

26. CONFERENCE RULES OF ORDER

A. RULES RELATING TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

1. **Parliamentary Procedures.** The United Methodist Discipline and most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the guides and authority for parliamentary procedure in the conduct of all Conference business.
2. **Conference Resource Book.** Conference staff shall be responsible for editing, printing and distributing the Conference Resource Book including the Conference daily program and projected reports of agencies. A copy shall be mailed to each Conference Member in advance of the Annual Session. Summary reports of agency achievements shall be printed in the Conference Journal.
3. **Voting Area.** Only members within the voting area may vote. However, a member outside of the area, absent on Conference business at the seat of the Conference approved by Conference order, may vote by absentee ballot.
 - a. In Annual Conference sessions involving election of General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates, if the youth members of Annual Conference are in a Youth Annual Conference plenary session or other planned activity when the result of any ballot for lay delegates or alternates to General or Jurisdictional Conference is announced and/or another laity ballot is to be taken, a teller will announce the ballot result at Youth Annual Conference, and the poll will be extended by authorizing that teller to receive that ballot from voting youth members of Annual Conference.
4. **Motions Written in Duplicate.** All motions, reports and resolutions shall be written and presented to the Conference Secretary in an easily duplicated form.
5. **Limitation of Debate.**
 - a. When the bishop determines the Conference Agenda to be thirty minutes behind schedule, the bishop may declare that debate on motions shall be limited to two speeches for and two speeches against, not to exceed a length of two minutes per speech. If the bishop determines the Conference agenda has returned to schedule, the bishop may declare the limit on debate to be lifted.
 - b. At any time when this limitation is in effect, any member of the Conference may move to suspend the limitation for a particular item or series of items. Such a motion is not debatable and requires a two-thirds majority.
 - c. This limitation of debate shall not apply to legislative groups or any other committee.
6. **Reports Before the Conference:**
 - a. **Adoption of Reports.** No report shall be presented to the Conference unless adopted by the designated quorum at a properly constituted and publicized session of the agency making this report. The adoption of a report from any Conference office, board, committee, or society, accepts such reports for the records of the Conference.
 - b. **Legislation by Items.** All items in reports shall be considered as recommendations and not as legislation. In order to be effective and binding on the Conference, the recommendation of any report must be passed by the Conference in the form of a separate and specific motion.
7. **Legislative Groups.** The Conference Council, through its Conference Planning Committee, shall plan the program and agenda for the sessions of the Annual Conference in such manner that all items of business shall be considered by legislative groups of the Conference before being voted on by the Annual Conference except for those items sent to the Committee on General Reference. Legislative groups have the right to bring new legislation and resolutions before the Annual Conference and will be so advised.

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8. **Finance Items Referred.** All matters with fiscal implications must be referred to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration for their recommendation prior to Annual Conference adoption.
9. **Matters to Lay Over.** Copies of proposals involving fund raising, or matters of long-term commitment, not described sufficiently in the Conference Resource Book for thorough debate and competent decision, shall be distributed to Conference members twenty-four (24) hours before the vote is taken. Reconsideration of such a matter does not require a 24-hour waiting period.
10. **General Reference.** The Committee on General Reference will consist of a one representative from each District; District representatives will be nominated and elected by the Pre-Conference Groups and approved by the Annual Conference. One District Superintendent and the Director of Connectional Ministries will serve without vote. Conference business which arrives too late to go to Legislative Groups (including new legislation or resolutions brought by legislative groups) shall be referred, without debate, to this committee which shall, before adjournment, place the matter before the Conference with one of the following recommendations: (a) concurrence; (b) non-concurrence; (c) without recommendation. The committee will be restricted to considering matters presented after the Legislative Groups meet. Advocates for legislation or resolutions will be told of their right to appear before the committee before their proposals are acted upon. Resolutions not in the packets will be summarized either orally or in writing in the Annual Conference session before consideration by the Committee on General Reference.
11. **Conference offerings.** No collection, subscription or roll call of pastoral charges shall be taken for any financial purpose without the consent of the Conference. All monies from offerings, or from other sources for special mission or benevolent causes shall be sent to the Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services. All bills, honoraria and obligations incident to holding of the Conference shall be paid from the Conference Expense Fund.
12. **Banquets.** Agencies or groups holding luncheons and banquets during Annual Conference shall be responsible for publicity, ticket sales, and honoraria incident thereto.
13. **Booths and display tables.**
 - a. Groups requesting space must be 1) official United Methodist agencies, 2) ministries supported by the Annual Conference, or 3) endorsed or sponsored by a Board, Commission, or Committee of the Annual Conference or the General Church.
 - b. All booths, displays, and items to be vended shall be in accord with the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church.
 - c. Priority for space shall be granted first to official United Methodist agencies, second to ministries supported by the Annual Conference, and third to groups endorsed or sponsored by a Board, Commission, or Committee of the Annual Conference or the General Church.
 - d. With the exception of Cokesbury and (at sessions when a photo directory is being done) a photographic directory business, vendors or vending shall be allowed from any booth or display space only with the express written approval of the Annual Conference Planning Committee and the Director of Connectional Ministries. For purposes of this rule, any receipt of money in exchange for items of value including sales, donations (either fixed or suggested), or pledges of future receipt shall be considered vending. This rule shall not apply to food, beverage, or similar vending which is a normal part of business in the venue where the Conference session is held.

