

XI. Miscellaneous

A. Standing Rules and Rules of Order

Declaration

The Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church declares itself to be a continuing entity of the larger Body of Christ within the denomination known as The United Methodist Church. As that declared body, we are defined and directed for purposes of organization and procedure by the 2008 edition of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. Our Organizational Structure, Standing Rules, and Rules of Order as defined and written in this document continue in force from year to year, from one session of the Annual Conference to the next, except as changed or amended from time to time as prescribed by *The Book of Discipline* and this document.

The Standing Rules and Rules of Order will be printed annually in the pre-Conference workbook and in the official *Journal of the Annual Conference Session*. Unless otherwise needed, the Structure Document will only be printed in the pre-Conference workbook and in the official *Journal of the Annual Conference Session* quadrennially in the year just prior to the Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Boundaries of the Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church

The Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church includes the state of Indiana in its entirety. Ten Districts and their respective boundaries are determined and set by the Cabinet of the Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Our Annual Gathering

The Indiana Conference gathers as a representative body to address the mission and business of the Conference once each year and may be called into session more frequently as the bishop deems necessary.

The Annual Conference Sessions Committee

The Annual Conference Sessions Committee ensures that we are prepared for our work and are fulfilling our Disciplinary obligations as we conduct our work before and during each annual gathering and special called session of the Indiana Conference. They do this by:

Oversight

After the bishop has set the dates and times for the Annual Conference, the Sessions Committee assumes oversight for the site, meeting rooms, lodging, food service, communications, and other equipment and services needed are properly obtained and executed.

Assembling and Publishing Pre-Gathering Reports

The Annual Conference Sessions Committee calls for, collects, and distributes to all Conference members the reports of the mission groups, boards, and work areas of the Annual Conference. Members will receive the first of these reports no later than 30 days before the start of that year's Annual Conference. The report will include the latest version of the projected agenda, the current Rules and Structure document of the Annual Conference, and information needed to register and reserve lodging for the upcoming Annual Conference.

Creating the Agenda

The Annual Conference Sessions Committee creates a preliminary agenda for the upcoming session of the Annual Conference and includes it in the pre-Conference report. The Annual Conference Sessions Committee will regularly update the agenda, both before and during the Annual Conference, and supply all Conference members with updated agendas as needed.

Managing Registration

The Conference Secretary supervises registration.

Managing the Legislative and Referrals Process

At Annual Conference and special called sessions, members of the Conference consider several types of legislation. Among them are those that have *fiscal implications*, those that have *no fiscal implications*, and those that *ask for specific actions* of specific groups or that *refer items* to other groups, teams or boards for comment prior to consideration by the members of the conference. (In addition, Conference members consider petitions to General Conference. Management of those petitions is explained in detail in the section titled: 'General and Jurisdictional Conference Procedures.')

In order to manage these various types of legislation, the Annual Conference Sessions Committee will do the following:

1. Create a list of items that have *fiscal implications*, and refer these items to the Committee on Finance and Administration prior to action;

2. Create a consent calendar that includes those items that have *no fiscal implications* and that do not need to be referred to any teams or boards for discussion;
3. *Refer* all petitions and items that need further discussion, or that *ask for specific actions* from conference teams, boards, or committees to those groups for comment prior to consideration by the members of conference .

Nominating Committee

The Annual Conference's Nominating Committee develops a process that encourages persons, both lay and clergy, to make available to the Conference their gifts and skills for groups and committees at a Conference level. The Nominating Committee prepares and presents to the Annual Conference Session a leadership list for all the appropriate groups as directed by *The Book of Discipline*. It also works with affiliated groups to receive nominations that require Annual Conference confirmation.

The report from the Nominating Committee is presented in written form at the first business session of the Conference and will be voted on at a time recommended by the Director of Connectional Ministries later in the Conference, allowing members time to review the report prior to consideration and action.

The Nominating Committee works to have all committees and groups reflect the demographics of the state, with special attention given to gender, ethnicity, age and geographic considerations, and a balance of lay and clergy representation (Paragraph 640.5).

The Nominating Committee also ensures broad participation on Conference groups by limiting individual membership to only one significant Conference committee unless specified by *The Book of Discipline*. A person generally will not be elected as a member on a Conference committee and have ex-officio membership status on another unless it is directed by *The Book of Discipline*.

