

Standing Rules of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church

Adopted at Annual Conference 2025

The Standing Rules of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference (also referred to herein as “TWK” or “the Conference”) represent the means by which we organize and oversee our work of making disciples for the transformation of the world. The standing rules are the organizational rules for sessions of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference, setting forth the rules by which sessions of the Conference operate, in compliance with ¶604 of the *2020/2024 United Methodist Book of Discipline*. As our *Book of Discipline* says about itself, our Standing Rules reflect the “...most current statement of how United Methodists [in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference] agree to live together and ‘maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’”

The Committee on Standing Rules presents these rules for renewal and adoption by each session of the Tennessee- Western Kentucky Annual Conference.

Section 1 – Authorization for the Committee on Standing Rules

- 1.1 The Committee on Standing Rules has the responsibility to:
 - a) Propose new policies and standing rules;
 - b) Propose needed amendments to existing policies and standing rules;
 - c) Provide guidance to the annual conference at any point where conference action may be at variance with a policy or standing rule.
- 1.2 The Standing Rules of the Annual Conference must be in compliance with the provisions of ¶604 of the current edition of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*.

Section 2 – Annual Conference Session Procedures

- 2.1 The conference shall follow the latest edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order* except where it is in conflict with these Standing Rules or the current *Book of Discipline*.
- 2.2 All motions and resolutions shall be supplied to the conference secretary in writing on a form provided for this purpose by the conference secretary.

- 2.3 All resolutions not included in the pre-conference materials shall be submitted to the Committee on Resolutions at least 60 days prior to the first day of the annual conference session. The chair of the Committee on Resolutions shall submit to the annual conference, in their original form, all resolutions so submitted. In addition, the Committee on Resolutions may present to the annual conference for consideration a revised version of any such resolution.
- 2.4 The roll call of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference shall be taken from the list submitted by the Conference Secretary.
- 2.5 The agenda of the annual conference shall be that as it is corrected and distributed on the first day of annual conference with the understanding that the Bishop may adjust the agenda for the good of the order.
- 2.6 All speeches other than reports shall be limited to three minutes. A maximum of three speeches for, and three speeches against, shall apply to each item of business presented to the annual conference for vote. This limitation shall not apply to questions or parliamentary points of order.
- 2.7 Voting eligibility will be determined by the Conference Secretary, as guided by the Book of Discipline. The Conference Secretary shall determine, in consultation with the Annual Conference Design Team, the appropriate means of identifying who is eligible to vote on all issues requiring a vote.
- 2.8 The annual conference session shall meet at a location accessible to persons with disabilities. Where it is impractical or impossible to meet in person, meetings may be conducted electronically to the full extent permitted by law.
- 2.9 All annual conference reports to be presented at Annual Conference and/or to be included in the journal (other than reports from the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Cabinet, Connectional Table, and Council on Finance and Administration) shall be supplied to the Conference Secretary in writing on a form provided for this purpose at least 60 days prior to the opening day of annual conference. Any corrections and/or additions received after this date may, at the discretion of the Conference Secretary, be included in the journal. Handwritten and typewritten reports shall not be accepted for publication in the journal. All reports should be typed using Microsoft Word according to the specifications on the conference website. Photos must be submitted as separate JPG files and must include permissions from all persons pictured. Photos submitted will be used as space permits in the journal. Use Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Journal Style Sheet posted on the conference website for guidance on capitalization, punctuation, and so forth to ensure that the journal has a consistent look and flow. Files that contain tables should be submitted in Microsoft Excel format. No PDF or directly scanned images will be accepted.
- 2.10 There shall be a consent agenda that will include the following:
- a) Agenda items and reports not requiring action by the Annual Conference other than receipt of the item for publication in the journal or acceptance of the report;

- b) All nominations made pursuant to Section 5 below; and
- c) Closures, mergers, and charge line changes of local churches.

In order for any item or report to be eligible for placement on the consent agenda, it must have been available online with the pre-conference materials at least seventy-two hours prior to the opening date of the Annual Conference session. Any item may be removed from the consent agenda if ten members of the Conference who are eligible to vote petition for removal.