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- a. Rather than a lay member from each charge as indicated by Par. 32. Article I. of the 2004 Book of Discipline, the Nebraska Conference shall have a lay member from each church.
- b. Youth members shall be as provided by Par. 32. Article I. of the 2004 Book of Discipline except that in the Nebraska Conference, one from each district shall be a young adult age 19-24 and one a youth from grades 7-12 at time of election. They shall be elected by the districts from nominations received from individual United Methodists of the district, local church administrative boards, district councils on youth ministries or other agencies of the United Methodist Church. The youth shall have principal residence in the district of election. There shall be a reserve in each category. Additional youth members shall include all members of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries Leadership Team.
- c. Delegates and Reserve Delegates elected to General and Jurisdictional Conference shall be members of the Annual Conference for four years following their election and their expenses to Annual Conference shall be paid by the Nebraska Annual Conference if not paid by their local church.
- d. Board and Commission Chairpersons shall be voting members of the Annual Conference as long as they hold that position. Their expenses to Annual Conference will be paid by the Nebraska Annual Conference when such expenses are not paid by a local church or any group they represent.

15. Roll Call and Attendance Record Roll Call shall be taken at the Annual Conference Session as follows:

- a. Official roll cards shall be provided by the Conference Secretary and distributed at the beginning of the Conference Session.
- b. Official roll cards shall be made available throughout the Conference Sessions by the Conference Secretary and Assistant Secretaries and may be handed in to any of the aforementioned Secretaries.
- c. The Conference Secretary shall process the official roll cards and see that the record of attendance is properly recorded in the Conference Journal.
- d. Members shall sit in the voting area designated by the Arrangement Committee. Where possible, each pastor and the lay members from the parish are to sit together. Each member is expected to promptly return to his/her seat following recesses.

16. Annual Conference Expenses

- a. Local churches shall pay at least minimum expenses for pastor(s) and lay member(s) upon required attendance at Annual Conference Sessions.
- b. The registration fee for retirees attending Annual Conference shall be waived.

17. Steps by which the Annual Conference takes positions by means of resolution.

- a. Resolutions are motions which are intended to cause the Annual Conference to express its mind on some matter of concern. A resolution might, also, cause the altering of some aspect of conference procedure. Resolutions are distinguished from program proposals in that resolutions do not cause the expenditure of money or a significant amount of staff time, the holding of meetings, nor the conducting of studies.
- b. Individuals, congregations, districts organizations, or annual conference organizations may submit their resolutions to the conference staff.
- c. The conference staff shall be responsible for placing them in the Conference Resource Book and will direct the resolutions to the appropriate conference organization(s) for their consideration. The appropriate conference organization(s) will review each resolution and determine if there is a duplication, a conflict with

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standing or annual resolutions, a conflict with the Book of Discipline, or a need for revision of rationale or support data. They may report their work to the original writer, the conference staff, the legislative groups, or to the Annual Conference session.

