person originating the resolution, and all copies distributed shall indicate the source of the resolution. No resolution shall be voted on unless it has been presented the day before. All resolutions shall be referred to the Committee on Resolutions and Reference, which shall report to the annual conference session.
6. Early in each annual conference, the Council on Finance and Administration shall present a proposed budget for consideration and debate. After consideration and debate, the proposed budget will lie on the table until the final report of the Council on Finance and Administration. Any motion to change the proposed budget may be considered, debated, and voted on, and if affirmed, will be referred to the Council on Finance and Administration. In its final report the Council on Finance and Administration will indicate their concurrence or nonconcurrence with any such motion before final passage of the budget.

D. Speeches and Reports

1. Speeches from the floor shall be limited to three (3) minutes.
2. There shall be up to three (3) speeches for and three (3) against each motion.
3. A member may speak only once on any motion until all who desire to speak have done so, and then he/she may speak only one additional time.
4. The chairperson of an agency, or someone designated by him/her, shall be allowed to speak last on his/her report even though the previous questions have been ordered. The presiding officer (bishop) may recognize the maker of a resolution to make one (1) speech in favor of her/his resolution even if the maker is not a voting member of the current annual conference session.

5. Presentations and reports shall be limited to ten (10) minutes. This rule does not apply to sermons, orders of the day, or standing committee reports as listed in the Agenda.
6. Required reports requested by the conference secretary coming from boards, agencies and committees shall be sent to the conference secretary, in a format acceptable to the conference secretary, on or before the deadline set by the secretary.
7. Members requesting the floor shall follow the process outlined above in an online meeting of an annual conference session.

E. Voting

1. A vote conducted through the designated Internet meeting service shall be deemed a valid vote.
2. There shall be no absentee voting, proxy voting, or voting by mail.

F. Election of Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences

1. In the Annual Conference prior to the election of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference the Annual Conference Rules Committee shall propose the manner of election to be approved by the Annual Conference. The method of election for the delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference will be by electronic voting device as arranged by the Conference Secretary.
2. Prior to the convening of any annual conference that will elect delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, the Conference Secretary will publish eligibility requirements and voting procedures for election of delegates.
3. The election of a delegate becomes final immediately if the candidate is present and does not decline or if he/she is absent but has consented to be a candidate. A person who is absent and has not consented to his/her candidacy as a delegate shall not be elected.
4. Convening the Delegation--At the conclusion of an annual conference that conducts elections for clergy and lay delegates to General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference, the Conference's presiding Bishop will convene the initial meeting of the entire newly elected delegation (clergy and laity). At this meeting, the officers of the delegation will be elected (chair, vice-chair, and secretary). A date will be selected for the second meeting of the delegation, to occur within a period of 14 days from the conclusion of the annual conference session.
5. A meeting of the delegation for the purpose of beginning the episcopal nominee selection process will occur within a time period of 14 days from the conclusion of the annual conference session that conducted elections or from any annual conference session in the year preceding a

jurisdictional conference session or at the call of the chair of the delegation as required by the schedule of jurisdictional conference sessions. The first clergy elected will be acknowledged as an automatic nominee for bishop. Other nominations will be received from members of the delegation. Such nominations will be made by secret ballot. Nominees can be any Elder in good standing in the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. A delegate will be given the opportunity to speak regarding his/her nominee. A secret ballot vote will follow immediately. The vote will narrow the field of nominees to a number not to exceed 10% of the delegation. As soon as possible, officers of the delegation, or those whom they designate, will contact the nominees selected during this process and upon request share with them the results of the vote concerning their nomination. They will be given 10 days to discern God's will for their ministries. At the conclusion of the 10 days, those who accept nomination must submit a one-page biographical statement to the delegation Secretary, who will distribute all such statements to all members of the delegation. At a time chosen by the delegation, the delegation will meet and engage the nominees. This day of discernment will include each nominee's making a presentation (10 minutes), responding to a set of questions composed by the delegation officers or those whom the officers designate (10 minutes), responding to questions from the floor of the meeting (10 minutes), and offering closing remarks (1 minute). Immediately after meeting with the nominees, the delegation will vote, perhaps several times, by written ballot. The nominee must receive at least 60% of the votes cast to earn the delegation's endorsement. If after 5 votes the delegation present has not cast 60% (or more) of its ballots for one nominee, the delegation and the Annual Conference will not endorse an episcopal nominee in that election cycle. At the annual conference session immediately before a jurisdictional conference session, the delegation's nominee will make a brief speech and be endorsed (or not) by vote of the Annual Conference; endorsement by the Annual Conference requires at least 60% of the votes cast. If after 3 votes the Annual Conference members present have not cast 60% (or more) of their ballots for one nominee, the Annual Conference will not endorse an episcopal nominee in that election cycle. A nominee endorsed by the Annual Conference becomes the Annual Conference's nominee for bishop.

II. Districts

- A. Number of Districts—the number of districts shall be eight (8). A motion to change the number of districts must be presented in writing, and must be

considered no sooner than the day following its introduction. Any change in the number of districts shall be approved at one annual conference, and will not take effect for at least one year.

