

2023 Standing Rules

A. Introduction

“The annual conference, for its own government, may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the Discipline of The United Methodist Church” (§ 604.1.) The standing rules of the conference expand and clarify these structures and their modes of operation. (All references to the 2016 *The Book of Discipline* hereafter shall be designated by the paragraph number.)

A. 1. Rules - *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern parliamentary procedures of the annual conference, subject to the rules of the preceding general conference and the 2016 *The Book of Discipline*.

A. 2. Amendments - These standing rules may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the conference no fewer than twenty-four (24) hours following their presentation to the conference; provided, a written copy of the proposed amendment(s) shall be submitted to the conference secretary before being read to the conference. Amendments shall take effect upon passage.

B. Standing Committees of the Annual Conference

The primary function of standing committees is to provide support that enables the session of the North Georgia Annual Conference to operate efficiently. These on-going committees do not have programmatic responsibilities throughout the year other than preparing for the annual conference session.

B. 1. There shall be a committee on standing rules composed of up to ten (10) with no less than five (5) persons, nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations, plus the conference chancellor and conference secretary. The committee on standing rules is charged with the annual task of addressing the submission of new rules and maintaining the standing rules of the annual conference in the following ways: to receive requests for amendments, assure rules maintain internal consistency, make editorial changes as needed, present changes to the conference and review revised standing rules for publication in the conference journal. The committee is also charged with the quadrennial task of examining the rules of the annual conference for consistency with the latest *The Book of Discipline* and to recommend any editorial changes to bring about that consistency.

B. 2. There shall be a committee on registration and assistance composed of up to ten (10) with no less than five (5) persons, nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations. The primary functions of the committee on registration & assistance are to conduct registration, along with the host committee; certify delegates; and to issue badges accordingly. Using guidelines to verify eligibility, the committee helps retired pastors receive financial assistance, and during the week of annual conference, the committee maintains a table to assist visitors with badges and other needs. The registration and assistance committee is responsible for working with the host committee to organize and recruit volunteers.

B. 3. There shall be a committee on daily proceedings composed of up to ten (10) with no less than five (5) persons, nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations.

The daily proceedings committee is responsible for certifying the written record of the annual conference and reporting to the annual conference on the committee's review of the material.

The committee on daily proceedings works with the editor of the conference journal/conference secretary as needed to ensure compliance with Disciplinary standards in ¶ 606.3 and for clarification of the written record of the annual conference session.

B. 4. There shall be a committee on resolutions composed of up to ten (10) with no less than five (5) persons, nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations. The charge of the resolution committee is to process all resolutions presented to the annual conference that are not submitted to the programmatic committees through dialogue with the submitter and all agencies of the annual conference affected by the resolution. This committee makes sure that, with occasional exceptions, resolutions submitted by the deadline of February 1 of the Annual Conference year are included in the handbook.

The resolutions committee is responsible for reviewing each resolution to determine if it can properly come before the annual conference, making revisions as needed in consultation with the submitter of the resolution, ensuring consistency with *The Book of Discipline* and North Georgia Standing Rules/Guidelines, submitting to the conference secretary by the deadline for the conference handbook, and presenting resolutions to the conference.

C. Annual Conference Session and Related Committees

C. 1. Annual Conference Committee on Nominations - There shall be an annual conference committee on nominations whose duty shall be to nominate all lay and clergy members of the boards, councils, teams, commissions, committees, and other agencies of the north Georgia conference. The committee shall be composed of the bishop, who shall be the chairperson; the district superintendents and extended cabinet; the conference lay leader and associate conference lay leaders; the district lay leaders; the commission on religion and race representative; the conference presidents of United Methodist Men and of United Women in Faith; the chairpersons of the conference young adult organization and the council on youth ministry; and not more than five (5) members-at-large who shall be named by the bishop for inclusiveness. The committee shall make its nominations not later than the second morning of the annual conference.

The executive committee of the annual conference committee on nominations, composed of the bishop, the conference lay leader, the director of connectional ministries or designated person, three (3) other members of the annual conference committee on nominations named by the bishop, will coordinate the comprehensive nominations process of identification, recruitment, training, selection and evaluation for the annual conference. Where vacancies in essential elected positions occur between annual conference sessions, the executive committee may fill the positions until the next annual conference elects. Task forces may be used in keeping with the directions stated in standing rule H.1.

C. 2. District Committee on Nominations - There shall be a district committee on nominations, composed of five (5) clergy and six (6) lay members. One (1) clergy member shall be the district superintendent, who shall serve as the chairperson. One (1) of the six (6) lay members shall be the district lay leader. The district committee on nominations shall

assist in identifying, recruiting and recommending potential leaders to the conference committee on nominations.

C. 3. Quadrennial Boards, Teams, Councils, Commissions, Committees - The membership of quadrennial boards, councils, teams, commissions, committees, and other agencies shall be limited to twenty-seven (27) persons plus ex-officio members. This rule shall not apply to standing committees or to any board, council, team, commission, committee, or other agency whose membership is otherwise determined by the conference or by *The Book of Discipline*.

All committees, boards, teams, councils, commissions and agencies of the annual conference shall be composed of equal numbers of clergy and laity unless *The Book of Discipline* provides otherwise.

No person shall be eligible for election to membership on the same board, council, team, commission or committee or agency for more than eight (8) consecutive years and after serving eight (8) years may not be later elected to the same board, commission, team, council, committee or agency for more than eight (8) years except as allowed by *The Book of Discipline*, for a lifetime total of sixteen (16) years maximum on the same board, council, team, commission, committee or agency. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall be one of those exempted from this standing rule. ¶ 635.1.a. of *The Book of Discipline* states that the membership of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be as follows: “An elected board member may serve a maximum of three (3) consecutive four (4) year terms.” No person shall be nominated to serve concurrently on more than one (1) quadrennial board, council, team, commission or committee, except as an ex-officio member. However, one (1) exemption may be allowed for those serving on the board of laity, episcopal committee, congregational development, nominations, the standing committees of the annual conference session (registration and assistance, daily proceedings, resolutions, and standing rules) and the Board of Ordained Ministry. No district superintendent may be nominated as an elective member of any program agency or team of the conference. Persons nominated shall have agreed in advance to serve if elected.

