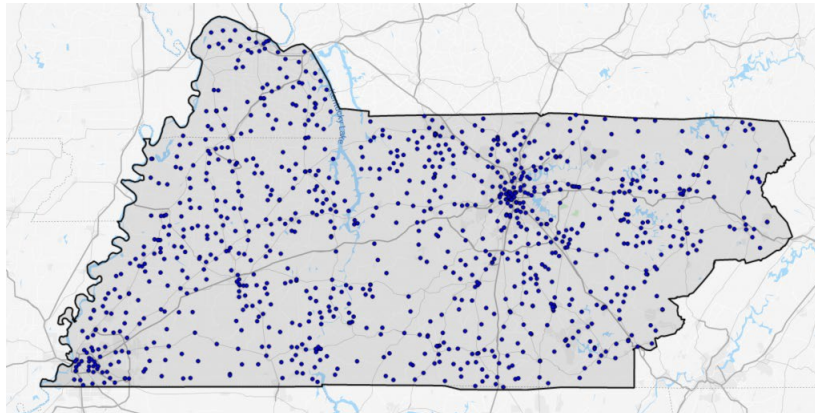




# HUMAN RESOURCES HANDBOOK



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b>Welcome Letter</b> .....	4
<b>Policies as Applicable to the United Methodist Clergy</b> .....	5
<b>Introduction</b> .....	5
<b>Definitions</b> .....	5-6
<b>Mission, Vision, Values</b> .....	6
<b>History</b> .....	6
<b>Employment Practices</b>	
Equal Opportunity .....	7
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).....	7
Immigration Law Compliance.....	7
Diversity .....	7
Staff Member Qualifications .....	8
Selection and Hiring Procedures .....	8
Procedures for Conference Staff/District Office Positions.....	8-9
Post-Offer .....	9
Background Checks .....	9
Hiring of Relatives.....	9
Orientation .....	9
Job Descriptions .....	10
Policy on Sexual Misconduct .....	10
Anti-Harassment and Complaint Policy .....	10-11
Personnel Files.....	11
<b>Compensation/Financial Remuneration</b>	
Employment Classifications .....	12
Exempt and Non-Exempt .....	12
Work Schedule .....	12
Hybrid/Remote Work .....	13
Overtime .....	13
Adjustments to Compensation.....	13
Pay Period.....	13
Accountable Reimbursement.....	13-14
Cell Phones .....	14
<b>Employee Benefits/Group Insurance</b>	
Health Plan Benefits .....	14
Death & Disability Insurance .....	14
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) .....	14-15
Worker’s Compensation .....	15
Assisting Employees with Disabling Illnesses .....	15
Pension Plan .....	15-16
Holidays.....	16
Religious Participation.....	16
Continuing Education .....	16
<b>Workplace Safety</b>	
Drug-Alcohol-Free Workplace .....	16-17
Smoke-Free Workplace .....	17

Firearms and Concealed Weapons.....	17
Workplace Violence Prevention.....	17
Inclement Weather.....	17
<b>Standards of Conduct</b>	
Environment .....	18
Absence .....	18
Employee Performance Reviews.....	18
Disciplinary Action.....	19
Grievance Procedure.....	19
Dress Standards .....	19
Social Media Acceptable Use.....	19-21
Computers, Internet, Email and Other Resources.....	21
<b>Time Off and Leaves and Absence</b>	
Vacation.....	22
Sick Leave .....	22
Extended Sick Leave .....	22-23
Parental Leave .....	23
Family and Medical Leave .....	23-24
Return to Work Policy.....	24-25
Military Leave .....	25
FMLA.....	25-26
Bereavement Leave .....	26
Civic Duty.....	26
<b>Separation from Employment</b>	
Unemployment Insurance.....	27
Resignation .....	27
Retirement .....	27
Severance.....	27
Exit Interview .....	27
Life of the Document.....	27
<b>Employment Handbook Acknowledgement and Receipt.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Confidentiality Agreement .....</b>	<b>29</b>

## WELCOME

Welcome to The Tennessee-Western Kentucky (TWK) Conference of the United Methodist Church!

We are delighted that you have chosen to join our organization and hope that you will enjoy a successful career with us. As you become familiar with our mission and values, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further the mission of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The Conference is unique in many ways. It is a place where “ministry happens” - where people serve other people. Nevertheless, like other organizations, it requires certain policies and procedures to ensure its smooth operation and the fair treatment of each employee. With your active involvement, creativity, and support, The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church will continue to achieve its goal to offer Christ to a hurting world, one neighborhood at a time.

We sincerely hope you will take pride in being an important part of The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church's success. Each employee is an essential part of the total ministry of the Conference. All employees are encouraged to build and maintain a sense of community. Many people come to the Conference with many kinds of needs. They should find in our employees a model of the Christian community that is Christ's Church.

This Handbook covers all employees of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference. From time to time, revisions and additions to this Handbook will be made and those changes will be effective upon communication to Conference employees. This Handbook and the policies within it, including Appendices, are not intended to be and do not constitute a contract of employment, and may be changed by the Conference at any time in its sole discretion. Any questions or concerns that you may have about the application of these policies or procedures should be addressed to your immediate supervisor.

Occasionally a question will arise which has not been discussed in this Handbook or clarification will be needed on a topic already addressed. In this case, if the question cannot be answered by your supervisor, please contact the Chairperson of the Human Resources Committee.

Please take time to review the policies and procedures contained in this handbook and retain it for your future reference.

## POLICIES AS APPLICABLE TO UNITED METHODIST CLERGY

Whenever there is a conflict between these Personnel Policies and Procedures of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference and *The Discipline* with respect to United Methodist clergy or other matters addressed in *The Discipline*, *The Discipline* will control.

### INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is intended to provide employees with a general understanding of the personnel policies of the Conference. However, it cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment. Neither this Handbook, nor any provision in it constitute a contract of employment or any other type of contract, and revisions may be made in the Conference's sole discretion at any time. All employees are considered employees at will and the employment relationship may be terminated by the employer or employee at any time, with or without cause, so long as termination is not for an unlawful purpose. While this Handbook provides general guidelines for employee discipline, failure to adhere precisely to the disciplinary procedures described will not preclude the Conference from moving forward with discipline or termination when in the sole opinion of the responsible Director or other decisionmaker, the employee's job performance and/or conduct justifies discipline up to and including termination.

### DEFINITIONS AND APPLICATIONS

The following definitions apply to all references in this document where the acronym or words/phrases are used:

**"TWK" or "CONFERENCE": Refers** to the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church which is comprised of the Office of Administrative Services, Connectional Ministry Office, District Offices, Camps and Retreats Ministries

**"CFA": Refers** to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. See ¶611 - 618 of *The Discipline*.

**"EXEMPT EMPLOYEES": Refers** to employees who are exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended (FLSA).

**"NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES": Refers** to employees who are subject to the overtime requirements of the FLSA. These employees must be paid at least minimum wage and are entitled to overtime pay when they have worked over forty (40) hours during the workweek.