- d. Legislative groups will consider all resolutions before being voted on by the Annual Conference except for those resolutions which are sent to the Committee on General Reference. New resolutions can may be presented to the legislative groups for recommendation to the Annual Conference.
 - e. Legislative groups shall recommend the resolutions to the Annual Conference with one of the following designations: (1) concurrence, (2) concurrence with amendment, (3) non concurrence.
 - f. All resolutions shall come before the Annual Conference for action.
 - g. Annual Resolutions will be in effect for one year after the Annual Conference votes in favor of them. In order for them to be a part of the Conference Record in following years they must be reintroduced and passed.
 - h. Standing Resolutions are created for a four year period by a 2/3 majority vote of the Annual Conference. The motion to make an Annual Resolution a Standing Resolution should follow immediately upon its passage as an Annual Resolution. The expiration date will be identified with the Standing Resolution and one year before its expiration will be referred to the appropriate conference organization(s) for review. Standing Resolutions do not require action during the four year period, but can be changed or discontinued by any subsequent Annual Conference. Amending a Standing Resolution returns it to being an Annual Resolution which can become a Standing Resolution. All resolutions passed at previous Annual Conferences can be amended or discontinued by Annual Conference action.
18. **Privilege of the Floor.** Lay and clergy members of boards, commissions and committees, elected by the Conference or appointed by order of the Conference, or in pursuance of provisions of the Discipline, who are not members of the Conference shall be granted the privilege of the floor, without vote, on all matters relating to the reports of the respective boards, commissions, and committees of which they are members.
 19. **Standing Committees.** In consultation with the Bishop, the Director of Connectional Ministries shall appoint standing committees for the Annual Conference session and name the chair and secretary of each committee (with the exception of the Committee on General Reference). Care shall be taken to make the committees broadly inclusive of conference membership.
 20. **Courtesies.** Non-members of the Conference or of our church organizations shall secure the privilege of speaking before the Conference from the Director of Connectional Ministries, in consultation with the Bishop, who shall limit the time of such speaking.

B. RULES RELATING TO THE KEEPING OF RECORDS

1. **Conference Journal.** The Secretary shall follow the directive of the United Methodist Discipline. The Secretary shall prepare a bound volume of Conference Journals for each quadrennium and send to the following (a) Jurisdictional Committee on Conference Journals; (b) Conference Offices; (c) Conference Historical Society.
2. **Publication.** The Commission on Publication shall have the responsibility for matters related to printing and distribution of the Conference Journals. The Commission on Publication of the Official Journal shall be composed of the Conference Secretary, the Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services, the Director of Connectional Ministries, and the Director of Communications.

3. **Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.** The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall accurately report in the Annual Conference Journal all monies received and from what source, all monies paid out to whom and for what purpose. The report shall cover the time of the Conference fiscal year. The Board shall take receipts for all money paid out and preserve the same for five years. It shall keep an accurate record book of all the Board's financial affairs. This record shall be preserved for at least five years from the time of the transactions involved.
4. In the Journal of the Nebraska Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church listing of the Pastors' Historical Record, there will be added, after the notation of a Minister's Retirement, the record of additional service performed under the appointment and/or approval of the Bishop and Cabinet.
5. **Church Historian.** There shall be a Church Historian in each local church for the purpose of maintaining the historical records of that particular church.
6. **Memoirs of Lay Pastors.** The memoirs of Lay Pastors who die while serving charges under regular appointment, the memoirs of spouses of Lay Pastors who die while their spouses are serving charges under regular appointment, the memoirs of Lay Pastors who are retired and the memoirs of spouses of Lay Pastors who are retired, shall be printed in the Journal. The names of deceased Lay Pastors shall be listed in the Roll of Deceased Ministerial members and Lay Pastors.
7. **Necrology.**
 - a. In the event of death of any of those listed below, The pastor of the charge, or a neighboring charge, shall notify the district superintendent. Said superintendent shall notify United Methodist Offices of the funeral arrangements, and a notice of this information shall go out immediately to all active and retired clergy, lay pastors, diaconal ministers, and past and present Conference Lay Leaders and Associate Lay Leaders and current District Lay Leaders of the Conference.
 - (1) A clergy member of the Nebraska Conference,
 - (2) Spouse of such clergy,
 - (3) Spouse of a clergyperson whose death occurred while a member of the Nebraska Conference (whether or not residing within the bounds of the Conference),
 - (4) Local Pastor while serving charges under regular appointment, or a retired Local Pastor,
 - (5) Spouse of a Local Pastor serving under a regular appointment, or spouse of a retired Local Pastor,
 - (6) A diaconal minister, active or retired, who is a member of the Nebraska Conference.
 - (7) Spouse of an active or retired diaconal minister in the Nebraska Conference.
 - b. Whenever there is a death of the above named, an appropriate memorial service shall be conducted during the next Annual Conference Session.
 - c. Complete Roll of Ministerial Members now deceased who served as members of any Conference and are now a part of the Nebraska Conference of The United Methodist Church, shall appear in the Proceedings of the Conference Session of the second year of each quadrennium.