When quadrennial boards, councils, teams, commissions and committees are elected, they shall receive training, information and support for their responsibilities within sixty (60) days following the annual conference session, except in a year of episcopal transition when the window will be one hundred twenty (120) days. Chairpersons shall be nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations and elected by the annual conference. Under the direction of their respective chairpersons, each board, council, commission and committee shall elect a vice-chairperson and secretary. All team officers shall be nominated by the committee on nominations.

All district committees and conference boards, councils, teams, commissions and committees shall include members which ensure balance, continuity, expertise and inclusiveness in keeping with the spirit and guidelines of *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 140.

C. 3. a. For Persons Holding Chairs:

C. 3. a. 1) Chairpersons are expected to maintain a yearly calendar of scheduled and announced meetings for planning, budgeting, and evaluation.

C. 3. a. 2) Chairpersons are expected to plan meetings at such times and locations that encourage and allow for maximum attendance of the elected membership, giving particular mind to the academic schedules of youth and young adults.

C. 3. a. 3) Chairpersons are to submit proper budgets with supporting rationale and any other requested reports in a proper and timely manner.

C. 3. a. 4) Chairpersons are expected to provide consistent communication with members of their committee or board regarding agendas, time/date/locations, and related information that impact a member's ability to serve well.

C. 3. a. 5) Chairpersons are expected to attend all called meetings of the committee or board for which he or she is responsible. Missing (2) two consecutive called meetings of his or her committee or board with no excuse, or missing (3) three consecutive called meetings of his or her committee or board with good excuse, will result in automatic release from the chair position and from membership on the committee or board.

C. 3. a. 6) Inability to meet the minimum guidelines of attendance will prompt a letter from the conference nominations executive committee, releasing the individual from his or her position (this will not negatively impact subsequent nominations or committee service) so the conference nominations executive committee can immediately fill the vacated position.

C. 3. a. 7) Chairpersons are permitted to nominate a member of the committee or board to serve in her or his place as a representative of the primary committee on the secondary committee on which the chairperson is a member by virtue of position.

C. 3. b. For Committee and Board Members:

C. 3. b. 1) Elected members are expected to attend all called meetings of the committee or board on which they are serving. Missing (3) three consecutive properly called meetings of his or her committee or board with no excuse, or missing (4) four consecutive properly called meetings of his or her committee or board with good excuse, will result in automatic release from the chair position and from membership on the committee or board.

C. 3. b. 2) Inability to meet the minimum guidelines of attendance will prompt a letter of notification from the conference nominations executive committee, releasing the individual from his or her position (this will not negatively impact subsequent nominations or committee service) so the conference nominations executive committee can immediately fill the vacated position.

C. 3. c. Training for all members of conference and district boards, teams, councils, commissions, and committees

C. 3. c. 1) All members of conference and ~~district boards~~, teams, councils, commissions, and committees including chairs, co-chairs, vice-chairs, and ex-officio members shall complete intercultural training within 60 days of beginning a term of service. The training shall be determined by the Conference Commission on Religion and Race and be funded through the budget of the Director of Inclusion and Advocacy.

C. 3. c. 2) Members who have begun terms prior 2023 shall complete intercultural training within 60 days of the conclusion of the 2023 Annual Conference Session.

C. 3. c. 3) Inability to meet the minimum guideline for intercultural training will prompt a letter of notification from the conference nominations executive committee, releasing the individual from his or her position so the conference nominations executive committee can immediately fill the vacated position.

C. 3. d. Maintaining Good Standing for Service

C. 3. d. 1) All members of conference and district boards, teams, councils, commissions, and committers shall maintain faithful membership of a United Methodist Church and refrain from engaging in activities or behaviors that are detrimental to their

witness as United Methodist disciples of Jesus Christ. This is a minimum requirement to be in good standing to serve.

C. 3. d. 2) Inability to meet the minimum requirements will prompt a letter of notification from the conference nominations executive committee, releasing the individual from his or her position so the conference nominations executive committee can immediately fill the vacated position.

C. 4. Annual Conference Planning Committee - There shall be an annual conference planning committee responsible for setting the agenda for sessions of the annual conference, recommending the site of the conference annually, and overall coordination of annual conference. Applications to host the conference shall be for a period of four consecutive years in one site. The application shall be submitted to the bishop not less than two and one-half years before the proposed invitation date and must include adequate data to satisfy the planning committee of the suitability of the proposed site, with special attention to housing, food service, seating, congregating areas, parking and all standard public services necessary to accommodate large numbers of people. All facilities must meet ADA Accessibility Guidelines. All applications to host the conference must include an itemized account of anticipated expenses. The site must provide seating for all members of the conference, both clergy and lay, and for visitors and guests.

The annual conference planning committee shall select one site for four years and must reconfirm the site selected for each of the four years of the approved application. When for unforeseen circumstances related to finances, logistics or other compelling reasons the annual conference is not able to hold annual conference at the agreed upon site, the annual conference planning committee is authorized to work with the conference council on finance and administration to secure an appropriate alternate site.