**"CMO": Refers** to the Connectional Ministry Officer, See ¶608 of *The Discipline*.

**"DIRECTOR": Refers** to the individual who is considered to have the final authority in a given office/section or department.

**"THE DISCIPLINE": Refers** to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2016)*.

**"CONFIDENTIALITY": Refers** to the duty of Conference personnel to maintain the privacy of certain information. To the extent practical consistent with operational necessity, sensitive legal, personal, salary and disciplinary information shall be maintained in a confidential manner, shall be shared with only those persons who have a business need to know, and shall not be disseminated outside of the organization except as required by law or other policy, or as necessary to protect others. .

**"IMMEDIATE FAMILY": Refers** to an employee's father, mother, sister, brother, spouse, daughter, son, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild. This would include persons who are "step" relatives and persons who are relatives by virtue of adoption.

## **MISSION, VISION AND VALUES**

### **MISSION**

The mission of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference is to discover, equip, connect, and send lay and clergy leaders who shape congregations that offer Jesus Christ to a hurting world one neighborhood at a time.

### **VISION**

Our vision is uniting to embody the love of Christ in Spirit-led actions one community at a time.

### **VALUES**

1. The local church as the disciple making center.
2. Transparency and integrity in our communication.
3. Seeking a purposeful and more generous way of love.
4. Courage to explore possibilities and take risks by being nimble, experimenting, permitting failure, and staying the course.
5. Empowering all leaders and enabling leaders with gifts and graces for the task.
6. Seeking input from both people and useful data.
7. We welcome diversity, rooted in Christ, a deep love of one another, celebrating our differences.

### **HISTORY**

Initially formed as the Western Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1800, the Tennessee Conference consisted of all lands west of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas.

- The Western Conference was divided in 1812 into the Ohio (the territory north of the Ohio River) and Tennessee (lands south of the Ohio River) Conferences.
- The rapid growth of Methodism on the frontier, combined with the westward movement of an increasingly mobile nation, led to multiple sub-divisions of the Tennessee conference—Illinois (1816), Indiana (1816), Arkansas (1816), Missouri (1816), Louisiana (1816), Mississippi (1816), Kentucky (1820), Holston (1824), Memphis (1840), and North Alabama (1870).
- January 1, 2022 the Tennessee conference (formed in 1812) and Memphis conference (formed in 1840) combined to form the Tennessee-Western Kentucky conference of the United Methodist Church.

## **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The TWK is an equal opportunity employer and will base employment decisions related to all staff members and applicants upon a consideration of the individual's qualifications. No person shall be discriminated against in employment because of race, color, sex, veteran's status, national origin, age, disability or any other status protected by law. This policy applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment. Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, religious organizations are permitted to give employment preference to members of their own religion and depending upon the position to be filled, the TWK may take an employee's religious affiliation into account in order to best serve the mission of the Conference. However, religions of all persons shall be respected and no employee shall be subjected to harassment or other hostile conduct based upon religion. Any concerns related to equal employment opportunity shall be referred to Human Resources.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation**

To ensure equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the Conference will make reasonable accommodations for the known disability of an otherwise qualified individual, unless doing so would cause undue hardship on the operation of the Conference.

An employee who may require a reasonable accommodation should contact his/her Director in order to initiate an interactive process regarding whether an accommodation is needed and what accommodation is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. .

### **Immigration Law Compliance**

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of the right to work in the United States. Newly hired employees must provide original documents verifying the right to work and as required by federal law, to sign Federal Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form. If at any time the Conference cannot verify an employee's right to work in the United States, the Conference may terminate his/her employment.

### **Diversity**

The Conference values diversity. It is our policy and goal as an employer and organization that everyone be respectful of the heritage and culture of others. We also demand this respect for the uniqueness of each individual. All of us must strive to reach beyond our own experience to understand and to interact effectively with a wide range of others who are truly different from ourselves. Our organizational practices and norms will include many styles and approaches in the pursuit of excellence. Therefore, everyone will be able to contribute in his/her own unique way. We intend to build a work environment where the inclusion of many kinds of people leads to excellence in ministry, service and organizational climate. This appreciation of differences is built into hiring and employee development. We also emphasize self- knowledge (learning the patterns of one's own biases and interpersonal skills) as well as learning specifics about the cultural history and characteristics of many different groups. As followers of Christ, we have a moral and social obligation by our example to treat everyone fairly and with respect. If we are to help create an inclusive workplace and church, everyone who works for the Conference must be personally committed to these standards.

## Staff Member Qualifications

In addition to the skill set necessary to each individual position, all staff shall have the following minimum qualifications:

- Sympathetic with the Christian faith and purposes of The United Methodist Church
- Possess aptitudes, skills and capacities required in their respective fields of work
- Have the ability to win and hold the cooperation and goodwill of the people they serve as well as their associates
- Can maintain and keep confidences
- Have a willingness and ability to learn and improve his/her performance
- Are legally available to work for the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference

## Selection/Hiring Procedures

A consistent pattern in the selection of employees, both lay and clergy, on the basis of necessary qualifications, including education, work experience, and skills and abilities will be followed. All hiring will comply with all federal and state laws and regulations. The HR Committee, in consultation with the appropriate Director, establishes salary levels. Authorization from Human Resources (HR) Committee is required to initiate any action for an open position, including recruitment expenditures, advertising, interviewing and offers of employment. The Conference is committed to developing a diverse pool of applicants by using internal and external job posting capabilities; however, in appropriate circumstances the HR Committee may authorize a Director to fill a position internally without formally posting the position.

## Procedures for Conference Staff /District Office Positions

1. The Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services is interviewed and nominated by the Council on Finance and Administration and elected by the Annual Conference. The Connectional Ministries Officer (CMO) is appointed by the Bishop.
2. For all other positions not specifically addressed in *The Discipline*, the following process will be followed: The appropriate hiring director (including CMO, District Superintendents, Treasurer, Executive Director of Camps & Retreat Ministries) responsible for the vacant position notifies the Chairperson of the HR Committee that the position needs to be filled.
3. The Chairperson of the HR committee assures that:
  - a. there is a budgeted vacancy;
  - b. the salary range and job description are current;
  - c. a recruitment plan is created for the position.

If there is not a budgeted vacancy, further consultation is needed with the Conference treasurer and CF&A to determine funding options.

4. Unless the HR Committee has authorized the Director in question to fill the position without posting, the HR manager will advertise position(s) via the conference website and established media channels.
5. The HR manager receives all resumes/applications, screens all for a “match” with position qualifications and provides the matches to the hiring director responsible for the vacant position.