C. RULES RELATING TO NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. **Nominating and Equipping Committee.** The Committee shall consist of four District Superintendents; one lay person from each district; two clergy selected At Large; two racial/ethnic persons; the Conference Lay Leader; the Conference President of the United Methodist Women; the Conference President of the United Methodist

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Men; one youth selected by the Conference Council on Youth Ministries; the Director of Connectional Ministries; and the Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services. The Nominating and Equipping Committee shall make nominations in keeping with ¶609.5 of the 2004 Book of Discipline.

2. **Filling Vacancies.** The Cabinet shall fill vacancies on boards, commissions, and committees that occur between sessions of the Annual Conference, except where the Discipline provides otherwise. Respective boards, commissions, and committees shall have opportunity to submit nominations.
3. **Conference Program.** Conference Program planning and implementation shall be the responsibility of the Conference Council on Ministries. The Annual Conference Planning Committee will have the option of naming additional members to carry out specific assignments.
4. **Tenure of Members.** A member of any quadrennial board, commission or committee shall be eligible for not more than two consecutive terms. At least one-half of the membership shall be new each quadrennium. Persons elected to fill vacancies within a quadrennium shall be eligible for re-election until they have served two full terms, except that such a member would be eligible to serve as chairperson of a given board, commission or committee only for a maximum of eight years. A period of four years shall elapse after a member has served two full terms, before that person is eligible to be named again to that board, commission or committee. This maximum does not apply to the Board of Ministry which shall be three quadrennia. The Conference Lay Leader and Associate Lay Leader shall be nominated quadrennially by the Conference Nominating and Equipping Committee and elected by the Annual Conference for a four year term. Persons serving in these offices shall be eligible for not more than two (2) consecutive terms. The Conference Lay Leader and Associate Lay Leader position shall be filled alternately by a layman and laywoman. These tenure rules are applicable to the District Boards, District Councils on Ministries, Commissions, and Committees, Lay Leader and Associate Lay Leader, with the exception of the District Youth Coordinator
5. **Tenure of Trustees.** The Trustees of the Nebraska Annual Conference shall be elected for four-year terms, one-fourth to be elected each year. No member shall be eligible for election for more than two terms without a two-thirds vote of the Annual Conference. A period of two years must elapse after serving on a Board of Trustees before a member shall be eligible again for membership on the same board. The Trustees of the Annual Conference shall be listed in the Conference Journal with other officers of the Conference since they are the Board of Directors of this corporation.
6. **Annual Elections.** All officers of the local church, elected by the charge conference or the annual church conference, shall be elected in the quarter preceding the beginning of the new fiscal (calendar) year. Vacancies may be filled at any charge conference.
7. **Terms of Office.** Terms of office for members and officers of Conference boards and agencies shall be from July 1 to June 30, unless provided otherwise by the Discipline and by the Constitution and By-Laws of the institution.
8. In the Session of Annual Conference at the beginning of each quadrennium when elections are held for quadrennial councils, boards and commissions, the chairpersons of the councils, boards and commissions shall be nominated by the Conference Nominating and Equipping Committee and elected by the Annual Conference with the exception of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Pensions and the Council on Finance and Administration, who according to the provisions of the Discipline, elect their own chairpersons.

Those boards, commissions, committees or councils electing their own chairpersons shall be convened by the liaison of the Cabinet at the Annual Conference, or soon thereafter, for the purpose of electing a nominating committee from the board, commission, committee or council to nominate its officers.