The annual conference planning committee shall consist of the following persons: the bishop; the annual conference lay leader; the associate conference lay leader(s); the conference secretary; the dean of the cabinet; the conference presidents of United Women in Faith, United Methodist Men, conference youth organization, conference young adult organization and the conference young adult committee representative; the chairpersons of the conference committee on registration and assistance and the board of ordained ministry; the director of connectional ministries or designated person; the director of center for clergy excellence, executive assistant to the bishop, the chairperson of the conference council on finance and administration; the conference treasurer; and other persons selected by the bishop to assure proper representation of persons related to the work of the committee, such as the host district superintendent and the host pastor. The bishop or his/her designee shall be the chairperson of the annual conference planning committee.

C. 5. Conference Handbook & Information Packets - Material for publication in the conference handbook shall be submitted annually to the conference secretary not less than ninety (90) days prior to the opening date of the annual conference. Other material may be distributed to the members of the conference, at the discretion of the conference secretary, in a packet of supplementary materials. All printed materials requiring action by the annual conference shall be available in large print. The default format of the handbook shall be PDF posted on the conference website for members to download or print.

C. 6. Pre-Conference Briefings - Not more than twenty-five (25) days prior to the opening session of the annual conference, each district superintendent, in consultation with the district lay leader, shall convene, at such time and place as the two (2) of them together shall determine, the conference members residing in the district, both clergy and lay, for the purpose of examining the published reports and recommendations of the boards, councils, teams, commissions, committees and other agencies of the conference.

C. 7. Consent Agenda - In order to expedite the business of the conference, the consent agenda committee, composed of the conference secretary, the chairperson of the committee on standing rules, the director of connectional ministries or designated person, and the conference lay leader or his/her designee, in consultation with agencies or individuals presenting reports, recommendations or resolutions, may present in the conference handbook a written list of items which shall be known as the consent agenda. Items on the consent agenda shall be considered as adopted by consent of the annual conference unless they are removed from this list at a time set aside for this purpose on the second day of conference. Individual items may be removed from the consent agenda to be placed on the regular agenda by a motion to remove supported by a second from two (2) voting members of the annual conference. When an item has been removed from the consent agenda, it shall be placed on the regular agenda at an appropriate time as determined by the conference secretary.

C. 8. Reports - Reports shall be in writing, and an original, signed copy of the same shall be in the hands of the conference secretary before being read on the floor of the conference. When twenty-five (25) percent or more of the membership of a board, council, team, commission, committee or other agency shall request the privilege of presenting a minority report to the annual conference, the chairperson of said board or other agency shall appoint a committee to draft a minority report and shall submit the said minority report along with the majority report to the conference.

C. 9. Committee on Resolutions - There shall be a committee on resolutions, nominated and elected under the provisions of the standing rules (B.4). Any resolution coming to the floor of the annual conference which has not been before an official board, commission or agency of the annual conference, or a resolution not previously printed in the conference handbook, shall be referred to the committee on resolutions for study before the resolution is considered by the annual conference.

C.10. Virtual Conference - In the event that the Annual Conference Planning Committee determines that circumstances require that any annual or special session of the Conference should be held by virtual or electronic meeting in lieu of physical meeting, such determination shall be communicated to all delegates to the annual conference with a notice of the date and time for such virtual or electronic meeting. The notice shall be delivered in writing or by electronic communication at least ten days prior to the date specified for the virtual or electronic meeting. The notice shall provide the methodology necessary for each delegate to participate in the virtual or electronic meeting.

For any action to be taken by the delegates at the virtual or electronic meeting, a ballot shall be provided to the delegates by electronic transmission that shall set forth each proposed action and provide an opportunity for each delegate to vote for or against each proposed action.

Approval by electronic ballot shall be valid only when the number of votes cast by such ballot equals or exceeds the quorum required to be present at a meeting authorizing the

action, and the number of approvals equals or exceeds the number of votes that would be required to approve the matter at a meeting at which the total number of votes cast was the same as the number of votes cast by ballot. Prior to or simultaneously with the delivery of any electronic ballot, the Conference Secretary shall notify by electronic communication (1) the number of responses needed to meet the quorum requirements, (2) the percentage of approvals necessary to approve each matter, and the time by which a ballot must be received by the Conference Secretary or any designated teller(s) in order to be counted. Once submitted by any delegate, an electronic ballot may not be modified or revoked.

D. Administrative Procedures of the Annual Conference

D. 1. Publication of Names and Addresses of Lay Members - The names and email addresses of lay members of the annual conference, arranged by districts and by charges, shall be published in the conference journal, and they shall be compiled and made available to members of the conference, both lay and clergy, as early as feasible following their election.

D. 2. Lay Member Equalization Plan - The lay membership of the annual conference shall be equal in number to its clergy membership. Lay members shall be elected by each charge conference as directed by *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 32. The following are designated by *The Book of Discipline* (loc. cit.) to be members of the annual conference: the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses, and home missionaries under Episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, the conference president of the United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the conference director of lay servant ministries, conference secretary of global ministries (if lay), the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student organization, and one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference.

If the lay membership shall number less than the clergy membership, the following lay persons shall also be members of the annual conference: the associate conference lay leaders, the district directors of lay servant ministries, the district presidents of United Women in Faith and United Methodist Men, and the district presidents or equivalent officers of the district young adult organization and the district youth organization, six (6) young persons 18 years and under and eight (8) young adult persons eighteen (18) years of age to thirty five (35) years of age.

Additional members shall be elected from each district by the district board of laity to achieve equalization of the number of lay and clergy members of the annual conference.

The conference secretary shall advise the district superintendents annually, not later than November 1, of the number of additional lay members required to achieve equalization. The district superintendents shall assist the district board of laity to elect the necessary persons, to notify them of their election, and to forward their names and addresses to the conference secretary by January 1 of each year.