- B. The Annual Conference shall elect the District Lay Leaders for a four-year term at the beginning of each quadrennium upon nomination by each District Superintendent and the Annual Conference Lay Leader. After election, if a District Lay Leader position becomes vacant, it shall be filled by the same procedure, with the nominee serving as District Lay Leader until a District Lay Leader is elected at the next annual conference to complete the four-year term.

III. Conference Structure

- A. The membership of the Annual Conference is to be as outlined in the complete Lay/Clergy Equalization Plan adopted by the 2023 Annual Conference. A complete report is in the most recent Annual Conference Journal.
- B. Tenure for membership for all persons on boards, agencies, commissions, committees, and ministry groups shall be any part of a four-year quadrennium, with the possibility of reelection for a second quadrennium except as otherwise defined in *The Book of Discipline*.
- C. Committees and Boards
 1. The Annual Conference Board of Trustees shall meet at least twice a year at times and places designated by the board. The annual meeting shall be held either at the annual conference or within thirty (30) days prior thereto.
 2. There shall be a Program and Planning Committee for the annual conference consisting of the Bishop; Assistant to the Bishop for Clergy Life; the Conference Secretary; Conference Treasurer; the Annual Conference Lay Leader; the Annual Conference Presidents of The United Methodist Men, United Women in Faith, the United Methodist Youth Fellowship; the Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, and other persons selected by the Bishop. The committee shall determine the compensation and expense for invited speakers, who shall be paid from the annual conference expense fund. The committee will receive invitations and may also make recommendations for the site of the annual conference.
 3. The Committee on Worship, the Conference Secretary and the District Superintendents shall provide for all the details of the Memorial Service. The Conference Secretary shall serve as the chair of this group.
 4. There shall be a Committee on Daily Minutes elected each year to examine and edit the daily minutes of the annual conference.
 5. There shall be a Committee on Appeals appointed quadrennially by the Bishop, composed of five members, whose duties shall be to hear appeals

from the decisions of the several District Boards of Church Location and Building, or any other questions that may properly come before it.

6. There shall be a Committee on Annual Conference Rules, which shall provide to the Annual Conference a document of standing rules and structure that the Annual Conference from time to time may adopt. This document shall be presented at the opening of the first session of each annual conference.
7. There shall be a Committee on Resolutions and Reference, which shall perform the duties assigned to it in these rules.
8. There shall be a North Carolina Annual Conference Board of Institutions, Inc. which shall have the responsibility, upon consultation with Methodist Home for Children, Inc.; United Methodist Retirement Homes, Inc., Cypress Glen Retirement Community, North Carolina United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc.; Louisburg College, Inc.; Methodist University, Inc.; North Carolina Wesleyan College, Inc.; United Methodist Foundation, Inc., and any other related corporations which may be formed in the future, as appropriate, for nominating and electing forty (40) percent of all voting members of each of the boards of trustees of the affiliated institutions with the exception of the Methodist Retirement Homes, Inc. The North Carolina Annual Conference shall elect the trustees of the North Carolina Annual Conference Board of Institutions, Inc. in staggered four-year terms. (See 1992 Journal, page 320). No person may serve on more than one board of trustees of the institutions for which the Annual Conference elects trustees.
9. There shall be a Structure Review Team which will annually evaluate the conference structure for effectiveness and faithfulness to the vision and mission of the Annual Conference, working in concert with the Connectional Table to propose changes in structure as needed. The team shall consist of one representative from each Team of Ministry, the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop for Clergy Life, Executive Director of Conference Connectional Ministries, the Conference Treasurer, and the Conference Lay Leader, plus two at-large members who will be elected by the conference.
10. There shall be a North Carolina Annual Conference Connectional Table
 - a) Responsibilities of The Conference Connectional Table:
 - (1) to provide a forum for the discernment, clarification, and implementing of the vision of the conference;
 - (2) to connect the missional efforts of all the ministries areas and align the related resources of the Annual Conference;

- (3) to foster collaboration through linking the Teams of Ministry (Leadership Development, Race Equity and Justice Ministries, Christian Formation, Peace Building and Outreach Ministry, and Operations and Administrative Resources) and the agency to which they report;
- (4) to provide for joint planning and the setting of priorities;
- (5) to report to, and be amenable to the Annual Conference;
- (6) to discern and articulate the vision of the conference;
- (7) to provide stewardship of the mission, ministry, and resources of the conference and provide fiscal responsibility and establish policies and procedures to carry out the mission;
- (8) to collaborate with the Council on Finance and Administration by:
 - (a) communicating the vision and priorities of the conference in preparation of budgets for apportioned funds that come before the Annual Conference Session;
 - (b) setting allocations of budget requests within totals as recommended by the Council on Finance and Administration to the Annual Conference Session.
 - (c) working with the Council on Finance and Administration to achieve consensus concerning total funds allocated to program agencies;
 - (d) enabling the flow of communication among the boards and agencies, districts and local churches through the Teams of Ministry. To help with the flow of communication one member of the Communications Committee will be assigned to each of the Teams of Ministry.