D. MISCELLANEOUS RULES:

1. **Annual Audit.** The Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services and other treasurers responsible for funds over which the Annual Conference has jurisdiction, shall provide an annual audit by an Auditor satisfactory to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. Such audits shall be printed in the Conference Journal. A notice shall be sent annually to all agencies receiving funds from the Conference informing them of the requirement that an annual audit of those funds must be filed.
2. **Statistics.** It shall be the duty of each clergy assigned to a field, to fill out accurately the statistical blank as ordered by the General Council on Finance and Administration and submit the same to the Conference Statistician by a date established by the Bishop.
3. **Institutions Soliciting Funds.** Conference institutions, and institutions with Jurisdictional and General Conference connections soliciting funds in the churches of the Nebraska Annual Conference must have the approval of the Council on Finance and Administration. The approved solicitors must, annually, report all money raised to the Conference Statistician for inclusion in the Journal. They shall receive permission from the local church administrative board, clear data with the pastor of the church, and inform the church of the permission granted them by the Council on Finance and Administration before beginning their solicitation.
4. **Authorized Speakers.** It is recommended that only speakers authorized by The United Methodist Church or Nebraska Annual Conference be admitted to United Methodist pulpits or permitted to take offerings in local churches. An authorized speaker is someone representing an organization with which the United Methodist Church has an official or ecumenical relationship.
5. **Payment of Apportionments in Full and Priorities**
 - a. Conference Council on Ministries' programs shall be prioritized by the Conference Council on Ministries in consultation with the Conference Council on Finance and Administration in accordance with the goals and objectives established by the Annual Conference.
 - b. In all parts of the Conference program, salary items shall be paid out at one hundred percent.
 - c. Each congregation is expected to pay all apportionments in full and a promotional effort to secure that objective shall be undertaken by the Bishop and District Superintendents, with the cooperation of the Council on Finance and Administration and Council on Ministries.
6. **Youth Service Fund.** The Nebraska Conference share of the Youth Service Fund raised in a particular year is to be used for projects approved by Conference Council on Youth Ministry for program in the following year.
7. **Travel Allowance.** Travel allowance at rates recommended by the Council on Finance and Administration and approved by the Conference shall be paid to members of Conference boards, commissions, committees and agencies to attend board meetings and all travel related to Conference program.
8. **Attendance at Meetings.** Members of boards, commissions, committees and agencies of the Annual Conference are expected to be present at all meetings. In the event a person must be absent, the chairperson or secretary must be notified in writing or by telephone in order that an excused absence may be granted. Failure to do so two (2)

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consecutive times shall result in automatic termination of membership.

9. **Remuneration for Attendance.** Boards, commissions, committees and agencies are to pay expenses only to members who are in attendance for the majority of a called meeting, members are to arrive on time and remain in the session until the meeting has been adjourned unless excused. Further, members not complying will be placing payment for their expenses in jeopardy with the payment decision to be left to the group involved.
10. **Parsonage Policy.** Each pastoral appointment will provide a parsonage or housing allowance for its pastor. When a clergy couple is appointed to two adjacent pastoral charges with available parsonages, the Cabinet will select the parsonage for the couple.
 - a. During the appointment consultation process, the District Superintendent will meet with the S/PPRC and Trustees of the non-occupied parsonage for dialogue about uses for the non-occupied parsonage. Possible uses may include making the parsonage available for the pastor to use while on the parish; renting out the parsonage with property taxes being paid and the balance of the rent used for maintenance and future parsonage improvement; using the parsonage for other church ministries. The local church will make the decision about the use of the non-occupied parsonage and is to continue to maintain the parsonage for future occupancy of appointed pastors.
 - b. When a clergy couple lives in one parsonage, no financial obligations will be assumed by the other appointment. When both pastoral appointments give a housing allowance, the District Superintendent will negotiate the amount paid by each pastoral appointment.
11. Churches who are experiencing a move will be responsible for filling their pulpit on the last Sunday of June.
 - a. Salary, travel allowance (vouchered or fixed), health insurance, pension and all reimbursement expenses paid through June 30 from the charge to which they are currently appointed; and their salary, travel allowance (vouchered or fixed), health insurance, pension and all reimbursement expenses from the charge to which they are being appointed beginning July 1.
 - b. For pastors whose new appointments become effective after Annual Conference, their current charge should pay their June 29 HealthFlex premium. Pastors new to the Conference will be enrolled in HealthFlex as of July 1. Housing allowance from the present appointment will be paid to June 30; and housing allowance from the new appointment commencing July 1.
 - c. Churches where pastors are retiring should contact the Office of Administrative Services for instructions.
12. Seminary students from Nebraska will be placed on the mailing list for the home district newsletter, Nebraska Conference MESSENGER and other appropriate Conference mailings that will keep them current with the Conference program, including a copy of the official Journal of the Nebraska Annual Conference.
13. The Nebraska Annual Conference designates the Sunday preceding Ascension Day (the sixth Sunday of Easter) as Rural Life Sunday in correspondence with the traditional celebration of Rogation.
14. The Rules of Order may be amended by majority vote of those present at any Annual Conference after the proposed amendment has been in the hands of the Conference in printed form for 24 hours. Reconsideration of such a matter does not require a 24-hour waiting period.
15. No decisions of the Annual Conference can be overturned on procedural grounds after the adjournment of the Annual Conference.