D. 3. Pastoral Transition and Expenses

The last Sunday for pastors leaving a church will be the last Sunday of June. Move Day will be on the Tuesday following the last Sunday in June, and pastors shall vacate parsonages no later than 1:00 p.m. on this date. The first Sunday in July will be transitional leave for moving pastors. The incoming pastor's first day in the office will be the first business day after July 4. The incoming pastor's first day in the pulpit will be the second Sunday of July. If unusual circumstances prevail, the cabinet may change these dates to more suitable ones; provided, further, the secretary of the cabinet shall have notice of the change published on the North Georgia Conference website not fewer than ninety (90) days prior to the convening of annual conference. Churches receiving new pastors shall pay the moving expenses of the clergy, not to exceed \$6,000. The amount paid shall be reported in accordance with IRS code.

D. 4. Care of Parsonages - Clergy shall use care to maintain cleanliness and good housekeeping of the parsonages in which they reside. In addition to the annual inspection of the parsonage (§ 2533.4), at a time of change in pastoral appointment, there shall be an inspection of the parsonage by the pastor and the pastor/parish relations committee to determine the condition of the parsonage.

Responsibilities and additional information regarding parsonages can be found in the report from the Commission on Equitable Compensation in the Guidelines and Reports sections.

D. 5. Number of Districts - There shall be eight (8) districts in the North Georgia Conference.

D. 6. Service Year - The conference service year shall be July 1 through June 30.

D. 7. Local Church Reports - Pastors shall submit their annual reports as directed by the conference statistician. The conference statistician shall reconcile the financial reports with the records of the conference treasurer.

D. 8. Archives - The depository for archival records of the North Georgia Conference shall be the Candler School of Theology of Emory University through its Pitts Theology Library.

E. Finance and Property

E. 1. Budget Development - All requests for appropriations shall be submitted to the conference council on finance and administration, in writing, not less than ninety (90) days prior to the opening session of the annual conference. Requests shall include a detailed financial statement. Any persons or group presenting a proposal to the annual conference for a program or activity which is not included in the conference budget shall at the same time, present a financial analysis including estimated cost and plans for funding. Before final action by the annual conference, the conference council on finance and administration shall review the financial aspects of the proposal and make its recommendation to the conference regarding the proposal. Budgets submitted to the conference for approval shall include itemized comparative figures for the previous year, except in the case of new programs.

E. 2. Fiscal Regulations - The conference fiscal year shall be January 1 through December 31. All monies for conference and district items shall be remitted by December 31. The books of the conference treasurer and the district treasurers shall be closed at the end of business on the fifth (5th) working day following January 1. The conference treasurer shall make final settlement and disburse all funds to the annual conference boards, councils,

commissions or other agencies within fifteen (15) days following the end of the fiscal year. The conference treasurer shall report by districts and by charges all payments for equitable compensation, mission appropriations and the temporary general aid fund. The conference treasurer shall report monthly to the district superintendents all conference askings paid by each local church in the district.

E. 3. District Superintendents and District Office Financial Support

The *Conference* apportionments will fund the following expenses: (1) district superintendent salaries, pensions, insurance (subject to the same insurance rules for other clergy); (2) district superintendent business expenses, including all travel and all business expenses; (3) salaries, pensions and insurance for the conference-employed administrative assistants assigned to the district offices (subject to the same rules for other conference lay staff); (4) district superintendent housing allowance (\$32,749 per annum in 2020-2021) or parsonage and utilities (\$5,000 in 2020-2021); (5) District Office overhead/support expenses such as rent/mortgage, utilities, property and liability insurance, supplies, equipment rental, etc.

E. 4. Church Property - Each district superintendent shall furnish the conference secretary annually, no later than February 1 of each year, for publication in the Conference Journal, a list of the real property situated within the district, belonging to but not currently in use by The United Methodist Church. Each district superintendent shall supplement said list in the event the district superintendent shall determine that the action of a charge conference in its district prior to the end of Annual Conference will result in the closing of a local church and the need to dispose of that local church's property. In the event of an ad interim procedure, as set out in ¶ 2549.3, the Conference Board of Trustees shall supplement the list with that information. The compilation of those lists shall be transmitted by the Conference Secretary to the Annual Conference Board of Trustees no later than February 15 of each year and supplemented as herein set out. The Conference Board of Trustees shall review said list and add or subtract properties based on its knowledge of the current status of properties not in use. The Conference Board of Trustees shall report the most current information regarding unused property, including properties to be discontinued, along with recommendations to the Annual Conference with recommendations for disposition. To assist it in managing and disposing of unused properties, the Conference Board of Trustees may employ professional management personnel or entities. Funding for such assistance shall be retained from the sale or rental of any properties within the authority of the Conference Board of Trustees.

E. 5. Salary Supplements - All supplementation of pastoral salaries from whatever source shall be administered by the commission on equitable compensation in accordance with guidelines developed by the commission and approved by the annual conference, except that the conference board of congregational development shall be authorized to administer salary supplementation for pastors of new and redeveloping congregations, in keeping with guidelines developed by the committee and approved by the annual conference.

E. 6. Charters - Charters authorized by the North Georgia Conference shall be reviewed by the conference chancellor before being filed with the Georgia Secretary of State.

E. 7. Annual Conference Registration Fee – A registration fee of \$30.00 shall be assessed for each lay and active clergy delegate to the North Georgia Annual Conference. Retired clergy and youth members are exempt from the assessment.

F. Conference Common Table (CCT)

F. 1. There shall be a Conference Common Table with responsibility to focus and guide the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church within the boundaries of the North Georgia Annual Conference. It shall give leadership and guidance in setting the vision and priorities of the annual conference and in conducting an on-going process of refining and revising that vision.