To enable full participation, Conference committees should schedule meetings with careful consideration of the availability of the membership to be in attendance and with attention given to locations within the shortest distance for most attendees. Groups should explore alternative meeting formats whenever possible to limit expense and travel for Conference meetings.

The Nominating Committee also is responsible for:

1. filling vacancies between sessions of Annual Conference;
2. naming membership to new groups formed by Annual Conference action (unless that task is specifically assigned to another group or to the bishop);
3. reviewing the participation of elected members and replacing inactive members as needed and recommended by the chairperson of the affected committee.

Persons elected or appointed to an office by the Annual Conference will assume their duties immediately following the Conference (or at the time of their appointment if after a regular session of the Conference). The tenure for leadership and committee membership is normally four years and not more than eight years unless directed otherwise by *The Book of Discipline*. A person can return to a committee after having served a maximum term if that person is off the committee for one year.

Eligibility to Vote

The following are eligible to vote:

1. one professing member elected from each charge in this Conference;
2. all active diaconal ministers, active deaconesses and home missionaries under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the Annual Conference, the Conference president of United Methodist Women, the Conference president of United Methodist Men, the Conference lay leader, the Conference director of Lay Speaking Ministries (Paragraph 32), the Conference director of Global Ministries (if lay, Paragraph 32), district lay leaders, the Conference scouting coordinator, the president or equivalent officer of the Conference young adult organization, the president of the Conference youth organization, one youth between the ages of 12 and 18 and one young adult between the ages of 18 and 30 from each district, and the chair of the Annual Conference student organization;
3. campus ministers, chaplains, and Wesley Foundations directors. In districts where laypersons serve as campus ministers/directors of Wesley Foundations, they shall be added as district-at-large lay members to the Annual Conference. In districts where UM clergy serve as chaplains, campus ministers, and directors of Wesley Foundations, the laypersons elected as their balancing counterparts shall be elected from either the campus ministry board of directors or a student from that ministry/foundation (Paragraph 602 e);
4. additional lay members needed to equalize lay and clergy membership of the Annual Conference;
5. clergy members, including deacons and elders in full connection, provisional members, associate members, affiliate members, local pastors under full- and part-time appointment and others certified by the Board of Ordained Ministry (Paragraph 346.2).

All lay members of the Annual Conference must have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years and professing members for at least two years prior to being elected to serve as lay members. Exception to this rule may be granted to persons under 30 years of age.

Voting on Various Issues

While all lay and clergy are equally members of the Conference, not all members may vote on all matters. The following are the exceptions:

1. Only clergy members in full connection may vote on matters of ordination, character, and Conference relations of clergy, unless otherwise noted.
2. Provisional clergy members may *not* vote on constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the general or jurisdictional Conferences, *or* on matters of ordination, character, and Conference relations of clergy.
3. Associate and affiliate members, as well as full-time and part-time local pastors under appointment, may *not* vote on constitutional amendments *or* on election of clergy delegates to the General or Jurisdictional Conferences. They may *not* vote on matters of ordination, character, and Conference relations of clergy *unless* they are members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
4. Lay members may *not* vote on granting or validation of license, ordination, reception into full Conference relationship, *or* on any question concerning the character and official conduct of ordained ministers *unless* they are lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry or the Committee on Investigation.

Granting Voice Without Vote

The following may be given voice without vote during sessions of the Annual Conference by invitation of the bishop or action of the Annual Conference:

1. Official representatives from other denominations invited by the Annual Conference;
2. Missionaries assigned by the General Board of Global Ministries and serving within the bounds of the Annual Conference;
3. Lay missionaries appointed by the General Board of Global Ministries in nations other than the United States but attending this Annual Conference;
4. Certified lay missionaries from nations other than the United States serving within the bounds of this Annual Conference;
5. The chancellor of the Annual Conference unless the chancellor is otherwise a voting member of the Annual Conference;
6. Special guests of the Annual Conference.