In consultation with the hiring director, the HR Committee appoints a screening committee, which includes the hiring director, to narrow the field to no more than three candidates to be interviewed.

6. HR staff in collaboration with the hiring director prepares and presents a written letter of offer to the selected applicant. The offer letter will provide the starting date and all conditions of the offer, specify the full scope of compensation and benefits.
  - a. Offers will all be contingent upon favorable referencing, including background checks and employment eligibility verification (I-9).
  - b. No other terms and conditions of employment will be recognized except those contained in the Letter of Offer and in the current HR Handbook.

### **Post-Offer**

1. HR staff will assure that references are obtained and that Background Check and Employment Eligibility Verification documents are provided.
2. The appropriate hiring Director will determine how to announce the hiring and to whom and will initiate the Orientation for the newly hired employee.

### **Background Checks**

To ensure prospective employees have been thoroughly researched for any criminal records, and for financial circumstances that make them a high risk for criminal activity, the TWK will perform background checks on all staff. All offers of employment are contingent on the results of a background check and references check. Agreeing to a background check is a condition of continued employment by the TWK.

### **Hiring of Relatives**

A regular full-time or regular part-time employee shall not be hired by or in the direct chain of command of an “immediate family”\* member currently employed by the TWK. Rare exceptions may be considered by the HR Committee. (\*See definition of “immediate family”)

### **Orientation**

A new employee shall receive an orientation which shall include (but is not limited to): explanation of the vision, mission, values, and expectations of the organization; introductions to people within and outside the organization with whom she or he may routinely work; review of the office facility and equipment; and the relationship of the organization with respect to the Conference, the districts and the local churches.

The responsible Director shall be responsible for coordinating the orientation and monitoring the employee's progress. The Director should give special attention to providing feedback to the employee during the introductory three-month period of employment in order to ensure that information provided at orientation is incorporated into the employee's work.

### **Job Descriptions**

The hiring director in consultation with the HR committee shall provide a job description for each position within the organization that outlines responsibilities of the employee and relationships within and outside the organizations. Every job description should be reviewed annually for accuracy, preferably during the employee's annual performance review.

## **Policy on Sexual Misconduct**

Any form of sexual misconduct is incompatible with biblical teachings and ethical standards and all steps will be taken to protect the vulnerable and to discipline those guilty of such behaviors. Any reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse will be reported to appropriate authorities in addition to the District Superintendent and/or Bishop. All employees are responsible for familiarizing themselves with, and complying with, the provisions of the Conference Sexual Misconduct Policy.

## **Anti-Harassment and Complaint Procedure**

Harassment based on a characteristic protected by law, including race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, religion, age, disability, or veteran status will not be tolerated by the Conference.

It is Conference policy to provide a work environment free of unlawful harassment. To that end, harassment of employees by directors, supervisors, co-workers, or non-employees who are in the workplace is absolutely prohibited. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about unlawful harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated. The Conference will take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.

**Definition of Unlawful Harassment.** “Unlawful harassment” is conduct based upon a person’s membership in a protected class that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual’s employment opportunities.

Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

**Definition of Sexual Harassment.** “Sexual harassment” is one form of unlawful harassment and is generally defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where the conduct is based upon “sex” (including gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation or gender identity) and:

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual’s employment or as a basis for employment decisions; *or*
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwanted sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not;

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments about an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; *and*
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

As with all forms of unlawful harassment, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

## **Complaint Procedure**

Any employee who believes he or she has been subject to or witnessed discrimination or unlawful harassment, is requested and encouraged to make a complaint. The employee may, but is not required to, complain first to the person the employee believes is engaged in discrimination or harassment. The employee may also complain directly to an immediate supervisor, HR director, or any supervisory Conference employee with whom the employee feels comfortable bringing such a complaint. Similarly, an employee who observes acts of discrimination toward or harassment of another employee, should report this to one of the individuals listed above.

No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against an employee for making a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment or for assisting in the investigation of any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to one of the persons identified above.

All complaints will be investigated promptly and, to the extent possible, with regard for confidentiality. Investigations of sexual harassment complaints against Church Professionals shall be conducted in accordance with the Conference Sexual Misconduct Policy for Church Professionals. Investigations of other complaints of discrimination or unlawful harassment shall be conducted either by the responsible Director, HR staff, or the Conference Chancellor, depending upon the circumstances and after consultation with the Conference Chancellor.

If the investigation confirms conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, the Conference will take immediate, appropriate corrective action calculated to end the conduct, including discipline up to and including immediate termination if justified by the circumstances. If the complaint is validated but action short of termination is taken, the accused individual will be advised that any further harassment or retaliation of any kind will be grounds for immediate termination. While the complaining party may not be informed of the details of specific disciplinary action taken, he/she will be advised of whether the complaint was validated, and if so, that appropriate action was taken that is intended to stop the conduct. The complaining party will also be asked to report any further events of harassment and/or retaliation. Any such validated events will result in additional corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Personnel Files**

The Conference maintains a personnel file for each staff person. The Conference attempts to maintain those documents which are, have been or are intended to be used in determining a staff person's qualifications for employment, promotion, transfer, additional compensation, discharge or other disciplinary action.

A staff person has the right to inspect certain portions of his/her personnel file. Personal information is not to be released to a third party without authorization by the appropriate Director.

## COMPENSATION/FINANCIAL REMUNERATION

### Employment Classifications

An employee is defined as a person who performs services for the Conference whose work is under the Conference's control and direction regarding what will be done and how it will be done. Volunteers are persons who are not paid a wage or payment for the services they perform under the Conference's direction and control. Any relationships with the Conference that require remuneration by the Conference, including possible contract work, must be reviewed, and approved in advance by the Office of Administrative Services.

- A. **Regular, Full-Time:** Employees who are not in a temporary status and work a minimum of 30 hours weekly and maintain continuous employment status. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full-time benefits package and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.
- B. **Regular, Part-Time.** Employees who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours weekly, and who maintain continuous employment status are considered part-time. Part-time employees who work at least 20 hours weekly, are eligible for some of the benefits offered by the Conference and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.
- C. **Temporary/Seasonal Employees:** Employed for a specific short duration of time. Ordinarily, a temporary/seasonal position will not exceed six (6) months in duration.

### Exempt & Non-exempt Classifications

In order to determine eligibility for benefits and overtime status and to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, the Conference classifies its employees as shown below. TWK may review or change employee classifications at any time.

**Exempt.** Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis and are not eligible to receive overtime pay. Exempt employees are required to accurately record their vacation and sick time away from work.

**Non-exempt.** Nonexempt employees are paid on an hourly basis and are eligible to receive overtime pay for overtime hours worked.