F. 2. The director of connectional ministries or designated person, in consultation with the resident bishop, shall chair the Common Table, which shall be composed of the following persons: resident bishop, director of connectional ministries or designated person, district superintendents, director of center for clergy excellence, executive assistant to the bishop, director of congregational excellence, chairperson of the board of congregational development, conference treasurer, chairperson of the council on finance and administration, chairperson of the board of ordained ministry, secretary of the annual conference, conference chancellor, conference lay leader, the four associate conference lay leaders, conference president of United Women in Faith, conference president of United Methodist Men, president of the conference youth organization, the co-presidents of the conference young adult organization, chairperson of the board of discipleship and advocacy, vice-chair of the board of discipleship and advocacy, conference staff person assigned to missions, chairperson of the order of deacons, chairperson of the order of elders, chairperson of the fellowship of local pastors and associate members, the heads of the most recently elected lay and clergy delegations to general conference, and such at-large members as the bishop shall nominate to provide for diversity and inclusiveness as regards race/ethnicity/national origin, age, and gender. The Common Table's membership shall be limited to fifty persons. The eligibility limitations of standing rule C.3. shall not apply to the Common Table.

F. 3. There shall be an executive committee of the Common Table composed of the bishop, the director of connectional ministries or designated person, the conference lay leader, the dean of the cabinet, the chairperson of the board of discipleship and advocacy, and the chairperson of the council on finance and administration.

F. 4. The Common Table could be called into session at such time as the chair, in consultation with the bishop, deems it necessary for the benefit of the conference's work, and may report each year to the annual conference regarding stewardship of the conference's vision and its commitment to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

G. Connectional Ministries

G. 1. There shall be a director of connectional ministries or designated person who, in partnership with the bishop and cabinet, shall have the following primary responsibilities: to serve as steward of the vision of the annual conference, including the development, clarification, interpretation, and embodiment of the conference's vision; to serve as leader of the continuous process of transformation and renewal necessary for the annual conference to be faithful to our Christian identity in a changing world; to ensure alignment of the total resources of the conference to its vision; and to ensure the connections among the local, district, annual conference, and general church ministries for the purpose of networking, resourcing, and communicating their shared ministry.

G. 2. The director of connectional ministries or designated person shall serve as an officer of the annual conference and shall sit with the cabinet when the cabinet considers matters relating to coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, and other matters as the cabinet and director may determine.

G. 3. The director of connectional ministries or designated person shall coordinate the recruitment and training of conference program leaders, provide oversight and leadership in the conference's program and ministry, and serve as chair of the Common Table and as executive officer of the board of discipleship and advocacy.

H. Connectional Ministry Team

H.1. There shall be connectional ministry team. The work and ministry of this board is aimed at strengthening the local church and the annual conference through discipleship and support of the North Georgia Conference churches, laity and clergy, and through the prophetic voice of advocacy that calls us all to be better; to lead and assist congregations, districts and the conference in efforts to communicate and celebrate the redeeming and reconciling love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ to persons of every age, ethnic background, and social condition; to invite persons to commit their lives to Christ and to Christ's church; and to enable persons to live as Christian disciples in the world. In carrying out this work and ministry, the board shall be responsible for leading the North Georgia Conference ministries stipulated in ¶ 630 of *The Book of Discipline*, including as central to its role and ministries:

- Shall have authority to form committees as the Discipline may require or for carrying out its responsibilities
- working in collaboration with the Barnes Evaluation and Administration Team and the eight (8) District Strategic Growth Teams to ensure ongoing congregational development through promoting, nurturing, supporting, and guiding existing and new faith communities as they implement innovative ministries with and in the communities they serve
- working in collaboration with the North Georgia Conference staff to ensure focused, strategic, and effective training, consultation, leadership development, and other, human resources-driven support are provided to the North Georgia Conference churches, laity, and clergy for both new and existing ministries
- working in collaboration with all the North Georgia Conference churches, laity, clergy, and other groups to ensure our call to Christian advocacy is heard and responded to in effective and meaningful ways across our North Georgia Conference, and as stipulated in *The Book of Discipline*
- working collaboratively, as one board, to ensure the board's ministries of church development, human resources-driven support, and conference-wide advocacy are carried out in a transparent, clear, and coordinated way that advances our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

H.2. Members of the connectional ministries team shall be nominated by the committee on nominations, elected by the annual conference, and serve per guidelines stipulated in Standing Rule C.3. Membership shall include:

- co-chairs, one who shall be a lay-person designated by the conference lay leader and one who shall be a clergyperson nominated by the director for congregational excellence
- secretary
- four at-large lay-persons
- four at-large clergy persons
- chairpersons of the committees on
 - Latino congregational development
 - Pan Asian congregational development
 - Black congregational development
- North Georgia Conference lead persons for the discipleship and advocacy areas of:
 - Children's Ministries / Safe Sanctuaries
 - Small Membership Church
 - Older Adult Ministries
 - Young Adult Ministries
 - Youth Ministries
 - Spiritual Formation
 - Higher Education & Campus Ministries
 - Adult & Family Ministries
 - Camp & Retreat Ministries
 - Evangelism
 - Christian Unity & Inter-religious Relationships
 - Church and Society
 - Status and Role of Women
 - Religion and Race
 - Creation and Care
 - Criminal Justice and Mercy
 - Disability Concerns
 - Disaster Response
 - Ethnic Local Church Concerns
 - Global Ministries
 - Health, Welfare & Wellness
 - Missions
 - Native American Ministries
 - Peace with Justice
 - Persons in Poverty
 - Refugee Resettlement
 - Multi-Cultural Advocate

Ex-Officio members of the board shall include:

- Cabinet representative appointed by the bishop
- Conference Lay Leader
- Associate Conference Lay Leaders
- Conference United Women in Faith President
- Conference United Methodist Men President
- Conference Youth President

- Conference Youth Secretary
- General Commission on Religion and Race Representative
- Council of Finance and Administration Representative selected by the Chair of the Council of Finance and Administration
- Conference Board of Trustee representative

H.3. Staffing and supporting the board shall be the responsibility of:

- Director of Inclusion and Advocacy
- Director, Center for Congregational Excellence
- Conference Treasurer
- Associate Directors of Congregational Excellence
- other Conference staff as needed/assigned

H.4. The board of discipleship, advocacy and congregational development shall have authority to form committees as *The Book of Discipline* may require or as deemed necessary by the board in carrying out its responsibilities. The board of discipleship, advocacy, and congregational development may enlist additional persons to assist in its work and may also form time-limited task forces to address particular issues or emphases.