Equalizing Vote of Lay and Clergy Membership

The process by which the Indiana Conference will equalize lay and clergy membership of the Annual Conference follows:

1. Every charge elects one lay member and an alternate lay member for each clergy member appointed to that charge during the first charge Conference following the General Conference in each quadrennium. The alternate lay member has neither voice nor vote unless the lay member is unable to serve. Results of these elections and the number elected must be reported to the Director of Connectional Ministries by February 1, prior to the regular Annual Conference session.
2. Additionally, district lay leaders, directors of lay speaking ministries, district presidents of United Methodist Women, district presidents of United Methodist Men, and district presidents of United Methodist Youth are eligible to serve as equalization members. Each district office must forward a complete list of the names of these persons not already elected by their charge or the district to the Director of Connectional Ministries by February 1, prior to the regular Annual Conference session.
3. Laypersons who served as General or Jurisdictional Conference delegates during the previous quadrennium or who have served on the boards of General Agencies of The United Methodist Church during the previous or current year, but otherwise are not elected to serve, are expected to serve as equalization members. Such persons should notify the Director of Connectional Ministries if they are not willing to serve by February 1, prior to the regular Annual Conference session.
4. The Director of Connectional Ministries adds these names (1 through 3 above) until the number of lay and clergy members is equalized for the coming session. As additional laypersons are needed, the Director of Connectional Ministries notifies the District Superintendent of each district of the number of additional persons needed from each district equally (rounding up to the next ten) to equalize lay and clergy membership, seeking in all selections to establish and maintain gender, race, age, and disabilities, in accordance with the Call to Equality of The United Methodist Church (Paragraph 139).

Membership at Special Sessions

The same lay members who served at the previous Annual Conference will serve at the special session, except in cases of the death, serious illness, or cessation of professing membership by those laypersons. In those instances, the charge affected shall elect the new lay member.

The Voting Process at the Annual Gathering

Bar of the Conference

The Annual Conference Secretary establishes the Bar of the Conference and ensures it is clearly marked in the auditorium.

1. To vote, a member must be seated within the Bar of the Conference.
2. To be recognized by the presiding officer to address the Conference, a member must be seated within the Bar of the Conference.
3. When not voting by ballot, members vote by displaying large, brightly colored cards provided by the Conference.
4. Any member may request a *counted vote* that will be granted if at least one-third of the members present and voting agree.
5. Any member may request a *vote by ballot* that will be granted if a simple majority of the members present and voting agree.

Collecting and Counting Ballots

Prior to the first session of the Indiana Conference, the Sessions Committee establishes a procedure for collecting any ballots, tabulating the vote, and reporting the results of such balloting as quickly, fairly, and accurately as possible to the Annual Conference.

Parliamentary Procedures

Sessions of the Annual Conference will be conducted by the Rules of Order of the preceding General Conference and, as applicable, *Robert's Rules of Order*.

1. A timing light is used on stage during discussion and debate on matters before the Conference. Each speaker is limited to three minutes. Thirty seconds before the time expires, a warning light appears. When time is up, the light changes to red, indicating to the speaker and to the presiding officer that the time has expired.
2. All main motions, amendments, and procedural motions must be presented in writing upon forms provided by the Secretary, signed by the person submitting the motion, and placed in the hands of the Conference Secretary immediately after being moved.
3. The Rules of Order may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members present.
4. Any proposed amendment to Rules and Structure must first be considered and reported on by the Committee on Rules and Structure prior to a vote.
5. All material in the published reports of any agency to the Annual Conference will be considered the property of the Conference and may not be altered or withdrawn without approval of the Conference.

Reporting of All Proceedings

Environmental responsibility prompts the Annual Conference to be responsible in how it reports its work. Helpful accountability requires transparency with all publicly available information, and requires that it be available in the most useful format.

The Conference Secretary will direct the editing and distribution of pre-Conference reports (gathered by the Annual Conference Sessions Committee) to all members of the Annual Conference. These materials are considered to be properly before the Conference when it assembles. It is not necessary for presenters to read these reports aloud or otherwise present them in detail, other than to note any significant changes that may have occurred between the time of their publication and the current session of the Annual Conference. Once adopted, these materials (along with additional materials that may be distributed no later than the beginning of each plenary session) become the official business and agenda of the Annual Conference. Any matters having financial implications must be approved by a specific vote of the Annual Conference following the procedures established by the Council on Finance and Administration.

All plenary sessions of the Annual Conference are recorded on audio and/or video devices for the use of the Conference Secretary to provide an accurate accounting of the proceedings. These recordings are maintained in the Conference office for a period of at least four years, after which they may be disposed of in a secure and environmentally responsible manner. The official record is printed and preserved at the archives.