- b) Membership of the Conference Connectional Table shall consist of twelve (12) at-large voting members, in equal distribution of male and female, no fewer than twenty-five percent (25%) of whom shall be from racial/ethnic minorities, with at least one youth. Voting members are the twelve at-large members and Conference Lay Leader. Other members with voice but no vote are:
 - (1) The Bishop;
 - (2) The following Extended Cabinet Members: Executive Director of Conference Connectional Ministries, Assistant

to the Bishop for Clergy Life, Executive Director of New Faith Communities, Conference Treasurer;

(3) Conference Team Ministry Directors (Staff)

(4) Director of Communications.

(5) Director of Youth Ministries

(6) Chairperson of the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries

c) Teams of Ministry--The agencies, boards and commissions defined by the current edition of the *Book of Discipline* will organize themselves according to the requirements outlined therein and will connect through the Teams of Ministry. The Teams of Ministry, using task forces or standing groups to plan and implement ministry and mission, will organize any ministry areas not prescribed by the *Book of Discipline*. Teams of Ministry are accountable to the Connectional Table for holding up and living out the vision affirmed by the Annual Conference and for faithfully presenting ministry needs to the Connectional Table. The four programming teams of Leadership Development, Race Equity and Justice Ministries, Christian Formation, and **Peace Building and Outreach Ministry** are represented on the Connectional Table by three (3) at-large members with a chairperson and two rotating members. Rotating members are set in different classes and rotate on a two-year basis from Team to Team. At the end of each quadrennium, the chairpersons will rotate. The Operations and Administrative Resources Team, as a non-programmatic team, will be represented by the Conference Lay Leader and staff representation of the Conference Treasurer. The Teams are as follows:

(1) Leadership Development Team: Serves to form and equip leaders who implement the vision.

(2) Race Equity and Justice Ministries Team: Serves to direct and vision the work of race equity, justice, and belonging at all levels of our institutional life and work.

(3) Christian Formation Team: Serves to form and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ.

(4) Peace Building and Outreach Ministry Team: Serves to carry forth the ministry that transforms the world.

(5) Operations and Administrative Resources Team: Serves to empower, resource, and provide administrative oversight for ministry.

- d) Conference Connectional Table Meeting Schedule—The Conference Connectional Table shall meet at least quarterly.
- 11. There shall be other boards and committees as required by the *Book of Discipline* including, but not limited to, **the Conference Council on Finance and Administration**, the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the Conference Board of Laity, the Conference Committee on Episcopacy, the Conference Board of Pensions, the United Women of Faith, United Methodist Men, Conference Council on Youth Ministry, and others.

D. Annual Conference Officers

- 12. The Annual Conference Lay Leader shall be elected quadrennially. This nomination will be made in a joint session of the Board of Laity and Cabinet. The nomination is to be made no later than October of the year prior to the General Conference session. Should a vacancy occur at any other time, it shall be filled by the same procedure, with the nominee serving as Lay Leader until a Conference Lay Leader is elected at the next annual conference session. The Annual Conference Lay Leader shall serve as the chairperson of the Board of Laity.
- 13. There shall be an Assistant to the Bishop for Clergy Life with such duties and responsibilities as determined by the Annual Conference or assigned by the presiding Bishop.
- 14. There shall be an Executive Director of Conference Connectional Ministries.
- 15. There shall be a Conference Treasurer/Business Manager.
- 16. There shall be an Annual Conference Secretary: The position of Annual Conference Secretary is held on a part-time basis with those duties stipulated by the current edition of *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church and the North Carolina Annual Conference, with adequate funding provided. The Conference Secretary shall be elected at the beginning of each quadrennium. The responsibilities of the Conference Secretary shall be determined by *The Book of Discipline*, the annual conference, and the bishop.
- 17. The Annual Conference Statistician
 - a) The position of Annual Conference Statistician shall be continued on a part-time basis with those duties stipulated by the current edition of *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, with adequate funding provided.
 - b) The Conference Statistician shall be elected at the beginning of each quadrennium.

IV. Financial Administration

- A. The Conference Treasurer and all others receiving and disbursing funds from the Annual Conference shall be required to make audited statements annually, which the Conference Secretary will make available.
 - B. The Council on Finance and Administration shall present the budget for adoption at the annual conference only after all other matters having claims on the budget have been presented.
 - C. Tables I, II, and III shall be available in the Annual Conference Journal with individual church reports and charge totals as compiled by the Conference Statistician from each pastor's reports.
- V. Annual Conference Journal
- A. The Conference Secretary shall publish a Journal of The North Carolina Annual Conference each year.
 - B. The Conference Secretary shall be charged with the responsibility of editing and making contracts for the publication of the Annual Conference Journal, in keeping with regulations of the General Conference and of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. The editor shall have full authority to condense reports, memoirs, and other papers when necessary.
 - C. The Annual Conference Journal will be posted online, at The North Carolina Annual Conference website, making it accessible to everyone. Individuals may reproduce it and have it printed at their discretion.