

## Standing rules for sessions of the Great Plains Annual Conference

**A. Rules of order and parliamentary procedures.** The current Book of Discipline and the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the guides and authority for parliamentary procedure in the conduct of all session business.

1. These rules may be suspended or amended by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.
2. No decisions of the conference may be overturned on procedural grounds after the adjournment of the conference. *Actions taken by remote voting may be challenged only by a request for ruling of the Presiding Bishop, within seven days of the announcement of the vote results.*
3. The agenda shall be the final distributed form at the beginning of the session. In the interest of efficiency, the chair may adjust agenda items as necessary.
4. The Bar of the Conference shall be as designated in the Enabling Motions adopted at the beginning of the session. Only members within the Bar may vote. However, a member outside the Bar, absent on conference business at the conference venue and approved by conference order, may vote by absentee ballot.

**B. Meeting Format.** *The standard meeting format shall be an in-person gathering at a location determined by the Bishop. When the Bishop, the Cabinet, and the Connecting Council are in agreement that circumstances prevent the members of Annual Conference from meeting in person, the Bishop may call for a meeting of the Annual Conference by electronic conferencing. Participation in an electronic meeting shall be equivalent to presence in person.*

1. *Notification of such meeting shall be subject to the requirements for Annual Conference meetings specified in The Book of Discipline.*
2. *When notifying members of the annual conference, the Bishop shall specify the format to be used for the meeting.*
3. *The conferencing platform must ensure that all people participating in the meeting can hear each other, can speak and vote (if so entitled), and can have their attendance recorded.*

**C. Membership, Privilege of the Floor, and Attendance.**

1. All lay and clergy members of the Great Plains Annual

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Conference, as well as clergy from other Conferences or denominations serving churches within the Great Plains Annual Conference, shall have privilege of the floor and may address the session on any issue before the body. Persons serving as District Superintendent Assignees (DSA) or Certified Lay Ministers (CLM) shall have voice as lay members of the Conference. This privilege shall be extended as well to the spouse of the Bishop; to any members of Conference, General, or Jurisdictional boards, agencies, or institutions who are not otherwise members of the Annual Conference; to all members of the Extended Cabinet; and to anyone else presenting items on the Agenda.

**2. Lay Equalization Plan for Annual Conference Membership:**

The formula for lay/clergy equalization was determined at Uniting Conference. For the purposes of this formula, the numbers used shall be those in the official Journal of the previous Annual Conference session as submitted to the General Council on Finance and Administration.

- a. Consistent with the provisions of ¶132 and 602.4 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church-2016, the basic lay membership of the annual conference shall include:
  - (a) Churches with more than one appointed clergy will receive an additional lay member for each clergy appointed to the church.
  - (b) All deaconesses, diaconal ministers and home missionaries who are serving within bounds of the annual conference.
  - (c) The conference president of United Methodist Women.
  - (d) The conference president of United Methodist Men.
  - (e) The conference lay leader.
  - (f) One young person between the ages of 12 and 17 from each district, to be selected by the District Council on Youth Ministry (or equivalent structure).
  - (g) One young person between the ages of 18 and 30 from each district, to be selected by the District Council on Ministry (or equivalent structure).
  - (h) Each district lay leader.
  - (i) Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries.
  - (j) Conference Secretary of Global Ministries.
  - (k) The president of the conference young adult organization.
  - (l) The president of the conference youth organization.