- 2.11 Equalization: Whenever it shall occur that the person serving as the director of Administrative Services or Connectional Ministry Officer is a lay person, then each person so serving shall be an at-large lay member of the annual conference. The conference secretary shall determine annually the number of laypersons needed to equalize lay and clergy members of the annual conference. A maximum of 20% of the at-large delegates should be reserved for those serving in conference leadership roles as determined by the Conference Connectional Table. The remaining at-large members are to be allocated as nearly as possible on a pro-rata basis as determined by church attendance as reported in the most recent Year End Statistical Reports). The at-large members are to be selected by each district leadership team and should reflect the rich diversity of our connection – across ethnicity, age, sex, race, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ability and more-so that together we embody the beautiful tapestry of who we are and the beloved community God calls us to become.

Section 3 -- Election of Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference

- 3.1 Clergy and lay delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences shall be elected as provided in the Constitution of The United Methodist Church (paragraphs 35-37 of *The Book of Discipline*).
- 3.2 Ballots:
 - a) Ballots will be provided by the office of the conference secretary.
 - b) Fifty percent plus one valid ballots cast shall be necessary to elect. Voting shall continue until the requisite number of delegates receives at least fifty percent plus one votes cast. After the first three rounds of voting, votes received will no longer be displayed before the body for any delegate receiving less than 20% percent of the vote in the preceding round of voting, but the names of such delegates shall remain available for selection on the voting devices.
 - c) Ballots with more or less than the number of delegates to be elected shall be rejected as invalid.
- 3.3 Candidacy of persons eligible to serve as delegates, whether clergy or lay to General and/or jurisdictional conference, may be established either by declaration or nomination:
 - a) To declare candidacy for election to serve as a General or jurisdictional conference delegate, the eligible person must submit to the Conference Secretary, no later than 60 days prior to the opening day of annual conference, for inclusion in the pre-conference

materials a statement concerning:

1. His/her activities at the local church, district, and annual, jurisdictional, and general conference levels;
 2. An assessment of the principal needs of the general Church and how those needs should be met; and
 3. Any other information felt pertinent to introducing himself/herself to those members of the annual conference who may not be familiar with his/her views on issues confronting the Church.
- b) To nominate a person for candidacy to be elected to serve as a General or jurisdictional conference delegate and have the nomination included in the pre-conference materials, the nominator(s) must:
1. Determine the eligibility of the person to be nominated.
 2. Secure from the person to be nominated and submit to the Conference Secretary the proposed nominee's written consent to accept the nomination.
 3. Submit to the Conference Secretary, no later than 60 days prior to the opening day of annual conference, for inclusion in the pre-conference materials, a statement concerning:
 - a. The activities of the nominee at the local church, district, and annual, jurisdictional, and general conference levels,
 - b. An assessment of the views of the nominee regarding the principal needs of the church and how those needs should be met, and
 - c. Any other information (such as age and ethnicity) felt to be pertinent to introducing the nominee to those members of the annual conference who may not be familiar with that nominee's views on issues confronting the church.
- c) Statements submitted in the establishing of candidacy, whether by declaration or nomination, shall be limited to 200 words and shall be submitted to the Conference Secretary via e-mail.
- d) Persons do not have to declare candidacy or be nominated for candidacy in order to be eligible for election to serve as a General or jurisdictional conference delegate.
- e) The initial ballot for election to General Conference will have a ballot number assigned only to those who, by declaration or nomination, have expressed their desire to be considered as a candidate. All subsequent ballots will assign numbers to write-in candidates during the election process.

3.4 Reserve delegates: After the general and jurisdictional conference delegates are elected, three

lay and three clergy reserve delegates shall be elected. The delegation's budget will include funding for three lay and three clergy reserve delegates to attend General and jurisdictional conferences.

Section 4 – Suspension, Adoption, and Amendment of Standing Rules

- 4.1 Any standing rule, with the exception of SR 4.1 and SR 4.2, may be suspended at any session of the annual conference by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and eligible to vote.
- 4.2 Any proposal for the adoption of a standing rule, or for the amendment of an existing standing rule, shall be submitted to the Committee on Standing Rules at least 60 days prior to the first day of the annual conference session. The Committee on Standing Rules will present their recommendations to the annual conference, and their recommendations may be adopted or amended from the floor by a two-thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote. Proposed revisions to the Standing Rules will be available on the conference website at least 30 days prior to the first day of the annual conference session.
- 4.3 Any additions or amendments to the Standing Rules shall take effect at the conclusion of the annual conference session in which they are adopted.

Section 5 – Nominations, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and other Entities

- 5.1 The Annual Conference Committee on Nominations shall be chaired by the bishop and elected by the annual conference.
- 5.2 The Committee on Nominations shall nominate persons in alignment with the conference ministry structure as authorized by the annual conference.
- 5.3 The Committee on Nominations shall develop a system for nominating leaders which utilizes the conference communication tools, enhances the desire to invest in young and diverse leadership, and seeks the input of leaders across the area. The system will adhere to the appropriate provisions in the current *Book of Discipline*. Particular attention will be paid to focus on the guiding values adopted for the TWK conference.
- 5.4 No person shall serve as a member of the same conference board, council, commission or agency, or on an associated or underlying committee (such as one which has as its parent body a conference board or agency), for more than eight years in a period of 12.
- 5.5 No person shall serve as a chairperson of any conference entity or as conference secretary or conference lay leader for more than eight years in a period of 12.
- 5.6 No person shall serve as a member of any entity of the annual conference when there is real or potential conflict of interest of an ongoing and thoroughgoing nature. When such conflict arises, that person shall be replaced immediately by the appropriate nominating committee, provided, however, that when a real or potential conflict of interest arises on a single issue, the person affected shall withdraw from the meeting until the discussion of and voting on that issue is complete.

Section 6 – Administration

- 6.1 The fiscal year of the annual conference shall be the calendar year.
- 6.2 All financial requests of the annual conference shall be presented to the Council on Finance and Administration for consideration and recommendation, using the format requested by the Council on Finance and Administration. Any proposed budget amendment made from the floor that includes a financial request of the annual conference shall be accompanied by a proposal for the source of the funds for such request. The President of the Council on Finance and Administration and the Conference Treasurer shall be consulted regarding any such proposal and shall be given the opportunity to provide information to the annual conference regarding the impact of any such proposed budget amendment.
- 6.3 The authorization for the establishment of short-term committees related to the annual conference may include reimbursement for expenses incurred by committee members, in accordance with Council on Finance and Administration policies and oversight.
- 6.4 The expenses of at-large members necessary for the equalization of lay and clergy members of the annual conference shall be paid by the annual conference from the annual conference expenses line item not to exceed a per diem for lodging and food established each year by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. In addition, reimbursement for travel shall be at the conference's current mileage rate.
- 6.5 The conference treasurer is authorized to pay invoices clearly related to budgeted lines which the treasurer determines to be a proper conference expense, subject to available funding. In the case of requests that are not clearly related to or exceed a budgeted line item:
 - a) expenses under \$10,000 are delegated to the treasurer with the authority to approve the request;
 - b) requests of \$10,000 up to \$25,000 require approval from the CFA executive committee before payment;
 - c) requests above \$25,000 up to \$250,000 require approval from a majority of CFA members before payment;
 - d) requests above \$250,000 up to \$1,000,000.00 require approval from a majority of CFA members and a majority of Connectional Table members before payment;
 - e) any requests above \$1,000,000.00 shall be referred to the annual conference for its decision.
- 6.6 The following authority shall exist in extraordinary circumstances where necessary, due to unforeseen fluctuations in expenses or revenue that render the Conference unable to meet its commitments within the annual budget:
 - a) the conference treasurer is authorized to make minor reductions within existing budget line items, not exceeding 5% of the line item's total allocation;

- b) reductions above 5% up to 10% require approval from the CFA executive committee;
- c) reductions above 10% up to 15% require approval from a majority of CFA members;
- d) reductions above 15% up to 25% require approval from a majority of CFA members and a majority of Connectional Table members;
- e) reductions of 25% or higher will be deferred to the next regular or a special called session of annual conference for its decision.

6.7 Personnel policies will be developed and approved by the Human Resources (HR) Committee.

6.8 Annual conference records are maintained by various persons representing the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Pensions, Commission on Archives and History, district boards of ministry, the conference secretary, the bishop's office, and the offices of the district superintendents. These records are the property of the annual conference and shall be maintained, disposed of, or archived according to The Book of Discipline, G.C.F.A. Guidelines, and/or applicable law.