All nonexempt employees are required to complete accurate weekly time reports showing all time actually worked. These records are required by governmental regulations and are used to calculate regular and overtime pay. At the end of each pay period, the employee and his or her supervisor must verify and approve the time sheet attesting to its correctness before forwarding it to payroll processing in the Office of Administrative Services.

### Work Schedule

In the hybrid/remote work environment, non-exempt employees are expected to be immediately accessible and available during the core business work hours of 8am to 4pm Monday through Friday. The responsible Director may allow a deviation from these hours or days when the Director deems it appropriate.

Exempt employees are often expected to work schedules that do not fit the ordinary schedule of office hours. These persons are responsible for their areas of ministry and will demonstrate by their results that they are faithful to their ministries.

## **Work From Home/Remote Work Policy**

Working from home/remote work is the process of performing regularly scheduled job duties during regular business hours at a remote location. In certain circumstances, remote work may be allowed, subject to the needs of the Conference, and also, subject to the discretion and approval of the applicable Director. It is not an entitlement, it is not a Conference-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the TWK Conference. Since remote work is based on ordinary job duties during ordinary business hours, the employee who works remotely must be easily accessible to other Conference personnel and must be available to come into the Conference offices or work in person at the annual conference or other conference meetings, if Conference needs dictate. Employees must report to his/her director if he/she is ill, if equipment or power fails, or if for any other reason he/she will not be working.

## **Overtime for Non-exempt Employees**

Actual time worked is the basis for computing overtime. For purposes of computing overtime, the work week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday.

1. All requests for overtime must be approved in advance by a director or equivalent. Employees and supervisors should attempt to provide as much advance notice as possible when required to work overtime.
2. All time worked up to and including 40 hours is computed at straight pay; all overtime worked in excess of 40 hours is computed at time-and-one-half pay. Overtime is paid for hours worked in excess of 40 hours during a regular work week. Holiday, vacation and sick pay are not counted towards overtime
3. All overtime is to be clearly reported on the attendance record (i.e. timecard).

## **Adjustments to Compensation**

A wage assignment or a garnishment is a legal order requiring an individual's employer to withhold part of the employee's wages in order to pay a debt or obligation. Wage assignments which meet legal requirements will be honored when issued and withheld from employee's compensation.

All lay employees are covered by the Federal Old Age and Survivors Benefits Act to provide the protection offered by Social Security. Social Security tax is paid half by the lay employee and half by the employer. Clergy pay the total cost for Social Security coverage as "self-employed" persons for Social Security purposes. Clergy may also have part of their compensation designated as a "housing allowance." Please see the annual conference resolution related to clergy /staff housing allowance.

## **Pay Period**

Compensation shall be issued by the Conference on the 15th and 30th of each month (except when those dates fall on a Saturday or Sunday; then, the issuance will be made on the last workday immediately preceding the 15th or 30th). Paychecks are directly deposited into the checking and/or savings accounts that the employee designates. The work week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday. All employees will be paid by direct deposit

## **Accountable Reimbursement**

All employees will receive reimbursement for Conference related travel in accordance with TWK rules, subject to IRS rules defining business expense and appropriate contemporaneous documentation.

The Conference will reimburse employees for reasonable and documented expenses they incurred while traveling on Conference business, including mileage, meals, and lodging.

All expense records, including credit card receipts and mileage logs/documentation must be turned in to the Treasurer's office no later than 60 days from the date the expense was incurred.

All Conference employees will be reimbursed mileage at the current IRS business rate. The current year's business rate will be published in the Treasurer's report at Annual Conference each year. Travel between the place of employment and the place of residence shall not be reimbursed.

For a more detailed explanation of accountable reimbursements, please see the Conference Accountable Reimbursement Policy.

## **Cell Phones**

While cell phones are an essential part of our daily lives, the Conference requires the safe use of cell phones by employees while conducting business. Employees shall not use the cell phones while driving unless they are using the handsfree option. Employees shall refrain from responding to texts and emails while driving. Employees who use their personal cell phones for Conference business will be provided a monthly allowance.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

The Conference recognizes the value of benefits to clergy, lay employees and their families. The Conference supports this by offering a comprehensive and competitive benefits program. For more information regarding benefit programs, please refer to the Conference Summary Plan Descriptions (SPD) or contact the Assistant Benefits Officer. To the extent of the information provided here conflicts with the SPD or full plan document, the full plan document will control.

### **Group Insurance**

#### **Health Plan Benefits**

All fulltime employees who regularly work at least 30 hours per week are eligible to participate in the Conference Health Plan, beginning upon the time of employment. Health insurance plans are provided through Wespath Healthflex. Contact Administrative Services or Wespath at 1-800-851-2201 for more information about this program.

#### **Death and Disability Insurance**

**Comprehensive Protection Plan – Clergy only:** The Comprehensive Protection Plan provides long- term disability, death, and other benefits for clergy and their families. An Employee who is a clergy member of a Conference under full-time Episcopal appointment may participate in the Plan.

**UNUM – Laity only:** UNUM provides death and other benefits for lay employees. Lay employees who are employed 30 hours or more with the Conference may participate. Employees are eligible for this benefit on the first of the month following 90 days of service. The life benefit is \$100,000. The cost of this coverage is paid for in full by the Conference.

#### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Conference cares about the health and well-being of clergy and lay employees and recognizes that a variety of personal problems can disrupt their personal and work lives. Although many employees solve their problems either on their own or with the help of family and friends, sometimes employees need

professional assistance and advice.

Through the employee assistance program (EAP), the Conference provides confidential access to professional counseling services for help in confronting issues including but not limited to alcohol and other substance abuse, marital and family difficulties, financial or legal troubles, and emotional distress. The EAP is available to all clergy and lay employees, fulltime or parttime, and it offers problem assessment, short-term counseling and referrals to appropriate community and private services.

The EAP is strictly confidential and is designed to safeguard an employee's privacy. Information given to the EAP counselor may be released to the TWK only if authorized by the employee in writing or required by law. All counselors are guided by a professional code of ethics.

Personal information concerning employee participation in the EAP is maintained in a confidential manner. No information related to an employee's participation in the program is entered into the employee's personnel file.

There is no cost for an employee to consult with an EAP counselor. If further counseling is necessary, the EAP counselor will describe community and private services available. The counselor will also let participants know whether any costs associated with private services may be covered by their health insurance plan. Costs that are not covered are the responsibility of the employee. Contact the Conference Benefits Officer for more information about the EAP.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Workers' compensation is a "no-fault" system that provides compensation for medical expenses and wage losses to employees who are injured on the job or who become ill because of employment.

The Conference pays the entire cost of workers' compensation insurance. The insurance provides coverage for related authorized medical and rehabilitation expenses and in some circumstances, a portion of lost wages to employees who sustain an injury on the job.