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- (m) The chair of the conference college student organization.
  - (n) All lay campus ministers, chaplains, and Wesley Foundation directors serving within the bounds of the Annual Conference.
  - (o) For each clergy campus minister, chaplain, and Wesley Foundation director, there shall be a lay board member or student from the ministry.
  - (p) In addition to the lay members of Annual Conference mandated by The Book of Discipline (§32 and 602.4), the first priority in equalizing the number of lay and clergy members will be to grant a lay member from each local church.
  - (q) If, after meeting the requirements above, additional lay membership positions are available, lay people assigned by District Superintendents to serve as pastors of local churches [District Superintendent Assignment (DA) and Certified Lay Ministers (CLM)] will be seated as lay members.
4. If, after meeting the requirements of 1, 2 and 3 above, additional lay membership positions are still available, they will be filled in the following order of priority:
- (a) An additional youth from each district, to be selected by the District Council on Youth Ministry (or equivalent structure).
  - (b) Associate conference lay leader(s).
  - (c) Chairpersons of conference boards and teams and the Conference Secretary, Conference Treasurer and Peace With Justice Coordinator (if laity).
  - (d) One person of color from each district, selected by the District Council on Ministry (or equivalent structure).
  - (e) All elected lay members of general boards and agencies from our Conference.
  - (f) All delegates and reserve delegates elected to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences.
  - (g) Five lay members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (to be selected by the lay members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry).
  - (h) District directors of Lay Servant Ministries.
  - (i) An additional young adult (ages 18-30) from each district to be selected by the District Council on Ministry

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(or equivalent structure).

- (j) Seventeen additional youth as determined by the Conference Council on Youth Ministries.
- (k) Additional lay members as chosen by the conference secretary.

5. *The official attendance roll shall be the registration taken upon arrival at the Annual Conference site, or the credentialing used by the Annual Conference technology provider.*
6. *If an alternate lay member needs to be seated, they shall register with the Conference Secretary using the protocol provided in the Conference instructions.*
7. Excused absences for pastors during the session shall be secured from the respective District Superintendents, rather than from the floor of the Annual Conference. *The clergy person must send a written notification following the instructions in the registration material, to the District Superintendent and Conference Secretary setting forth the reason for his/her absence (Book of Discipline, paragraph 602.8).*

**8. Addressing the Body:**

- (a). Those who wish to address the body shall move in an orderly manner *or indicate their request to speak as directed in the instructions*, to a microphone and wait to be called upon by the chair.
- (b). When addressing the body, members shall identify themselves by name, church or current appointment, and district. This practice may be relaxed at the chair's discretion, such as when a particular individual by virtue of office or role addresses the conference multiple times in a single plenary session.

**D. Daily Proceedings:** Proceedings of the session shall be recorded in a manner determined by the secretary and staff. The secretary shall daily review and consolidate records of the session to ensure accuracy of the official record and recommend adoption by the annual conference. The secretary shall edit and publish the minutes and reports, which when published, shall be the official report of the conference.

**1. Items Required in Writing:**

Any matter requiring action by the annual conference shall be printed *and/or emailed* and in the hands of the members of the conference at least four session hours

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prior to action overnight for action the following day, to be monitored by the conference secretary. Such items for general distribution shall be prepared and distributed by the sponsoring person or agency at their own expense.

- (a) All reports and main motions *and motions to amend* must be submitted to the conference secretary on paper or in an electronic format determined by the secretary. *The written copy shall be submitted immediately following the motion.*
- (b) Privileged and Subsidiary motions other than motions to amend shall be recorded by the conference secretary and secretarial staff and need not be submitted in writing. (Privileged motions include Adjournment, Recess, Question of Privilege, and Order of the Day. Subsidiary motions include Lay on the Table, Previous Question, Limit or Extend the Limits of Debate, Postpone to a Certain Time and Refer.)

**E. Debate:**

1. Members shall speak no more than twice on a given item nor longer than three (3) minutes at a given time without special permission from the chair.
2. Limitation of Debate.
  - (a) When the chair determines the agenda to be thirty minutes behind schedule or at his/her discretion, the chair may declare that debate on motions shall be limited to two speeches for and two speeches against, not to exceed two minutes per speech. This limitation shall include allowing any member to speak only once on a given item. If the chair determines the conference agenda has returned to schedule, the chair may declare the limit on debate to be lifted.
  - (b) At any time when this limitation is in effect, any member of the body 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 sub-groups or any other committee.
3. With Respect in Debate:
  - (a) In accordance with John Wesley's general rules to do all the good that you can and to do no harm, debate is to be conducted in an atmosphere of respect in

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listening and speaking, including refraining from applause during debate.