Environmental responsibility assumes the reduction of paper and non-recyclable media records. Therefore, complete hardcopy versions of the materials required by *The Book of Discipline* (Paragraph 606.3) will only be provided to those persons and agencies that require the full contents in print, including the United Methodist Archives at DePauw University and Drew University. An electronic version of the *Journal of the Conference* will be provided on-line as soon after conference as possible. To reduce the incidence of inappropriate use of member personal information (“spam”), access to Internet posting of phone, address, and email addresses will be limited to registered members of the Annual Conference and others authorized by *The Book of Discipline* to access this material.

All versions of the *Journal* are compiled and checked for accuracy under the direction of the Conference Secretary. At the first plenary session of the Annual Conference or special session, the Conference may nominate and elect persons to act as assistant secretaries for the duration of that Annual Conference.

General and Jurisdictional Conference Procedures

Eligibility for Election

Lay: The lay delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be elected by the lay members of the Annual Conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years preceding their election and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years preceding their election, and are members thereof within the Annual Conference electing them at the time of holding the General and Jurisdictional Conference (Paragraph 36). Lay delegates need not be voting members of the Annual Conference to be elected.

Clergy: The ordained ministerial delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be elected by and from the ordained ministerial members in full connection with the Annual Conference (Paragraph 35).

Managing the Election of General and Jurisdictional Delegates

The Annual Conference Sessions Committee receives nominations, distributes information received from candidates, organizes opportunities to dialogue with candidates, and ensures adequate voting equipment and mechanisms are provided to members eligible to vote in the election of lay and clergy delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

Commitment of a Delegate

Election to General and/or Jurisdictional Conference conveys the trust and respect of peers within the Annual Conference. Those offering themselves for election need to be aware of the commitments involved. General Conference meets for 10-12 days in April or May; Jurisdictional Conference meets for three days in July. Preparation for General Conference requires many hours of reading/studying proposed legislation. Long days comprise both Conferences. In addition, per diem provided does not cover the expenses incurred.

Procedure for Election

Lay and clergy delegates shall be elected at the Annual Conference in the calendar year preceding the General and Jurisdictional Conferences and shall serve for the quadrennium. The number in each order (clergy and lay) to be elected shall be provided to the bishop and Conference secretary by the General Conference Secretary no later than December 2, prior to election. Persons elected to Jurisdictional Conference shall, in the order of election, be reserve delegates to General Conference.

The Sessions Committee shall provide a one-page *Willingness to Serve* form. Information sought shall include pertinent personal data, a biographical sketch, why he/she is a United Methodist, and a statement of three critical issues to be considered at General Conference. Persons eligible for election are invited to submit a completed form to the Sessions Committee by March 15, prior to the election. Copies of the forms received shall be provided to Annual Conference members in the respective order, at least 30 days prior to Annual Conference. Submission of a completed form is not essential for a person to be considered for election. No person or group shall print or distribute material by any means, or otherwise promote or solicit on behalf of person(s) for election within the Annual Conference meeting facility.

The Sessions Committee shall provide opportunity, prior to the first ballot, for members of the Annual Conference to meet and talk with persons willing to serve.

The Conference Secretary shall arrange for a Head Teller and a sufficient number of tellers in each order to count the ballots. Ballots counted at the close of any session shall be sealed and the results not known until reported at the next session.

Voting shall be on official ballots, with the number of names voted for each ballot being exactly the number announced by the bishop. On write-in ballots, the names of those voted for must be spelled correctly. Majority of valid ballots cast shall constitute election.

Balloting shall continue in each order until the allotted number of delegates for General Conference is elected. Following completion of these elections, balloting shall begin for Jurisdictional Conference delegates, continuing until those delegates have been elected.

When all delegates have been elected, an additional ballot shall be taken in each order, with those receiving the three highest votes constituting the additional reserve delegates. These reserve delegates may act as reserve delegates to General Conference when it is evident that not enough of the previously elected reserve delegates are in attendance at General Conference (Paragraph 34).

General and Jurisdictional Conference Petitions

Petitions for General and Jurisdictional Conference provide all members of United Methodist churches, as well as organizations within the Indiana Conference, the opportunity to engage the members of the Annual Conference

and the larger church. These petitions must be submitted to the Annual Conference Secretary no later than 90 days prior to the Annual Conference session.