The Conference abides by all applicable state workers' compensation laws and regulations.

An employee who sustains a job-related injury or illness shall notify the responsible Director and Human Resources immediately. The Director will complete an injury report with input from the employee and return the form to Human Resources for filing with the insurance provider. In cases of true medical emergencies, report to the nearest emergency room and notify the Director and HR as soon as practical.

Workers' compensation benefits (paid or unpaid) will run concurrently with FMLA leave, if applicable, where permitted by state and federal law.

### **Assisting Employees with Disabling Illnesses**

Fulltime staff will be covered by the Conference's long term disability coverage but should consider purchasing their own policies to provide additional short-term disability benefits.

### **Pension Plan**

Clergy appointed to serve as employees of the Conference are participants in the TWK's Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP). For lay employees, the Conference will contribute 12% of the employees' compensation to the UMPIP account if (1) the employee is scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week, and (2) the employee contributes at least 3% of their compensation to their UMPIP account. If the lay employee does not contribute 3% of his/her compensation to the UMPIP account, a 9% contribution will be made by the Conference.

All pension participants may make additional contributions to their UMPIP account up to the amount

allowed by IRS regulations and the plans. Contact Administrative Services or Wespath for more information about these programs.

## **Holidays**

The TWK fulltime staff shall observe the following 14 holidays and employees shall be paid for these authorized holidays:

- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- Good Friday and Monday after Easter
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and Day after
- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the Day after Christmas

These are paid holidays with the following provisions:

- A. Part time/temporary/seasonal employees are not eligible for holiday pay.
- B. Persons on leave of absence are not eligible for holiday pay.

If one of these holidays falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the Conference will select either the following Monday or the preceding Friday as a substitute holiday.

## **Religious Participation**

Each employee is encouraged to participate in a local congregation of a Christian church.

## **Continuing Education**

Conference staff may request up to two weeks of work time to be used for continuing education. The continuing education must benefit or improve the employee's job performance, skill set, or knowledge base. The Conference may pay any related expenses, and the request must be submitted to the responsible Director for approval, which may be granted or declined in the Director's sole discretion.

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

### **Drug-Alcohol-Free Workplace**

It is the policy of the TWK to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free work environment that is safe and productive for employees and others having business with the Conference.

The unlawful use, possession, purchase, sale, distribution, or being under the influence of any illegal drug and/or the misuse of legal drugs while on Conference or client premises or while performing services for the Conference is strictly prohibited. The Conference also prohibits reporting to work or performing services while impaired by the use of alcohol or consuming alcohol while on duty or during work hours.

To ensure compliance with this policy, substance abuse screening may be conducted in the following situations.



**For Cause:** Upon reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs that could affect or has adversely affected the employee's job performance.

Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment. Employees who test positive or who refuse to submit to substance abuse screening will be subject to termination. Notwithstanding any provision herein, this policy will be enforced at all times in accordance with applicable state and local law.

Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

### **Smoke-Free Workplace**

Smoking is not allowed in Conference buildings or work areas at any time. "Smoking" includes the use of any tobacco products, electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes containing nicotine cartridges.

Smoking is only permitted during break times in designated outdoor areas. Employees using these areas are expected to dispose of any smoking debris safely and properly.

### **Firearms or Concealed Weapons**

Possession or use of firearms or concealed weapons on TWK premises is strictly prohibited.

While on duty, employees may not carry a weapon of any type.

### **Workplace Violence Prevention**

The TWK is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees. Due to this commitment, we discourage employees from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any employee will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at Conference-sponsored functions.

All employees bear the responsibility of keeping our work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform the Director or Human Resources. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence against the Conference, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

Conference-wide offices will be closed during inclement weather if the county or city school system in which the office is located is closed for inclement weather. Employees who are authorized to work from home/remote are not affected by this policy. Those employees who regularly work at the Conference center should ask for approval from their supervisor to work from home on inclement weather days. Conditions caused by ordinary inclement weather require each employee who ordinarily works at the Conference center to make a personal decision regarding safety in traveling to and from the workplace.

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

### Environment

Employees of the TWK are expected to maintain a quality work environment by:

- Being respectful of each employee as a person with individual rights and differences
- Being courteous and offering assistance, as appropriate, to persons or groups calling or visiting the offices
- Exercising responsible stewardship in the use of Conference funds and property
- Keeping internal and external personal telephone calls brief and few
- Honoring that all TWK buildings are non-smoking facilities.
- Refraining from use of abusive and obscene language

Conference employees represent The United Methodist Church to people who visit Conference-wide offices. Each contact made is an opportunity to create good will for the church. This places an important responsibility on each employee answering the telephone, responding to a request in writing, or talking face to face. This responsibility requires employees to conduct themselves professionally at all times.

### Absence

Employees are expected to be at work as scheduled or as agreed between supervisor and employee, whether in the Conference office or in their home office. However, if illness or an unexpected emergency requires the employee to be absent, it is the employee's responsibility to contact his/her supervisor/Director within an hour of the employee's expected arrival/start time.

If an extended absence is anticipated, the employee is to notify his/her supervisor of the expected date he/she is able to return to work

If an employee is unable to complete the workday due to injury on the job, he/she will receive compensation for the remainder of the workday.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to an employee's effective performance on the job. Every employee is expected to maintain a good attendance record and act responsibly in the use of sick leave.

### Employee Performance Reviews

The appropriate Director/supervisor shall evaluate annually the job performance of each person under his/her supervision. This evaluation shall be based upon the employee's work as related to his/her job description and performance goals. A performance review is intended to provide an annual means of appraising a staff person's performance on the job. These reviews include a written performance appraisal and discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance as well as expectations for the coming year.

Communication between employees and supervisors or managers is very important. Discussions regarding job performance are ongoing and often informal. Employees should initiate conversations with their supervisors if they feel additional ongoing feedback is needed.

In the event that there are deficiencies in an employee's performance, the director shall schedule interim reviews with the employee to assess the needed improvement.

An evaluation is a confidential matter that shall remain with those who have a need to know: the employee, the supervisor(s), and appropriate entity. A copy of the evaluation shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action may be initiated for various reasons including but not limited to:

- violations of Conference standards and policies;
- poor job performance;
- poor attendance.

