



Texas Annual Conference
United Methodist Church

TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE STANDING RULES AND STRUCTURE

These are the new rules from the “Discipling Document” and adopted at the Texas Annual Conference 2020

Adopted at Texas Annual Conference 2021

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Preface to the Texas Annual Conference Rules and Structure

From the very beginning Methodists have believed in both organizing for mission and in the idea of “think and let think.” This has translated over into distinct expressions detailing how we live together in the most basic of all Methodist connections, the annual conference. The following rules and structures are thus intended not to restrict or control the free expression of any, but rather to guide us into how we may live out our shared faith and witness within the Texas Annual Conference. They serve as a further delineation of the ideals established in our denominational *Book of Discipline* and are offered in hopes of strengthening our core values as an annual conference and our common mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ so that the world might be transformed to the glory of God.

Our Core Values

In the pursuit of our calling and mission as a conference, we affirm the following values of discipleship:

- Diligent study of scripture
- Fervent prayer
- Radical Hospitality
- Passionate Worship
- Faith Forming Small Groups
- Risk Taking Missions
- Extravagant Generosity
- Connectional Ministry

SECTION 1: GENERAL

- I. The Texas Annual Conference (Conference) establishes Rules by which it operated (Rules) and its Structure for Ministry under authority of paragraph 610 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 2019 (BOD or Discipline)
- II. The Structure for Ministry and Rules describe Conference Ministries and the procedures by which they operate.
- III. Any conflict between the Structure for Ministry and Rules and *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* shall be decided in favor of *The Book of Discipline*.

SECTION 2: OFFICERS

- I. The Officers of the Texas Annual Conference shall be the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop, Secretary, Fiscal Officer, Statistician, and Lay Leader. (BOD 603.9a)
- II. The Secretary and the Statistician shall be elected at the last session of each quadrennium to serve during the next quadrennium. (BOD 603.7) The minutes of each business session shall be kept on file at Conference headquarters.

- III. A Chancellor(s) shall be nominated by the Bishop and elected by the Conference (*BOD* 603.8)
- IV. The Treasurer/Director of Administration shall be elected by the Conference, on nomination of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, at the first session of the Conference after the quadrennial session of the General Conference. Upon vacancy, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall fill the position until the next session of the Texas Annual Conference. (*BOD* 619)

SECTION 3: STRUCTURE FOR MINISTRY IN THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- I. Conference Leadership Team
 - A. A Conference Leadership Team will be responsible for implementing decisions approved by the Annual Conference in accordance with Conference Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs. The Conference Leadership Team creates a culture of accountability within the Conference by conducting an ongoing process of goal setting, strategic planning, and annual reporting to the Annual Conference.
 - B. The Conference Leadership Team will be comprised of:
 - 1. The Bishop (with voice, non-voting)
 - 2. Members (with voice and vote)
 - a. One District Superintendent from each of the Districts
 - b. The District Leadership Team Chairperson or DLT representative from each of the Districts
 - c. Four At-Large Members
 - d. The Conference Lay Leader
 - 3. Ex-Officio Membership (with voice, non-voting)
 - a. The Director of the Center for Leadership Formation
 - b. The Director of the Center for Connectional Resources
 - c. The Conference Director of Communications
 - d. The Assistant to the Bishop
- II. Conference Ministry Centers – There will be two (2) Conference Ministry Center
 - A. The Center for Leadership Formation – The purpose of this center is to create an environment of support and accountability that continuously moves lay and clergy leadership of the Annual Conference toward excellence
 - B. The Center for Connectional Resources – The purpose of this center is to provide fiscal oversight, property management, and archives and records to under gird the mission and ministry of the Texas Annual Conference.

SECTION 4: NOMINATIONS

- I. The Nominations Committee – The Nominations Committee for the Texas Annual Conference of the UMC shall consist of the Assistant to the Bishop, the Dean of the Cabinet, and one representative from each of the nine (9) districts. The District Representatives shall consist of 3 clergy, 3 lay men and 3 lay women. The Nominations Committee will reflect the diversity of the Texas Annual Conference with regard to ethnicity, age, gender, geography, and church size. The Ex-Officio members with voice and vote shall consist of the Directors of the Centers and the Conference Lay Leader. The chair of the Nominations Committee will be the Assistant to the Bishop.
- II. Quadrennium Nominations
 - A. At the Annual Conference session one year prior to each new quadrennium, the Assistant to the Bishop will distribute a listing and description of all positions on teams, boards, agencies, committees, commissions and councils which are subject to election by the Annual Conference to all clergy and lay delegates to Annual Conference. The Nominations Committee will list the positions available in the Texas Annual Conference. The Assistant to the Bishop will announce

the Nominations process. The delegates are encouraged to take the body of this nominations report to their local churches so they can participate in the nominating process.