- (b) Certain rules of respect are already addressed in Robert's Rules of Order; the extra mile of respect may be done in the model of Holy Conferencing or other communication models.

**F. Voting Matters:**

1. When balloting for representatives to General and Jurisdictional Conferences:
  - (a) Invalid ballots. Any individual's ballot shall be invalid in any of the following instances:
    1. Fewer or more names are marked than are needed for that round.
    2. A lay person is selected on a clergy ballot or a clergy person is selected on a lay ballot.
    3. A person already elected or an ineligible name is selected on the ballot.
    4. A person is selected twice on a single ballot.
  - (b) There shall be no voting by proxy for delegates.
2. Between sessions, when the Bishop, in consultation with the Connecting Council, determines that a matter of the Annual Conference cannot wait until the next regular session, a vote may be taken by email and/or mail ballot.
  - (a) The members of the Annual Conference (lay and clergy) who are eligible to vote will be notified that a vote will be taken and informed of the issue via electronic and written methods.
  - (b) Ballots shall be sent out via written and electronic means by the *by the Conference Office in coordination with the Conference Secretary*. Ballots will be received, counted and verified following the protocol established by the *Conference Secretary*.
  - (c) Reasonable time will be given for the body to respond and a deadline for response announced.
  - (d) A two-thirds majority of the respondents must affirm the motion for the vote to be binding.
  - (e) The members of the annual conference will receive notification of the results of the vote as soon as possible after the deadline for voting.

**G. Resolutions and Petitions:**

1. For the purposes of the Great Plains Annual Conference, a resolution asks the annual conference to take a stand on a

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particular issue or to direct somebody within the conference to consider a specific action. A petition directs the Annual Conference to make a similar request to the General Conference.

2. Submissions: All professing members of local churches within the boundaries of the Great Plains Annual Conference, *conference committees*, and all clergy members of the Great Plains Annual Conference, shall have the right to submit resolutions or petitions for consideration by the Annual Conference session.
3. Submission Deadline: To be included in the Conference Workbook, resolutions and petitions must be submitted by the date specified by the Sessions Planning Team. (For purposes of planning, this will be approximately two months prior to the Annual Conference session.)
4. Late Submissions: All late items for action may be included in the packet distributed at registration if approved by the Sessions Planning Team. The person or group submitting the late item *must submit an electronic copy to the Conference Secretary prior to the beginning of the Annual Conference session*. When the Annual Conference meets in person, 1,800 copies printed on 8 ½ x 11-inch paper and punched with three holes *shall be delivered* to a location designated by the Secretary. Late items should be *emailed* or placed in the mail no later than 14 days prior to the opening of the Annual Conference session. *When the Annual Conference meets electronically, costs for mailing items to Conference members who do not have access to email shall be the responsibility of those submitting the late item.*
5. Format: Resolutions and petitions shall be submitted in accordance with formatting guidelines established by the Sessions Planning Team.
6. Editorial Revision: The Secretary shall have the right to review and revise resolutions and petitions for purposes of spelling, grammar, and formatting. In cases where there is more than one signatory of a resolution, only the first signer's name shall be listed in the conference work book, followed by the number of additional signatories indicated. The names of all signatories will be provided on the annual conference website.
7. When a resolution is adopted that calls for the Conference

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Secretary to communicate with fewer than 5 persons or entities, pertinent contact information shall be provided by the maker of the motion. When a resolution is adopted that calls for the Conference Secretary to communicate with 5 or more persons or entities, the maker of the motion shall be responsible for distribution.

**H. Financial matters:**

1. Revenue neutrality: After adoption of a funding plan and formula for Mission Shares, any motion from the floor to increase spending in any area of the budget must include an equal or greater corresponding reduction in spending as part of the same motion.
2. All items with financial implications will be referred to the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) before final adoption. Such referral, at the Chairs discretion, may be before or after discussion and refinement by the body.