The Conference reserves the exclusive right to evaluate employee performance and conduct on which to take disciplinary action. The Conference has the sole discretion to determine whether disciplinary action is to be taken in a given instance and to decide what type of discipline is appropriate. Each disciplinary action will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and there is no routine procedure or sequence of disciplinary action. The appropriate Director in consultation with the HR Committee will decide in each case what action is appropriate based on all the facts and circumstances. The severity of the disciplinary action depends on the nature of the offense and the employee's past record and may range from verbal counseling to immediate dismissal. Disciplinary action may consist of any of the following:

- Oral warning with note to personnel file
- Written warning with a copy to personnel file
- Suspension
- Discharge/Termination from employment

The Conference does not guarantee that one form of disciplinary action will necessarily precede another, and immediate termination is possible in any given instance in the Conference's sole discretion.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Except in the context of discrimination and harassment issues, in which context it is recognized that employees may not feel empowered to address the harassing or discriminating party directly and are not required to do so before making a report, Employees should in most cases make reasonable efforts to resolve differences by communicating with those with whom they have a difference. If the difference cannot be worked out, the supervisor should be notified within 30 days of the incident and with the supervisor's help, resolution will be attempted. If the dispute involves the supervisor, the grievance may be taken to the Director and/or HR who will work toward achieving a fair resolution of the problem within 30 days, with allowance for one extension, based on the nature of the grievance

## **Dress Standards**

Employees of the TWK are expected to be dressed in comfortable business attire, which is appropriate for job function, and expresses individuality and professionalism in equal proportion. Employees of the TWK represent The United Methodist Church.

## **Social Media Acceptable Use**

The Conference encourages employees to share information with co-workers and with those outside the Conference for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others. Social media provides inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public and, therefore, the Conference has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

*Note:* As used in this policy, "social media" refers to blogs, forums, and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and MySpace, among others.

**Off-duty use of social media.** Employees may maintain personal websites or web logs on their own time using their own facilities. Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with their work. In general, the Conference considers social media activities to be personal endeavors, and employees may use them to express their thoughts or promote their ideas, however, employees should ensure that personal social media use does not undermine the Conference’s mission or reflect negatively on the Conference or The United Methodist Church.

**On-duty use of social media.** Employees may engage in social media activity during work time provided it is directly related to their work, approved by their Director, and does not identify or reference Conference stakeholders or vendors without express permission. The Conference reserves the right to monitor employee use of Conference computers and the Internet, including employee blogging and social networking activity. Employees have no expectation of privacy when using Conference equipment or technology for posting on social media or communicating electronically.

**Respect.** All social media posts should demonstrate respect for the dignity of the Conference, its stakeholders, its vendors, and its employees. Employees should avoid inappropriate comments on social media, as sites can be accessed by groups of individuals or in some cases, all members of the general public. For example, employees should not use ethnic or racial slurs, personal insults, or obscenity, or use language that may be considered inflammatory. Even if a message is posted anonymously, it may be possible to trace it back to the sender and such posting reflects poorly on the employee and the Conference.

**Post disclaimers.** If an employee identifies himself or herself as a Conference employee or discusses matters related to the Conference on a social media site, the site must include a disclaimer on the front page stating that it does not express the views of the Conference and that the employee is expressing only his or her personal views. For example: “The views expressed on this website/Web log are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.” The employee should place the disclaimer in a prominent position and repeat it for each posting expressing an opinion related to the Conference or the Conference’s or Church’s business. Employees must keep in mind that if they post information on a social media site that is in violation of Conference policy and/or federal, state, or local law, the disclaimer will not shield them from disciplinary action.

Employees should not use a social media to criticize The United Methodist Church or the Conference or to speculate or make predictions regarding the future of The United Methodist Church.

**Confidentiality.** Employees may not identify or reference Conference stakeholders or vendors without express permission. Employees may write about their jobs in general but may not disclose any confidential or proprietary information. For examples of confidential information, employees should refer to the confidentiality policy. When in doubt, an employee should ask before publishing.

**New ideas.** New ideas related to work or the Conference’s business belong to the Conference. Intellectual property developed while working for the Conference is Conference property. Employees may not post such information on a social media site without the Conference’s permission.

**Links.** Employees may provide a link from a social media site to the Conference’s website during employment (subject to discontinuance at the Conference’s sole discretion).

**Trademarks and copyrights.** Employees may not use the Conference’s or others’ trademarks on a social media site or reproduce the Conference’s or others’ material without first obtaining permission.

**Legal.** When using social media or any internet forum, Employees are expected to comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines, copyright, trademark, and harassment laws.

**Discipline.** Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

**Note:** Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit the rights of employees under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including the right under the National Labor Relations Act to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve terms and conditions of employment, such as wages and benefits.

## **Computers, Internet, Email, and Other Resources**

The Conference provides a wide variety of communication tools and resources to employees for use in running day-to-day business activities. Whether it is the telephone, voice mail, scanner, Internet, intranet, e-mail, text messaging, fax or any other Conference-provided technology, use should be reserved for business-related matters during working hours. All communication using these tools should be handled in a professional and respectful manner.

Employees should not have any expectation of privacy in their use of Conference computer, phone, or other communication tools. All communications made using Conference-provided equipment or services including email and internet activity, are subject to inspection by the Conference. Employees should keep in mind that even if they delete an email, voicemail or other communication, a copy may be archived on the Conference's systems.

E-mails that are not job-related have the potential to drain, rather than enhance, productivity and system performance. Employees should also be aware that information transmitted and received through e-email is not completely secure, and information transmitted and received by employees could damage the reputation of the Conference.

The Conference encourages employees to use email only to communicate with fellow employees, suppliers, customers, or potential customers regarding Conference business. Internal and external e-mails are considered business records and may be subject to discovery in the event of litigation. Be aware of this possibility when sending e-mails within and outside the Conference.

Refrain from using e-mail in a manner that violates any of our Conference guidelines/policies, including but not limited to the Equal Opportunity and Harassment policies. Delete any e-mail messages prior to opening that are received from unknown senders and advertisers.

It is the Conference's goal to respect the dignity of employees at all times. Because e-mail, telephone and voice mail, and internet communication equipment are provided for Conference business purposes and are critical to its success, employee communications may be accessed without further notice by Information Technology administrators and Conference management to ensure compliance with this guideline.

The electronic communication systems are not secure and may allow inadvertent disclosure, accidental transmission to third parties, etc. Sensitive information should not be sent via unsecured electronic means.

Office telephones are for business purposes. While the Conference recognizes that some personal calls are necessary, these should be kept as brief as possible and to a minimum. Likewise, use of personal cell phones, tablets, or other equipment for personal communications during work hours should be kept to a minimum. Abuse of these privileges is subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

It is against policy to turn off antivirus protection software or make unauthorized changes to system configurations installed on Conference computers. Violations of this policy may result in termination for a first offense.

## **Time Off and Leaves of Absence**

### **Vacation**

A vacation is a time for rest and renewal and is granted with pay to all full-time employees who work at least 30 hours per week (except temporary/seasonal employees) after 6 months of satisfactory employment. Time employed is based on the hire date and includes employment within the United Methodist Connection. Hire date is the first day an employee began working.