- B. Persons interested in being considered for nomination to any TAC positions are encouraged to fill out a biographical profile (Assistant to the Bishop will provide a template on the Conference website) including church, district, conference and spiritual gifts and turn these into the local church pastors and District Superintendents for comments and endorsement. Completed profiles with endorsements should be sent into the office of the Assistant to the Bishop prior to November 15 of the year prior to the new quadrennium. District Superintendents, Center Directors, and the Core Leadership Team and District Leadership Teams may also make nominations.
- C. The Assistant to the Bishop will prepare profiles for the Nominations Committee by January 1. The Nominations Committee will meet prior to January 15. The Nominations Committee will make nominations giving attention to the pool of names submitted. The Nominations Committee will strive to make each Board, Agency, Commission, Committee, and Team as inclusive as possible with regard to ethnicity, age, gender, and church size. The report of the Nominations Committee will be reviewed by the Commission on Religion and Race for inclusivity as specified in the current Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The Commission on Religion and Race will report any recommendations back to the Nominations Committee by March 1. All persons nominated by the Nominating Committee will be notified by email or letter and invited to indicate whether they accept or decline the nomination. The Nominations Committee will continue to meet until nominations are finalized. Nominations will be completed by March 15 and will be published in the Pre-Conference Journal. Some nominations may need to be made after the March 15 deadline and these will be presented at Annual Conference. Persons may be nominated for unfilled positions listed in the Pre-Conference Journal.
- D. The aggregate membership of all Ministry Teams, Boards, Divisions, Commissions, and Committees nominated by the Nominating Committee should consist of ½ clergy and ½ laity (this will exclude Board of Ordained Ministry, Administrative Review Committee, and Committee on Investigations).
- E. The Board of Ordained Ministry, Administrative Review Committee and Committee on Investigations will be nominated and elected in accordance with the discipline ¶635, 636, 2703 respectively.
- F. Persons may be nominated from the floor of the Annual Conference. The nominator will indicate which person from the Nominating Committee's report is to be replaced by the nominee. Substitute nominations should maintain or expand the diversity of the Nominations Committee's report. Votes on substitute nominees will be made individually prior to the vote on the full report.
- G. Persons shall not serve more than two consecutive quadrennia on the same Ministry Team, Board, Division, Commission, and Committee except in the case of persons elected to complete a vacancy occurring during a quadrennium who will be allowed to serve two consecutive full quadrennia.
 - 1. Persons serving in an ex-officio capacity, or as members of the Committee on Nominations, the Administrative Review Committee, and the Committee on Investigation are exempt from this restriction.
 - 2. Exempt from this rule are persons elected to the Committee on Nominations, Administrative Review Committee and Committee on Investigation that by nature meet as needed.
 - 3. Participation on a Task Force that is convened by a Conference Leader or Team will not disqualify an individual from being nominated for or elected to a Conference Ministry Team, Board, Division, Commission, or Committee.
- H. The Chairperson of any Ministry Team, Board, Division, Commission, or Committee shall not serve more than one full quadrennium except in the case of person filling an unexpired term of not over two years.

- I. During the quadrennium, chairpersons of all Ministry Teams, Boards, Divisions, Commissions, and Committees will conduct annual assessments of the leadership for attendance, effectiveness, and evidences of fruitfulness. Based on these assessments, the Center Leaders may request the Conference Leadership Team to recommend remedial action or replacement of leadership.
 - J. All Nomination Rules of the Texas Annual Conference are subject to any applicable provisions of the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.
 - K. The Board of Ordained Ministry of the Texas Annual Conference will be subject to Paragraph 635 of the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* with the exception of the term limit which will be two quadrennia.
 - L. Persons elected will begin serving at the close of Annual Conference.
- III. Nominations Between Quadrennia
- A. Vacancies in elected positions occurring between sessions of Annual Conference will filled on a temporary basis by a vote of the Conference Leadership Team. Nominations for the Conference Leadership Team to consider for vacancies will be made by the Nominations Committee.
 - B. Vacancies will be permanently filled by the process listed in Section II.
- IV. District Nominations – The Districts shall use a process similar to the Conference process subject to the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.