Standing committees of the board shall include committees on:

- Latino congregational development
- Pan Asian congregational development
- Black congregational development

Working in collaboration with the Commission on Religion and Race, the 8 District Strategic Growth teams, and other North Georgia Conference boards and committees as needed, these standing committees shall make recommendations to the board and other appropriate North Georgia Conference groups with regard to supporting the development of new Latino, Pan Asian and Black congregations and strengthening existing Latino, Pan Asian and Black congregations. They shall also be responsible for the development and deployment of training they deem important from a cultural perspective in planting new, and supporting existing, Latino, Pan Asian, and Black churches. Each committee shall request funds necessary for this training be included in the connectional ministry team budget. These committees shall meet at least quarterly and may meet more often at the request of the Director of Inclusion and Advocacy, Director of Congregational Excellence, or the co-chairs of the connectional ministry team. Each committee shall elect a vice-chair and secretary. Ex-officio members of each committee shall include a Cabinet Representative assigned by the Cabinet, and a Conference staff representative, assigned by the Director, Center for Congregational Excellence.

H.5. The co-chairs of the board of discipleship, advocacy, and congregational development shall on an annual basis, no later than January 31st of each year, and in consultation with board members:

- determine the boards and the board's standing committee's personnel/membership needs for the coming conference year
- submit their request for personnel/membership nominations to the Administrative Assistant, Center of Congregational Excellence. The request shall include:
 - the number of persons needed
 - number of lay persons

- number of clergypersons
- specific board or committee role for each person needed
- the board's perspective on the gifts and graces needed for each opening
- an estimate of the time-commitment associated with each opening

H.6. The budget for the connectional ministries team and all of its associated committees, shall be included in the budget for the Center for Congregational Excellence.

H.7. There shall be an executive committee of the board, composed of the co-chairs, secretary, conference lay leader, cabinet representative, and other members as determined and elected by the full board.

H.8. The full board shall meet at least semi-annually; but may meet more often as needed or determined by the board's executive committee.

I. Ministry of the Laity

I. 1. Conference Board of Laity - There shall be a conference board of laity which shall provide for the ministry of the laity related to the objectives of the General Board of Discipleship as set forth in ¶¶ 1101-1126. The purpose of the conference board of laity shall be as outlined in ¶ 631.2. Funding for the board shall be provided through the conference budget.

I. 2. Membership of Conference Board of Laity - The following shall comprise the membership of the board: the conference lay leader, associate conference lay leaders, the district lay leaders, the conference director of lay servant ministries, the presidents and two representatives elected by each of the conference organizations of United Methodist Men and United Women in Faith, the presidents of the conference young adult organization and the conference youth organization; and in addition, the conference scouting coordinator, the lay chair or lay vice-chair of the general conference delegation and up to four at-large members elected by the board, in consultation with the annual conference committee on nominations as needed from time to time for inclusiveness and/or operations; and as ex-officio, a district superintendent designated by the cabinet, the director of connectional ministries or designated person and the presiding bishop. Task forces may be utilized in keeping with the directives stated in Standing Rule H.1.

I. 3. Election of Conference Lay Leader and Associate Conference Lay Leaders – The conference lay leader and no more than four (4) associate conference lay leaders shall be elected quadrennially by the annual conference on nomination of the conference committee on nominations after consultation with the board of laity. The conference lay leader shall serve as chair of the conference board of laity. No person may serve as the conference lay leader for more than eight (8) consecutive years. No person may serve as the associate conference lay leader for more than eight (8) consecutive years. The conference lay leader and the associate conference lay leaders shall be members of the board of laity by virtue of their election to the offices they hold. Years of service as an associate conference lay leader shall not be considered in determining the eligibility of a person to serve as conference lay leader.

I. 4. Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries – There shall be a conference committee on lay servant ministries, which shall relate to the conference board of laity as specifically provided for in ¶ 631.6. The committee shall be structured by the conference

board of laity and shall include as a minimum the conference director of lay servant ministries, the district directors of lay servant ministries, the conference lay leader, and one or more associate conference lay leaders. Up to four (4) at-large members may be elected by the conference board of laity as needed for inclusiveness and/or operations from time to time. The conference director of lay servant ministries shall be elected for a four-year term by the conference board of laity after consultation with the conference committee on nominations. No person may serve as the conference director of lay servant ministries for more than eight (8) consecutive years.

J. Administrative Agencies of the Annual Conference

J. 1. There shall be a board of ordained ministry composed of up to seventy-five (75) persons nominated by the bishop as outlined in ¶ 635.1, including those who serve by virtue of their offices.

J.1.a. Purpose. There shall be a committee on clergy effectiveness which shall be a resource to the bishop and cabinet to assist clergy who are having significant difficulty with effectiveness in ministry. To assist the bishop in carrying out the responsibilities of ¶ 334.3 and ¶ 359.1b, the committee will meet with the referred clergy person to identify concerns and design collaboratively a corrective plan of action for a return to more effective ministry.

J.1.b. Membership. There shall be eight (8) members who shall be appointed by the executive committee of the board of ordained ministry. The members of the committee shall not be members of the conference board of ordained ministry. The majority of the committee shall be clergy, and at least one member shall be a layperson. In addition, the director of the center for clergy excellence and a district superintendent appointed by the bishop shall be ex-officio members without vote. In the event the district superintendent of the referred clergy person is an ex-officio member of the committee, that district superintendent shall recuse himself or herself, and the bishop shall appoint another district superintendent to sit on the committee for that case only. In the event any member of the committee is appointed to or attends the same local church as the referred clergy person, that member of the committee shall recuse himself or herself, and the bishop shall appoint another clergy person or layperson to sit on the committee for that case only.

J.1.c. Terms of Service. The committee membership shall be divided into two classes of four years each. To promote continuity, four of the initial members shall be elected for two year terms and four of the initial members shall be elected to four year terms. Notwithstanding conference rules of longevity regarding total length of service in an elected position, members may not be appointed to serve two consecutive terms on the committee.

J.1.d. Officers. The committee shall elect a chair and a secretary from its members every two years.

J.1.e. Referrals. The Bishop and the cabinet shall refer to the committee those clergy who are experiencing a pattern of diminished effectiveness in their ministry. The committee shall meet with the referred clergy person and his/her district superintendent and shall develop a plan to enable and support the restoration of effectiveness. The committee shall continue to meet with the referred clergy person until such time as he or she has established a pattern of effectiveness or, in the opinion of the majority of the members of the committee,

until the committee determines that the referred clergy person is not making sufficient progress. The committee shall report its conclusions to the Bishop and Cabinet.

J.1.f. Method. The committee, the referred clergy person, and his/her district superintendent together shall develop a plan for the attainment of agreed upon goals that will demonstrate renewed effectiveness for ministry. The work of the committee may include psychological testing, health screening, random or directed drug testing, retreats, counseling, mentoring, educational opportunities, or other programs as needed to assist the clergy person in attaining effectiveness in ministry. A letter detailing the agreed upon goals and plan of work shall be sent to the referred clergy person from the Center for Clergy Excellence immediately following the meeting in which the plan is developed. Progress shall be demonstrated and documented at each meeting.

J.1.g. Meetings. The committee shall meet at least two times per year and the chair shall give reasonable notice of the meeting dates to all members as well as to the Bishop and cabinet.

J.1.h. Financial Support. The committee shall determine its financial needs in order to be effective and shall submit any request for funding to the center for clergy excellence to be included in its budget.

J. 2. There shall be a commission on equitable compensation as provided by ¶ 625.1, composed of twenty (20) persons with one (1) representative from each district. Members shall be nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations.

J. 3. There shall be a board of pensions and health benefits as provided by ¶ 639.1 composed of twenty-four (24) persons arranged in classes and serving a term of eight (8) years to include representatives of both lay and clergy, nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations.

J. 4. There shall be a board of trustees of the annual conference, elected as indicated in ¶¶ 640 and 2512.1, composed of twelve (12) persons, nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations, serving in four (4) year terms, except for the first board. It is recommended that it be composed of one-third (1/3) clergy, one-third (1/3) lay women, and one-third (1/3) lay men.

J. 5. There shall be a council on finance and administration as provided by ¶¶ 611-618, composed of five to twenty-one (5-21) persons, with one (1) lay person more than clergy included on the council. The council shall designate an audit committee comprised of one lay council on finance and administration member, one clergy council on finance and administration member and a Certified Public Accountant who is not a member of the council on finance and administration. The council shall designate a personnel committee, whose responsibilities will include those defined in ¶ 613.13. The personnel committee shall be comprised of two (2) clergy council on finance and administration members, one lay council on finance and administration member, two lay human resources professionals who are not members of the council on finance and administration, and the conference lay leader. Personnel committee members with voice and no vote are the conference treasurer and the cabinet representative. The council will, on those extremely rare occasions when the Conference may be asked to guarantee a local church loan, function as the committee to evaluate said request. This function will eliminate the need for a seating of the "Loan Guarantee Committee."

The council on finance and administration members shall be nominated by the annual conference committee on nominations.

J. 6. There shall be a committee on episcopacy as provided by ¶ 637.1, composed of fifteen (15) persons. It is recommended that it be composed of one-third (1/3) clergy, one-third (1/3) lay women, and one-third (1/3) lay men, provided that one (1) lay person be the conference lay leader. One-fifth (1/5) of the membership shall be appointed by the bishop. The lay and clergy members of the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy shall be ex-officio members.

J. 7. There shall be an episcopal residency committee as provided by ¶ 638.1.

J. 8. There shall be a committee on investigation consisting of four (4) clergy in full connection, three (3) professing members, and six (6) alternate members, three of whom shall be clergy in full connection and three of whom shall be professing members. The committee shall be nominated by the presiding bishop in consultation with the board of ordained ministry (for clergy members) and the conference board of laity (for lay persons) and elected quadrennially by the annual conference. If additional members or alternates are needed, the annual conference may elect members to serve for the remainder of the quadrennium. Committee members shall be in good standing and should be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity ¶ 2703.

J. 9. There shall be a North Georgia Loan Guarantee Committee, comprised of two (2) members of the cabinet, the chair of the board of congregational development and the director of congregational excellence, two (2) members of the council on finance and administration, one (1) lay and one (1) clergy and two (2) members representing areas of expertise appointed by the bishop in consultation with the chancellor, the conference lay leader; and the chairperson of the council on finance and administration.

J. 10. There shall be a diaconal committee on investigation as provided by ¶ 2703.2.

J. 11. There shall be an administrative review committee as provided by ¶ 636.

J. 12. There shall be a North Georgia United Methodist housing and homeless council which shall be composed of no more than 36 persons nominated by the conference committee on nominations and elected by the annual conference. Each district shall be represented by no fewer than two members, one of whom shall be a clergy member in that district and one of whom shall be a lay person who shall be a member of one of the churches in the district that they represent. In addition, the following other persons shall be members: a district superintendent designated by the cabinet; a member of the congregational excellence staff designated by the director of connectional ministries or designated person; the director of the council, who shall be a non-voting member; and representatives of Persons Living in Poverty and Refugee Resettlement.

J.13. There shall be a Barnes Evaluation and Administrative Team that oversees and administers ministry grants made from the The Barnes Fund for Church Development (“Barnes Fund”). The Barnes Evaluation and Administrative Team shall establish a spending plan to protect the corpus of the The Barnes Fund and endeavor to increase the The Barnes Fund potential for ministry grants in perpetuity. The Barnes Evaluation and Administrative Team shall partner with District Superintendents and District Strategic Growth Teams to ensure that all districts are given equitable opportunities to apply for and employ grant funding for their district-specific, missional needs. The Barnes Evaluation and Administrative Team shall partner with Annual Conference Standing Boards and Agencies to

ensure that conference priorities for ministry are given equitable opportunity to apply for and employ grant funding for the greater good of the conference.

J.13.a Members of the Barnes Evaluation and Administrative Team shall be nominated by the committee on nominations, elected by the Annual Conference, and serve per guidelines stipulated in Standing Rule C.3. The Barnes Evaluation and Administrative Team shall consist of no more than 26 members with equal representation of clergy and laity and shall include, but not be limited to:

- co-chairs, one who shall be a lay-person and one who shall be a clergy-person
- four to eight at-large lay-persons
- four to eight at-large clergy-persons
- Executive Assistant to the Bishop
- two Cabinet representatives selected by the Cabinet
- Council of Finance and Administration Representative selected by the Chair of the Council of Finance and Administration
- Board of Trustees Representative selected by the Chair of Board of Trustees
- Conference Lay Leader
- chair(s) of the Connectional Ministries Team
- Director of Inclusion and Advocacy
- Director, Center for Congregational Excellence
- Conference Treasurer.

K. Districts

K. 1. District Conference Membership – The membership of the district conference shall consist of (a) all active and retired clergy and diaconal ministers serving appointments or holding charge conference membership within the district and (b) all local church elected, at-large, and ex-officio lay members of the annual conference from the district.

K. 2. District Board of Laity – There shall be in each district of the annual conference a district board of laity composed of the district lay leader who shall serve as chair, the associate district lay leaders, the district superintendent, the chair of district connectional ministries or designated person, the district presidents of United Women in Faith and United Methodist Men, one (1) youth and one (1) young adult named by the youth and young adult groups respectively, the district director of lay speaking, and such other persons as the district lay leader and the district superintendent together may select. The district board of laity shall elect annual conference at-large delegates from the districts.

K. 3. Election of District Lay Leader and Lay Leadership – The district lay leader, the district associate lay leaders and the district director of lay servant ministries shall be elected annually, on nomination of the district nominating committee, after consultation with the district board of laity, by the membership of the district conference at the district orientation meeting before the annual conference session. It is recommended these officers will serve quadrennially and will be elected for their first term at the district orientation meeting immediately preceding the start of the new quadrennium. Replacements for these positions shall be elected at the annual district orientation meeting as needed.

L. Conference Related Agencies

- L. 1.** There shall be a Georgia United Methodist Foundation, Inc., board of trustees, nominated by the Foundation to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference.
- L. 2.** There shall be a Methodist Foundation for Retired Ministers Board of Trustees, nominated in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws, to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference.
- L. 3.** There shall be an Aldersgate Homes board of directors, nominated in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws, to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference.
- L. 4.** There shall be a United Methodist Children's Home now doing business as Wellroot Family Services board of directors, nominated in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws, to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference.
- L. 5.** There shall be a Wesley Woods, Senior Living, Inc., board of trustees, nominated in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws, to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference.
- L. 6.** There shall be a board of North Georgia Camp and Retreat Ministries, nominated in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws, to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference. North Georgia Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc. is the entity through which camping ministry for children and youth shall be carried out.

M. Joint Ministries of North and South Georgia Conferences

M. 1. There shall be a Georgia United Methodist Commission on Higher Education and Collegiate Ministry. The commission shall have twenty-three (23) voting members, ten (10) elected by the North Georgia Conference and eight (8) elected by the South Georgia Conference. Proposed members shall be nominated by the Committees on Nominations from the two annual conferences after receiving input from the commission regarding possible nominees. At least half of the elected members from each annual conference shall be laypersons. The presiding bishop of each annual conference shall designate one district superintendent from that annual conference to be a voting member of the commission. The director of connectional ministries or designated person of each annual conference shall designate one staff member from each annual conference to be a voting member of the commission. The executive director of the commission shall be a voting member of the commission.

Leadership positions of the commission shall be held by members from both annual conferences.

M. 2. There shall be a Georgia United Methodist Pastors' School board of managers, composed of persons by virtue of office and at-large members named by the annual conference committee on nominations. The purpose of the Georgia United Methodist Pastors' School shall be to provide an annual school for continuing education for United Methodist clergy of the North and South Georgia annual conferences, while modeling and promoting a spirit of cooperation and goodwill between the two annual conferences and members thereof. The Georgia Pastors' School shall be governed by a board of managers

composed of thirty (30) clergy from both annual conferences. The members shall be named to the board of managers according to nominating guidelines established by each annual conference. The officers are nominated and elected from the board of managers. The chairperson and dean of the pastors' school shall rotate between the two annual conferences from quadrennium to quadrennium.

N. United Methodist Related Institutions of Higher Education

N. 1. There shall be boards of trustees of United Methodist related schools, nominated in accordance with their Constitution and By-Laws, to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference.

N. 2. There shall be boards of directors of Wesley Foundations, nominated in accordance with their Constitution and By-Laws, to be confirmed or denied confirmation by the annual conference.