Employees receive the following:

- 6 months – 1 year employment – 1 week
- 1-5 Years employment – 2 weeks
- 5-10 years employment - 3 weeks
- 10 years or more employment - 4 weeks

Vacation requests should be submitted to the Director at least two weeks prior to the desired vacation time. Employees should have reasonable flexibility in determining vacation dates, but requests for vacation may be denied or deferred by the responsible Director based upon operational needs. Pay for vacation time will be at the employee's regular rate of pay. A week of vacation is five business days. Vacation time is not cumulative from one year to the next. However, the HR Committee in consultation with the director, may permit, under extenuating circumstances (such as illness at year end), a person to carry over vacation time, provided the vacation is taken at the earliest opportunity after the beginning of the vacation year. An employee shall not be granted pay in lieu of vacation, except in case of employee's termination.

Fulltime employees whose employment ends with voluntary resignation, and he/she works his/her full notice, will be paid for unused vacation time that has accumulated during the calendar year of the termination. Employees who are involuntarily terminated for cause are not entitled to receive accrued vacation.

### **Leave for Illness/Annual Sick Leave**

An employee shall be permitted absence for illness with pay according to the categories listed below:

Annual Sick leave is available at the time of employment, up to twelve days per calendar year and non-accumulative

Use of annual sick leave includes:

- A. Employee's own illness
- B. Serious illness of a member of the employee's immediate family
- C. Medical and dentist appointments

### **Extended Sick Leave**

Accrues at the rate of one (1) day each month of active employment up to a maximum of 60 working days and applies only to employee's own illness and recuperative time with written physician's orders.

Use of Extended Sick leave may include:

1. Hospitalization and post hospitalization recuperative time

2. Medical testing and out-patient surgery
3. Disability due to injury
4. Complications due to pregnancy

A statement may be required from the attending physician in the event of extended or repeated illness. At retirement or termination of employment by either party, the employee shall not be compensated for unused sick leave.

If the need for sick leave is foreseeable, employees are required to give at least 30 days' advance notice (e.g., a planned medical treatment) whenever possible. If the need for sick leave is not foreseeable, employees are asked to notify their supervisor as soon as is practical.

If an employee misses 3 days or more consecutive days because of illness, the Conference may require the employee to provide a physician's written permission to return to work.

### **Parental Leave**

Parental leave may be granted and counted as sick leave and charged to time accrued in **Extended Sick leave**. Parental leave may be granted as leave without compensation pursuant to the criteria of the Family and Medical Leave Act, outlined below, not to exceed 12 weeks, if accrued **Extended Sick leave** time is not available. The employee is responsible for notifying the appropriate Supervisor as soon as s/he knows s/he will require maternity or paternity leave.

### **Family and Medical Leave**

In compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Conference provides covered employees with up to twelve (12) weeks of job-protected leave each calendar year for certain family and medical reasons. Available sick and vacation time as well as any paid long-term or short-term disability will run concurrently with any such leave, and once all such accrued paid time has been used in accordance with this policy, the balance of any remaining leave will be unpaid. Employees are eligible for FMLA leave if they have worked for the Conference for at least twelve months. It is not required that the twelve months be consecutive. The employee must also have worked at least 1250 hours in the twelve-month period immediately preceding the application for leave. If an employee does not expressly request FMLA leave, the conference reserves the right to designate a qualifying absence as FMLA leave and will give notice of the FMLA designation to the employee.

The following list indicates reasons for leave covered under FMLA:

1. Birth of a child or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care.
2. A serious health condition of the employee, or the care of a child, spouse or parent who has a serious health condition. A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition requiring inpatient care or continuing medical treatment by a health care provider. To qualify as serious, the condition must result in either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or absence from work and/or regular daily activities for more than three days.
3. Any work-related injury that results in an employee having to miss work, if such an injury or illness meets the criteria stated above for a serious health condition.

Benefits provided while on FMLA leave will be administered in accordance with federal law. If an employee was a covered employee prior to the commencement of the leave period, coverage will stay in effect during the FMLA leave period under the same conditions as if the employee was not on leave

During periods of unpaid leave, an employee will not accrue additional seniority or other such employment benefits, unless the Policy related to childbirth and adoption is applicable.

The right to leave under this policy shall apply equally to male and female employees who meet the eligibility requirements. Employees requesting medical leave for their own medical condition or the serious health condition of a parent, child or spouse must use the balance of any available sick leave or vacation leave accrued prior to the commencement of unpaid leave.

The employee must give 30 days' advance notice to his/her supervisor of the need for leave, where the need is foreseeable. Emergency conditions and unforeseen events, such as a sudden serious health condition or a premature birth, do not require such notice. Under such circumstances, the employee should give as much notice as reasonably possible.

The Conference has the right to verify an employee's request for family/medical leave. If the employee requests leave because of a serious health condition or to care for a family member with a serious health condition, the Conference requires that the request be supported by certification supplied by the health care provider responsible for the treatment of the serious health condition on a form prescribed by the Conference. The certification must include the date the serious health condition began, how long the condition is expected to continue and what medical facts form the basis for these findings. If leave is taken for the serious health condition of a family member, the certification must also include a statement that the individual needs the care of the employee, and, if applicable, an estimate of the amount of time the employee is needed to care for the family member. To the extent allowed by law, the medical certification will be treated as confidential and privileged information.

An employee is required to report in periodically to his/her Director while on FMLA leave. The employee shall report in weekly, or, if the employee is suffering from a serious health condition, as frequently as is possible given the employee's condition. The employee is expected to indicate whether he or she intends to return to work.

Leave taken under this policy can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when certified to be medically necessary. Intermittent or reduced leave schedules for routine care of a new child may be taken only with your supervisor's approval, on a schedule mutually agreed upon by the employee and Director.

Ordinarily, employees are entitled to be returned to the original position or an equivalent position upon return from Family and Medical Leave. However, in the case of a key, salaried employee in the top 10% of paid employees, the Conference may not be able to hold the job. In these circumstances, the Conference must show that the denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the operations of the Conference. The Conference must also notify the employee that it will not be able to hold the original position at the time it is determined and must give the employee the option to return to work within a reasonable period of time after receiving this notice.

### **Return-to-Work Policy**

When such work is available, the Conference may, in its sole discretion, attempt to provide an employee with a temporary modified or light-duty assignment in accordance with documented medical restrictions. Nothing shall require the creation of such a position if meaningful work is not available, nor shall an employee who is entitled to protected leave be required to accept a light or restricted duty position in lieu of leave.

### **Military**

The Conference supports and complies with the Veteran's Reemployment Rights Act, the FMLA provisions



applicable to service member leave, and applicable state laws.

## **FMLA**

Except where otherwise noted, the general rights and responsibilities outlined in the Family & Medical Leave policy shall apply to service member leave taken pursuant to the FMLA.