SECTION 5: PROCEDURES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- I. *Pre-Conference Journal*
 - A. The Assistant to the Bishop shall be responsible for producing a *Pre-Conference Journal*. Contents of the *Pre-Conference Journal* shall include those materials necessary for the business of the Annual Conference to be conducted. It shall be distributed at least 25 days before the Annual Conference begins.
 - B. Chairpersons are responsible for providing reports and materials to the Assistant to the Bishop on the schedule prescribed by the Assistant to the Bishop.
 - C. Pre-Conference Meetings may be held virtually or in person at least 21 days before the regular session of Annual Conference. All matters that will be voted upon individually at the Annual Conference Session will be presented and discussed at the pre-conference meetings.
- II. Resolutions and Proposals for the regular session of Annual Conference (Resolutions are related to issues. Proposals are related to structures and rules.)
 - A. Resolutions and proposals to be considered by the Annual Conference at its regular session shall be submitted to the office of the Assistant to the Bishop on or before January 31, allowing the appropriate Conference Center to offer any suggested changes to the author of the resolution prior to February 15. If amended, a final draft of a resolution or proposal will subsequently be due in the conference office no later than February 28 in order to be presented to the Conference Leadership Team during their March meeting. After its review, the CLT will submit a written response to accompany the motion, including any recommendation of concurrence or non-concurrence, prior to the inclusion of the motion in the *Pre-Conference Journal*. The author of any resolution or proposal may withdraw their motion prior to its consideration by the Annual Conference.
 - B. Resolutions and proposals included in the *Pre-Conference Journal* will be presented in Pre-Conference Delegate Meetings prior to Annual Conference. Any discussions regarding the resolutions/proposals will be conducted in a spirit of Holy Conversations with all sides of the issues being presented and listened to in a spirit of Christian love and respect. Persons making presentations will not be interrogated or cross-examined. Persons present will not participate in applause or partisan or disparaging sounds (boos or hurrahs). No personal attacks will be allowed.
 - C. Resolutions and proposals included in the *Pre-Conference Journal* will be placed on the Agenda of the Annual Conference. When the resolutions/proposals come to the floor of Annual Conference, there may be one predetermined speaker for identified by the maker of

- the resolution and one predetermined speaker against the resolution/proposal identified by the Conference Leadership Team. Predetermined speakers are allowed a maximum of 5 minutes. Alternating comments shall be no longer than 60 seconds each for and against the resolution/proposal. All comments will be made in the spirit of Holy Conversations as set forth in Section 5: II.B. above. A minute of silent prayer will precede the vote on each resolution/proposal.
- D. Resolutions and proposals not in the *Pre-Conference Journal*, except for courtesy resolutions, may be brought up at Annual Conference provided that:
1. They have been turned into the Assistant to the Bishop at least 60 days prior to the Annual Conference session and
 2. been reviewed by the Conference Leadership Team with a recommendation of concurrence/non-concurrence and/or disposition; and
 3. appeared in an Addendum distributed to the delegates so they can be discuss at the Pre-Conference Meetings prior to the Annual Conference
 4. Resolution and Proposals that do not meet the above criteria would require a suspension of rules of 2/3 majority of the delegates in order to be considered.
- III. Conference Session Procedures
- A. The Assistant to the Bishop shall prepare an Agenda of all reports and proposals for distribution on the opening day of each Annual Conference.
- B. No report, paper, or proposal shall be considered until three (3) copies have been given to the Secretary.
- C. The Conference Rules may be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Annual Conference members present and voting. The Rules may be changed by three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Annual Conference members present and voting.
- D. All items that do not require Annual Conference action will be placed on the consent calendar. If the consent calendar is not a part of the *Pre-Conference Journal*, it will be presented on the first day of Annual Conference, and after laying on the table for 24 hours, it will be acted on by motion of the Assistant to the Bishop. Anyone may make a motion that an item be removed from the consent calendar. The item may be placed on the Agenda by a support of 25% of the Annual Conference body present and voting.
- E. Speeches in favor of or in opposition to a motion, will be limited to three (3) minutes each.
- F. A Session of the Texas Annual Conference may be held by remote communication technology by means of a conference telephone or an electronic communications system, including videoconferencing technology or the Internet. Remote communication technology may be used only if the system permits each person participating in the meeting to communicate with all other persons participating in the meeting and if voting is to take place at the meeting, reasonable measures must be implemented to verify that every person voting at the meeting by means of remote communication is sufficiently identified and a record must be kept of any vote or other action taken.
- IV. Special Session of Annual Conference
- A. A Special Session of the Annual Conference may be called by the Resident Bishop according to provisions in Paragraph 603.5 of the 2019 Book of Discipline.
- B. The Special Session of the Annual Conference shall be limited only to the matters expressed in the call.
- C. Only petitions and resolutions related to the call will be considered during the Special Session.
- D. Suspension of the rules are not to be considered during a Special Session of the Annual Conference.
- V. *Conference Journal*
- A. The Assistant to the Bishop shall be editor of the *Conference Journal*.
- B. The *Conference Journal* shall include at a minimum:
1. Items required by *BOD* 606

2. Year-end statement of receipts and expenditures by all Conference bodies
3. List of appointments with and without annuity claim
4. Conference Rules document

SECTION 6: DISTRICTS

- I. Each District will determine an organizational structure that is consistent with the Conference vision and mission, and responsible to specific needs and priorities of the District.
- II. The number of districts will be determined by the Annual Conference.

SECTION 7: CONFERENCE STAFF

- I. Conference staff positions will be determined by the Bishop, the Cabinet, and the Conference Leadership Team.
- II. Compensation of appointed Conference staff positions shall not exceed that of a District Superintendent.
- III. Salaries of District Superintendents may be adjusted annually by the percentage change in the average (mean) base salary of all full-time senior pastors serving in the Texas Annual Conference, providing funds are available.

SECTION 8: FINANCIAL PROCEDURES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- I. Each year, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A) shall prepare and recommend a budget for the next calendar year, under appropriate headings, for Conference action.
- II. CF&A shall recommend to the Annual Conference for its action and determination methods or formulae by which all approved budgets shall be apportioned to the churches. All Conference delegates must be informed in writing of the financial consequences of any proposed change in the apportionment method before a vote is taken.
- III. The Treasurer of each church or charge is encouraged to remit to the Conference Fiscal Officer all receipts for Conference connectional and benevolent causes on a monthly basis.
- IV. The Conference Fiscal Officer shall distribute monthly or quarterly a report of budgeted funds available to the credit of agencies in proportion to receipts.
- V. All proposals with financial implications shall be referred to the CF&A before any action is taken by the Annual Conference, including any disbursements from any Reserve Funds held on behalf of the Annual Conference.
- VI. The Conference shall establish a year-end report date no earlier than January 10 and no later than January 17.
- VII. At the end of each fiscal year, all unspent budgeted funds remaining in the Annual Conference budget shall be deposited in the Operating Reserve Fund except the reserves for Pensions and Health Benefits and other designated reserves, which shall be reserved and made available for future expenditures for these designated purposes.
- VIII. Annually, the CF&A shall report for Conference approval a list of special days without offering and a list of special days with offering, including Conference Advance Specials. No appeal shall be made to churches of the Texas Annual Conference without CF&A approval except as provided in *The Book of Discipline*.
- IX. At the request of anyone receiving a salary from the Conference, the Conference Fiscal Officer is authorized to withhold a designated portion of salary annuities, allowances, and/or other benefits, pursuant to Internal Revenue Service regulations.
- X. The CF&A of the Texas Annual Conference, consistent with *BOD* 613.8, shall have limited authority to modify a budget approved by the Annual Conference between its sessions.

SECTION 9: PLAN OF EQUALIZATION - The Plan of Equalization shall follow BOD 602.4. All lay members to annual conference will be elected either by their charge (for those representing their church) or by the District Leadership Team (for those serving as at-large delegates). At large delegates may also be elected by the District Conference upon nomination by the District Leadership Team. At large delegates will reflect the proportional strength and diversity of churches in the district. The Conference Leadership Team will be responsible for drafting a procedure that can be followed in all districts of the Texas Annual Conference.

SECTION 10: ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

- I. Clergy and Laity Candidate Profile Booklet – Eligible clergy members and eligible laity willing to be considered for election as a delegate to General or Jurisdictional Conferences are requested to complete a candidate profile sheet for inclusion in a candidate profile booklet which shall be mailed with the *Pre-Conference Journal*. Eligible persons willing to be considered must agree to attend delegation meetings, to prepare themselves by studying all assigned materials, and to make the necessary preparations to be effective delegates. If any eligible person who is not included in the booklet receives a vote on any ballot, then the individual will be assigned a number to be included in the remainder of the balloting process.
- II. Continuous Accountability: Each year during Annual Conference meetings, the CLT will make progress reports detailing steps taken to implement this proposal and steps taken to continue cultivating growing, vibrant, missional congregations; forming transforming lay and clergy leaders; and investing in the young. The CLT will also be responsible for scheduling an external “Ministry Audit” every two years. During this “Ministry Audit,” an outside professional may be engaged to review Conference progress toward implementing this proposal and accomplishing its strategic foci; help the CLT articulate measurable outcomes and set clear benchmarks; and then make a full report to the CLT and to the Annual Conference. As implementation continues, if questions or concerns arise, all Conference delegates should feel free to contact District Superintendents, Center Directors, or the Assistant to the Bishop.
- III. Vacation Policy for Clergy

This Vacation Policy for Clergy is to standardize clergy vacations across the Conference. The policy is for clergy appointed within the bounds of the Texas Conference.

NOTE: Years of service (under appointment) refer to years of service in an Annual Conference(s) of The United Methodist Church, not years of service in the local church to which the clergy is appointed.

For every week's vacation, a paid Sunday off is included.

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| (1) | FULL-TIME LOCAL PASTORS in process, attending the four-week Course of Study | 5 years or less | 2 weeks paid |
| (2) | FULL-TIME CLERGY (Full Members, Provisional Members, Assoc. Members, Full Connection Deacons, Full-Time Local Pastors) PART-TIME CLERGY (Includes Student Local Pastors) | 5 years or less | 2 weeks paid 1 week paid |
| (3) | FULL-TIME CLERGY (Full Members, Provisional Members, Assoc. Members, Full Connection Deacons, Full-Time Local Pastors) PART-TIME CLERGY (Includes Student Local Pastors) | 5 years + 1 day through completion of 10 th year | 3 weeks paid 2 weeks paid |
| (4) | FULL-TIME CLERGY (Full Members, Provisional Members, Assoc. Members, Full Connection Deacons, Full-Time Local Pastors) PART-TIME CLERGY | 10 years + 1 day through completion of 15 th year | 4 weeks paid 3 weeks paid |
| (5) | FULL-TIME CLERGY (Full Members, Provisional Members, Assoc. Members, Full Connection Deacons, Full-Time Local Pastors) PART-TIME CLERGY | 15 years + 1 day through completion of 25 th year | 5 weeks paid 3 weeks paid |
| (6) | FULL-TIME CLERGY (Full Members, Provisional Members, Assoc. Members, Full Connection Deacons, Full-Time Local Pastors) PART-TIME CLERGY | 25 years or more | 6 weeks paid 4 weeks paid |

Time used for Continuing Education, Spiritual formation and Course of Study as defined by the *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church and according to the rules set by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, shall not be considered as vacation time or used in lieu of vacation time. Vacation time is calculated on a conference year basis (7/1- 6/30). Vacation time not used in on year cannot be carried into the next year. There will be no pay in lieu of unused vacation time.

ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Affiliated Entities within the Texas Annual Conference

Houston Methodist Hospital
Lakeview Methodist Conference Center
Methodist Retirement Communities
UM ARMY
Wesley Community Center
Wiley College

Entities within the State of Texas

Methodist Children's Home
Providence Place
Texas Methodist Foundation
Texas United Methodist College Association

Entities within the South Central Jurisdiction

Lydia Patterson Institute
Perkins School of Theology
Saint Paul School of Theology

Entities outside the South Central Jurisdiction

Gulfside Assembly