In order to be forwarded to General or Jurisdictional Conference, each petition must deal with only one issue or Disciplinary paragraph, and must be signed by the submitter with appropriate identification, including address and local church affiliation. If it is from an organization, the identification must be that of a responsible individual within the submitting organization and include address information for that individual.

Petitions, as submitted, become the property of the Annual Conference, and as such, may be amended by action of the Annual Conference. Petitions affirmed by the Annual Conference will be forwarded to the appropriate entity. Petitions submitted to General Conference must follow guidelines provided by the General Conference Secretary.

B. Abuse Prevention Policy – For Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

The Indiana Annual Conference is committed to the well being of every person entrusted to its care as well as those entrusted to the care of local United Methodist Churches in all of Indiana. Our calling is to provide safe sanctuary for all of God's people including our children, youth and vulnerable adults. Indiana United Methodists affirm that all children, youth and vulnerable adults have the right to expect safe sanctuary.

Jesus taught that: *"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me," (Mark 9:37 NRSV)* and *"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones... it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6 NRSV)*

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that: "...children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse." 2008, *The Book of Discipline* paragraph 162 C.

At each child's baptism, we affirm our responsibility to their safety by our congregational response, pledging: *"With God's help, we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal."* (From *The Book of Worship, Baptismal Covenant, Congregational Pledge II*)

As Disciples, we affirm Christ's commandment to love our neighbors. We also serve as witnesses of Christ's power to transform lives. Building on these foundations, we recognize that our faith calls us to offer hospitality and protection to all persons.

Guidelines for Safe Sanctuary Policies

We strongly encourage every church in the Indiana Annual Conference to develop and follow its own Safe Sanctuary Policy. Such policies protect children and vulnerable individuals as well as the volunteers and staff who serve them. Each church is encouraged to prepare a policy that best fits its congregational setting. A Safe Sanctuary policy and its accompanying implementation procedures should include the following elements:

- a. A description of the role of staff and lay members who work with children and vulnerable adults;
- b. Procedures to be used in recruitment and selection of all employees and volunteers who will work with or have regular access to children, youth, and vulnerable adults;
- c. A plan for training all employees and volunteers about all aspects of the protection policy, including provisions for routine re-training;
- d. Procedures designed to reduce the risk of instance of abuse of any type and assure that instances of real or suspected abuse are promptly detected and reported to the appropriate internal and external authorities;
- e. A procedure for reporting incidents of known and suspected abuse of children, youth or vulnerable adults to appropriate church leaders, including district leadership, and to appropriate civil authorities in accordance with the laws of Indiana;
- f. Information about resources and strategies for adults who have questions about the policy or who confront situations that make them uncomfortable;
- g. A plan to provide for the safety, protection, and ongoing emotional support of those who may have been victimized;
- h. A plan for reporting known or suspected incidents of abuse to family members, the congregation and the public, as appropriate, while protecting those involved; and
- i. Annual review of the protection policy and procedures and of the church's liability coverage for employees and volunteers.

A copy of the local church policy should be on file in the church and District Office. *Administrative bodies of the local church shall be responsible for implementing and monitoring their own policy and accompanying procedures.*

Resources

The Safe Sanctuary policy adopted for Annual Conference events may be considered as one example for developing your church policy and procedures. We also recommend the following as valuable tools to assist you in this process:

Melton, Joy. *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children*. Nashville, 2008. In this

book you will find suggestions and guidelines to aid you in creating your policy including sample forms for screening workers; requesting background checks; checking references; and reporting suspected abuse. For a complete list of resources go to The General Board of Discipleship website: www.gbod.org/safeSanctuary.

Each local church is responsible for establishing and implementing its own Safe Sanctuary policy. Additionally, Discipleship Resources, The United Methodist Church, and the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church do not engage in the practice of law or accounting. Churches should consult professional advisors when creating and implementing internal policies, including a Safe Sanctuary policy.

Motion:

That Bishop Coyner appoint a Task Group to develop Conference Policies for Safe Sanctuaries, that the task group report to Trustees and the Leadership Table for approval of the conference policy. The Conference Policy would be presented to the Annual Conference in 2011.