The FMLA allows eligible employees to take leave for the following qualifying events or circumstances:

**Exigency** – Employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent (the “service member”) on active duty or called to active duty in the National Guard or Reserves may use leave to address certain qualifying exigencies arising out of the active duty or impending active duty.

Examples of qualifying exigencies include:

1. Short notice deployment;
2. Attendance at military events and related activities;
3. Arranging childcare, providing childcare on an urgent basis, and attending school activities;
4. Financial and legal arrangements;
5. Counseling for the employee, the service member or child;
6. Rest and recuperation (up to 5 days);
7. Post-deployment activities;
8. Additional activities to address other events that arise out of active-duty status, provided the employer and employee agree that it is an exigent circumstance and agree to the timing and duration of leave.

An employee may take up to twelve (12) weeks of leave per calendar year (January 1 – December 31). An employee whose family member is on active duty or called to active duty as a member of the Regular Armed Forces is not eligible to take leave because of a qualifying exigency.

**Caregiver for Service member Injury or Illness** – Employees may also take leave to care for a covered current service member (“the service member”) who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her own duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

In order to care for the covered service member, the employee must be the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member.

An employee may take up to twenty-six (26) weeks of caregiver leave during a twelve (12) month period, such period to be calculated beginning on the first day of leave.

**Notice and Documentation** – When the need for leave is foreseeable, the employee shall notify his/her Director at least thirty (30) days before the need for leave. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee shall notify his/her Director as soon as possible. An employee requesting leave must explain the reasons for the needed leave so as to allow the employer to determine whether the leave qualifies under the policy.

The employee must provide complete and sufficient documentation in support of a request for service member FMLA leave. Failure to provide such documentation may result in the denial or delay of FMLA. The employee may also be required to provide documentation of the familial relationship to support service member leave.

TWK supports the military obligations of all employees and grants leaves for uniformed service in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Employees taking part in a variety of military duties are covered under this policy. Such military duties include leaves of absence taken by members of the uniformed services, including active duty, reserve or National Guard, for training, periods of active military service, and funeral honors duty, as well as time spent being examined to determine fitness to perform such service. Subject to certain exceptions under the law, these benefits are generally limited to five years of leave of absence.

Any employee who needs time off for uniformed service should immediately notify his/her supervisor and HR, who will provide details regarding the leave. If an employee is unable to provide notice before leaving for uniformed service, a family member should notify the supervisor as soon as possible. National Guard members (and National Disaster Medical System reservists) are protected under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Upon return from military leave, employees will be granted the same seniority, pay, and benefits as if they had worked continuously. Failure to report for work within the prescribed time after completion of military service will be considered a voluntary termination.

All employees who enter military service may accumulate a total absence of 5 years and still retain employment rights.

### **Bereavement Leave**

An employee will be allowed up to three days with pay to attend the funeral of an employee's Immediate Family.

### **Civic Duty**

Employees are encouraged to accept their responsibilities by voting in elections. Employees are supported in serving as a juror or appearing in court as a witness. Employees must present any summons to jury duty to their supervisor as soon as possible after receiving the notice to allow advance planning for an employee's absence.

Employees are expected to return to work when the service is completed for the day if there is reasonable time to do so. For example, if an employee is released from jury duty within core business hours, they are expected to notify their Director. Likewise, if for example, the jury is excused from reporting for a day or more, the employee is expected to report to work.

Employees will be paid for up to 2 weeks of jury duty service at their regular rate of pay. Employees are expected to let his/her Director know and provide the summons if jury duty will extend for 2 weeks or longer.

Time for appearance in court for personal business will be the individual employee's responsibility. Ordinarily, vacation days will be used for this purpose.

## **SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT**

### **Unemployment Insurance**

Unemployment insurance is not provided for employees of religious organizations under the provisions of

Tennessee and Kentucky state law. Accordingly, the Conference does not provide unemployment insurance for its employees.

### **Resignation**

Should a staff person decide to leave the employment of the TWK, it is expected that at least two weeks written notice will be given. Any accrued unused vacation balance will be provided on the final direct deposit if he/she provides and works a satisfactory written notice.

Any employee who resigns or has been terminated will have the option for continuation of health care coverage for up to 18 months at their own expense.

### **Retirement**

Lay employees who are retiring are requested to provide written notice to his/her Director at least 60 days prior to the effective date of retirement. Clergy who are retiring should provide written notification at least 120 days prior to the effective date of retirement.

### **Severance**

If a termination or discharge is made because of reorganization, shortage of work or lack of funds, the Conference may consider appropriate severance pay. No employee is entitled to such severance pay, and the decision to award severance pay is solely within the discretion of the Conference. Staff leaving employment must return all Conference property to his/her Director, such as office keys, credit cards, and equipment before receiving the separation pay. The Administrative Services office will determine if the terminating employee has any outstanding debt owed to the Conference.

### **Exit Interview**

Before a staff member leaves employment, the Director should conduct an Exit Interview when possible. Documentation of the exit interview will become part of the exiting staff person's personnel file.

### **Life of the Document**

This Policy shall be reviewed and approved by the Conference Human Resources Committee at least once every two years, or more frequently if changes in circumstances or legal standards warrant. The updated manual shall be disseminated to all employees when changes are made.

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the personnel/HR handbook of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies in the handbook.

I understand that the handbook and all other written and oral materials provided to me are intended for informational purposes only. Neither it, Conference practices, nor other communications create an employment contract or term. I understand that the policies and benefits, both in the handbook and those communicated to me in any other fashion, are subject to interpretation, review, and change by the Conference at any time without notice.

I further agree that neither this document nor any other communication shall bind the Conference to employ me now or hereafter and that my employment may be terminated by me or the Conference without reason at any time. I understand that no representative of the Conference has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to assure any other personnel action or to assure any benefits or terms or conditions of employment or make any agreement contrary to the foregoing.

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Employee's Name in Print

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Signature of Employee

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Date Signed by Employee

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE**

## **Confidentiality Statement**

During the time that I serve the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church as an employee I realize that I will have access to information that is considered to be confidential and/or proprietary.

Since confidential and proprietary information – verbal and written – is crucial to the operation of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church, and because the Conference has the obligation to protect such information, I agree that I will not use, publish, or disclose such information during or subsequent to my employment with the Conference. Such information might be received as an employee or might be overheard in passing. I will preserve the restricted nature of this information except to the extent that it becomes publicly available or is otherwise lawfully obtained outside the scope of this agreement from third parties.

This agreement applies retroactively to the beginning of my relationship with the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church as an employee, volunteer, or member of a Conference board or agency and remains in full effect at all times during and after my service.

► I hereby certify that I have read, understand and agree to the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church Personnel Policy as described in this statement, with respect to confidential information, and that the information given in this statement is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

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**Print Name**

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**Signature**

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**Date**

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE**